



A BIRD IN THE HAND*

TANGIBLE ASSETS,
A 2023 Love Story

THE WEALTH
OF HEALTH

RICH WITCH RISING

POLITICAL
PINOCCHIOS

SHMOOZE OR LOSE?

ENGLISH MAJORS'
REVENGE

THE DUBONNET
DEFENSE



**With pearls (natural, page 58)*

The Women Come and Go, Searching for Michelangelo

Can you sculpt back the clock?

BY FIORELLA VALDESOLO

Earlier this year Martha Stewart, basking in the flattering light of a shampoo chair at Frédéric Fekkai, posted a pouty-lipped selfie to Instagram, writing, “Absolutely no-reimaging!!! Skin looking good after a mostly dry January and Pilates every other day. By reimaging I mean no filtering my selfie!” The comments section exploded with demands that Stewart confess to the plastic surgery that she, at 81, must surely have had. Stewart’s response? Three more immaculate skin selfies crediting great dermatologists (specifically, Daniel Belkin and Dhaval Bhanusali), diet and exercise, facials at Mario Badescu for 40 years...and no face-lift. With that, Stewart became the paragon of a certain type of woman who, with sufficient capital and time for maintenance, dedicates herself to evading the scalpel.

“I thought Martha looked outrageously good,” says Marcy, a 66-year-old woman living in Manhattan, who immediately booked a consultation with Belkin after seeing Stewart’s photos. “I went in with the same thought, that I didn’t want any cutting,” she says. “A face-lift isn’t me. I wanted something more subtle and natural.” Now that there are so many ways to keep skin looking better longer—from “vampire facial” PRP treatments to thread lifts to ultrasound—forgoing surgery may not be an unrealistic goal. Here’s how far the alternative route can take you, and how to know when it’s time for the knife.

HIIT FOR THE FACE

What we call a “facial” has come a long way from simply masks and extractions. “With the right technology, facials can have an immediate tightening effect,” says Iván Pol, the brains behind the cultish Beauty Sandwich treatment, which uses radiofrequency to sculpt, minimize fine lines, and impart a “snatched glow” that heads off the need for surgery or fillers (J.Lo and Salma Hayek are clients). And the lifting power of microcurrent, delivered via low-level electrical probes, is now legendary; from Joanna Czech to Shani Darden, ➡



Keto: A low-carb plant-based diet.

Lip taping: You put tape around your mouth to encourage nose breathing at night. Gwyneth once called this “the single best wellness tool.”

Macrobiotic diet: A diet associated with Zen Buddhism in which there’s an emphasis on locally grown foods. No nightshades allowed!

Microneedling: Acupuncture needles infused with vitamins to perfect the skin.

Night cream (but during the day): Breaking all the rules!

Oil pulling: Gwyneth swishes a minty coconut oil in her mouth for 15 to 20 minutes to reduce bacteria and inflammation.

Paleo diet: Yes to veggies and lean meats; no to dairy, grains, and sugar.



Psychedelic therapy:

Taking small doses of a drug, like LSD, under a therapist’s supervision. Prince Harry recently revealed he’s a fan.

Qigong: Slow, low-impact movements; part of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Rectal ozone therapy: Medical grade ozone, a form of oxygen, is administered via the rectum,

allegedly giving an immune boost. Gwyneth says, “It’s pretty weird. But it’s been very helpful.” *Weird* is an understatement.

Skin tightening: A laser procedure intended to minimize wrinkles. Gwyneth specifically uses Thermage, saying, “It feels like someone’s smacking your face with a rubber band that has an electric shock in it.”

Tongue scraper: A tool used to clean your tongue.

Transcendental meditation: Gwyneth started meditating in the early aughts but now practices this type of meditation daily.

Ultrasound for the face: More skin

tightening!

Vaginal steaming: This is exactly what it sounds like. You sit on a cleanse for your vagina.



Vampire facial: Also called platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy, this uses a mask made out of your own blood. Gwyneth warns: “It hurts.”

Xeomin: A Botox alternative. Gwyneth gets it twice a year (she’s also a spokeswoman for the brand).

Yoga: At age 25 Gwyneth took up Ashtanga yoga six mornings a week; it emphasizes yoga as exercise.

Zen divorce: She is the OG of “conscious uncoupling.”



there are few celebrity facialists who don't have it in their repertoires, claiming it both delivers a fast fix and tones facial muscles over time.

Hands can work wonders too. Sculpting expert Joseph Carrillo's trademark energetic lifting facial, which involves lymphatic drainage, facial cupping, vigorous sculpting, and buccal massage, tones, tightens, depuffs, and releases tension (you can ogle the results on his Instagram @SCULPTEDBYJOSEPH). "The treatment is a noninvasive, no-injection, no-surgery face-lift aimed at reaching deep into the underlying muscles that support our faces' natural posture," Carrillo says. The program? A weekly appointment (starting at \$350) for 10 weeks, then maintenance visits every four to six weeks. "It takes work," he says, "but it's all natural."

