



Thready, steady, go

Hair expert Reena Parekh is reviving an ancient eastern art – but without any painful plucking and tweezing.
ELAINE SINGLETON reports

The small crowd gathering curiously around a new unit at the bottom of the stairs in The Mall, Preston, is the first clue that something unfamiliar is taking place. Two women are leant over and working purposefully, lengths of cotton grasped tightly between both hands and their teeth.

It's quickly clear that the majority of the onlookers have no idea what is going on. Once they do, many quickly get in line to try it out for themselves. What they are seeing is threading. A method of hair removal that is a well-practised and ancient skill in the Middle East and Asia and which is increasingly becoming more common in the West and is now in Preston.

The technique uses pure cotton thread twisted around rows of hair, commonly eyebrows, to pull them out by the roots. Therapist Reena Parekh has used the technique on friends and family for many years but has now taken the plunge to give up her job in advertising and open Preston's first threading brow bar, M:ask. Barely open for two weeks, Reena has been rushed off her feet with people wanting to try it for the very first time, and others, frustrated at trying to find a threading service locally, welcoming its appearance.

In addition to eyebrow-shaping, threading is used for removing other facial hair such as those on the upper lip. Unlike tweezing which pulls out one hair at a time, threading removes many at once making it quicker and less painful. Brows feel as though they are being prickled and while there is an 'ouch' sensation, it is brief. Reena says she prefers the technique as it shapes the brow giving a chis-



BROWED MOMENT: Another customer feels the benefit of Reena's gentle facial art at her newly-opened M:ASK Brow Bar

elled arch.

"It's like a mini-Botox. After brows have been threaded they give a lift to the face. It really opens up the eyes," she said.

As a beauty therapist she winces at the thought of women having their brows waxed.

"We spend all this money and care on eye products and creams," she said "and then think nothing of applying hot wax to the delicate skin around the eye, tearing it off and traumatising the skin. Over time it causes and worsens wrinkles. Threading is gentle and doesn't do that."

And over time the hair follicle is weakened making regrowth finer.

Threading is done using a fine, pure cotton thread, one end of which is held between the teeth, the other end in the left hand, and the remaining thread is used to make a loop between the index and middle fingers of the right hand and twisted around the unwanted hair to remove it from the follicle.

Ken Williams, manager of The Mall, says he is fascinated by the theatre of it all and astounded by the amount of interest and the queues of customers eager to have a turn. And he said the glazed mini-unit was perfect for the therapy giving just the right amount of privacy while allowing those unfamiliar with the technique the chance to discover it



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