

# HURTS SO Good

PEEL AWAY THE LAYERS AND FIND BABY-SMOOTH SKIN.

By SHELLY HORTON

I'm not a big fan of the "beauty is pain, pain is beauty" mantra. But when it comes to Fraxel, I say, "Suck it up, sister" because, hands down, it's the best result I've ever had from a beauty treatment.

Fraxel is a laser treatment for sun damage and wrinkles; it refines pores and makes your skin more luminous. "It's the ultimate treatment to make you look five years younger," says Lisa Sullivan-Smith, registered nurse and co-director of The Clinic in Sydney.

To me, it feels as if you have had your face burnt off, but Dr David MacDonald, from the Cosmetic and Laser Medical Centre in Melbourne, says that's not so. "It doesn't burn off the top layer, but you do peel as it's a reaction to the heat," he says. "I'd describe it as like pixels in a computer screen – it beams into the skin delivering a burn, and the skin reacts by stimulating collagen and elasticity."

I had a full Fraxel treatment 18 months ago (prices are about \$1500 in Sydney and \$1000 in Melbourne). Anaesthetic cream was applied to my face, and then the pain

began. Sullivan-Smith and MacDonald both say it's about a three out of 10 on the pain scale. For me, it was a solid seven.

But it takes only about 15 minutes. After, your skin feels as if you've been badly sunburnt. I went home and sat in front of a fan. The next day, small brown spots had come up all over my face – I looked like I had been flicked with Milo. Then I peeled for about four days. My five-year-old nephew said, "Aunty Shelly, you have face dandruff." Nice.

I used **Redless by Aspect Dr (\$99)**, an oil-based serum that aids hydration, doesn't clog pores and calms skin. By day five, my skin was incredible – baby-soft and clear. Fine lines had disappeared. I was thrilled.

"It's important to be sun-aware afterwards,"