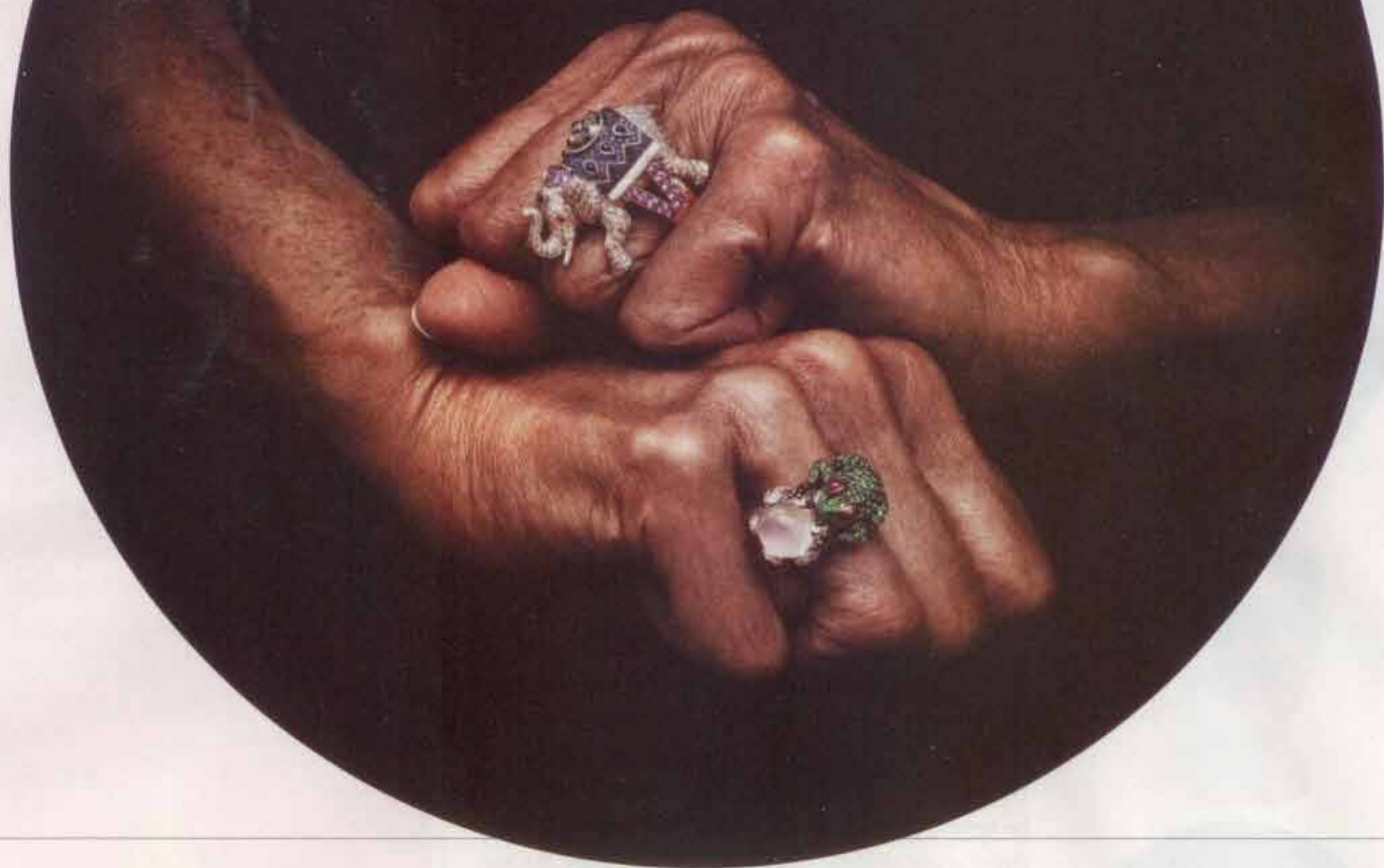


HAND BRAKE

They say your hands betray your age, but new procedures stop veins and sun spots in their tracks.

By GABRIELLE JOHNSON



IT'S A MORE OR LESS UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED fact that Sarah Jessica Parker looks amazing for her age. At 48, she's got long, lush curls that have their own hair colour contract, a lithe body toned by daily personal training and yoga sessions and a glowing complexion attended to by a dedicated facialist and makeup artist. Like many female celebrities, Parker works hard to cultivate a preternaturally youthful appearance, but she's missed the one body part that gives away her age: her hands.

Thin-skinned and veiny, they've been widely scrutinized, inspiring the blog "Sarah Jessica Parker Granny Hands." Given the current obsession with nail art and the introduction of the red carpet "mani cam" at this year's Golden Globes, famous hands are being thrust further into the spotlight—for better or for worse.

Parker's hands age her in a way that nothing else about her appearance does, making her a prime candidate for the latest

trend in cosmetic surgery: combination therapy hand rejuvenation. As we get older, our hands are subjected to the same indignities as our faces, including wrinkles, loss of volume and hyperpigmentation caused by sun damage. But while facelifts and other age-reversing procedures have been around for decades, it's only in the past five years or so that dermatologists and cosmetic surgeons have started to offer safe, relatively painless ways to make their patients' hands look younger, too.

"Hand rejuvenation as a concept has been around for several years," says Dr. Andreas Nikolis, a Montreal-based plastic surgeon. "It's the marriage between lasers and injectables that is newer."

