

A cut above the rest

You simply can't afford to make a mistake with cosmetic surgery, so get the best – and to hell with the air fare. Even the tiniest nip and tuck earns you recuperation at a private resort, so Shannon Leeman plunders her friends' address books for the *Tatler* guide to the world's best snips and post-op pampering. Styled by Ann Marie Gardner. Photographed by Jörgen Ahlström

THE BODY

Women have always striven to change their shape. There has always been a market for liposuction but, like the dishwasher, we never knew we needed it until it was invented. The technology used to remove fat cells permanently has changed dramatically in the past five years. Unsightly contours and pits from liposuction gone wrong are history.

The most advanced method is the tumescent technique. The surgeon injects the area to be treated with a local anaesthetic and salt water mixed with small amounts of adrenaline solution. This mixture shrinks blood vessels, which means you don't get much swelling or bruising. Recovery can take as little as one week.

Ultrasonic-assisted liposuction (ULA), which is also gaining credibility, uses an ultrasonic device that liquefies the fat to make extraction and sculpting more effective. There is far less bruising, swelling and blood loss. The skin also shrinks and retracts more easily, giving more pleasing contours. This requires skill: if done badly it can burn the skin.

Tumescent technique

Dr Gerald Pitman

New York (tel: 001 212 517 2600)

Pitman has almost single-handedly elevated the respectability of liposuction. Unlike previous techniques, Pitman's method does not involve binding or girdling his patients after surgery, except in the calf and ankle area. Patients are often surprised at how little discomfort there is after this procedure and how quickly they are back to their normal routine: usually within a few days. His goal is 'to achieve aesthetic change'.

Cost: £3,500–£8,000.

Recovery time before flying home: five days.

Ultrasonic-assisted liposuction

Dr John Sherman

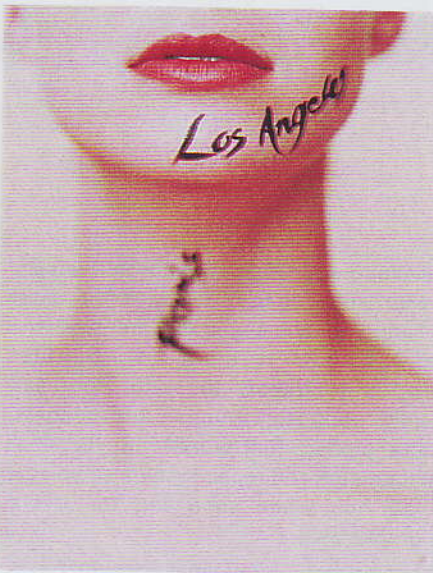
New York (tel: 001 212 535 2300)

With 16 years' experience in liposuction, Sherman uses ULA on the larger, more fibrous areas of the stomach, hips and buttocks

with greater success than previously seen. About 20 per cent of Sherman's patients are male, and ULA is particularly effective on male chests and waists. Ultrasonic liposuction is not recommended where the skin is thinner (knees and inner thighs). Sherman combines the tumescent technique with ultrasound to amazing effect.

Cost: £4,500.

Recovery time before flying home: one week.



THE FACE

The ultimate in time travel will always be a facelift. Several years ago, an extraordinary experiment was performed with two sets of identical twins undergoing facelifts at the same time with four different surgeons. The point of the trial was to resolve the debate over different techniques of lifting. A year later, when pictures of the women were studied, the advantages of the deep-tissue lift over the less intrusive lift were minimal. Each of the following doctors has pioneered new techniques in facial cosmetic surgery. They agree only on the fact that they are not mere surgeons but 'surgical psychologists'.

Dr Daniel Baker

New York

(tel: 001 212 734 9695)

Baker is one of America's most respected facial cosmetic surgeons. He is conservative and performs what he calls 'a freshening'. When Baker operates, there is never a danger of the 'wind tunnel' look. He doesn't believe in deep-tissue procedures as 'the benefits do not outweigh the risks, which may even include facial paralysis'. Women in their mid-40s gain the most from freshening because they are 'still very active physically, sexually and professionally – and appreciate the change the most.' Baker wants his patients to come off his table looking like themselves, but better.

