



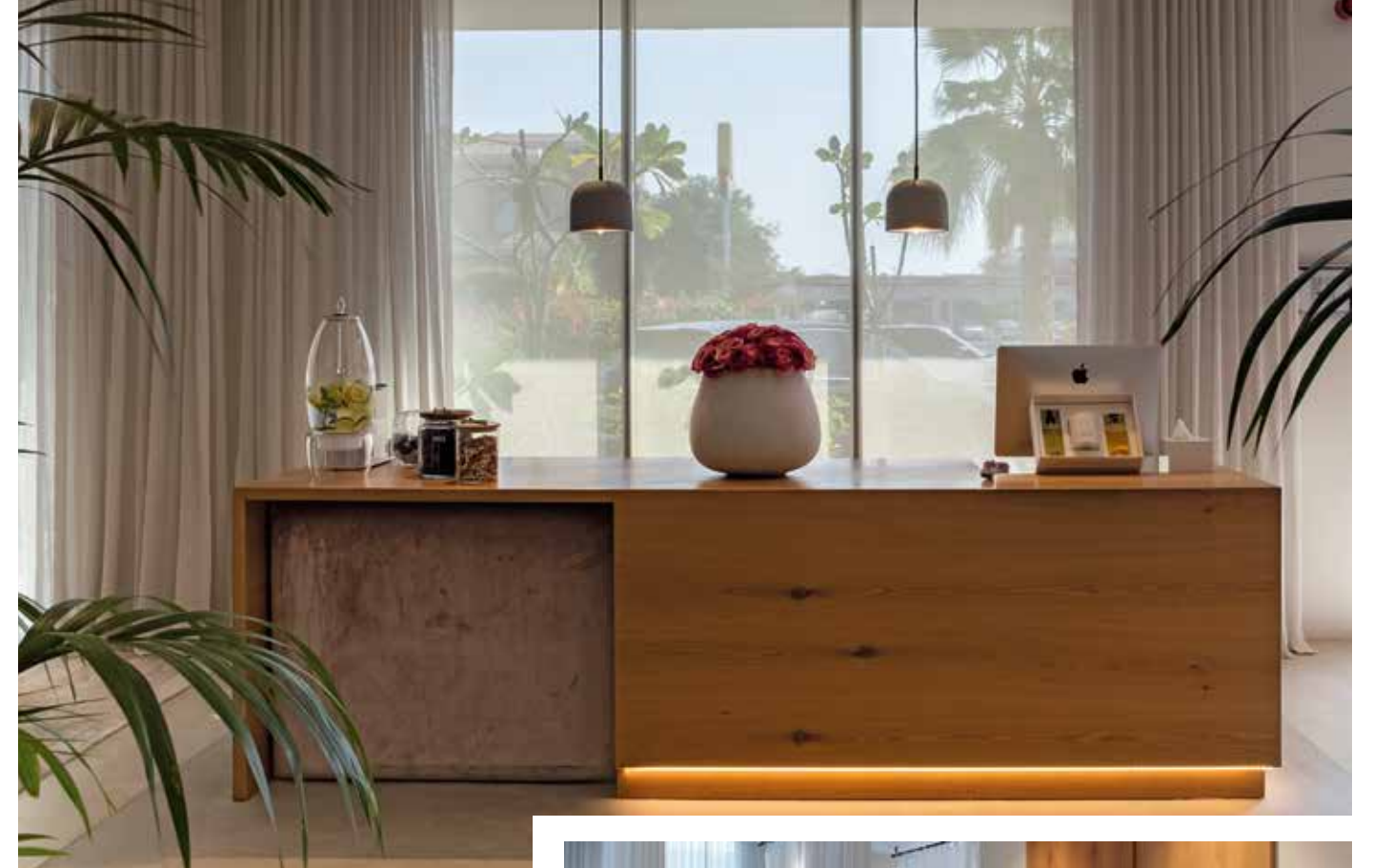
Michele wears:
Suit, Max Mara

HIGHBROW BEAUTY

The world of skincare is one of the most fickle and fast-paced of them all; so what does it take to create true longevity? With over three decades of experience, Dubai-based owner of Browz salon, Michele Barclay has all the answers...

Words by DEVINDER BAINS

With the global cosmetics industry worth \$532 billion and estimated to hit \$716.6 billion by 2025, it's no surprise that influencers and celebrities alike are jumping on the beauty bandwagon. Social media has helped make skincare and make-up novices household names, with 63 per cent of beauty buyers trusting brands they can find on Instagram. But how many of these new start-ups and influencers will actually stand the test of time? And what does it take to have longevity in one of the fastest-growing and saturated markets in the world? With over three decades of experience, owner of Dubai's Browz salon Michele Barclay is a true veteran of the industry, and is all-too aware of the hard work needed to not only run a successful skincare business, but the dedication it takes to stay relevant in such a fluid and fast-moving market. Since the age of 17, mother-of-two Michele has worked at multiple salons across the UK and UAE, including a number of her own, setting up her most recent project, Browz, in 2015. Now one of the UAE's leading beauty destinations for those as discerning



as they are in-the-know, Browz specialises in brow balance and rejuvenation, semi-permanent make-up, lip blush, brow shaping, lashes, anti-ageing facials and advanced skincare treatments. It also happens to have impeccably designed interiors, *Bazaar* sat down with Michele, 58, to get an insider's thoughts on the market, and of course, her beauty tips...

