

just *undo* me

Goodbye, frozen foreheads and trout pouts. *Marilisa Racco* reports on the birth of the "undo-plasty"

COURTNEY LOVE IS A CAUTIONARY TALE IN

so many ways. Cocaine. Jail. Rehab. Custody battles. She is the poster child for the ugly side of rock 'n' roll. And, in 2006, she also became the poster child for the ugly side of cosmetic surgery when a nose job and lip fillers left her looking like a bloated mask of her former self. Until clarity kicked in. In a blog post from early 2007, *Love* wrote she hated her "nose-jobby nose" and "crazy lips" and underwent more surgery to have them fixed. And so, more than a decade after ushering in the era of grunge, *Love* ushered in the age of the undo-plasty.

A term coined by the media, an undo-plasty can reverse, but usually corrects, botched and overly aggressive cosmetic procedures. It's a tactic that's gaining ground in Canada and the U.S., where some of the surgeons we spoke with estimate that revision procedures account for anywhere from 10-20 percent of their overall practice. Reasons for this trend abound, from a growing desire for a more naturally enhanced look to fixing the damage wielded by an overly zealous "professional" with a needle full of Botox.

"I would say that, across the board, undo-plasties are more often the result of a botched job carried out by a nonmedical professional in a spa," says Dr. Fred Weksberg of the Centre for Cosmetic Dermatology in Toronto, where 15-20 percent of his practice is made up of fixing other doctors' and spas' mis-

takes. "Fortunately with Botox, Canadian doctors are among the best in the world because we have so much experience doing it, but in some European countries, where they haven't had it as long, the level of error is much higher."

Dr. Elie Levine, cofounder of the Plastic Surgery & Dermatology clinic in New York, says undo-plasty is an interesting, if somewhat erroneous, term. "I like to think of it more like revision surgery," he says, noting that few, if any, procedures can actually be reversed. In Dr. Levine's experience, the 10-20 percent of his practice dedicated to revisions is often spent fine-tuning other surgeons' work.

It's a more emotional endeavour for Dr. Richard >



Undo-plasty pioneer Courtney Love in January 2007 (left) and October 2007

Fleming of The Beverly Hills Institute of Aesthetic & Reconstructive Surgery in Beverly Hills, Calif., where two-thirds of his practice consists of redoing nose jobs other surgeons have performed.

" Oftentimes, the nose comes out too pinched, too scooped out or crooked," says Dr. Fleming, and the trauma of the error can leave patients pining for their God-given nose. "I sometimes have people say to me, 'I wish I had never had anything done.' I reassure them they don't have to trade one bad thing for another bad thing."

When it comes to pinpointing the real wild cards in the cosmetic-surgery business, both Dr. Levine and Dr. Fleming point to body-contouring procedures (including liposuction and tummy tucks), which can be the least exact of all procedures. "Even with using a small cannula (a tube used to help suction fat) and making tiny incisions, the procedure can be tricky," says Dr. Levine. "Some doctors try to make it sound more exact by calling it body sculpting. But the reality is no surgeon is a sculptor."

But what of breast implants? They have come under a great deal of scrutiny lately, with Tara Reid lamenting her botched job, saying she wanted "big Bs, not Cs." Even notoriously buxom Brits such as Victoria Beckham and glamour model Jordan-cum-Katie Price reportedly traded in their full cups for a perkier pair.

"In 12 years of doing breast implants, I've had maybe

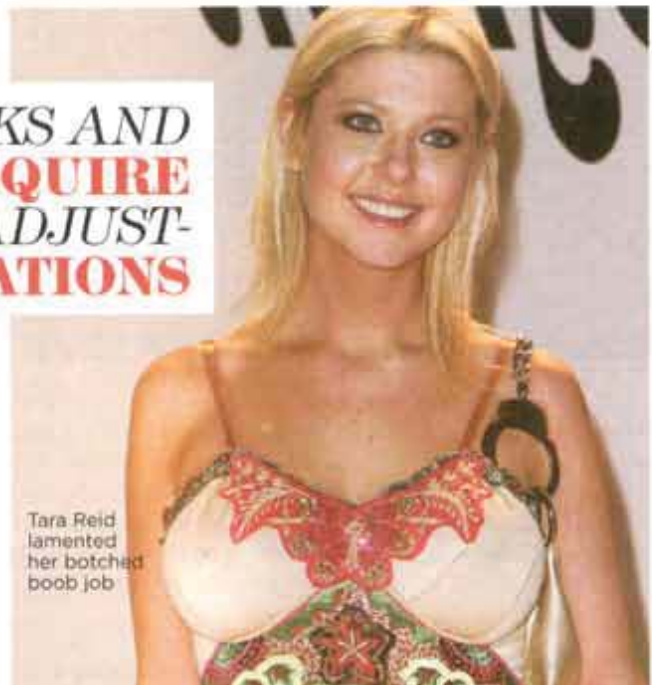
Jackson's nose," says Dr. Fleming.

And judging by the spate of movies celebrating fabulous 40-something women—*Sex and the City*, *Mamma Mia*, *The Women*—Tinseltown, it would seem, is setting a new beauty standard, or at least trying to. Just as Jennifer Lopez and Beyoncé are credited with reviving the allure of a voluptuous backside, so are Tilda Swinton, Helen Mirren and Meryl Streep being lauded for both their gutsy roles and their eschewing of the perfect Hollywood ideal. Recently deserving applause is Courtney Cox, 44, who openly expressed regret over her bit of needling in *Marie Claire*: "When people start messing with their foreheads and can't lift their eyebrows, that's weird. It's not that I haven't tried Botox—but I hated it."

