

FACE TO FACE

by kate hamilton

Are you an industry professional who would like to be featured in Face to Face? Contact Melinda Taschetta-Millane, editor, at 630-653-2155, ext. 565; send a fax to 630-653-2192 or e-mail taschetta-millane@allured.com.

Kai Bao has combined the best of two worlds for the ultimate in skin care. Born in China, Bao graduated from a traditional Chinese medical college, concentrating on acupuncture, massage and herbal medicine. After working as an acupuncturist and physician, she discovered an interest in skin care.

"I quickly realized that the Eastern therapy techniques employed to alleviate pain also could be used to enhance beauty," Bao says. Soon after, she made a career change and became a Clarins skin care consultant and executive account manager, helping to open skin care locations in seven Chinese cities and assisting with the launch of the spa at the Palace Hotel in Beijing.

In 1998, Bao left her native China for New York in order to be closer to her aging parents, and accepted a position as an esthetician working for a medical spa there. With a strong emphasis on melding Eastern philosophy with traditional American practices, Bao created recovery treatments for post-operative clients. Her innovation boosted client satisfaction and spa sales.

After five years, she founded Yin Beauty & Arts Inc. in order to concentrate on further developing her techniques. "I wanted to create a combination of East and West to achieve the best results for my clients," she says. Bao integrates the natural, gentle methodologies she learned in China with the results-oriented treatments taught in the United States. "For example, I unite the benefits of intense pulse light (IPL) and acupuncture to treat the skin from the inside out," she explains. Because IPL often causes the skin to be highly sensitive, incorporating acupuncture helps to increase blood circulation and stimulate the skin naturally. Clients also prefer this combination because they feel more protected against the sun's harmful rays.

Bao didn't stop at offering only spa services, but also designed a home care

system. Her product line, yinbeautyarts, includes natural herbs commonly used in China. "I wanted to help clients prepare and heal their skin before and after treatments," she says. For example, she recommends applying a natural plant formula for 2-3 weeks to strengthen the skin prior to receiving a glycolic acid service. Afterward, a double serum of co-enzyme Q10 and vitamin C heals and protects. Bao hopes that by emphasizing natural home care, her clients will begin to notice the benefits of maintaining their skin daily, instead of just getting one-time treatments.

Bao feels that in order to care for the client, you must treat the body in its entirety. "You really have to think about the people you treat," she says. "We use not only our hands, but our hearts and minds." Speaking from the traditional Chinese perspective, Bao believes that life energy, or chi, can enhance the overall experience and the end results of the treatment. She maintains that it is the responsibility of the therapist to create an environment in which positive chi flows between the therapist and the client. Bao does this by matching her breathing to that of the client and moving in tandem with the rhythm created for a sense of synergy. Her clientele often note that they can feel the energy exchanged after their treatments.

After a little more than two years of operation, Yin Beauty & Arts Inc. now employs two physicians and two estheticians, in addition to Bao. Each new client receives a consultation with a team member that consists of a series of questions that explore skin care goals, lifestyle and eating habits. Treatments then are tailored to their specific needs. One example of this is an herbal exfoliation facial, which offers 50 herbal options from which the client can choose in order to create an individualized blend.



Kai Bao
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Bao constantly strives to grow and educate herself, often spending two weeks traveling internationally to learn new techniques. "I want to continue to learn more to help myself and my clients," she explains. Bao returns regularly to China and Thailand to refine her skills and find out about new trends. In the future, she hopes to create a Thai-inspired treatment room and expand her Thai menu items. She also would like to enhance her product line by adding peptides and additional ingredients, as well as by expanding into the body and hair product arenas.

Bao plans to continue offering innovative treatments that enhance her unique skin care perspective. "I really want to mix the two to help my clients the best I can," she continues. "I have an interesting blend of knowledge, and I think that's very special." ■