

New Energy-Based Systems Fill Void in Aesthetic Market

As the number of consumers desiring anti-aging treatments with less downtime rapidly grows, it seems technological advancements in energy-based aesthetic devices are being unveiled almost daily. In response, practices increasingly realize they must embrace these less invasive or non-invasive energy-based systems to meet the needs of this patient population. Recognizing a void in the market for these types of products at a lower price point, one prominent manufacturer has set itself apart by offering high-quality, clinically efficacious products at an affordable price.

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Ellman's Expanded Range of Aesthetic Devices Promise Reliability at a Reasonable Price

By Jeffrey Frentzen, Executive Editor

Ellman International, Inc. (Hicksville, N.Y.) is no stranger to the energy-based medical device market. For over 50 years the company has offered a successful line of radiofrequency (RF) products. In 2009, the firm entered the medical aesthetic space with the Pellevé® RF-based Wrinkle Reduction System. According to Michael H. Gold, M.D., Director of the Gold Skin Care Center in Nashville, Tenn., "The Pellevé device opened a lot of doors for Ellman to a larger international market of aesthetic practitioners."

More recently the company expanded its range of product offerings beyond just the established line of RF devices in order to continue growth of its strong position within the medical aesthetic space. In late 2013 the company released a new series of cost-effective laser and intense pulsed light (IPL) devices with excellent safety profiles, a track record of clinical efficacy, and a three-year confidence warranty program (provided within the U.S.), all while priced at only half that of similar products.

With a focus on providing its customers with increased value, Ellman offers multiple technologies and capabilities in a single package, as well as stand-alone devices. Its new systems include: the Medley™, a configurable IPL, Er:YAG and Q-switched Nd:YAG / KTP laser platform; the Cortex™ Laser, which combines CO₂ and Er:YAG for both deep skin resurfacing and superficial skin rejuvenation, as well as an incisional CO₂ technology; the Cheveux™ II 810 nm diode laser for permanent hair reduction; the Q-Switched Ruby Laser, a safe and fast 694 nm wavelength system that is capable of removing multiple tattoo colors, including the most stubborn inks; and a new version of its Pellevé System, which adds upgraded features, including enhanced surgical capability with new waveforms for improved hemostasis, a new LCD display and more intuitive controls.

"Ellman has a finger on the pulse of the industry," stated Joel Schlessinger, M.D., a dermatologist and cosmetic surgeon in Omaha, Neb. "Instead of continuing with the same old technology year after year, they introduce technologies that make sense."

An example of this is the enhanced Pellevé System. This new version offers the same RF-based skin tightening features found in the original device, but in an improved package, Dr. Gold noted. "The enhanced Pellevé looks less surgical and this better appearance will fit well in aesthetic practices. It also has new surgical coagulation and blend waveforms for enhanced hemostasis. We've just started training on it and so far, so good. The system works well and is very safe."

According to Joseph Niamtu III, D.M.D., a cosmetic surgeon in Richmond, Va., "Minimally invasive skin tightening options are an exciting part of cosmetic surgery, giving both physician and staff the ability to perform procedures for those patients that are not surgical candidates, can't afford surgery or aren't ready for surgery."



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Periorbital and perioral regions before Tx



Periorbital and perioral regions after two Pellevé treatments
Photos courtesy of John Burke, M.D.



Before Tx



Four months after four Pellevé treatments
Photos courtesy of Stuart Bentkover, M.D.

Recently, the FDA expanded Pellevé's range of indications and cleared it for treatment of skin types V and VI, making treatment safe for all Fitzpatrick skin types. According to Cheryl M. Burgess, M.D., a dermatologic surgeon, as well as founder and president of the Center for Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery in Washington, D.C., "Pellevé offers a safe and efficacious skin tightening treatment for individuals who are against surgical means, or are not candidates for surgical skin tightening procedures," she noted. "Treatments are very calming and comfortable in comparison to most RF treatments."

As well, Dr. Burgess makes regular use of the Pellevé's surgical features, which are based upon the company's Surgitron® RF technology. "The Surgitron unit is used for electrolysis, cautery and biopsies on a daily basis," she said.

Dr. Burgess is not alone. Dr. Niamtu also utilizes the Ellman RF unit for surgical applications, including, "anything from face-lifts to eyelid procedures, removing moles to spider veins," he shared, "but you also have it for minimally invasive skin tightening. In my office, my staff generates income with the Pellevé while I'm in the operating room."

Commonly, practitioners combine Pellevé with other skin rejuvenation therapies, such as neurotoxins or dermal filler injections, skin resurfacing or topicals. Lisa K. Chipps, M.D., M.S., F.A.A.D., a dermatologist and cosmetic surgeon at Moy-Fincher-Chipps in Beverly Hills, Calif., often uses it for tightening up the jawline and skin around the eyes, and in combination with laser resurfacing, photofacials and topical skincare. "My loyal Pellevé patients say the treatment gives them a refreshed appearance and people tell them they look good."

