



Alice Hart-Davis has the full body repair kit

THE FACE

It was the arrival on my desk of Spiff Upper Lip from Bliss that made me stop and think. Here was a brand new high-tech face cream promising mind-boggling results (renovation of vertical lip lines, slowing down of hair-growth, brightening of "shadowy pigmentation" and with an added "miracle molecule" to help increase lip volume) designed specifically for use on the bit of skin between the upper lip and the nose. How extraordinary. But then, of course, there are dozens of eye creams and lip creams and forehead creams — so, why shouldn't there be an upper-lip-area cream? I decided to try a full face treatment ...

UNDERCOAT: first, on went an all-over layer of **SkinCeuticals' CE Ferulic** (£60; 020 8997 8541), with its combination of antioxidant ingredients to help strengthen the skin and protect it against environmental pollution. It's a sticky liquid, smelling lightly of smoked fish, containing L-Ascorbic Acid (a type of vitamin C), Alpha Tocopherol (Vitamin E) and Ferulic acid, all potent antioxidants which, together, have been shown to be even more effective than the sum of their parts. I don't see any instant results, but then you're not supposed to. It feels effective. All dermatologists will tell you that topical antioxidant face creams are "a good thing", and according to clinical data this is one of the best.

FOREHEAD: then, starting at the top, my forehead got a dose of **Dr Brandt's Crease Release** (£110 at Space NK, 020 8740 2085) which contains a "wrinkle-relaxing" substance called GABA. Dr Brandt is a top New York dermatologist and not only is Madonna said to be a fan of him and his product range, but my friend Anna, who has been trying the cream, emailed me excitedly to say that people keep telling her how well she looks. Again, I don't see anything immediately — but Anna is so amazed by the visible results, I'm planning to persevere.

EYES: I dabbed on **Instant Wrinkle Press by Dr Denese** (£44.95, 0870 1900 003). This contains an "Exclusive Inhibitor Peptide Factor" which is meant to work in much the same way as GABA, above, to relax muscles and thus soften wrinkles. No results yet — disappointingly, because this is a problem for me — but again I live in hope.

CHEEKS: on went the thick paste that is the skin-nourishing **Dr Miralles's Anti-Aging Radiance cream** (£100 at Harvey Nichols) which contains a "magic ingredient" called Kombucha mushroom, which aims to plump up skin by stimulating collagen formation. It goes on smoothly, sinks in well and immediately you can feel it making the skin that tiny bit firmer. It comes with a face mask that you use once a week — but, top tip, mix a tiny bit in with the regular cream and slap it on before going out for the evening. Voilà, a shrink-to-fit lift. Just don't overdo it, or you'll look very pinched.

NOSE: my nose, which has a tendency to go shiny, had a thin coat of **Bliss Instant Mattification** (£28, 0808 100 4151), which contains tiny chemical sponges to absorb oil that the skin produces. It felt a bit like silicone, but vanished quickly enough and completely "mattified" my nose. Then, it went on working



Smooth operator: Alice tries a wide range of creams for the face

all day. I found it to be an absolute must for the make-up bag.

UPPER LIP: and then for the **Bliss Spiff Upper Lip** (£35; 0808 100 4151), a light cream which you paint on with the little brush that is built into the tube and which tingles as it settles into the skin. A slight sting to the lips felt promising, and, yes, it boosted their appearance marginally, I guess. Whether it inhibits hair growth or not, I don't know. Thankfully, I don't have a huge problem in that department.

LIPS: to moisturise lips, I tried **Elizabeth Arden's Ceramide Plump Perfect Lip Moisture Cream** (£19, at larger Boots and selected department stores), a cream formulation with lip-plumping ceramide particles and SPF 30. Lovely. It goes on smoothly, makes a brilliant base for lipstick and has a very subtle plumping effect all at the same time. Another, and rather cheaper, make-up bag regular.

NECK: on my neck went a few pumps of the smooth, fluid **Pro-Collagen Lifting Treatment: Neck and Bust from Elemis** (£70; 01278 727 830), which draws its anti-ageing properties from marine algae such as Padina Pavonica, a brown seaweed popular for helping the skin's metabolism.

Total cost of products: £438.45

BEST OF THE REST:

Revival Cosmetox Serum (£19.50 Marks and Spencer). Contains Matrixyl to rejuvenate the skin, the muscle relaxant argireline and the moisturising ingredient hyaluronic acid to plump up the skin.

DDF's Wrinkle Relax (£75 at Harvey Nichols). The original and still the best of the so-called Botox creams. This contains argireline, a substance which inhibits the ability of facial muscles to contract, thus relaxing the face.

Linda Meredith's V-tox (£95, 020 7225 2755). Blends GABA (Gamma Amino Butyric Acid) with botanical extracts to reduce reflex facial movements.

pH Advantage Rhydex-2 (£125 at Harvey Nichols or www.strawberryandcream.com). Wrinkle softener devised by top US plastic surgeon Barry J Cohen also has GABA as its main active ingredient for an immediate smoothing effect, along with oligopeptides to increase skin elasticity and micro-particles to reflect light away from wrinkles.