Clinic brings Hollywood treatment to downtown Orillia

Anti-Aging Clinic owners' expertise in demand around the world; They have helped doctors of Michael Jackson, Sean 'Diddy Combs and the Kardashians

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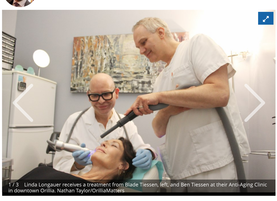

1 / 3 Linda Longauer receives a treatment from Blade Tiessen, left, and Ben Tiessen at their Anti-Aging Clinic in downtown Orillia. Nathan Taylor/OrilliaMatters

For Blade and Ben Tiessen, helping people look and feel better never gets old.

The couple has run the Anti-Aging Clinic and Dispensary in downtown Orillia for 19 years, focusing on "regenerative esthetic medicine."

During that time, they have continued to stock their small space on Mississaga Street East with the latest gadgets in skin care, trying to stay ahead of the cosmetic curve and bring what is often seen as Hollywood treatment to central Ontario.

Not that they need to stay here.

The Tiessens have turned down offers of a TV show in British Columbia and pleas to pack up their practice and take it to California.

"We've always said, 'No, we're staying in Orillia,'" Ben said.

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"The grass isn't always greener everywhere else," Blade added. "We have family here. We have friends here. We love Orillia."

Both grew up in Midland. Blade's parents owned a marina there. A couple who used to dock at the marina worked in the industry, and Blade was fascinated with it.

"They were my inspiration. I consider him my first mentor," he said.

More than 30 years later, Blade remains in the business and has cemented a reputation for being a master of the craft – micro-needling being his signature, as he was the first in Ontario to offer it. Micro-needling is a "controlled injury" to the tissue to stimulate collagen and create a "positive result" for the client, he explained.

"I teach people every single muscle in the face and how to manipulate those muscles with a controlled injury," he said. "That's why doctors fly me all over the world to train."

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He has worked with Conrad Murray, who was Michael Jackson's doctor, and has trained doctors who have worked with Sean "Diddy" Combs and the Kardashians.

While he relishes the opportunity to travel around the world to share his expertise, Blade is more concerned about keeping up with Orillians than Kardashians.

"If I were to leave Orillia, there would be trucks full of women coming with me," he said. "I don't see a difference between celebrity clients and the girls who are in my chair here. There's no difference to me. It's still skin."

He sees more a more local clientele during the summer, as many of those from this area who seek out his services are snowbirds, but it's often a revolving door of people.

"Every day, there's a few people from Orillia, a few from Barrie or Bancroft or even North Carolina," he said.

Some might find it hard to believe a business like his could thrive in a small city like Orillia. Indeed he was met with skepticism when he opened the clinic two decades ago.

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"You don't think this is going to last, do you?" he was asked at the time.

He quickly realized, "no matter where you are, there are people who care about how they look and how they feel."

His advertising is kept to a minimum, as he relies mostly on word of mouth. Booked solid, it seems to be working for him.

He even weathered the recession of a decade ago and came out unscathed.

"A large portion (of the clientele) is wealthy, and they were the ones who were hit the hardest," he said of those who took a hit on their investments. "But this isn't something they were willing to give up."

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That was good news for the Anti-Aging Clinic, which spares little expense on its equipment – such as the Beauty Angel red-light therapy (what Blade calls the "youth booth"), the Alpha Sauna Pod, and ScarLet micro-needling, which uses radio frequency.

But it's not enough for Blade to simply buy the latest equipment. Last year, he and the clinic's medical director, Dr. Nadir Ajaszawi (or Dr. A.J., as he is known) created a business called OPlasma and developed a PRP (platelet-rich plasma) device.

Blade can use it to take blood from someone's arm, then put the device in a centrifuge, where the white and red blood cells are removed, leaving only the PRP, which contains stem cells, and injecting it into another area on the client.

It's the local clientele that gets most excited when Blade brings in a new device or procedure. Linda Longauer is one of them.

She started going to the clinic about a decade ago, when she was in her mid-40s.

"I had a decent lifestyle, but I wanted to try some other things," she said, noting she was among the first to receive micro-needling treatment at the clinic.

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After she has a treatment, the results are subtle, and that's what she likes about it.

"People in my social circle will look at me and say, 'You look different,' but they can't figure it out."

That's the trend Blade is seeing: People want to look younger, but they don't want to undergo cosmetic surgery. Rather than one procedure that is invasive and requires plenty of healing time, his clients come in for multiple treatments.

"We are going away from the Band-Aid approach and the isolated approach," he said. "The baby boomer generation got caught up on a lot of the little things, like the lines between the eyebrows. Younger generations are more concerned with general improvement. More improvement and less fake is where people are going."

Find out more on the clinic's website.

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