Importantly, Pellevé offers an excellent return on investment (ROI), with some practices buying more than one device. For Dr. Schlessinger, it brought a new service into his day spa, which runs in conjunction with his dermatology practice. "I was looking for something that was a little stronger than a chemical peel but not as invasive as a laser or some other modality," he stated. "The device paid for itself within 90 days and has had the quickest ROI of any device I've ever purchased. And my staff loves it. I purchased a second unit that paid for itself within one month."

Recently, Dr. Schlessinger ran a promotion offering patients a free Pellevé treatment; "the conversion rate was 67% for those who received the free treatment," he reported. "Patients would leave my office feeling better and they wanted to re-book. Many neurotoxin or dermal filler patients have limited funds to improve their skin and are pleased with the price point of Pellevé versus other invasive procedures. I can't tell you the number of patients that have readily converted to Pellevé, but were previously unwilling to go to the next step of IPL, laser or other procedures. Pellevé is a procedure that is easily explainable and resonates with our customers."

Dr. Gold, who combines Pellevé with a post-procedure skincare regimen for his patients, noted that the device, “goes a little deeper than similar RF units, without causing the same level of pain as some of the other monopolar devices.”

Patient satisfaction and good clinical outcomes are another hallmark of Ellman’s new laser and light-based platforms, said Adam D. Schaffner, M.D., F.A.C.S., a plastic surgeon in New York City, N.Y., who uses the combined Cortex Fractional CO₂ / Er:YAG Laser System. “I was looking for a device that had multiple applications and was reasonably priced. I have used other fractionated CO₂ devices and found the Cortex to be an effective device that provides very good results,” he advised. I use it on the head and neck regions, and I also use the Cortex’s surgical capabilities, specifically for lower lid transconjunctival blepharoplasties.”

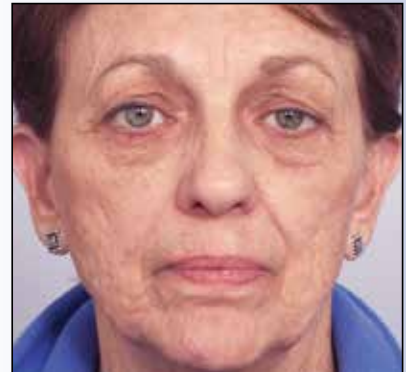
From a price point perspective, the Cortex is very well positioned in the market, expressed Phillip Langsdon, M.D., F.A.C.S., a facial plastic surgeon in Germantown, Tenn. “If this were a \$150,000 laser then it wouldn’t be sitting in my office. I would not buy a laser system until I found this Ellman product,” he said. “It is a reliable device that comes with a reasonable price, which enables a busy facial plastic surgeon like me to offer less invasive services to my patients.”

As the only system on the market with CO₂ and Erbium in a single device, Cortex, “allows us to apply fractional CO₂ and Erbium around the mouth and the results are really nice,” noted Dr. Gold. “Alone, the fractional CO₂ can be compared to a lot of other fractional CO₂ devices out there, but the added Erbium in the same console is a big advantage and makes the unit very attractive.”

For Paul J. Carniol, M.D., a facial plastic surgeon in Summit, N.J., the Cortex is, “very effective for skin rejuvenation and 95% of my patients are extremely happy with the results. I am happy with any procedure that scores that high with patients,” he stated, adding that the fractional CO₂ has a small 150-micron spot size, “with which you can deliver a significant amount of energy into the tissue to attain some nice skin tightening effects.”

“Also, owing to the small spot size, patients have minimal post treatment discomfort and a quick recovery,” Dr. Carniol continued. “I use topical anesthesia on their face and upper neck. You will need a chiller to blow cold air over the patient. Once you have all these elements the patient is comfortable and the procedure is very tolerable. If I only use the CO₂, then they are back to work in two to five days. If I use the Erbium, add a day or two to the recovery time, since I’m taking down the epidermis. However, I don’t use the Erbium laser on the entire face, just on areas of dyschromia and lentiginos.”

In Dr. Langsdon’s experience with skin resurfacing, the Cortex is useful for people presenting early aging changes. “You can go light on those patients and get a very good result, and you don’t put them through a lot of healing. Also, patients with thicker, oilier type skin benefit from Cortex



Before Tx



Two months after Cortex CO₂ and Er:YAG Tx
Photos courtesy of Harrison C. Putnam, III, M.D.



Crow's feet before Tx



Crow's feet two months after Cortex CO₂ and Er:YAG Tx
Photos courtesy of Harrison C. Putnam, III, M.D.



