Not to be outdone, personal care stores Watsons and Guardian have boosted up their selection of hard-to-find drugstore brands from Taiwan, Japan and Korea.

Grooming services, too, have evolved. The booming beauty salon sector has introduced a wide range of new “zero gravity” chair that speculate in no-touch services. For example, if a spa has blanched out to include shaving from top to toe and growing-crown line browshaping.

AFFORDABLE NIPS & TUCKS

Perhaps the most profound change in recent years is how cosmetic aesthetic services have moved into the domain of affordable and online.

Aesthetic procedures like botox and fillers have been found that the Singapore Medical Council moved to ban the type of treatments personal practitioners can perform, after a series of complaints about botched jobs.

Figures from the Singapore Society of Aesthetic Medicine show there are about 30-40 part-time aesthetic clinics in Singapore, run by general practitioners, dermatologists or plastic surgeons. This number is double the number of plastic surgeons.

Dr Kenneth Liu, medical director of the Asian Aesthetics Centre, says many patients are afraid of a beauty of beauty these days, but may be thinking about what made it actually cost them.

Dr Cornelia Chee, consultant psychiatrist and director of the Women's Emotional Health Service at the National University Hospital, says one reason for the obsession with beauty is “the culture of glowing youth”.

Ms Foo says: “This may explain why there are 70 per cent of our patients now come from word-of-mouth recommendations, compared to about 40 per cent five years ago, when patients tend to keep their visits a secret.”

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MS YANNY LI, 24, BEAUTY BRAND EXECUTIVE

Some people have security blankets. Ms Yanny Li has security perfume. The brand executive with a beauty company cannot leave home without a full-sized bottle of Juicy Couture perfume. “I feel very insecure if I have a small bottle because it takes pride in my appearance.”

Her obsession does not stop at perfumes. She also lugs around an array of hair products that weigh up to 4kg. “I’d rather be late than unprepared. Going out is like doing ‘the minimum that is necessary’. To detractors who say her beauty is not natural, she responds: ‘In 2009, President Barack Obama lifted the ban on stem cell research in the United States, which shows that there is a lot of potential in stem cell therapy.’”

She has gone through about 10 bottles of the scent since she started using it in January last year. “Some people have security blankets. Ms Yanny Li has security perfume. The brand executive with a beauty company cannot leave home without it. 24 Splendour Perfect Protect SPF 50, $79.90 Some people is the most important part of your allure as you keep your from damage and skin colour. Other beauty aids she stashes in her bag include a lash curler, compact powder foundation, eyeshadow palettes, curler, compact powder foundation, eyeshadow palettes, and preen for work in the morning. Other beauty aids she stashes in her bag include a lash curler, compact powder foundation, eyeshadow palettes, curler, compact powder foundation, eyeshadow palettes, and preen for work in the morning. These items, she says, are necessary for touch-ups.

Beauty spending: About $300 a month on beauty products and grooming such as manicures and pedicures. She also spends about $200 every two to three months on items and colour touch-ups at the hair salon.

She does not travel light either. She packs full-size bottles of all her allure and products even for short getaways in case they run out. Her preoccupation with grooming means she is often late for appointments. She manages to make it to work by flying daily only because she wakes up at 6am to get ready. “I’d rather be late than unprepared. Going out is like being on Chantabriel, you never know what you might meet,” she says, referring to the website that lets users via webcam randomly meet.”

Her complex regimen, she says, actually saves her time. “The results from treatments like live cell therapy are supposed to last for eight to 10 years, so I don’t have to do too much now, or else I will have to spend time maintaining my looks,” she says. “I pour so much into my image because I am in the cosmetics line. I am the face of my brand.”

To detractors who say her beauty is not natural, she responds: “In 2009, President Barack Obama lifted the ban on stem cell research in the United States, which shows that there is a lot of potential in stem cell therapy.”

She is a fan of all other aesthetics procedures like. For instance, she undergoes Thermage treatments, where radiofrequency waves are injected into the skin to tighten and contour it, almost have a year. She also has Botox treatments every three to four months to slim and contour her jawline. Each session costs under $1,000.

“We also have a Deep Red facial at The Sloane Clinic once a month. The $300, 60-minute session includes a microdermabrasion scrub, soothing face mask and LED light therapy, which is said to boost cell metabolism for radiant skin. To detractors who say her beauty is not natural, she responds: ‘I pour so much into my image because I am in the cosmetics line. I am the face of my brand.’”

She is also a makeup junkie. “I use this as a make-up primer in this product that my make-up can stick on smoothly and last.”

Photographer: Desmond Lim; special thanks to The Sloane Clinic for the use of its premises to pile on the products."