

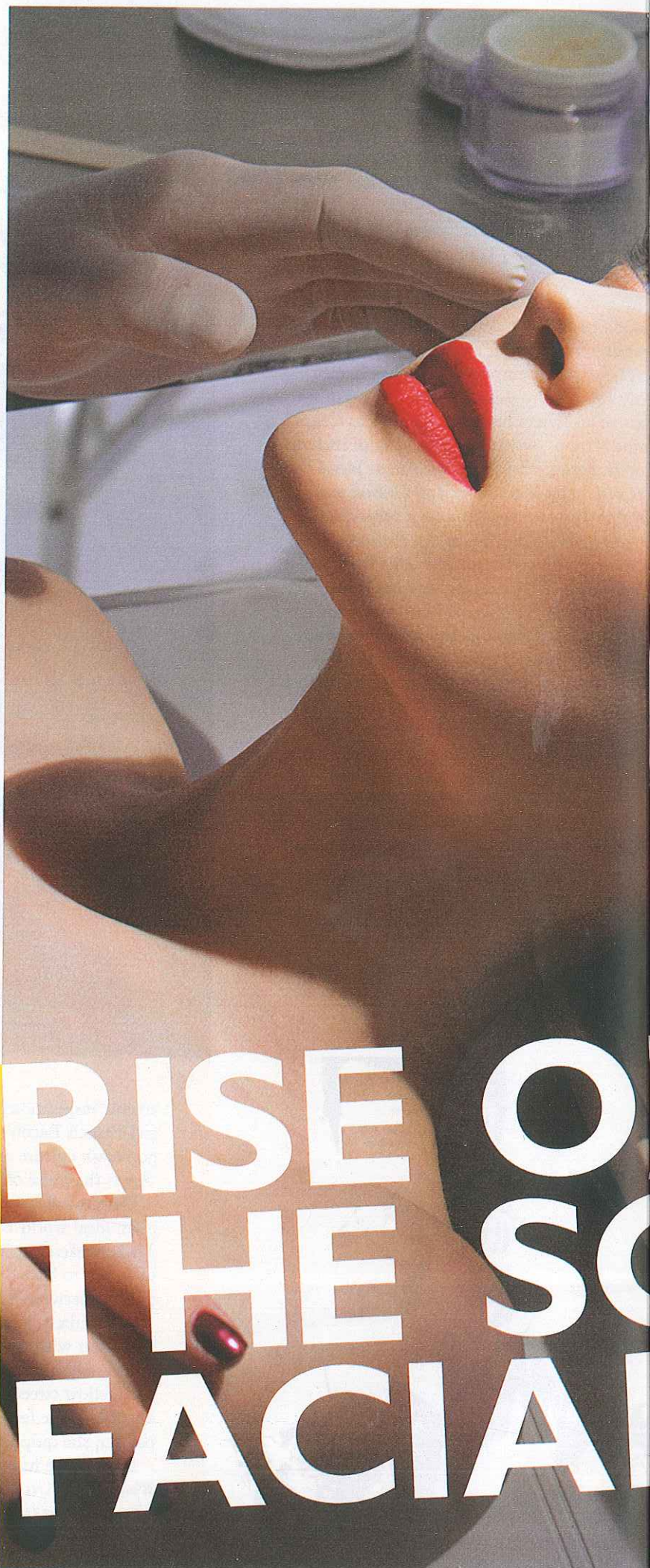
WITH BLOOD SMEARED across her face and a pained expression, Kim Kardashian's recent salon experience looked more painful than pampering (see far right). But the US reality star's joined a growing number of celebrities, including actress Anna Friel, in having an extreme type of facial dubbed 'Dracula Therapy'. Its proper name is Stimulated Self Serum or S3 Therapy. A doctor takes some of your own blood, separates it into red blood cells, platelets and clear serum, adds vitamins and amino acids, and injects it back into your face. Yikes!

According to Dr Daniel Sister, who introduced the treatment to the UK (beautyworkswest.com), it leaves skin looking and feeling younger, smoother and plumper. 'It's also totally safe and natural because you can't, unlike with fillers or Botox, be allergic to your own blood. Results take about two weeks to show fully and last around 10 months.' Costing £550 a time, it's a pricey, often painful, but incredibly popular facial. 'I've done over 600 and trained about 100 UK doctors to perform the procedure,' says Dr Sister.

