

Health & Fitness



AFTERGLOW: "Extreme Makeover" participant Jennifer Kuyburn, 25, had a nose job, tooth veneers, an upper eye lift and fat injections in her lips. Inset: before surgery.

PHOTOGRAPHED AT SEPHORA, TIMES SQUARE BY REBECCA MCALPIN

Youth Will Be Served

Is it any wonder that the pierced generation is now embracing cosmetic surgery?

BY LAN N. NGUYEN
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Catherine Davis has never liked her nose. For a long time she's wanted to get it fixed. Nothing too drastic: Just thin out the tip and straighten the bridge. After months of research and interviewing seven surgeons, she finally entrusted the job to Dr. Mokhtar Asaadi last year.

While under anesthesia, she also got a chin augmentation ("to balance my face") and Botox (to remove the deepening line on her forehead). Since then, she has been back twice more for Botox injections and a fat grafting (using her own fat to fill out the lines around her mouth).

I am not comfortable with showing signs of aging," she says. "I just want my face to keep up with the rest of me."

She is 33.

Davis has plenty of youthful company. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), 26% of the 6.6 million Americans who had cosmetic plastic surgery last year were between ages 19 and 34. Of the 4.9 million who had nonsurgical cosmetic procedures, 23% were 19 to 34.

"It is a fallacy that plastic surgery is for older people," says Dr. Howard Bellin, director of the cosmetic plastic surgery center CosMedica. "The bulk of my practice is between 18 and 39."

COUNTINUED INSIDE

**ROCK 'N' ROLE
MODEL?** Courtney Love
sports different look
today (far r.) than she
did in 1996 (l.).



The big redo

CONTINUED FROM COVER

Another fallacy: Only women are pursuing such treatments. Beauty consultant Wendy Lewis, author of "The Beauty Battle," says that 25% of her clients are men. She believes their increased interest in these services is due to their competing "not only with other men but with women in the marketplace. Women know how to take care of themselves. Women who are 50 look 40. Men need to compete."

Pierce Mattie, 28, started his first self-improvement project when he was 22 and saved up enough to have his stomach and love handles lipo-ed. Since then, the CEO of Pierce Mattie Public Relations has had another liposuction (at age 24), cosmetic dentistry and his first hair-restoration session. He also gets a chemical peel once a year and Botox three times a year.

Irritated by a slight bump on the bridge of her nose, Krystal Ambrose, a 21-year-old promotional marketer in Manhattan, got rid of it in early July, charging the procedure to credit cards. While on the operating table, she also corrected droopy upper eyelids. The cost: \$10,000.

Why are 20- and 30-year-olds (and even teens) so eager to open their wallets and go under the knife? Advances have made cosmetic procedures less invasive, allowing for an easier and faster recovery. Some can be done during an office visit.

Physicians are also savvy about packaging and marketing such services. Patients of Manhattan cosmetic dentist Paul Tanners have been able to get injections of Botox and collagen for the past four years. Two years ago, Dr. Stephen Greenberg, a board-certified plastic surgeon with offices in Manhattan and Woodbury, L.I., added a team of image consultants (including a hair stylist, makeup artist, even a psychologist) to his practice.

"I determined that I could only do so much," he says of the visit with a 22-year-

old patient that led to his epiphany. "It's one-stop shopping for body and mind improvement."

Clearly, Gen Xers have different ideas about their bodies than prior generations. "It's the fix-it attitude," says Mattie. "When I was 14, I had my first zit. I didn't want to go to school. My mom pulled out some pancake makeup. It was the first time I realized that if you don't like something, fix it."

Allure editor in chief Linda Wells worries about the new mind-set. "This idea that there is no limit to what you can improve raises the stakes a lot," she says. "Will we reach a day when a person who does nothing ends up looking terrible unless you're born with great genes? We're already at a point where women over 60 who have not had face-lifts look quite old. It's not as if women who had face-lifts look better, it's that they don't look wrinkled."

THE TELEVISION BOON

It's easy to point the finger at the media for the cultural preoccupation with bodily perfection. Just spend time with MTV, the cable channel that was created for and defines this generation.

Shows like "Real World" or "Spring Break" were and continue to be populated by women with Barbie-like proportions and men with six-pack abs.

Then there is "Extreme Makeovers," a reality show in which surgeons, image consultants and trainers make people over. It is, says Lewis, "everybody's fantasy." Not surprisingly, it was such a hit that ABC has renewed the program for another season. (The new drama on FX, "Nip/Tuck," showcases a darker, scarier vision of plastic surgery as it tracks the lives of two attractive plastic surgeons in Miami.)

"Extreme Makeovers" has been a boon to the industry Bellin says he has been inundated with E-mails from people now

willing to entertain the idea of cosmetic surgery. Adds Dr. Michael Bruck, director of plastic surgery at JUVA Skin and Laser Center: "I've had two patients come in and they were motivated by the show. If they were sitting on the fence, the show pushed them over to make an appointment."

That does not mean models and celebrities are thanking anyone but God and stylists for their fabulous looks. In fact, people like Cher and Michael Jackson are held up more as cautionary tales. No, for the most part, they are reluctant to admit what they've had to do to keep their glamour quotient high. But we know better.

Word of mouth has also been an equally powerful motivator. Some potential patients, like Catherine Davis, find answers through the Internet. Others are influenced by their mothers, who are turning toward surgery to erase some of the ravages of aging. A 21-year-old senior at Cornell started thinking about plumping her lips

and cheeks with silicone (\$500 a visit) after she saw her mother's fantastic results.

She had rhinoplasty (\$10,000) to get rid of a bump and to correct a deviated septum after her mother underwent two nose corrections. "I never thought about it before, but why wait when I could do it now?" she asks.

After a conversation with a girlfriend who had liposuction on her stomach and thighs, another woman, a 25-year-old payroll administrator from Centereach, N.Y., who didn't want to be identified, went ahead with liposuction and a breast augmentation in January. With the help of Greenberg, she also obtained the straight teeth she had always wanted with laminates and a more flattering haircut. The \$17,000 price tag was worth it, she says.

Shirts are fitting better and "everyone who has never said it before now say what a beautiful smile I have," she says. "My confidence is way up."



HAIR TODAY: Pierce Mattie, 28, has had lots of surgery, including hair restoration.