Whether it's taking a sanctimonious stand against societal pressures or just plain old fear of a frozen face, the desire to grow old gracefully is permeating even the notoriously perfection-obsessed fashion industry. British *Vogue* editor Alexandra Shulman wrote in a column for London's *Daily Mail*, "Sorry, but I deplore cosmetic surgery," admitting she'll shell out big bucks for antiaging lotions and potions but won't submit to the needle or knife. And Kate Moss, the archetype of youth and vigour (although maybe not health) revealed in the August 2008 issue of *Vogue* that she wouldn't

FACE-LIFTS, TUMMY TUCKS AND LIPOSUCTION OFTEN REQUIRE SMALL CORRECTIVE ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO COMPLICATIONS

three or four women come to me to have them taken out altogether," says Dr. Stephen Mulholland, surgical director of SpaMedica in Toronto and Los Angeles. "It's more likely they come to me for revision work" to fix common problems such as hardening or asymmetry. He maintains that undo-plasty is not as widespread in Canada as it is in the U.S. because "our surgeons do more conservative and judicious work, not aesthetically inappropriate procedures." But face-lifts, tummy tucks and liposuction often require



Tara Reid lamented her botched boob job

PHOTOGRAPHS: WEN/JOHN WARRIARD/WIREIMAGE.COM; COURTNEY LOVE: IN OCTOBER; ANITA KENNELL; CORBIS OUTLINE; TARA REID: TONY BARON/GETTY IMAGES



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get Botox for fear of not being able to frown should a photographer ask her to do so.

"Directors are definitely telling actors now not to get Botox if they're doing a particular role," says Dr. Weksberg, who has worked on a number of A-list celebrities. "Fillers aren't really a problem since they just target lines and wrinkles, but Botox relaxes the muscles and they often can't express themselves."

Weeds actor Elizabeth Perkins, 48, is fed up with the pressure, she told *Grazia* magazine: "Is our generation of women going to go down in the history books as the ones who paid money to have their faces cut off and bodies stuffed? Enough is enough."

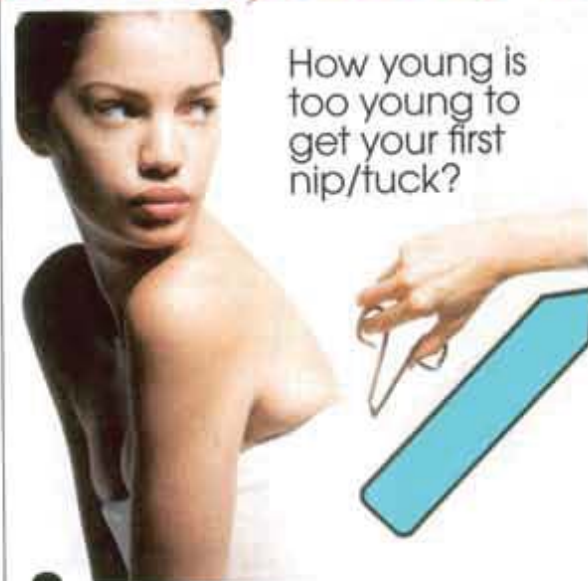
What is changing is what patients ask for when they walk into their doctor's office. "Rested," "refreshed" and "pick-me-up" are the new catchwords women are using today—not "young."

"Now, patients want to turn the clock back 3–5 years, versus 10–15 years, like they were trying to do with face-lifts two decades ago," says Dr. Weksberg.

People are far more educated today about cosmetic surgery and have more reasonable expectations, Dr. Fleming echoes. They will come in and ask for a particular celebrity feature, like Nicole Kidman's nose or Beyoncé's cheeks, but they don't expect to look like that person.

No, they want to look like themselves except, you know, *refreshed*. □

Girls, interrupted



How young is
too young to
get your first
nip/tuck?

popular being laser hair removal, microdermabrasion and otoplasty (cosmetic ear surgery). In general, the most requested surgeries include rhinoplasty and, surprisingly, breast reduction. **Dr. Levine** agrees to perform surgery on mature teens when medically reconstructive work is necessary. However, the average teenager is not a candidate for cosmetic surgery.

"If they're under the voting or drinking age, I just won't do it," Dr. Mulholland says of teens who come to him for face- or body-contouring procedures in order to "achieve a look they were not genetically endowed with." In his experience, the young patients who seek his services suffer from an "unhealthy preoccupation with institutionalized ideals of beauty." They are, he says, teens with anxiety issues best dealt with by a therapist, leaving him to ask: "At what point does an anxiety end and cosmetic surgery begin?" —M.R.

If MTV's *My Super Sweet 16*—the reality show where teens with too much money and too little parenting spend the equivalent of a small nation's GDP on a birthday party—has shown us anything, it's a nose job as a teenage gift isn't nearly as shocking as it once was. Young women are even being so bold as to request boob jobs as graduation presents, perhaps spurred by speculation that former teen queens Lindsay

Lohan and Britney Spears underwent breast augmentation before they were 20 years old. "It's very common," says Dr. Fleming. "There's nothing inappropriate about that, as long as the patient is emotionally and physically mature."

According to The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, 1.8 percent of all cosmetic procedures performed in 2007 were done on patients under the age of 18, with the most