



UNCOVERING BEAUTY

Creams and peels can only do so much.

Written by *Mary-Jo Dionne*

SHANNON MORSE IS in the business of beauty. She has been for nearly a quarter of a century. To hear this and then to look at her, one would likely deduce she began her professional life at the age of eight, ten tops. Because Morse is one of those women who defies years, she walks into a room and it gets somehow all the brighter. The owner of Port Moody's Spa Divine, Morse is something of a pro when it comes to understanding a woman's quest for beauty. The pressures to conform, the unrealistic standards we use to benchmark our own attractiveness, the tendency to feel that getting older is a curse and not a gift. And yet from her seat

behind the counter of her successful entrepreneurial venture, she consistently sees two types of clients: the woman who lives from the inside out, and the woman who does not.

The woman who does not is usually the primary caregiver to many, yet excludes herself from that list. She consistently ensures everyone is where they need to be when they need to be there, likely frantic in the process. Little or no thought is given to where she might need to be. (Like alone on a beach sipping Mojitos or, at the very least, taking a long-overdue nap on the couch.) On those occasions when she allows herself the luxury of an evening out, it's frequently a frenzied combination of application and deprivation: the concealers, the creams, the crash diets. The desperate hunt for the elixir to mask her fatigue and sense of hopelessness is on.

There is one difference between our harried

woman and our woman who lives from the inside out. The latter makes the commitment to add herself to, and keep herself on, the list of people she cares for. And from that commitment, all else radiates. As Sarah Ban Breathnach says in *Simple Abundance: A Daybook of Comfort and Joy*, "There is nothing sexier than the woman emitting the pheromone of personal fulfillment." At this time of year more than any other, we are bombarded with images of who we could be if we follow this plan, join that club, or inject this serum. Our goals invariably end up looking like some variation of: *This year, I will fit into my skinny jeans*. But maybe this is the year we dramatically change our focus. Maybe this is the year the only question we ask ourselves is whether or not we are truly living from the inside out. And if not, well, there's our New Year's resolution. **1b**