



BUSINESS
SWISS BEAUTY

The poetry of science

The Forever Laser Institut in Geneva offers an ambience, as well as exclusive beauty products, that incorporate hi technology, science, art and nature

The Geneva based Forever Laser Institut is making a name for itself with an innovative combination of medicine and beauty based on an eastern-western philosophy. Barbara Polla – physician and national counselor in Bern, gallery owner in Geneva – coordinates all the institute's beauty, medical and artistic activities.

Forever pursues three distinct, but interrelated activities: the Forever Laser Institut beauty center, the Analix Forever contemporary art gallery, and the new Forever Choice line of skin-care products. Polla comments, "The work of a beauty institute is based on uniting physical, artistic, creative and interior beauty. The challenge for Forever is to use science and nature at the service of beauty."

The company appears to be on the right track. It is the first beauty institute in Switzerland to share an address with a dermatological practice. Dr Luigi Polla, the husband of Barbara Polla and a specialist in laser techniques, is the institute's financial backer. He also trains the nurses and aestheticians. "In legal terms, Forever is a corporation," explains Barbara Polla. "It is a strictly commercial venture, yet with all the restrictions that apply to medicine. In administrative terms, the structure of my husband's dermatology practice is separate from the laser institute. One reason we decided to combine the two professions was that the laser techniques used in dermatology were developing more and more towards new beauty applications."

In two years, the institute has balanced out financially. After an initial



◀ The Forever Laser Institut offers hi-tech treatments incorporating dermatology in an avant-garde setting

investment of €375,000, the 1999 turnover reached €812,000. The company now employs 11 people. "To meet the demand, we have had to reinvest constantly in new technologies," says Barbara Polla. "On top of the initial investment, we put in about €250,000." With the launch of its skincare line last February, the Forever Laser Institut expanded its presence on the beauty market. "We think it is important for a beauty institute offering both high technology and the best of traditional beauty treatments to have its own product line," says Polla. Our goal was not to replace the other brands we work with, but to contribute to the development of effective products for consumers."

An amalgam of science and nature, Forever Choice comprises three references: the Diode serums (facial care), Xenon gel



"The challenge of the Forever Laser Institut is to use science and nature at the service of beauty"

Barbara Polla

(for the arms and bust) and Pulse emulsion (body care). The formulas feature the anti-age ingredients rosemary (carnosol) and green tea (epigallocatechine gallate). The brand uses total extracts in the composition of its products and not specific compounds. An exclusive formula neutralizes free radicals and oxygen. Barbara Polla, with 15 years of experience in research on free radicals behind her, coordinates the small research team. Her daughter Cyrille is interested in the psychology behind sales and how to stimulate the desire to buy. In relation to her studies in anthropology at Oxford, she developed the concept and chose the products and the design. Prices are from €40 to €52.

"We are now working on three types of products," Polla continues. "The first is a massage oil based on a natural anti-oxidant, mostly for use in cabin treatments. The second is a men's product that will contain, among other ingredients, the stress protein inductor turmeric; the third fulfills the needs of the skin before and after a laser depilatory session." The first is now available, while the launch of the men's product is scheduled for the fall; the laser care product is still in its early stages.

No large-scale marketing campaigns are scheduled for Forever Choice. Instead, the emphasis

will be on e-commerce and highly selective distribution in major cities, including Paris, London and Milan. "We want to sell in outlets whose philosophy resembles that of Forever, in other words chic, artistic and avant garde," comments Polla. To promote the first three Forever Choice products in Switzerland, supermodel Jodie Kidd was photographed by one of the gallery's artists and the image was reproduced on the leaflet. Other celebrities will be associated with the brand as it develops.

The products are available on the Internet (www.forever.ch), in the Forever Laser Institut and in Barbara Polla's gallery, where each product sold is accompanied by a signed artwork.

→ BEATRIZ DE CANDOLLE

LA PRAIRIE AND FOREVER

After the success of La Prairie's 'Art of Beauty' concept at the Ritz Health Club in Paris, the Regent Hotel in Hong Kong and the Cavalieri Hilton in Rome, it was natural that the company launch the idea in Geneva. In late April, an Art of Beauty center was opened in the Forever Laser Institut, inviting the venue into the exclusive fold. The centers, with their spa concept, usually generate up to five times the average turnover of a normal La Prairie outlet, largely due to its customer loyalty program. Laurence Pibouin took over early this year as the international director of The Art of Beauty. Since its introduction in 1996, the concept has been extended to 30 luxury hotels and spas around the world.