

THE £15 HEALING PATCH – FROM THE ACUPUNCTURIST MEGHAN SWEARS BY

Ross J Barr, who counts the Duchess of Sussex as a client, has launched a sell-out wellness range

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ASK THOSE IN the know about acupuncture and Ross J Barr's name is inevitably dropped into conversation. His charm and charisma are legendary, but that's not the only reason his waiting room is packed with stylish women. He specialises in fertility and women's wellness, and Meghan Markle became such a fan when she moved to London that Ross and his wife (actor Eva Birthistle) were invited to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's wedding.

Ross discovered his vocation after acupuncture helped him through a dark time. 'My dad died out of the blue when I was about 20,' he explains. 'My mum was always fairly holistic and she recommended that I try acupuncture. I went for my first appointment two weeks after he died and came out feeling like everything was going to be OK. I still see that acupuncturist today; I saw him last week for a treatment.'

Two decades later, Ross is one of the most prominent acupuncturists in the UK, partly thanks to that Markle sparkle. Not that he'll talk about it. 'The good thing about my job is that there's no grey area; you can't talk about patients, full stop,' he smiles. 'It could be your family, my family or royalty – it's all confidential, so it's easy to adhere to that.' It's no wonder that Meghan was persuaded to enlist his expertise. Acupuncture works with 'qi', the word for 'energy flow' in Chinese medicine – a practice that likely

chimed with the duchess's affinity with holistic therapies and yoga.

'Every body has an electrical current that flows through it,' explains Ross. 'We weirdly have the same output as a combi boiler – we generate a lot of heat and electricity. Acupuncture invigorates that current. It gives organs a kick up the arse and gets them doing their job more efficiently. I see acupuncture as a way of fine-tuning people, of returning people to their default settings.'

Ross specialises in 'five element' acupuncture, an area of traditional Chinese medicine that used to be, aptly, a treatment reserved for royals. 'Five element acupuncture was seen as being a bit of a luxury because it concerns itself with people's emotional symptoms, rather than their physical ones,' explains Ross.

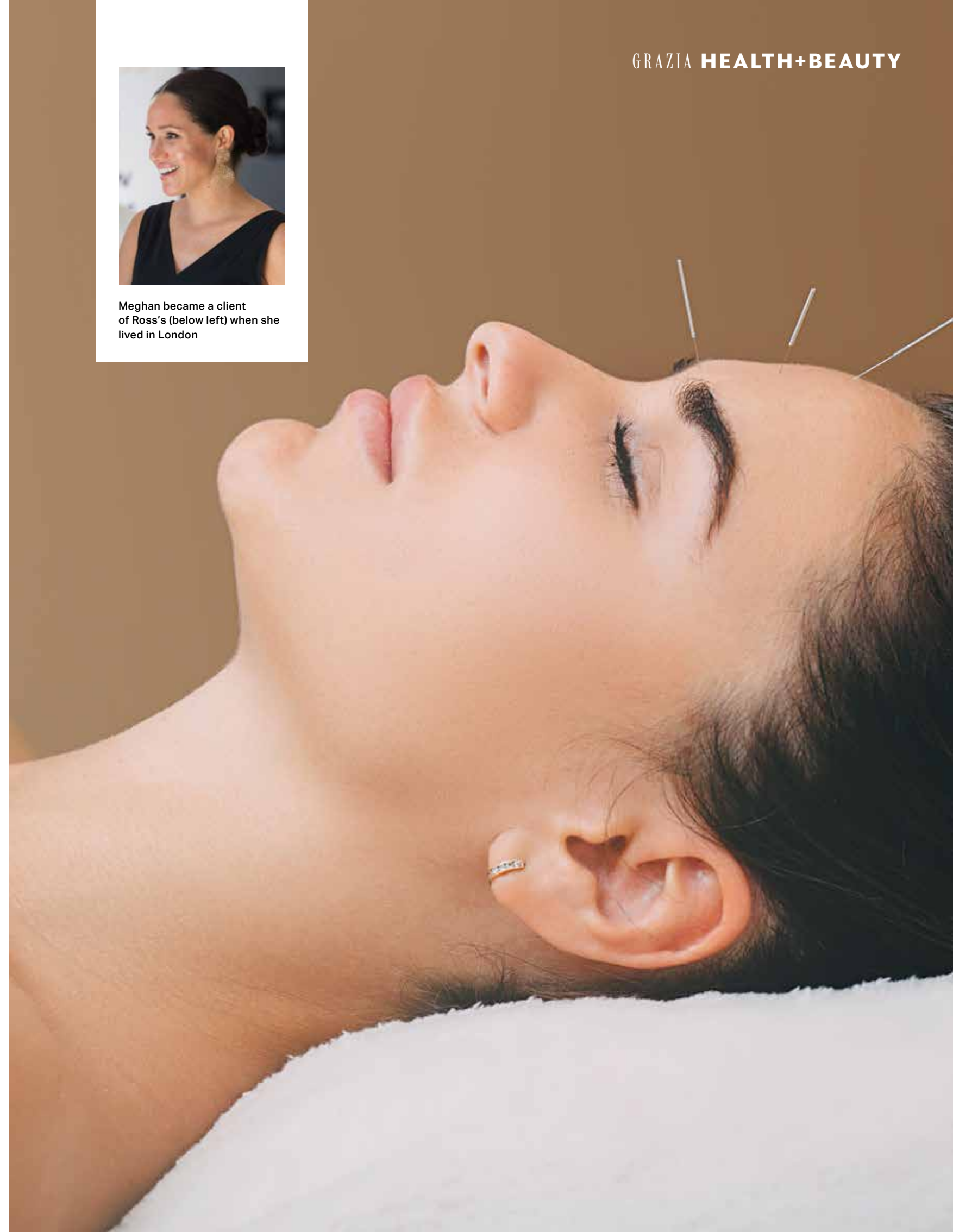
In June, he launched a range of natural fertility supplements on online wellness superstore VictoriaHealth.com, and followed them up last month with his innovative Healing Patches, £15. These proved an instant sell-out. A three-times sell-out to be exact. 'The healing patches were something I developed in clinic with a series of herbs. At first they were a way for me to reach patients who I couldn't see during lockdown,' says Ross. 'They're great

for areas of physical pain: the back, neck, shoulders, sciatica and menstrual pain especially.' Considering his reputation, it wouldn't have been surprising had his latest launch come with a hefty price tag, but Ross was adamant it be affordable. 'Often the people who need medicine the most are those who can seldom afford it. It's important for me to make these patches accessible to everyone.'

Ross has a broad range of clients, the odd member of the royal family, yes, but many a regular Londoner too, and he has noticed a common thread connecting many of them. 'There is something of a modern-day city syndrome that is prevalent among professionals, especially women,' he notes. 'They work long hours for disproportionate reward, they socialise and go out, and then there's the pressure to exercise. After a couple of years, the body becomes depleted. Next there's a period of time spent running on adrenaline, coupled with a greater level of anxiety. At that point the body starts to issue little warning signs, such as back ache, headaches or moments of anxiety. If these go ignored, it starts hitting us in the vanity stakes. Hair starts to thin, skin becomes dry or adult acne starts to flare up. That's the one thing that gets us changing our behaviour. That's when we start looking after ourselves.' Sound familiar? Maybe it's time we all took a tip out of Meghan's book. *Ross J Barr Healing Patches, £15 for five, available at victoriahealth.com*



Meghan became a client of Ross's (below left) when she lived in London



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