

EDITOR: SARAH BROWN

RETHINKING THE FACELIFT

IS TRADITIONAL
SURGERY PASSÉ?
SANDRA BALLENTINE
ON THE NEW OPTIONS
THAT HAVE PEOPLE
WONDERING: DID SHE
OR DIDN'T SHE?

WITHOUT A TRACE

THE LATEST COSMETIC INNOVATIONS SEEK TO RESTORE YOUTHFUL
CONTOURS, SEAMLESSLY. PHOTOGRAPHED BY GRANT CORNETT.

Back in my fresh-faced 30s, there were a few things I thought I'd never have to do: lie about my age, have a facelift, or talk to strange men on Skype. Fast-forward to my 40s, and I'm at my desk anxiously awaiting an on-line consultation with Chia Chi Kao, M.D., one of plastic surgery's ascending stars. With high-profile clients

scattered around the globe (Tahiti, Saudi Arabia, Singapore—oh, the sun damage), the Santa Monica-based surgeon is a virtual-office visit veteran. I, on the other hand, am a self-conscious wreck. What should I wear? Is concealer out of the question? Why did I have that third glass of Cabernet last night? Not that he'd make any decisions over the Internet, but what if he thinks I need . . . work?

Kao belongs to an elite corps of doctors (a handful that includes top surgeons like Sherrell Aston, Trevor Born, and Jason Diamond) who are pushing the facelift forward, doing highly customized work that, well, doesn't look like work. While most traditional lifts rely on one big pull to iron out lines and hoist everything skyward (which can result in that terrifyingly tight, unnatural look that you can *beauty* >124

spot across the room at certain Manhattan restaurants), the new thinking focuses on putting things back to where they used to be by tightening the deep tissue vertically while plumping up the skin with the patient's own fat. It's more about restoring, rebuilding, shaping, and draping, rather than cutting, pulling, and sewing. And thanks to painstaking incision placement—in Kao's case, tiny micro-incisions in the scalp above the hairline—it's practically undetectable. Those in the know are talking about it as the next big thing—the facelift of the future. (The procedure ranges from \$20,000 to \$40,000, depending on the surgeon and individual needs.)

Fat grafting—a key component that makes this procedure so notable—has been around for decades, but its application here is new: Doctors like Kao spin patients' fat in a centrifuge or “roll” it on a fabric-like material called Telfa to refine it into a powerful, stem cell-packed substance. A kind of superfat, as it were. This superfat gets injected back into the face mid-lift to help replace volume, to shape and support soft tissue, and, doctors hope, to stimulate the production of new growth cells. The jury is still out on whether the fat works on a regenerative level, but there's little doubt that it's effective from

an aesthetic standpoint. “We know we are getting better results,” says Aston.

Usually, looking at surgical before-and-after photos makes me queasy, but Kao's floored me. So did Diamond's. And Born's. And Aston's, for that matter. Fanned out in front of me was an array of women in their 40s, 50s, and 60s who simply looked like way-better versions of their former selves—fresher, younger, natural. But it was a chat with Jenna Roberson, a

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41-year-old actor and mother of two in Los Angeles who recently underwent Kao's superfat makeover, that made me book that Internet appointment. “I have friends who still don't know what I did,” she says, laughing. “They think I changed my hair or went on a cleanse. The surgery took those five or six tough baby-bearing years off my face—all the sleepless nights, the worrying, they're gone.”

As Kao peered at my digital image, his screen-side manner was reassuring.

His analysis, however, was painfully forthright. “I see some hooding in your upper eyelid, a bit of hollowness in your lower-lid area. Your cheek pad is descending. And your medial brow—the spot between your eyebrows—has fallen slightly, which makes you look a little worried.” Of course I look worried, I said. I'm being inspected like a month-old muskmelon. In four to six hours—a little longer than a standard facelift—Kao could erase ten years from my face, he said, and no one need be the wiser. (Unless they saw me during the two-week black-and-blue “recovery” period—miracle or not, this is still surgery.) He'd harvest 150 cc of fat from one of my problem areas to make me a dose of Super Sandra Fat, some of which he'd inject in my under-eye hollows. And for good measure, I'd receive a Plasma Cell Infusion, a cocktail of proteins and cells derived from my blood—Kao's version of PRP, or platelet-rich plasma, which proponents believe speeds healing thanks to its high concentration of growth factors—that would be micro-needled into my skin. If I did it in the next year, I might be able to avoid a bigger procedure later—when everything's really in free fall. Intrigued, I told him I'd see him again soon. Maybe even in person. □ *beauty >126*

HAIR

HAPPY, SHINY

Tracing the trajectory of organic hair-care line Phylia de M. is akin to drawing a loop diagram of Rapunzel-like beauty and style insiders. Tracey Cunningham (Gwyneth's colorist), who stocks the regenerative range at her Beverly Hills salon, Mèche, was introduced to it by the actress Kidada Jones, who helped launch the brand with founder Kazu Namise last year. Jet-setting Lady Kinvara Balfour—style consultant and niece of the Duke of Norfolk—discovered the products during a recent stint in Los Angeles and shared her find with pal Poppy Delevingne. Back in London, colorist Josh Wood was so impressed with Balfour's noticeably thicker head of hair, he insisted everyone at his Atelier have a look. Now Kylie Minogue is a devotee, too.

The 3 Step regimen—Clean, Condition, and Connect, the hero leave-in treatment—has been hailed as nothing short of transformative: “I have new hair literally sprouting out of my head,” says Balfour, who's since signed on as brand ambassador. The secret lies in the blend of nourishing aloe, reparative tannic acid, and detoxifying fulvic acid developed by Namise's godfather, Japanese oncologist Dick Miyayama, M.D., and formulated on his organic farm in Monterrey, Mexico. “Age, stress, and environmental factors affect the capillaries along the scalp,” says Namise. “Phylia works to restore healthy nerve-to-follicle connections, encourage cell renewal, and allow keratin to be carried out into the hair again.” New additions debuting this summer include Fulphyl, a drinkable supplement containing pure fulvic acid, and a superserum called Re-Connect. —RACHEL MARLOWE

MIRACLE GROW

TOP, FROM FAR LEFT: KAZU NAMISE, IN CHLOÉ, AND KINVARA BALFOUR, IN A.L.C. SHOT ON LOCATION AT CAFÉ HABANA, MALIBU, CA. LEFT: PHYLIA DE M. FULPHYL AND CLEAN.

