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A SOUTH AFRICAN BEAUTY BLOG

Pain free laser hair removal? Yeah right.

BY CHANTELLE BESTER | FEB 18, 2015 | BODY, TRIED & TESTED | 3 COMMENTS

I've heard rumours about pain-free laser hair removal for the past year or so now, and every time someone spoke or wrote about it I've snorted ungracefully.

I had laser hair removal about four years ago. It was satisfyingly effective but each session was really painful. I would go in, exposed the (ahem) delicate area in question and I'd usually be able to grit my teeth for the first 1/10th of the session.

Then the terrible swearing (mine) would start, followed by the embarrassed apologies and nervous laughter (yup, also mine). By the end I'd be a slightly teary and very sweaty mess, but hey, it worked really well.

So when the Laser Beautique invited me to have my under arms defuzzed with their pain-free laser I agreed to go – but mostly because I wanted hairless underarms, not because I had any hopes of pain-free laser.

So believe me when I solemnly swear that the Laser Beautique's Soprano Ice laser results in 100% pain-free sessions. I did some digging and the reason for this is two-fold.



I'm 100% sure I don't make it look as stylish as this woman does.

Firstly, there's the method of application. For the most part, lasers have to be placed on your skin over a hair follicle, blitzed, and then the therapist moves on to the next spot and gets ready to blitz again – if I remember correctly there were two or three painstakingly long seconds between every pulse when I went for laser hair removal back in the day, and the anticipation was terrible. The Soprano Ice laser has 'in motion' technology so the device is never picked up or left in one spot – they just glide it up and down the area being treated.

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Secondly (and very much related to the first point), it starts out cold and then gradually starts to feel warmer as they glide the machine along your skin, but it never burns. Should it become uncomfortable all your therapist needs to do is lift it off the skin for a couple of seconds and it's icy cool again. There is NO snapping-elastic sensation at all (the way most lasers are described in terms of pain level), just a gentle increase in heat that's very tolerable.



If you're into the technicalities, it's a 810 nm Diode laser, and there are 10 pulses per second – this ensures that they won't miss a spot.

I'm visiting the Irene branch for my sessions and I'm super chuffed with my therapist, Bridget. She's very professional and she let's me talk her ear off when I'm in the mood to do so, but she leaves me be if it's been a long day and I choose to just close my eyes and enjoy the peculiarly comforting sensation of warming underarms. She's also been very helpful with answering my endless questions.

As for the clinic itself, I really like that it's downstairs in the basement level. On days when I have time for a spot of browsing or shopping, I merrily prance through the whole centre. But when I'm

in a rush I know I can blitz in and out via the underground parking in my holey tights and a t-shirt without having to worry about running into anyone I know.

I was initially worried that Bridget won't get all my underarm fuzz because you need to shave pretty much the day of your treatment (otherwise they do it for you) and it takes me a couple of days to develop stubble again, but I was impressed that she treats a large area – reassuringly she goes way beyond the area of my actual armpit hair.



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As for the cost, it's not a negligible fee, but it's not undoable either. An underarm session is R550 (R450 for teens and R650 for men), and on average you'll need 8 sessions, spaced every 4-6 weeks.

I'm four sessions in and my underarm hair has been reduced by about half. My fourth session was yesterday and the intensity was increased to zone in on the finer, lighter hairs now. It warmed up a little quicker, but it was still a very tolerable sensation – by the time I asked Bridget to cool it, there were only three seconds of treatment left.

I asked whether you pay full price all the way to the last sessions, as some clinics reduce the fee as your hair becomes more sparse. Turns out you do pay full price till the end because they'll still treat the entire area in case there are active hair follicles that were previously dormant – it ups your chances of being smoother for longer.

Lastly, I checked in with them regarding skin types. For practical purposes skin colours are graded on the Fitzpatrick scale from 1 – 6. I'm a 1-2 (they're treating me as a 1), and 6 is the darkest skin. Most lasers can treat up to a type 3, but the Soprano can treat ALL skin tones successfully.

If you have questions I'll be happy to answer them, otherwise I'll report back after I've completed my 8 sessions.

Find your nearest Laser Beautique [here](#), and view the price lists [here](#).

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