Cost: £8,000–£12,000.

Recovery time before flying home: two weeks.

Dr Bernard Cornette de Saint Cyr

Paris (tel: 00 331 4704 2502)

Cornette de Saint Cyr prefers the term 'face remodelling' to facelift. He believes in deep-tissue remodelling, and says: 'The conventional facelift just pulls the skin, but my deep-tissue lift works all the way down to the bone.' He re-covers the cheekbones with fat from the jowls, and doesn't believe in facial implants as 'they alter a woman's natural appearance'. Cornette de Saint Cyr says the ideal time for most women to consider facial surgery is their mid-40s.

Cost: £4,000–£6,800.

Recovery time before flying home: eight to 10 days.

Dr Francis Palmer

Los Angeles (UK tel: 01462 678313)

Palmer is the surgeon to many famous faces. Discretion is everything, but look at the pages of any society and film magazine and you'll be unwittingly admiring his work. A proponent of deep-tissue surgery, Palmer believes in lifting as opposed to pulling (which is what gives the tight-ponytail look). He also advocates facial implants. Palmer works mostly in the US but operates in London once or twice a year. ▷



Beauty

In Los Angeles Dr Palmer sends a limousine to pick up his patients from the airport and keeps it at their beck and call for the stay. It's all part of the star treatment

◁ This year, during his London tour, he did 50 consultations in one week. The following week, three women from the consultations flew to LA for operations. He has so much business here that he also operates in Cambridge once a year. In Los Angeles, Palmer sends a limousine to pick up his patients from the airport and keeps it at their beck and call for their stay. It's all part of the star treatment.

Cost: £5,500-£10,000.

Recovery time before flying home: two weeks.

THE BREASTS

Looking at marble statues or beach babes may give you ideas about changing your breast shape. The quest for improvements in this area involves implanting silicone or saline, although soon soy fillers may be an option – soy is currently being testing in the US. In Europe and the UK, the choice of implant 'filler' is still at the client's discretion. In the US, however, silicone is no longer available. Patients have to decide where the implant insertion goes: in the armpit, in the fold below the breast, or around the nipple. Then it's purely a matter of choosing round or teardrop-shaped, smooth or rough-textured, and whether the implant is placed under the muscle or on top. More decisions than re-decorating a house, but the wonderful news is that even with implants, women don't lose sensitivity and can still breast-feed.

Dr Leonard Roudner

Miami (tel: 001 305 444 8585)

Roudner creates, as one woman raved, 'goddess breasts'. He makes them soft and natural with a silhouette any young girl would be proud of. Roudner has an instinctive breast sense, and claims to know what size will suit each woman. He prefers to place the implant under the muscle as he believes this gives a more aesthetically pleasing result. He sees many woman seeking breast surgery during major life changes such as divorce or separation, and sometimes advises women to wait for more stability in their lives.

Cost: £2,400-£5,400.

Recovery time before flying home: two weeks.

Dr Jules Hayen

Antwerp, Belgium (tel: 00 323 239 5894)

Hayen feels that silicone looks more natural and than saline – and also lasts longer: usually about 15 years rather than six. He would even put silicone implants in his daughters if they so desired. Hayen has a unique way of lifting



the breasts and likens the aesthetics of his surgical incisions to 'couture at St Laurent'. He is also renowned for performing the best tummy tucks in Europe.

Cost: £2,000-£2,500.

Recovery time before flying home: 10 days.

THE NOSE

The Seventies and Eighties churned out pointed, upwardly mobile, retroussé noses. In the Nineties, individuality reigns and experts believe that nose shape should suit the proportion of the face and not disturb facial harmony. The balance of the profile is also crucial to a nose job, so it is essential to evaluate the nose and chin together. For this reason, many surgeons combine nasal 'redefinition' with changes to the chin and cheeks.