What's the secret to your longevity?

I am deeply passionate about the industry, I just love beauty and I love working with women. I have perfected my daily routine as a proud member of *The 5am Club* by Robin Sharma and *Rewire Your Brain* by Dr Joe Dispenza – my goal is to create the best version of myself every day by doing the inner work that is needed for change.

I practice daily meditation, read one book a week and listen to podcasts of inspiring international business people. I also travel, and seek out the latest trends.

What piece of advice would you give to an entrepreneur starting out in the skincare industry?

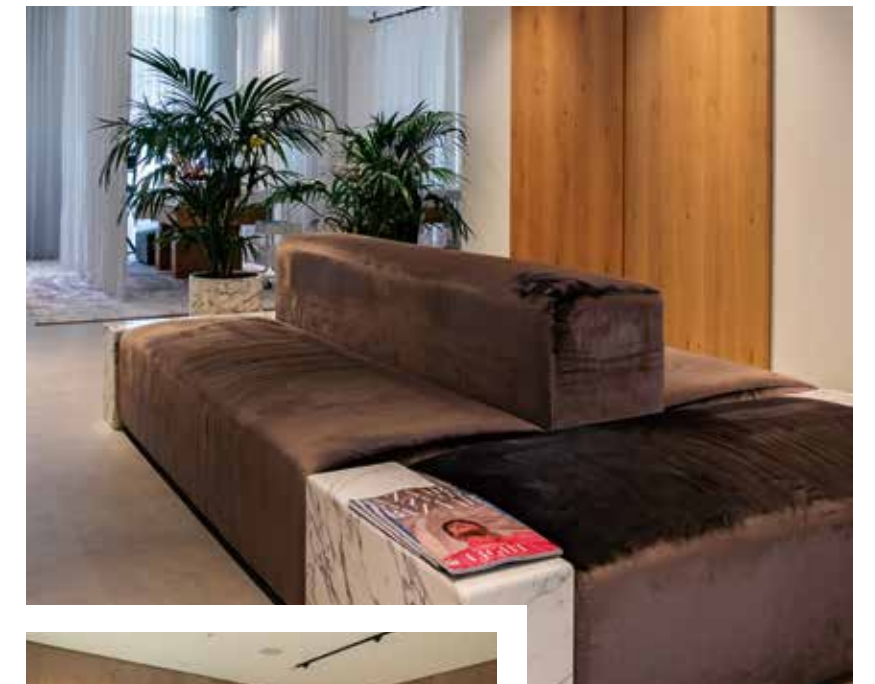
Constantly research and stay ahead of the game, especially when it comes to the next best ingredients in products. It is also very important to be self-aware, especially when it comes to working with ethical brands that are environmentally friendly. The perception of your brand and how others see you is key. Don't let competition distract you from achieving your goals, there will always be someone who takes advantage of a situation, you can wish them well but don't let them get you down.

What are your thoughts on the huge number of influencers bringing out beauty products?

They need to really ask themselves: what is the reason behind it? Is it ethical? Does it come from a spiritual place? Are they trying to help women to feel more beautiful on the inside? Or is it just using their own name to market in a different way?

What changes would you like to see in the industry?

I'd like to see women with more individuality embracing their own unique beauty, rather than trying to follow



Browz was launched in 2015 and has gone on to become one of the UAE's leading salons



unrealistic trends and look like someone else. I also want to see a shift in mindset, I think it is important that women should grow to be happier from within: be more spiritual and more confident.

What do you think about social media's influence on people's beauty ideals?

People have forgotten that real-life image, because what you look like in a photograph is different to real life and ▶

“I’d like to see women with more individuality embracing their unique beauty”

Michele Barclay



Michele has worked in the beauty industry for over 30 years

PHOTOGRAPHY: AASIYA JAGADEESH. STYLING: NOUR BOU EZZ. HAIR: WITH THANKS TO JACQUES LA COUPE

vice versa. I think there is too much on Instagram – too much comparison, people just want to emulate these people and are addicted to how they look, but no amount of Botox or fillers can mask how you feel inside. If you are not happy within, it will show on your face.

What are the key treatments that have changed the beauty industry?

Cosmetic dermatology, fillers, Botox and medical facials have become a lot more sophisticated. Facials were very spa-oriented, now they have become more high-tech with more equipment. There are so many different machines that people are happy to use, where it was only hands-on when I first started.

