

THE RADAR BEAUTY

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLTON WOLFE

DC

MODERN LUXURY™

HOT DOC TINA ALSTER



Society surgeon Tina Alster chills in her Newell Jacobsen-designed laser

LASER POWER! *In her posh new clinic and fresh retail outpost, diva/dermatologist Tina Alster wields a mighty wand*

When Maureen Dowd gives you a moniker, you take it. That's how uber-well-dressed District doctor Tina Alster became the reigning "Queen of Laser." Alster's developed a cult following by expertly touching up and tweaking the faces of well-heeled Washingtonians young and old—all while clad in perfectly picked couture. When she's not running her own practice, Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery, or making the rounds of the city's A-list fetes, Alster also finds time to serve as luxe beauty brand Lancôme's resident expert. Now, with a spanking new Hugh Newell Jacobsen designed clinic just opened and a retail store set to debut this month, the good doctor's wattage is higher than ever.

And while the fuss surrounding Alster may be owed in part to her good looks and great connections, the title bestowed on her by Dowd is one she came by honestly. Alster, who studied at Duke and Yale, was captivated by the revolutionary power of lasers early in her career and founded the Washington Institute in 1990, long before lasers were fashionable. The Institute was the first freestanding private laser clinic in the world, and Alster found herself among the first doctors using the beams to lighten the appearance of red birthmarks, also known as port-wine stains, and treat other skin conditions previously thought inoperable.

Today the DC native is the sole consulting dermatologist to Lancôme, a clinical professor of dermatology at Georgetown University and a cosmetic laser surgeon renowned worldwide for her ability to revitalize aging skin. Clients arrive from across the country and beyond (such as from the Middle East and South Africa) and include heads of state, actresses, many members of Congress and various royals. Wielding lasers powerful

enough to cut through steel, Alster can literally erase lines and wrinkles and allow new, younger-looking skin to surface. Clients can mix and match more tame treatments, including cellulite care and laser hair removal, with the serious stuff. And Alster also offers nonablative laser processes, which like other resurfacing reveals fresh skin, but does not require weeks of recovery.

After mastering her technique for transforming faces, Alster turned her trained eye on the Institute itself. New digs were in order: a gorgeous glass structure near the corner of 14th and K. Next, came the choice of architecture and design firm. "For years I have wanted Hugh Newell Jacobsen to design a new space for me," she says. The result? "It's a cutting-edge space which mirrors what we do in terms of medicine," says Alster. "The materials are like skin itself," says Simon Jacobsen, CEO of the firm who integrated his family's distinctive design by using translucent materials such as frosted glass along with industrial-grade, pure white flooring (like that used by NASA) to give the facility a sleek feel. And as staff and clients settle in, even more change is bubbling beneath. Debuting this month will be a street-level store below the clinic called *Après Peau*, meaning "after skin." Jacobsen's clever design for the boutique tricks the eye, making the demure store appear larger with inverted wall space that narrows as you move inward. The boutique will be stocked with specially packaged Lancôme products and a skin care line produced in Japan for Dr. Alster—plus candles, paper goods, pottery and jewelry. Stop in for a little face time! ■

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