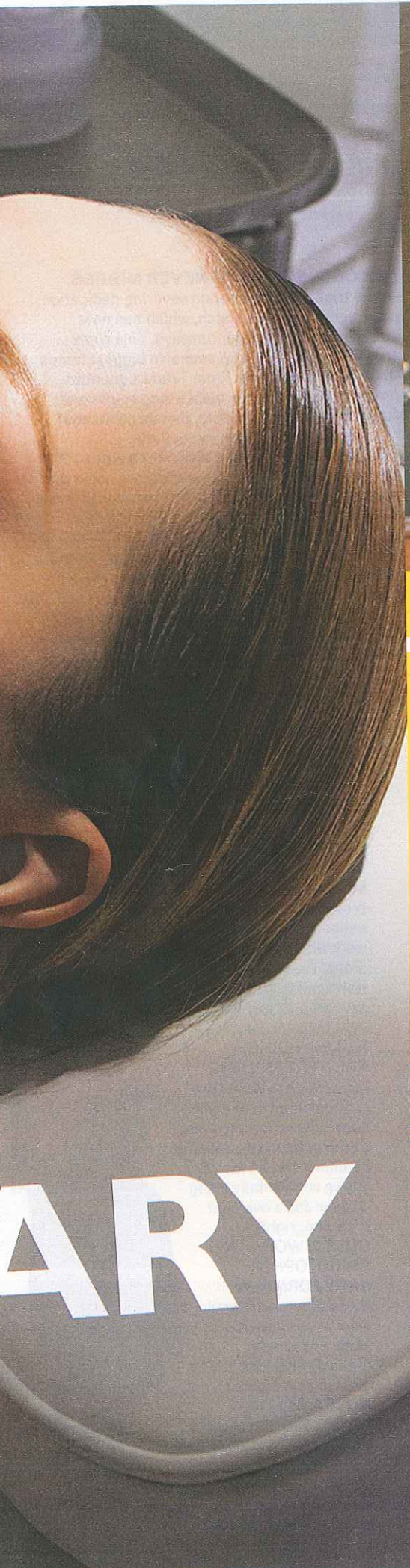
Cosmetic doctor Michael Prager adds, 'Facial treatments are getting weirder, yes, but definitely more wonderful. A simple massage with oil won't do – women want actual anti-ageing results, and this has led to a flood of new ones.' Here are four other facials that also have the eek factor...

THE ONE WITH BIRD POO

Known more glamorously as the Geisha Facial, this originated in Japan, became huge in New York and then landed in London. A-list fans include the ever-ageless Victoria Beckham. Nightingale droppings are ground to a fine powder and mixed with rice bran and water to make a paste that's applied to skin, leaving it soft and radiant. Why? The droppings are said to smooth out uneven skin tone, brighten and 'heal' fine lines. The bran acts as a pore extractor, and a green tea mask (full of antioxidants) rounds things off.



RISE OF THE SO FACIAL



THE ONE WITH SNAILS

A new facial that's big in LA involves letting African snails wander over your face. Snail slime is said to help repair and regenerate skin (it's great for scars). It all started in 2006 when Chilean farmers noticed their skin was smoother after handling snails. Research found that slime protects the creatures from cuts, bacteria and the sun's rays. A less cringe-worthy option is Dr Jart+ Premium Time Returning Serum (available at Sephora in the US) – it contains 77% snail mucin and Katie Holmes is said to love it.

THE ONE WITH PLACENTA

Kim Kardashian and Victoria Beckham are also said to be fans of 'placenta facials'. Gold flakes are added to placenta concentrate (from a sheep) and massaged in. VB reportedly visits Dr Harold Lancer in Beverly Hills for the £320-a-time treatment. His placentas come only from New Zealand sheep because they're 'untouched by the modern world', with few impurities. Nutrient-rich stem cells are harvested from amniotic cells, so no animals are harmed. After steaming and a handheld light treatment, the mixture is applied, causing skin to produce more collagen.



THE ONE WITH FIRE

If you want to make sure your facial truly packs a punch, look to the hottest (literally!) new craze in China. Called Huo Liào, the Fire Facial revolves around setting a special towel (soaked in a mysterious anti-ageing elixir and alcohol) on fire to intensify the impact of the products used. The result? It's thought that the fiery treatment works to cure anything from dull skin to a cold due to the heat triggering your adrenaline, which will improve symptoms. We'll stick to Lemsip, thanks!



From top: Katie Holmes is said to be a fan of the Snail Facial; Kim Kardashian's Dracula Therapy; the Fire Facial from China