



The White stuff



Fancy a beauty boost in your lunch hour?
Deri Robins goes in search of the perfect smile

Who is it that defines the parameters of 21st-century beauty? Who rules that stomachs should be flat, thighs smooth, roots tinted and facial hair (at least, for women) unacceptable?

Pharmaceutical companies, presumably, all set to make a packet out of our neuroses and vanities. And these same despotisms also have very decided ideas about teeth. These must be white; OK, they need not dazzle with Cowellesque whiteness, but a fresh, bright smile is generally accepted to be a major beauty necessity – and to be fair, we can't really disagree with that.

There's no shortage of Bath companies who are willing and able to whiten your teeth. Many, perhaps unsurprisingly, are dentists.

Not all of us relish the thought of visiting the

dentist, however, even for cosmetic purposes, and for the phobic it's good to hear that a new, boutiquey little clinic in the centre of town is ready and able to do the same job, without the sinister whine of the drill emanating from a neighbouring room.

Bright White Smiles could hardly be less ambiguously named. The shiny brass plaque is the sole indication that the elegant town house in North Parade Buildings houses a clinic; Donna, who answers the door to me, is not wearing a white coat, there are chillout vibes playing within, a faint smell of burning incense, and groovy art on the walls. The only indication that this is not the reception area of a funky hotel are the two treatment beds against a far wall.

Donna, it turns out, is the clinic manager, and will be attending to my less-than-pearly whites.



I bare my teeth at Donna, who compares them to the colours on her set of fake dentures

“Cool Blue takes a little longer than Zoom, but is less invasive for the teeth”

She'll be using a product called Cool Blue Light – a lot of clinics use Zoom, but Cool Blue is less invasive for the teeth; it takes slightly longer as the whitening gel (used in conjunction with a laser) is a little less strong. The outcome is identical, but the teeth are left feeling less sensitive.

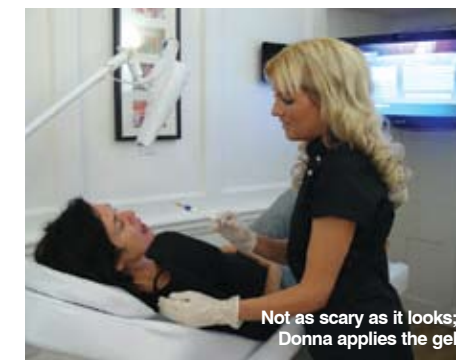
It's still a relatively quick process. No need for a prior consultation; this can be done over the phone, so that all you need to do when you turn up is fill out the usual medical form; after this, it's straight into the chair for an examination.

Obviously, teeth need to be checked out for suitability. My set are pronounced 'lovely', so we proceed directly to the next stage – assessing their current colour, and estimating how far they can be whitened in one treatment.

Age, apparently, plays some part in this, along with diet, how well you care for your teeth, their mineral content, whether you floss, smoke, eat lots of staining foods... you get the picture. My teeth could be worse – they clock in at an average-looking 4 M2 (which admittedly will mean little to the casual reader); Donna hopes to take them up to around three shades brighter.

The treatment consists of three 20-minute sessions, in which the gel is applied and a laser is trained on the teeth to activate the gel.

The reason it's broken down into three sessions, Donna tells me, is that “the gel is always at its strongest when it's first put on; after that, it slowly changes to a watery solution which dilutes the effect on the teeth.” Also, it gives clients the option of getting up and wandering about in between sessions, if they wish; Donna tells me that men are particularly prone to wandering.



Not as scary as it looks; Donna applies the gel



BEFORE: My teeth clock in at an average 4M2



AFTER: Brightened up to a far more acceptable 2.5M2

I'm perfectly happy, though, to lie back and think happy thoughts for an hour – even the strange plastic frame that Donna inserts into my mouth to keep it open wide and protect my lips and gums isn't really a bother.

Result . . .

OK, the mouth guard is off, the last laser has pinged off and my teeth are up to a gleaming 2.5M2. If I'd been 20 years younger they'd have been even brighter – possibly 7 shades lighter. I have the option of a follow-up session, but I'm quite happy as they look so natural and shiny.

Easily shoehorned into a lunch hour, this is an easy beauty boost that genuinely increases confidence; you can't put a price on that (though Bright Smiles do: £249). Recommended. 🦷

Visiting details

Treatment: Cool Blue Light teeth whitening system
Time: One hour, plus consultation and medical form-filling.
Practitioner: Donna Brown
Price: £249
Follow-up: I'm given a tube of Beyond whitening toothpaste
Where? Bright White Smiles
8 North Parade
Bath BA1 1NS
tel: 0845 5190193
www.brightwhitesmiles.co.uk