Before Tx



Six weeks after first Cheveux II Tx
Photos courtesy of Ellman International



Before Tx



Five weeks after first Cheveux II Tx
Photos courtesy of Ellman International

treatments. If a patient isn't an ideal candidate for a chemical peel, this laser also works very well. When using the fractionated beam there is less of a problem with a loss of pigmentation. They can have a natural, even complexion as a result."

Like the Pellevé, the Cortex – with its solid technology and excellent results – is also a good investment, Dr. Schaffner emphasized. "When you are able to purchase one device with dual capability, versus two different devices that have to be used together, it enhances my practice profitability," he stated. "Patients want facial resurfacing and rejuvenation; with this device I can improve their appearance with minimal downtime, without using a surgical procedure. As a result, it has been a worthwhile investment for my practice growth."

Another, equally good investment can be found in the Ellman Ruby laser. Its 694 nm wavelength laser comes with adjustable spot sizes, offering quick and effective removal of tattoos, while protecting the surrounding tissue. In addition, the laser is ideal for the removal of natural pigment changes such as solar lentigines and café-au-lait spots.

Users also consider Ellman's smaller Cheveux II hair removal laser an exceptional practice builder, said John Binhlam, M.D., a dermatologist in Brentwood, Tenn. "I've owned a wide-range of laser hair removal devices and used a number of different wavelengths, but the Cheveux is an exceptional unit compared to the others in the field."

Smooth Flow 10P™ technology, featured on the Cheveux II, delivers rapid pulses of energy and cooling simultaneously, causing light energy to be gradually absorbed directly into the hair follicle without injury to the surrounding tissue. This exclusive technology provides a permanent hair reduction solution for face and body.

What attracted me to the Cheveux was the price," Dr. Binhlam admitted. "Also, I have two offices and can easily move it from place to place and room to room because of the unit's size and small footprint, which is an important consideration."

In Dr. Carniol's opinion, the Cheveux II is an easy-to-use, well designed laser that is reliable. "It has worked really well and is very quick to use. The design of the handpiece's chill tip increases patient comfort."

Undeniably, the ROI aspect is important for practices that offer hair removal, Dr. Binhlam pointed out. "You have to have competitive pricing. The Cheveux technology works well and is durable at a price that is very attractive, since we're still in an economy where people are very price conscious," he said.

That goes triple for Ellman's new Medley Multifunction Laser Platform, which integrates IPL, Er:YAG, and Q-switched Nd:YAG / KTP wavelengths (depending on the number of handpieces purchased). Medley combines

the company's Tri-Lase™ and Apex™ systems into a single updated platform. The IPL portion treats acne, pigmentation and vascular problems, and performs hair removal; the Er:YAG handpiece provides shallow micro-peels, superficial resurfacing and smoothing of fine lines and wrinkles; and the Q-switched laser offers both 1064 nm and 532 nm wavelengths for tattoo removal and treatment of pigmented lesions. Notably, the system has been designed to allow for future expansion and inclusion of other wavelengths. The whole package is controlled via a single touchscreen interface, and uses no consumables.

"With this new combined platform, physicians can choose to use whatever functions they want from a robust platform of laser technologies," Dr. Carniol highlighted. "For instance, I have patients who come in with medical problems, so I don't want to do anything too deep. For them the IPL is perfect. Their skin looks better, which is what they wanted and there is virtually no recovery."

On the other hand, the Er:YAG is useful for removing superficial seborrheic keratoses, as well as treating epidermal nevi and thin superficial skin lesions, Dr. Carniol added. "You can use it for general skin rejuvenation or resurfacing, or for a micro-peel if you want. It gives you more control compared with a chemical peel. Of course there is still a role for some more intense chemical peels, but with the Er:YAG you can do a deeper laser peel. We use this especially if we want more depth of penetration, because it's much more predictable than a chemical peel."

What's more, the Medley offers physicians a worthwhile clinical advantage and financial savings, too, Dr. Carniol reported. "Instead of buying more than one laser with a single wavelength, you just need to buy different treatment head attachments for a single platform, which means a faster ROI," he noted. "In addition, it is really rare to have a problem with these devices, and Ellman's technical support is excellent. In the last three years I've only needed to call support once, and they were there 24/7."

Additionally, some practices are even considering purchasing multiple Medley consoles and a selection of different handpieces to provide treatment flexibility in multiple rooms simultaneously.

According to Dr. Schaffner, Ellman is, "a very good company to work with. They have provided educational support and training, and technical support when we've looked for guidance. When we have asked to speak with colleagues who can provide insight on various clinical situations, they have been able to refer us to experts that have become good resources."

As Dr. Niamtu pointed out, Ellman really has emerged as a major player in the aesthetic industry. The company likes to think of itself as, "The Differentiated Aesthetic Company." ■



Before Tx



After Tri-Lase Tx

Photos courtesy of Ellman International



Before Tx



After Tri-Lase Tx

Photos courtesy of Ellman International