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Show them some skin Dermatologist, PBers to open salon specializing in 'only skincare.'

By [STEPHANIE MURPHY](#), Daily News Business and Real Estate Writer
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Kenneth Beer walks a fine line between beauty and health, truth and fiction.


Daily News Photo by Greer Gattuso
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He is a partner in a soon-to-open cosmetic skincare salon at 283 Royal Poinciana Way.

Dermatologist Kenneth Beer is opening skincare salon Spa Cará at 283 Royal Poinciana Way, a spot once occupied by Michael's Jewelers.

He is a dermatologist whose Palm Beach patients include author Ted Bell.

He is the "personal physician" to Lord Alex Hawke, the daring protagonist in Bell's three spy thrillers.

And he is an acclaimed researcher/clinician who often opens a lecture by repeating a line of dialogue found on Page 158 of Bell's *Assassin*.

"Hell, Hawke, you're only as good as your last scar." That's what Beer actually told Bell one day after a minor stitch-up at the Palm Beach Esthetic Center, 1500 N. Dixie Highway, West Palm Beach.

"OK, that's going in the book," Bell recalled of the conversation. "Ken takes his role as 'Alex Hawke's personal physician' very seriously, and I hope he'll keep Alex healthy for many years to come."

Beer also is very serious about his new role as entrepreneur. In partnership with the Coniglio family of Palm Beach, Beer is preparing to open Spa Cará, on the corner of Bradley Place and Royal Poinciana. The space became available in June when Michael's Jewelers consolidated operations with its store in West Palm Beach.

The spa will open shortly before Christmas with a staff of five.

The operation will be "totally cosmetic: facials, microderm abrasion, waxing, peels and photorejuvenation," which uses intense light therapy to stimulate collagen production, Beer said. The procedure is used to treat acne, aging spots and broken blood vessels and to give the skin better tone and texture.

"This will be the premiere skincare day spa in the Southeast United States. It will be only skincare, no hair and nails," Beer said. Spa Cará will be the only establishment in Palm Beach operated by an M.D. who is certified by the American Board of Dermatology, he said.

Spa Cará also will be a template for other salons Beer plans to open in Palm Beach

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Gardens, where he has a second medical office, and in Wellington and Boca Raton.

The name for the business is what Beer called a "trifecta," with the Italian word for "face," a universal connotation for relaxation, and the first name of a patient and partner, Cara Coniglio. She and her brother, Nick, and their mother, Gail, will oversee the business end of the spa.

"Our whole family loves Ken. We're known him for years and used his services a zillion times. He's a credible physician and a good businessman, which doesn't always go together," Gail Coniglio said. "This will be a hands-on, intimate setting with quality aestheticians and massage therapists, and that's something that's sorely needed. We'll do what we always do, try to create a relationship. After pizza at Cucina dell' Arte, you can hang a right and regroup spiritually."

Beer said the Coniglios, who put up half the money, are the "ideal" business partners. They also own the building, along with art dealer John Surovek.

The up-front cost to remodel has tripled the initial estimate, Beer said: "What was going to be a \$60,000 investment is now more than \$180,000 for the build-out. But we had to gut the place to bring it into this century."

He intends to rely on the Coniglios' track record with two successful restaurants, E.R. Bradley's and Cucina.

"They are experts in hospitality, providing good service and running a business, which fits perfectly. They'll handle the administration; I'll handle the skincare. I'll only know if we're making money when Frank tells me."

The cream-colored space with sea hues and stone borders along the carpet has a look that is "peaceful and serene," Gail Coniglio said. "It will make you feel like you're in the salon of a mansion. I anticipate sitting down at the coffee table and asking people what will make them feel better." For window-shoppers, there will be a custom line of skincare products that Beer has developed during a decade in practice.

The reason for the new business is the increasing demand for cosmetic services, which crowds his schedule. The office in West Palm Beach has two separate entrances and waiting rooms, Beer said.

"We're completely divorcing the two practices. We are a national training center for Botox, and that alone keeps us pretty busy. Botox, liposuction and Restylane should be separate. Injectibles should be kept in the dermatologist's office, separate from the day spa stuff, which has become successful beyond my wildest dreams," Beer said.

More than 50 percent of his practice has become cosmetic over the past six years, Beer said.

Office hours at Spa Cará will be from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Prices for waxing will range from \$30 to \$100; facials, \$80 to \$130; photorejuvenation will vary with the size of the area; and microderm abrasion, \$100 to \$150. The spa will offer packages and gift certificates.

Although Beer said his medical credentials set the operation apart, Spa Cará is entering a market with no shortage of skincare options.

Layne Nisenbaum, an osteopath, heads the staff at Island Dermatology & Laser Institute, which is a short walk away at 50 Cocconut Row. Also nearby in Royal Poinciana Plaza is the Babor Institute, where customers can soak in a hydrotherapy tub before their massage, recline in a seaweed wrap or sit for a haircut. And Georgette Klinger on Worth Avenue has an abundant menu of facials.

Kaffee's Garden Spa in West Palm Beach, owned by aesthetician Kaffee Keldie, draws

Palm Beachers who knew her at Thomas Morrissey and Elizabeth Arden. Facials, waxing and massage are the focus, with treatment rooms overlooking an interior courtyard. And at the Trump Spa at Mar-a-Lago, patrons can indulge in massage, facials, vegetable peels, "hot yoga" and steam treatments. Beer, who also is board-certified in skin pathology, said his experience treating sun-damaged skin led him to research what could be done to improve one's looks.

"[The cosmetic side] has become a wonderfully entertaining part of my practice. I now teach other doctors what's new in cosmetic dermatology."

He doesn't plan to abandon his medical practice, however.

"I've got patients here that I've taken care of for 10 years, and I like that. We have the best of both worlds."

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