

Aesthetic Practices Favor Multi-Use SPECTRA for Tattoo Removal



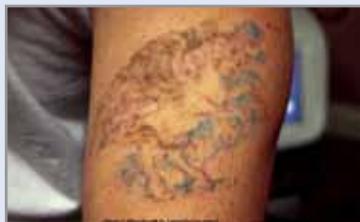
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Tattoo before Tx



Tattoo after two SPECTRA Dual Mode Nd:YAG treatments
Photos courtesy of Glenn Messina, M.D.



Tattoo before Tx



Tattoo after SPECTRA Dual Mode Nd:YAG Tx
Photos courtesy of Matthew Werner, M.D.

By Desiree Ifft, Contributing Editor

With a recent FDA clearance for the treatment of melasma, the versatile SPECTRA™ Dual Mode Nd:YAG laser from LUTRONIC, Inc. (San Jose, Calif.) will now play an even bigger role in aesthetic practices. In addition to melasma, the Q-switched SPECTRA is engineered for a wide-range of dermatologic and aesthetic applications, including tattoo removal and non-ablative skin resurfacing, as well as pigmented and vascular lesions.

Matthew Werner, M.D., medical director of La Quinta MedSpa in La Quinta and Rancho Mirage, Calif., considered several lasers before buying the SPECTRA. "I did some research and found about half of those who get tattoos would like to have them removed," he said. "I wanted to offer that service, and I also wanted a laser with more versatility."

Dr. Werner also explained that some tattoo inks are more difficult to remove than others. "We've had very good success with all color shades because of SPECTRA's four wavelengths," he said. "Q-switched ruby lasers have fallen out of favor for tattoo removal. Q-switched alexandrite technologies can work well, but at a more superficial depth, which means the risk of skin burning and scarring is higher. The SPECTRA Nd:YAG penetrates more deeply, and the spot size is adjustable, so energy can go deeper using a larger spot size."

SPECTRA's dual-mode capability provides four distinct Q-switched wavelengths (1064 nm, 532 nm, 585 nm and 650 nm). An additional operating mode, the 1064 nm SPECTRA Mode, delivers a quasi-long pulse of 300 microseconds, ideally suited for non-ablative SPECTRA Peel skin resurfacing.

According to Glenn J. Messina, M.D., president of Messina Esthetic Medicine in Smithtown, N.Y., having multiple wavelengths in one laser is important because modern tattoos contain multiple colors. "Most tattoos are successfully removed with the 585 nm and 650 nm solid dye handpieces available with the SPECTRA," he said. "It's important to have a strong understanding of the physics involved with tattoo removal. For example, the 650 nm wavelength removes green ink, the 1064 nm can remove dark brown and blue, and the frequency-doubled 532 nm wavelength does a beautiful job on red ink."

Dr. Messina said he also appreciates the increase in power output that the SPECTRA provides. "The power settings don't have to be as high as with other lasers, so physicians using the SPECTRA for the first time should start at a conservative level and work their way up," he advised. The SPECTRA also optimizes laser output by virtue of its more uniform top-hat beam profile, he noted. "This allows the physician to avoid contact with the skin, which I believe lowers the risk of contamination and skin trauma."

While Dr. Werner acquired the SPECTRA Dual Mode Nd:YAG laser mainly for tattoo removal, he said it generates interest among patients seeking treatment for acne, enlarged pores and brown spots on the skin. "It really works well for resistant melasma," he said. "It breaks up melanin but doesn't heat the skin or foster more melanin production." Dr. Werner added that the SPECTRA is the most used laser in his office. "I turn it on six to eight times every day. When I opened a second office, I purchased another one."