"When people are making the commitment to look good, and look younger, a lot of them focus on their faces, but the hands can be a dead giveaway of their true age," says Toronto dermatologist Dr. Paul Cohen. "You see a lot of people walking around with >>

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wrinkle-free, spotless faces, and they've got these old, wrinkled hands," Cohen, who recommends preventive anti-aging measures like diligent application of sunscreen to the backs of the hands, regularly performs hand rejuvenation procedures. To target brown or red spots, he uses IPL (intense pulsed light) or a Fraxel laser; the latter, he says, "is a more aggressive laser that tends to require more downtime, but it can help with the appearance of fine lines and the overall texture of the skin."

Cohen complements the laser with fillers to keep veiny hands from veering into octogenarian territory. While many of us have fond memories of holding our grandmothers' hands, beautifully weathered and lined with age, when we spot signs of that aging process on our own hands, the feelings become distinctly less warm and fuzzy. "The hands lose volume like the face does," says Cohen. "When the skin gets thin, you can see the tendons and the veins, and it makes the hands look old and gaunt. So we slip a little bit of filler in the backs of the hands, to replace some of the volume that's been lost, and it really makes them look plumper and more youthful."

The key here is the combination of the two treatments. "I tell patients, 'You never go to war with one gun. You have many weapons of mass destruction to combat aging,'" says Dr. Shehla Ebrahim, a Vancouver-based cosmetic dermatologist who has been rejuvenating hands for the past five years. She injects Radiesse, which can last from 12 to 18 months, and targets age spots with BBL, "which is not really a laser, it's a broad band of light that has multiple wavelengths." The process brings pigmentation to the surface, making the hands look as though they're covered in coffee grounds for three to five days until the pigment flakes off.

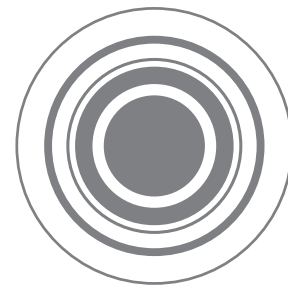
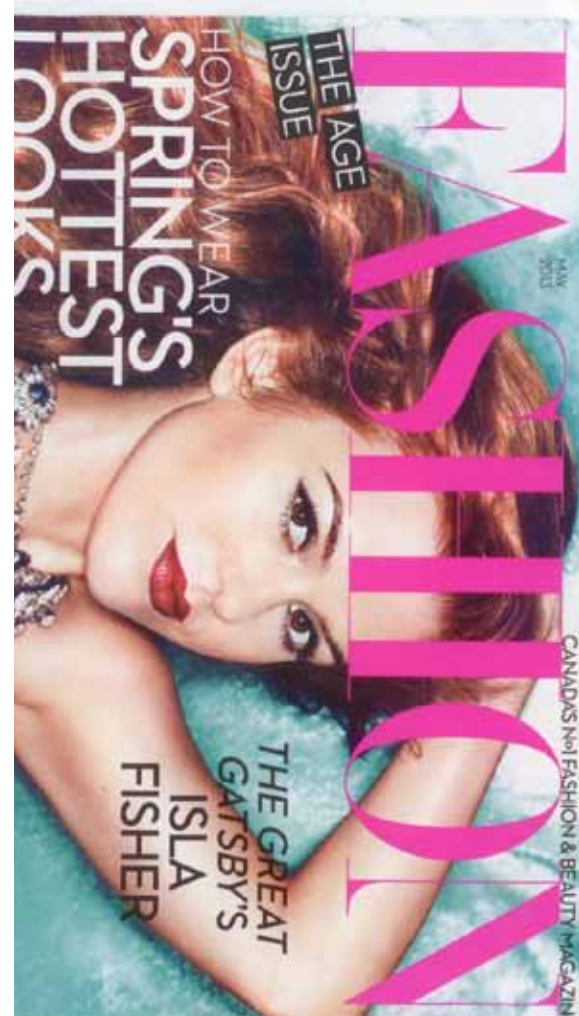
Nikolis performs a few hand treatments a month, and sees it as a natural progression from other anti-aging procedures. "This is something that patients would mention from time to time after we'd finished rejuvenating their face or another part of their body. They'd say, 'I wish I could do something for my hands,'" he says. "The majority of our patients are



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CAUDALÍE HAND AND NAIL CREAM (\$19, AT MURALE); CRABTREE & EVELYN TAROCCO ORANGE ULTRA-MOISTURIZING HAND THERAPY (\$20, CRABTREE-EVELYN.COM); LABORATOIRE DR RENAUD PURE ULTIMATE YOUTH HAND CARE CREAM SPF 30 (\$49, LDRENAUD.COM); LANCÔME NUTRIX ROYAL MAINS (\$38, LANCÔME.CA); FRESH BROWN SUGAR HAND CREAM (\$27, SEPHORA.COM); L'OCCITANE BRIGHTENING HAND CARE SPF 20 (\$34, LOCCITANE.COM)

in their 50s and 60s, and that's really when sun damage has had its major impact and when patients feel that their skin is becoming more atrophic."

In some cases, candidates are well into their twilight years. "When [older women] have their hands rejuvenated, they go and get manicures," says Ebrahim. "My oldest patient is 88 years old, and she just got a hand rejuvenation treatment a month ago because she's in a [new] relationship. It was so wonderful to be able to offer that to her." □



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