How has the way we manage our brows changed?

Back in the day, everyone just wanted a shape with tweezers; there was no threading, barely any tints and no one had heard of semi-permanent make-up. I think HD put eyebrows on the map, as in everyone wanted this particular shape and to keep that shape. We wanted to fill in the spaces, so then micro-blading came in and it was all about creating dream eyebrows.

What skincare items can you not live without?

I love to apply the Natura Bissé Sheer Eye instead of concealer, it hydrates the under eye and also has so many other benefits. It’s tinted so it hides any dark circles and you don’t need to apply any concealer, which dries out under the eyes making dark circles worse in the long run. It also blocks out blue light, which is great for when I am working on my laptop or on my phone all day. I also cannot live without my M2 Lash Growth Serum, it’s given me thicker and longer lashes. All I need to do is to apply my Rodial mascara and I’m ready to go. I also use the Natura Bissé Vitamin C Body Lotion, it is ideal for this part of the world, it hydrates the skin and also enhances any tan, firms the skin and smells absolutely gorgeous.

What is the most popular treatment at Browz right now?

Micro-blading – which is the semi-permanent make-up, and brow lamination that tames the hair, so the brows look more uplifted and you can brush the eyebrows in your desired direction.

What is your favourite treatment at Browz?

The Face Fitness, because I feel the massage is just so invigorating, energising and lifting that I feel that I’ve got a smile on my face when I walk out.

What types of beauty treatments in general would you not recommend?

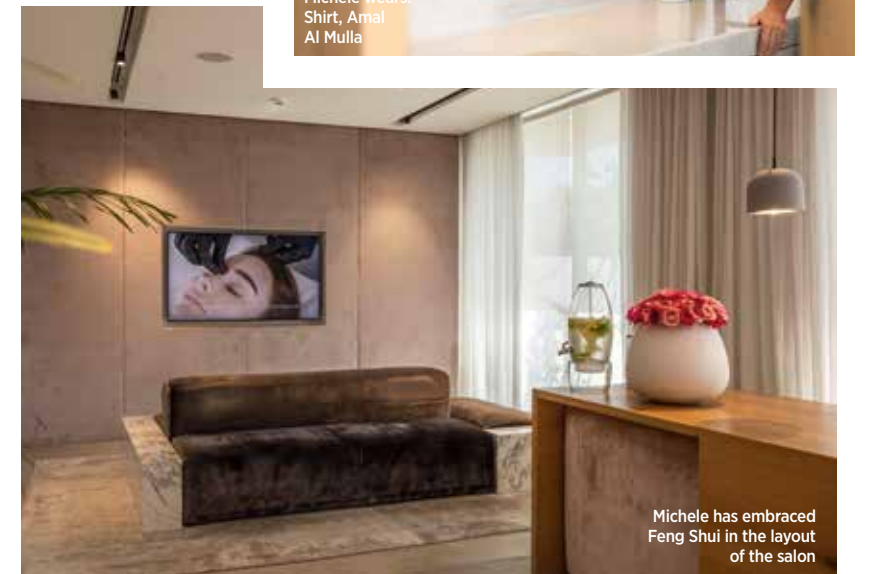
I am not too keen on fillers, or generally too many injectables in the face. I think it can change a woman’s softness and make her look too hard. I think to age gracefully is all about going within. Because what you eat will show on your face, and how you think will too: if you think rubbish, you will create nonsense in your life.

You provide wellness services such as talks, yoga and meditation for your staff. Why is this important?

I am trying to create an environment where women feel empowered, confident, appreciated and valued. To really feel they have a place within their family, where a lot of them support their families and are the bread winner. I want them to feel good about that, to be proud of themselves and feel that they are growing not just physically, but spiritually and emotionally – that they can cope as working women and mothers on all levels.



Michele wears: Shirt, Amal Al Mulla



Michele has embraced Feng Shui in the layout of the salon

How do you think the space that you have created contributes to that feeling of wellness?

I have incorporated Feng Shui into the space at Browz. I had a master that helped me create the perfect space at home, and that’s how it started. I believe that harmony in the space depends on alignment of energy. If the energy is good and aligned with your space then you can be more creative and more effective. I just passionately believe in the energy and the flow of the space helping people within.

Your daughter Yasmin is an integral part of the business – how has she helped?

She is my total inspiration; she is very creative. I always think you should have a younger person with you in the business, because young people have fresh ideas. She brings a different spin to what I have done for so long. The interiors at Browz are all done by Yasmin; the colour palettes, the tones, the materials, the design of the sinks, the shape of the mirrors, the way the door opens – all these unique elements that we don’t really see in any other beauty salon in Dubai.

What are your future plans for Browz?

Expanding in the Middle East including salons in Abu Dhabi and Saudi. I want to create a formidable brand where women come here because it makes them feel good inside and out, and makes them feel more spiritual. ■