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## features

### 15. What Price Beauty

We are who we see in the mirror and in this two-parter J. Verdi looks at one of the increasingly popular ways of achieving perfection - plastic surgery. It is indeed a painful cut for some but many feel the benefits outweigh the pain and all is worth the months of recuperation. You decide. When not writing about sharp scalpels, she looks at the stars and tells us what the future might hold as she's done in previous issues of Monsieur.

### 18. Eternal Paris

Edith Piaf, La Vie En Rose, the Eiffel Tower, Montmartre, the wine, the people, the street scene ... you could go on and on about Paris. The best solution: visit this eternally beautiful city for yourself as we hope you will after this article by Reena Gurbakash and Halim Berbar.

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David Lim Chong Lim has a point: What if women didn't need men anymore? What if we are all redundant? Who will love us, take care of us? Read on.

### 43. A Boost For Tired Male Batteries

Christine Doyle writes about hormone replacement therapy for men and talks to a doctor who is on the treatment. Can we be faster than a speeding bullet? Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound? Bed all manner of creatures like Captain James T. Kirk?

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Richard Tan writes about this hardy, stylish line of shoes and clothing that's seen on the feet and backs of those who appreciate good, honest apparel. ►

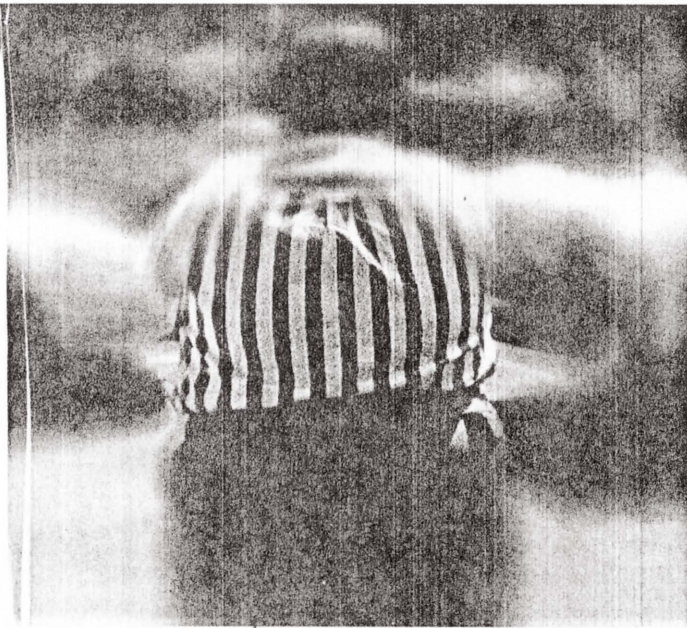
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- is for the doctor to make an armpit incision and work through an endoscope, a tubular probe equipped with a tiny light and miniature TV camera that projects the area onto a computer screen. Instead of the implant being inserted whole, its envelope can be threaded through the tube and, once in place, inflated with the saline solution. With this procedure, scars are hidden and recovery is more rapid.

However they are inserted, implants have a more authentic shape, some doctors think, if placed over the pectoral muscles - a position that also works well for correcting saggy breasts. But most surgeons prefer putting implants underneath the muscle, believing it minimizes hardening from scar tissue and reduces rippling of the skin.

**Afterward:** Most women go home an hour or two after surgery. One patient says her breasts felt tight, heavy - and the pain! Yes, it *can* hurt afterward and while some women get off painkillers in two days, most need them for a week or more. It must be emphasized that breast augmentation is *real surgery*.

Patients wear a wrap or a sports bra for the first week to keep the implants securely in place and decrease swelling and bruising, and they are told to avoid strenuous activity for some two weeks more. After that, sports are okay, as is lying on your stomach. A hard blow, direct puncture, or time's passage may deflate an implant. After ten years or so, you look down one day to find a breast has gone flat, like an old tire - no pain, no discomfort, but you need to get a replacement.

**Cost:** RM5,000 to RM5,500 and the procedure is only done in a hospital.

#### BREAST REDUCTION

This is no operation to trust to the hands of an inexperienced surgeon or to a doctor who specializes in facelifts. It's not easy to turn boxy, elongated breasts into smaller, beautifully shaped, conical breasts. Examine pictures of the doctor's work very carefully. You want to notice how the scars look and if you like the way the 'new' breasts are shaped.

**What happens:** Liposuction is used on the sides of the breast, and any remaining excess tissue is then excised, the surgeon being careful to save the nipples and milk ducts so that breast-feeding will still be possible.

**Afterward:** Because nerves leading through breast tissue to nipples are not identifiable and therefore may be severed, sensation could be diminished. The more breast tissue removed, the more likely the loss of sensation. Patients can go home a few hours after the operation but will probably be on heavy-duty painkillers for at least a day and a night. After that, a typical comment is "I'm sore." A surgical bra is worn around the clock for four weeks while scars heal, and to feel 100 percent normal can take as long as a year. Nevertheless, surveys find women who have breast reduction to be among the most satisfied of all cosmetic-surgery patients.

**Cost:** The operation is done in a hospital and costs RM5,500 to RM6,000.

#### LIP ENHANCEMENT

Most patients start out having shots of collagen, a protein obtained from bovines even though the substance is absorbed by the body within two to four months. You can see how full lips look and if you like the effect.

A longer lasting augmentation can be obtained by injecting dermis (which is almost pure human collagen) from the patient's own body. Unlike [bovine] collagen, which, the more often you use it, the less time it lasts, with fat, the more often it's used, the *longer* it lasts.