LIE VERY STILL

Another famous face-lift eschewer, Norma Kamali, swears by facial acupuncture. Acupuncturist Sandra Chiu, of Brooklyn's Lanshin Clinic, says repeat sessions are key. "Facial cosmetic acupuncture (FCA) and TCM modalities like gua sha are unsung heroes in the game of skin tightening," she says, adding that FCA works by restoring circulation to the skin and tissues beneath it. To support drooping jowls, Chiu works directly on them and also the scalp, jaw, and cheeks. "The result is a harmonious, balanced face," she says.

OUT-OF-THE BOX BOTOX

Eventually most of us will need to tiptoe into the middle ground of office treatments to perpetuate the illusion of agelessness. Neuromodulators, designed to reduce the appearance of wrinkles by keeping facial muscles from contracting, can also be used off-label to battle gravity. "Depending on where you inject, Botox can create a lifting effect for the lips, brows, jaw, and nose by temporarily relaxing the facial muscles that promote sagging," says Manhattan dermatologist Dendy Engelman. Belkin's favorite Botox

trick is placing it in the upper part of the platysmal muscle in the neck to reduce pull-down and encourage cheek muscles to pull up.

THERE MAY BE BLOOD

More "tweakments" with the ability to subtly lift are energy-based devices like radiofrequency (RF) microneedling, fractional ablative CO₂ lasers, and ultrasound procedures such as Sofwave, a technology that remodels collagen and elastin. "Energy devices are an amazing adjunct to injectables," says Nicola Lowrey, master injector and founder of N2 Aesthetics in L.A., who recommends Sofwave once or twice a year. "There is no dermal injury, so it's safe for all skin types, and there's no downtime." Engelman endorses RF microneedling followed by platelet rich plasma to address minor sagging. "In PRP your blood is drawn and spun in a centrifuge to isolate and concentrate platelets. Then it's injected back into skin to trigger the body's healing process," she says. Again, it's about the long game: "Steadily doing energy-based devices and careful filler over many years, along with healthy habits and avoidance of UV, can keep the skin from becoming thin and losing elasticity, which is the type of skin that requires surgical lifting," Belkin says.

FILLER UP

Biostimulatory fillers (such as Radiesse and Sculptra) are a go-to for Belkin. "They create volume by stimulating collagen production," he says. "This can lift the face." It did for Marcy, his Martha-inspired patient. "My lower face was getting narrow and making me look older, so filler in my cheeks lifted and balanced my face," she says. "It's a slight change that makes a tremendous difference."

...BUT WHEN IT'S TIME, IT'S TIME

There is a line in the sand. When serious sagging sets in—usually a result of UV and general slackening of fascia, [CONTINUED ON PAGE 112]

KOOKY TO COMMON

How Far Will You Escargot?

In a snail facial (beloved on TikTok), slithering gastropods placed on the face deposit their moisturizing slime, or mucin, on the skin. For the faint of heart, treatments can also be done using serums containing the goo, sans the actual snail.

BROKER FACE

Do you need a plastic surgery concierge?

BY JOLENE EDGAR

Ready for the knife but don't know where to start? There's a whisperer for that. Plastic surgery "brokers" are consultants who act as matchmakers between patients and cosmetic surgeons, assessing their needs, vetting doctors, making connections, and handholding clients (upon request). To some doctors, such as New York plastic surgeon Umbareen Mahmood, their appeal is clear. "It can be difficult to determine a surgeon's credentials, peel back a social media façade, and critically eval-

uate before-and-after photos," she says. Beyond ferrying patients across a sea of online hucksters, savvy consultants can steer them into uniquely specialized hands in an increasingly niche field. "I see value in this, even for my own wife," says Sam Rizk, a New York facial plastic surgeon known for his undetectable nose jobs and deep plane face-lifts. When she wanted her belly button tweaked, Rizk was unsure where to send her. "I don't look past the neck," he says. "I don't know who does the best belly button." But guess who did: his go-to broker.

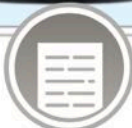
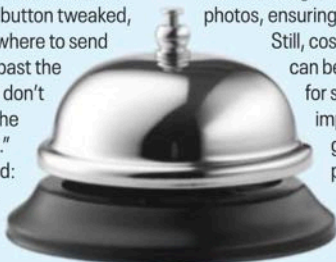
Other doctors question

the merits of these go-betweens. Theda C. Kontis, a Baltimore facial plastic surgeon and president of the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, deems them unnecessary (or even "predatory"), contending that people can locate skilled specialists by doing their own legwork (meeting with multiple board-certified surgeons, reviewing photos, ensuring aesthetics align).

Still, cosmetic consultants can be a godsend for some patients, improving the surgical journey from pre-op planning to post-op recovery. Their clientele can in-

clude everyone from the impossibly booked-and-busy to the extremely nervous and deeply private to the unfortunate who have had botched work and are now desperately seeking a top-notch fixer. "I do a lot of corrective procedures," says Miami plastic surgeon Adam J. Rubinstein. Consultants frequently send him patients "who don't want to make the same mistake a second time."

Melinda Farina is easily the most famous aesthetics matchmaker (THEBEAUTYBROKERS.COM), but the field is growing. Finding the right broker for your brow-lift may soon be as challenging as finding the right surgeon. It may no longer be a case of did-she-or-didn't-she but who did she call first?



GETTY IMAGES (BELL)