

## Face care, from the birds

By SYIDA LIZTA AMIRUL IHSAN

19 March, 2008

Edible bird's nests become a thing of beauty as SYIDA LIZTA AMIRUL IHSAN tries on a facial which uses a traditional ingredient that the Chinese believe is good for the body. EDIBLE bird's nests are among the most expensive animal products consumed by humans. Most of the time they are eaten as soup, and have been used for centuries in Chinese medicine as a restorative and remedial tonic.

Many believe that bird's nest has amazing health benefits. A friend tells me that benefits for women include improving the condition of your skin, hair and nails because of the nourishment it contains.

(No, not from the twigs and grass or even feathers that make up the physical nest. Rather, it's the saliva of the swift, from the family of common swallows, that makes the commodity precious.)

It was just a matter of time before the beauty industry cashed in. As it has now. Switzerland-based beauty house Beaubelle has come up with a bird's nest face-spa treatment to deliver the same nourishment topically on your face.

The logic is simple. What is good for your body is good for your skin too.

The spa treatment begins as any other spa would, with a foot massage and a foot soak so the customers are more relaxed when the facial starts. The facial also starts like any other facial, with the skin analysed to determine the products to be used.

Then, after cleansing, exfoliation, steaming and extraction, the bird's nest, used in the Fountain of Riches Mist, is sprayed and massaged on the face. The cooling sensation and the soft, floral scent is a far cry from the caves (or man-made nesting houses) where these nests are found.

The mist is sprayed after extraction because after the process, Carol the therapist says, the face may be red and tender. The bird's nest extract, ginseng root extract and 24K gold flakes in the mist help soothe and calm the skin.

After that, the Royalescence gel mask is applied, spread on the face with a facial brush. The stone massage follows, where a warm stone is placed on the forehead and another slid from the chin up the cheeks to the forehead “to clear any energy blockage on the face.”

Like the mist, the Royalescence mask also contains bird’s nest extract, 24K gold flakes and micropearls to rejuvenate, brighten and balance the complexion. Once the remaining mask is wiped off, another mask is put on.

This time, it’s the Revitralescence sheet mask. The bird’s nest in this floral-smelling mask is said to “accelerate skin repair”. For 15 minutes, the essence on the mask is absorbed by the skin, leaving it cooler and softer to the touch afterwards.

To complete the treatment, litres of pure, medical-grade oxygen is sprayed on the skin from a small container. The gas feels cold against the skin and is almost odourless; afterwards, the skin feels moist, supple and soft.

No post-facial skin reaction was detected. There was no redness or skin sensitivity. My face felt softer and well-moisturised, especially around my cheeks, which is dry on most days. Perhaps it’s true. What’s good to eat is good for the skin too.

The Opulent Glow- Bird’s Nest Face Spa treatment is RM300 for 90 minutes. (Half-price on first trial.) The treatment is available at Beaubelle skin and bodycare day spas at Ikano Power Centre (03-7726-9889), Starhill Gallery (03-2148-4898), Subang Parade (03-5635-0708), 10 Semantan (03-2092-5380) and its counter in Parkson Pavilion (014-331-2319).

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