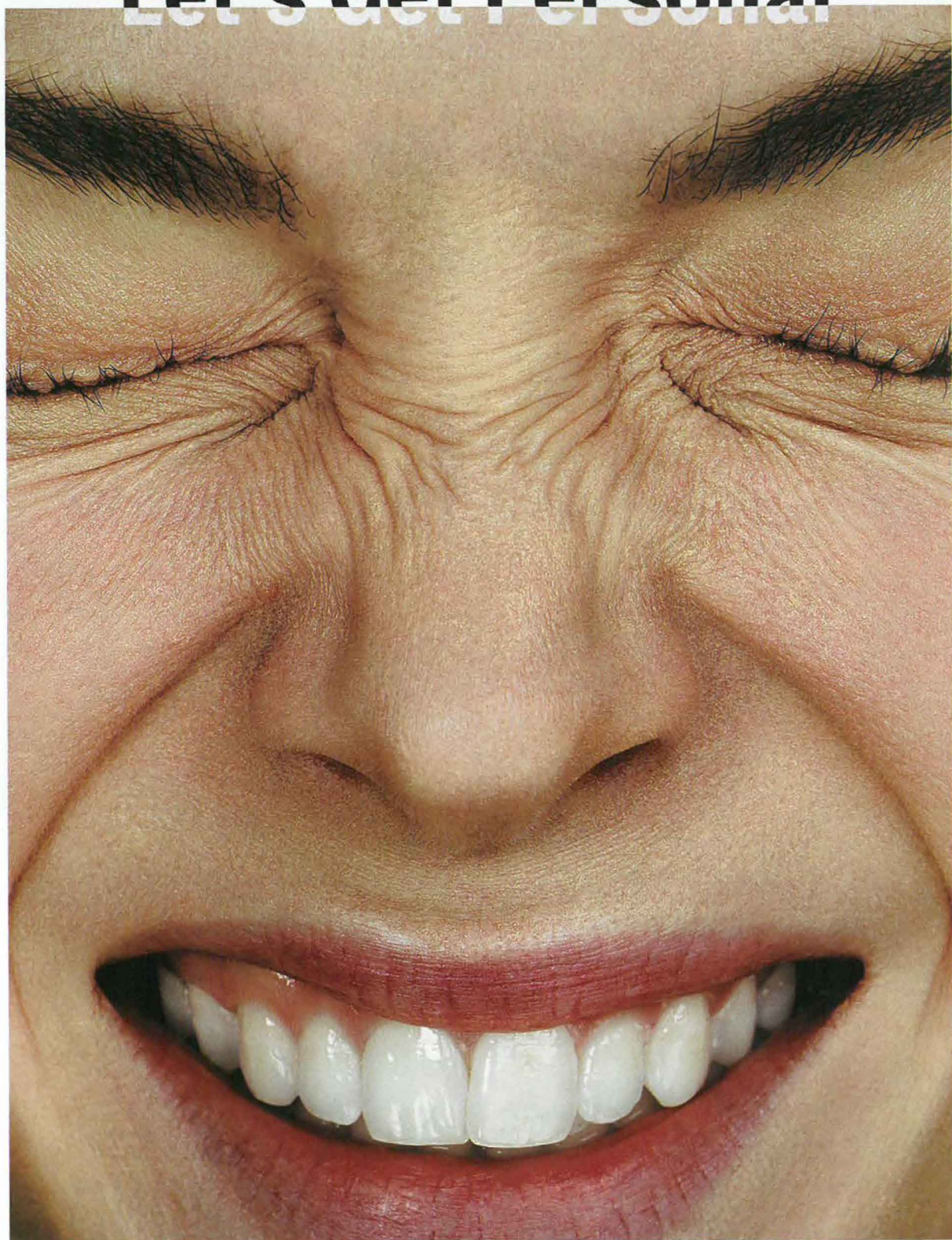


Let's Get Personal



The reigning beauty ideal is radically simple—it just requires that you be you. Because you truly are a singular sensation. So we're dedicating this special section to not only embracing but enhancing the qualities that make you special, that give you your magic. First up: lines that are more than just *fine*.

The Good Wrinkle

That line, that crease, that groove...all well earned. And as dermatologist Laurel Naversen Geraghty, M.D., explains, embracing them not only reveals your unique beauty but also can boost your confidence.

To hear some of my patients tell it, wrinkles are the enemy—invaders to be fought with every available tool. That mindset is a disservice to us all. I view these lines and creases as some of our most attractive and quintessentially human qualities, reflecting years of happiness, laughter, love, concentration (I definitely developed a few furrows during med school!), tears, and, in my own experience, occasional scowls aimed at adorable but misbehaving children.

Consider the curved lines on our cheeks—the nasolabial folds—that illuminate our face when we flash a genuine smile. Or take the twinkle-promoting crinkles around the eyes, which can make it appear as if we're smiling even when we're not. (I refuse to call these lines "crow's-feet." Why should natural expressions of joy be compared with creepy bird talons?) A little smoothing in either of these places can look fine, but delete them completely and you could lose the animation that gives your face character.

Of course, as a dermatologist, I perform cosmetic surgery. But I believe the best—the most beautiful and the most natural—results come from softening only the features that reflect negative emotions, like the undereye hollows that prompt colleagues to ask if we're tired even when we've logged eight hours, or the perma-scowl between the brows that can make us seem angry. I preach this philosophy to my patients and apply it to myself. I am in my forties, and, like my patients, I want to look and feel like my best self.

If there's one thing I've learned by examining skin for a living, it's this: Health, beauty, and radiance have absolutely nothing to do with our birthdate. I see gorgeous, glowing complexions in newborns and 90-year-olds alike. And while babies may be born with it, adults can develop and nurture it through healthy habits, confidence, happiness, and an acknowledgment of our own unique, irreplaceable, and expressive beauty.



Smoothing It Over

This science-backed action plan keeps skin hydrated and supple.

1. Apply a daily topical antioxidant (under sunscreen) containing vitamins C or E or ferulic acid, such as *SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic* (\$165, skinceuticals.com); it can fend off damage from UV exposure and pollution.

2. Wear a minimum of broad-spectrum SPF 30, like *Elta MD UV Clear SPF 46* (from \$32.50, eltamd.com), every day—no exceptions. It's the most important step for preserving your skin.

3. Moisturize once or twice a day with a soothing cream—ideally

one that contains an emollient like dimethicone, such as *Olay Regenerist Whip* (\$29, olay.com). This restores the skin's barrier, keeping irritants out and hydration in.

4. Cleanse your face with a gentle foaming cleanser, like *La Roche-Posay Toleriane* (\$15, at drugstores). It's crucial to do this at night to remove inflammation-causing makeup, dirt, bacteria, oil, and free radicals.

5. A pea-size amount of a topical retinoid, such as *Differin Gel* (\$30, at drugstores), at bedtime

can unclog pores and help lessen wrinkling, spots, and breakouts.

6. Gently exfoliate once or twice a week. Those with sensitive complexions often do well with a mechanical method (like a scrub or washcloth) because the process is a little more controlled; you can adjust how hard or how softly you rub. Oilier types often prefer chemical exfoliation (with a cream, peel, or wash containing a retinoid or acids), like the *Aveeno 60 Second In Shower Facial* (\$7, at drugstores), which contains sloughing lemon peel extract.