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LATE CITY FINAL

Pretty on the inside

New Yorkers line up for Asian Rx & beauty

By FARAH WENSTEIN

BEAUTY isn't skin-deep, but ask New Yorkers who are turning toward holistic specialists in the belief that what's underneath the skin can affect it more than makeup, Botox, peels and plastic surgery put together.

Of course, it helps to know where to go — and not everyone's talking.

Celebrity stylist Dana Weiss swears by what she calls Manhattan's "well-kept secrets."

"It's insane to think that they are such a secret," says Weiss, "but the truth is... most people looking this good don't want to share."

One of Weiss' favorite secrets is Pratima Raichur, an Indian aesthetician whose 1986 book "Absolute Beauty," available in 11 languages, has become a bible for spas and retreats.

"She's a dermatological genius," says Weiss.

Raichur can rid the skin of psoriasis, cystic acne, scars and wrinkles — all by classifying your skin type — after a brief consultation.

She'll tell you what to eat, what not to eat — and what to put on your face. Her essential face oils and body lotions are edible, and she adheres to the philosophy "if you can't eat it, then why should you put it in your body?"

Weiss says Raichur helped her after she suffered scarring from a cortisone shot to heal her acne. Though her insurance didn't cover the treatment, Weiss says it was the best \$95 she ever spent. (Follow-up visits are \$35.)

Raichur's smooth, silky face is her own best advertisement — at age 67, she looks 20 years younger. Her tiny clinic is at 162 W. 56th St. (Suite 204), and she plans to open a bigger SoHo office next month (212) 585-4036, pratima@kinara.com.

As anyone with hay fever can tell you, allergies can wreak havoc on your face — causing red eyes, dark circles and more.

Acupuncturist Dr. Yoshiko Yamaguchi — Dr. Y in his chest — can help by liberally pinpointing your problem after a consultation and follow-up visits.



Pratima Raichur's clients claim she can cure skin woes and keep them from developing.

Yamaguchi's treatment isn't limited to allergies. He also claims to cure insomnia, stress and anxiety, and even raises wrinkles disappear (161 W. 54th St., Suite 213; (212) 246-7988, yamaguchi@acupuncture.com; \$140 for consultation, \$90 per subsequent visit.)

It's hard to snag a spot at the Wednesday night Kundalini yoga workouts at the Universal Force Healing Center with spiritual leader Gurusam G's Joseph Michael Levy, but those who do claim it's worth the wait.

Sonia Sequera, a 30-year-old neurobiologist, credits her painless natural-childbirth delivery and recovery to Levy's class.

"I never had post-partum depression or pain," she says. "My delivery was

"If you can't eat it, then why should you put it in your body?"

PRATIMA RAICHUR, aesthetician

easy, simple, fun and magical. It was amazing. I was so healthy throughout. I was in class three days after my pregnancy."

Betsy Schecter, a 30-something marathon runner, came to the class on crutches and in excruciating pain after she'd stopped barefoot on a can.

Her doctor warned her there might be nerve damage. She attended Levy's class, and her foot healed faster than expected.

"They [the doctors]

thought I needed surgery," says Schecter, a film and TV production company owner. "I healed faster than they thought just by attending Gurusam's class. I really believe it."

Levy claims his breathing exercises and chanting help turn up the energy in your body, making it more effective at fighting off disease.

"We use the same energy force that makes the grass grow and the sun rise, and when you relax that force, the boldest dances with you," says Levy. "You become attractive. After a few weeks, it shows in your energy."

Inner radiance doesn't have to cost a fortune — each class is \$8. Universal Force Yoga is at 7 W. 54th St. (917) 606-1731.

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