Dr Jack Gunter

Dallas (tel: 001 214 369 8123)

Gunter is known as 'the man of a thousand noses', and his staff call him 'a very picky man'. A perfectionist, he believes that cosmetic surgery is a blend of art and science.

Cost: £2,500-£3,400.

Recovery time before flying home: one to two days, if you have a plastic surgeon in London who will remove the splints.

Dr Gilbert Aiach

Paris (tel: 00 331 4553 5757)

Aiach is a highly respected specialist who believes that 'if you don't feel good about yourself as a person no amount of adjustment

will help.' Sixty per cent of his operations are to undo the damage of botched first attempts.

Cost: £2,600.

Recovery time before flying home: one week.

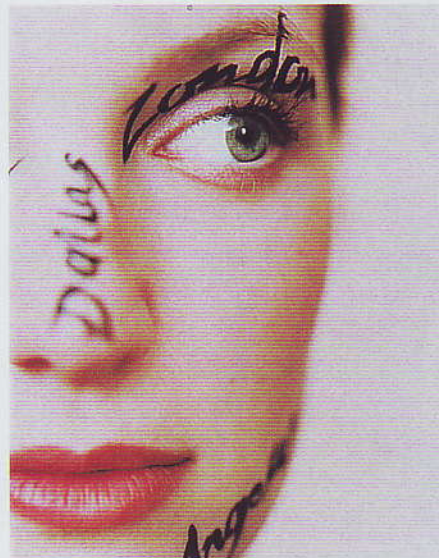
THE EYES

The delicate eye area is the first to succumb to the ravages of time. Slipping skin, fat and muscle conspire to give a tired, sad appearance. Eye surgery is one of the quickest and most effective treatments performed today. Its best practitioners are ophthalmic surgeons who are committed to the total health of the eye and its surrounding tissue.

Dr Richard Lisman

New York (tel: 001 212 755 0699)

Lisman believes that laser technology is an excellent way of resurfacing wrinkled skin, particularly on the lower lids, but doesn't feel it merits use in most cases. Lisman operates only



on the lids. Stitches can be removed in five days

Cost: £3,000-£4,000 for four-lid surgery.

Recovery time before flying home: seven to 10 days.

TOP RECOVERY SPOTS

Le Palais Chantique at the Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles (tel: 001 310 277 2270)

This is the primary after-care facility in Beverly Hills – the 10th floor is given over to the care of recovering plastic-surgery patients. The floor is private and entirely closed off from the rest of the hotel, with security cameras to guard against snoopers. Rooms have en-suite bathrooms, and patients can ▷

Beauty

At the exclusive Hidden Garden hideaway no one is admitted except staff and patients – and privacy is so well protected that they don't even give out the address

◁ have meals on balconies overlooking gorgeous views. There is 24-hour nursing care as well as transportation to and from surgery, private underground entry, with a keyed lift up to the 10th floor. After the initial recovery period, patients move to another floor in the hotel for the rest of their stay.

Cost: from £125 a night pre-op to £360 post-op.

The Hidden Garden, Los Angeles
(tel: 001 310 550 6855)

An exclusive LA hideaway that is more like a European inn than a fancy hotel – elegant and exquisite. Chauffeurs are provided, all meals are prepared individually by the chef, and there are nurses in-house – all terribly private. They accommodate all the stars. No one is admitted except staff and patients, and privacy is so well protected that they don't even give out the address.

Cost: five suites only, £285 or £300 a night.

Le Parc, Los Angeles (tel: 001 310 855 8888)

Offers apartment suites for recovery, with special rates for patients from Cedars Sinai, a local hospital. Apartments have king-size beds and small dining and living rooms.

Cost: £80 a night.

CLOSER TO HOME

As yet, we are not equipped with the kind of ultra-discreet post-op luxury that rich Americans demand, but Shrubland Hall (tel: 01473 830404) is recommended by some surgeons as a traditional private retreat where the staff are used to dealing with guests who have 'had things done'.

