

SOLID BEAUTY FOUNDATION

After a chemical peel gone wrong, Ronit Raphael, CEO and founder of L. Raphael, revolutionises preventative high-tech beauty Writer Amber Gibson

Ronit Raphael is beautiful. It's not just her dazzling smile, glamorous curls, plump lips and tan though. The high-powered CEO and founder of one of the world's most exclusive skincare brands, L. Raphael, radiates warmth and compassion for clients that goes far beyond the superficial. She wants to give every woman, man and teen the gift of happiness and confidence to see the beauty within themselves.

"If you are happy, nobody can judge you. But if you have a few wrinkles, grey hair and are not happy, you have so many options," Raphael says. Her drive to help others stems from her own struggles as a teen. Raphael recalls her childhood growing up in Israel, as a country girl who had never been in a city. She visited a doctor at the age of 18 for a chemical peel to help reduce acne, a procedure which went horribly wrong, leaving her with second degree burns all over her face. The accident left her so devastated and depressed that she tried taking her own life. It was only after more than 30 peels and several laser treatments that she began to feel like herself again.

"How dare doctors do something that could damage somebody for life? At the time I hated God. I was a good daughter and friend, helping everyone. Why would this happen to me? Now I love God, and I see he had a path for me, but at the time it was so difficult. I did everything to help me recover my soul and my life," says Raphael, the latter including five years of dermatology classes, learning yoga, reiki, make-up and aesthetics after her accident.

Although Raphael never attended university, she was determined, hardworking and smart. Her approach to combining beauty with technology 32 years ago when starting her first cosmetic medical centre in Israel was revolutionary, specialising in acne and hair removal, her personal



concerns. Now there are 15 Ronit Raphael clinics across Israel, but it wasn't until she moved to Geneva and opened the Temple of Beauty in 2005 that she brought doctors, aestheticians, nutritionists, hairdressers and make-up artists together under one roof.

Sitting inside the elegant six-storey Temple of Beauty beside the Rhône River in Geneva, Switzerland, a sceptic might question the over-the-top treatments. A facial with diamond dust or white truffles? Three therapists working on you at

once? Does this stuff really work? Middle Eastern princesses, Hollywood A-listers and Formula 1 race car drivers swear that it does, and have Raphael on speed dial. Discretion is of utmost importance and she'll never reveal names, but suffice it to say that for a few top clients who can afford it, Raphael has opened private spas on yachts, private jets and in homes.

The clients who see the greatest results fully subscribe to L. Raphael's philosophy of the seven foundations of beauty – medical, nutrition, physical activity, aesthetics, age management, stress management and leisure. Beauty and wellness go hand-in-hand and require a multi-faceted holistic approach. Raphael says, "Can any

intelligent woman believe that a cream will change your life? There's not a single product out there that can do that."

Raphael personally tests every treatment months before she'll introduce new technology like laser acupuncture to customers. Her thorough, methodical approach represents how she wants the company to grow. "We want to stay a small brand, but we want to make a real change," she explains. Although she receives offers on a weekly basis to open spas around the world, so far she has just four locations globally in addition to her Geneva headquarters: Four Seasons New York, Montage Beverly Hills, Hotel Martinez in Cannes and a spa in Kazakhstan.

"The spa industry is moving toward my vision. The Zen trend is finished. People are no longer just looking for a relaxing journey. They're looking for a fast result," says Raphael. It's that wow-factor and efficiency that keep guests coming back. She recommends electrical muscle stimulation workout, where 20 minutes of lunges and squats work the deep muscle fibres. L. Raphael signature oxygen facials infuse powerful serums deep into the dermis to ward off age spots and wrinkles. "The next generation will be about preventative beauty, like preventative medicine. It's like brushing your teeth. You can't just wait for the wrinkles to come and then try to fix it." www.l-raphael.com

