

new business since it opened in April. "I've got used to having treatments done... I'm going to stop... their eyes... their nails... not as often... their skin... the time or money... more luxurious treatments such as hot stone massages. Waxing is still very popular. Hair doesn't stop growing in a recession," tells Breeda whose speedy €15 services such as a ten minute file and polish or an eyebrow wax or trim are proving a hit with time-poor travellers before boarding time. Average spend here is €30. "Tanning is still popular. I think it's a feel good factor... you can make the most of yourself without spending a fortune."

The credit crunch definitely wiped the smile off our faces but aside from dealing with more tooth fractures as a result of stress-induced grinding and clenching, it's business as usual for Dr. Annette O'Donovan of Limerick's Alexandra Dental Practice. Cosmetic dental work was very much seen as a luxury



BREEDA O'SULLIVAN



DR. ANNETTE O'DONOVAN

in the past, especially for older men, but Annette has seen this change over the years. Five years ago, she carried out tooth whitening on three people in a whole year — now it's twice a week. "It was unknown back then,

scheduled as part of payment plans over six months or one year and Annette is even willing to strike a deal. "Clients used to put it on their credit card or get a loan but now they're saving for it. I think any business that wants to stay in business has to be open to negotiation. Everyone is struggling."

A worrying trend that is much more than skin deep is that clients in their early 20's are now queuing up for botox injections and the like. This might seem like a crazy waste of money — essentially treating wrinkles before they even appear.

**Counselling Psychologist Ann Marie McMahon** says it's all to do with confidence. "As a society, we have become very focused on the idea that people

**"Women got used to having maintenance treatments done and they're not going to stop now".**

It's commonplace now and I see that continuing. It was only ladies back then too but more men are getting work done now. It's about 50:50 (men : women). A person's smile is very important, especially if people are job hunting. It's as important as a good handshake as it's the first thing you see. It makes you feel better."

Annette opened Alexandra Dental Practice in 2006 when people were spending freely on cosmetic dental work but finance is calling the shots now. Expensive veneers (€500-600), implants (€3,000) and crowns (€650-850) are being

have to be perfect, and we're losing the ability to tolerate imperfections... I feel there's huge pressure on everyone to be the same." The author of books on personal development such as *Issues not Tissues*, Ann Marie wonders where all this pressure on young women is coming from. "Is it coming from their mothers? Where are they getting the money? I find it very bizarre. We're not teaching people to be individual. It's inevitable that we will age mentally and physically and happiness is about finding a look that suits you without setting standards that are too high to maintain... we have to stop running ourselves down as people, and as a nation."

Even image wizard and fashion darling **Gok Wan** of Channel 4's 'How to Look