Cost: from £518 a week for a single room.

MADE IN BRITAIN

Since World War I, London has been recognised all over the world as the leading centre for reconstructive surgery. If you would rather not travel abroad, the following surgeons are the best Britain has to offer:

LIPOSUCTION

Mr Bryan Mayou

Lister Hospital, SW1 (tel: 0171 730 3417)

The best lipo man in the country. Mayou has treated several prominent society women, and his kind and courteous manner is great for building confidence in nervous patients. He sometimes uses general anaesthetic. Highly recommended for knees and thighs.

Cost: £1,400–£2,300.

Recovery time: one to three weeks.

THE FACE

Barry Jones

The Wellington Hospital, NW8
(tel: 0171 586 5959)

The most famous face-man in London. Jones operates for the NHS on children born with deformed ears, performs cosmetic surgery privately and specialises in endoscopic surgery, which leaves incisions above the hairline. He is also an advocate of deep-tissue lifts.

Cost: £4,000.

Recovery time: two weeks.

THE BREASTS

Mr Armando Cason

Pountney Cosmetic Surgery Clinic, Hounslow
(tel: 0181 570 9658)

Cason offers silicone implants. He says he doesn't use saline, as breasts deflate and get cold in winter. Requires an overnight stay.

Cost: £4,000.

Recovery time: 10 days.

THE NOSE

Mr Tony Bull

Harley Street, W1 (tel: 0171 935 3171)

Bull is heralded as *the* nose specialist in the UK. He is low-key, conservative and instils confidence in his patients. Bull claims the 'done' nose that was so popular in the US was never of interest in Britain, and a natural look has always been his aim. He also employs a cosmetician, who will make-up and cover any residual bruising on the day of unveiling, which is usually one week after surgery.

Cost: £4,200.

Recovery time: 10 to 12 days.

THE EYES

Mr Richard Collins

Harley Street, W1 (tel: 0171 486 2699)

Collins has so many patients that it takes six months to get a consultation. His method is to use the patient's own tissue to create a more natural, youthful appearance. 'It may take three months before the patient forgets they have had surgery,' Collins warns. 'There is a feeling of tightness around the eyes, and vision can be affected for a time.'

Cost: £2,000–£3,800.

Recovery time: two weeks.

Dr John Celin

Hans Road, SW3 (tel: 0171 225 0179)

Celin trained in the United States. He operates on the lower lid, which involves cutting from within so as not to scar the skin. This is

only feasible if he's removing fat, not if he's tightening the skin as well. You check in as a day patient but a nurse will come home and look after you overnight.

Cost: £3,000–£4,000.

Recovery time: one to two weeks.

Dev Basra

Harley Street, W1 (tel: 0171 486 8055)

Famous for eyes. Basra does a particular type of cut, outside the natural line of the eye, which he says lasts longer, looks better and doesn't cause a knot of skin, which can happen with eyelid surgery.

Cost: £2,000–£2,600.

Recovery time: two weeks. □

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR PLASTIC SURGEON

- Check your surgeon's credentials thoroughly. It is perfectly legal for qualified doctors without a specialist knowledge of cosmetic surgery to offer to change your appearance. A doctor in the UK should preferably be a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. Check with their membership office (tel: 0171 405 3474). In the US, check with the American Institute of Plastic Surgery (tel: 001 212 977 5400).
- Rely on personal recommendations.
- Know exactly what you want and communicate it clearly to the surgeon.
- Interview several doctors before committing yourself.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

1. Which board did you receive your qualifications from?
2. What training have you received in the procedure I am interested in?
3. How many years have you been performing the procedure?
4. How many patients have you successfully treated with this procedure?
5. Do you have before-and-after pictures?
6. May I speak to former patients?
7. Will a licensed anaesthetist be in attendance?
8. What is your daily operating workload?
9. To which hospitals are you affiliated?
10. If the operation is performed in your private surgery, what emergency equipment do you have available?