

THE Christmas party season is about to burst into full swing - and there'll be plenty of mistletoe about!

Which means there's never been a better time to be the proud possessor of a perfect pout.

As the pillow lips of many a celebrity babe prove, it seems big is beautiful when it comes to the mouth department.

In fact, on planet showbiz a gorgeous gob is seemingly a must-have these days. The likes of Angelina Jolie, 30, and Billie Piper, 23, are among a host of bee-stung beauties who have firmly relegated rosebud lips to yesteryear.

And it's certainly not just a look for the ladies, with a generous north and south doing wonders for the boys as well...

Cricket ace Andrew "Freddie" Flintoff, 27, and Jamie Oliver, 30, were recently chosen as the ideal knights in shining armour but the fact they have juicy kissers won't have harmed their appeal with the ladies!

Of course both these fellas are clearly naturally blessed. But relatively simple cosmetic procedures mean you don't have

By SAM PARKER

to rely on old Mother Nature for that to-die-for mouth.

More than a few famous fillies are rumoured to have had a little help with their pleasingly plump pouts and lip enhancements are now one of the most common cosmetic procedures on both sides of the pond.

There can be a downside, though. The craze for full mouths has also provided the not-so-pleasant phenomenon of the trout pout. These over pumped-up offerings are usually sported by ladies of a certain age who've ignored the golden rule that you can have too much of a good thing.

Realistic

Instead, you must be realistic about what you can achieve - there's no use going in and demanding to look like Kylie if you bear no resemblance to her in the first place. Ensure you choose your practitioner wisely and a fuller and more defined mouth could be yours.

Frances Furlong, 30, nurse practitioner at London's City Skinklinic, advises: "How different people perceive lips is very individual. What is big to one might not be to another. Before undergoing any treatment a full consultation should take place.

"This is the time when the patient and practitioner can discuss what results they are hoping to achieve and also what will best suit the patient.

"The aim should be for a natural look. Enhanced, yes, but not freakishly out of proportion. We want to make the patient look better, not worse, so keeping the face in correct proportion - taking into consideration all features including cheekbones, eyes and shape - is vitally important.

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Worried

"If a patient feels unclear or worried about anything, or that the consultation has been rushed, I would advise they don't go ahead with the treatment. This is your face and you have to live with the results.

"Unfortunately this is an industry that at present is not as strictly monitored as most professionals would like."

Restylane and Perlane, which are also commonly used as "fillers" to help smooth away nose-to-mouth and frown lines, are currently the most commonly used products for lip enhancement, though procedures are constantly evolving.

Both are man-made, so there is no need for a patch test, as with collagen, which comes from cows. They tend to last for six to eight months as the product is gradually absorbed.

It is usually injected with an ultra-fine needle into the Vermillion border (lip outline) for improved definition, the body or fleshy part of the lip for increased volume, or a combination of both.

As well as improving the general appearance of the

mouth, this procedure can also help patients to look younger as lips, particularly the top one, diminish as part of the ageing process.

Prices vary depending on how much product is required and who carries out your procedure but average £270 to £300 for a 1ml syringe of Restylane.

Price shouldn't be a major factor in choosing your practitioner, though, with personal recommendation usually the best option.

Slight swelling is common, usually lasting from one to 48 hours depending on individual reaction,

and there is sometimes bruising, though this should be minimal.

Frances adds: "It's up to the patient but personally I prefer to use a local anaesthetic to numb the patient before I start administering the product.

Swelling

"The lips, particularly the top one, are very sensitive and injections in this area can be unpleasant.

"There's some debate on this as the anaesthetic can cause a little swelling in itself but this will quickly go down afterwards and I think the patient's comfort

should be a major priority. I've also found that using anaesthetic seems to minimise the amount of post-treatment bruising.

"As a practitioner our goal is to keep any discomfort or tell-tale signs down to the minimum.

"At City Skinklinic we offer treatment by either a nurse or doctor as it's very much an individual choice."

● **For lip enhancement and a host of treatments for both face and body, contact City Skinklinic on 0870 7513870 or visit www.cityskinklinic.co.uk**