Patients can also opt for a lip lift, which doesn't require the injection of any substance but does leave tiny scars although they can be concealed with lip liner. In this procedure, which is permanent, a strip of skin is removed just above the Cupid's bow and the lip line pulled up to the higher position; the pink of the lower lip can also be pulled downward. Most surgeons are cautious about doing permanent lip enhancements, however, simply because pouty mouths are a fashion but of the moment.

A good compromise may well be Gore-Tex implants, which are long-lasting but can be removed whenever desired. They feel soft and natural, and you can still kiss, whistle, and suck on straws. It's a medical grade of the same substance used in sports clothes; surgeons have been repairing hernias with it for years - replacing blood vessels with it too - and there hasn't been any side effects seen.

Yet not all doctors are convinced that foreign substances of any sort belong in human lips. Lip enhancement is an art form in progress, say some doctors, who caution that risks include asymmetry, scarring, infection, and loss of sensation. Some doctors who's seen Gore-Tex recipients with a "ropy" look, warn that nobody knows what will happen to lips after implants have been in place for ten or fifteen years. Even collagen, if administered clumsily, can leave unnatural white lumps.

**Cost:** Collagen injections can be done in a clinic at RM700 to RM800 per 1cc of collagen. For laugh lines, budget around RM1,500. ■

• In the next issue, we continue 'What Price Beauty' with a look at tummy tucks, scars, surface skin repairs, getting a new nose and prices on new chins, ears and face lifts. Ouch! •

◀ often asked for cosmetic surgery are changing Oriental eyes (single lids) to double lids, at a cost of RM1,000 to RM1,200. Another is eye rejuvenation because as you age, the skin beneath the eyebrow drops. This can be corrected for between RM1,200 and RM1,400. Another is under eye reduction, basically getting rid of those bags under the eyes and that costs RM1,200 to RM1,400. All these procedures can be done in a clinic.

## GENERAL LIPOSUCTION

Some patients learn that liposuction could slenderize those hard-to-budge body parts, they raid their savings and join the thousands every year who try liposuction to pare down parts below the waist. Best candidates for the procedure are those who have fat deposits unfazed by both diets and exercise machines.

**What happens:** Fat to be removed is injected with an anesthetic containing epinephrine, a chemical that constricts blood vessels, and makes tissue swell. (This so called tumescent method is new: it reduces bleeding and allows surgeons to remove more fat than before.) Incisions about a fourth of an inch long - too small to require stitches - are then made in natural body creases, and a cannula (a tiny suction tube) is thrust in repeatedly, jarring fat cells loose and sucking them out. This method is preferred because if you slice away the fat, you'd sever nerves and blood vessels, but the cannula pushes them out of the way.

**Afterward:** Following the procedure, the patient gets one brief, happy look at his new shape before compression bindings are applied to contain swelling. (They are worn for six weeks, although swelling may not subside for entirely for three months or so.) Patients walk out of the operating room and are advised to keep on their feet as much as possible as lying down makes the swelling worse.

Some patients find tenderness persists for weeks; others experience little discomfort. Risks include localized numbness, an uneven shape, and worsened cellulite. Almost one third of all patients are vexed because they think more fat should have been removed.

Surgeons contend that because fat cells are suctioned out, patients will never again bulge in the same spot. A few studies, however, have found that if a patient puts on weight, fat can sometimes return, especially to the abdomen.

If more than two liters of fat are to be removed, the procedure must be done in a hospital, at double the prices below, in case complications set in.

**Cost:** For women it is the tummy and the hips, while for men, the love handles and subcutaneous fat only, no beer bellies and it cost between RM1,000 and RM1,200. Thighs cost RM1,000 to RM1,200 and upper arms from RM1,000 to RM1,500. All the procedure can be done in a clinic.

## FACIAL LIPOSUCTION

A twenty-something who gains and then loses weight can find that the chin remains a permanent reminder of the overweight self. But thanks to the resilience of youthful skin, liposuction can now speedily reshape a double chin - and also redefine a moon face, bestowing a more sculpted look without cheek implants.

**What happens:** To suction fat out of the chin, a tiny incision (an inch or less) is made underneath, near the bone. For an overly round face, surgeons, working through incisions in the crease under the ears, suck out tiny amounts of subcutaneous fat to recontour cheeks and jawline. Surgeons have to be careful taking facial fat; it's easy to misjudge and if too much is removed, the face could look sunken in a few years.

**Afterward:** If the procedure is done on a Thursday, most people are back at work on Monday, looking normal. Painkillers are needed for a day or two, as are small bandages, and ice compresses help minimize swelling and discoloration. Eating is no problem. After the fat is gone, the saggy skin behaves much like scar tissue, retracting and tightening up. Aftercare is usually complete within six weeks.

## BREAST AUGMENTATION

Despite all the hoopla over silicone implants, breast enlargement is still the procedure most often requested by women in their twenties and early thirties. Today's implants are generally filled with a saline solution (salt water), and nobody considers them unsafe. But the big question remains: Can a lover tell? Yes, some say. Though augmented breasts feel warm and their shape looks natural, many lovers are aware of a difference.

**What happens:** An incision is most often made in the natural crease under the breast, where it fades in time; or in the nipple's lower half, where scarring is least visible but sensation perhaps affected. Decreased sensitivity or hypersensitivity for a few months after surgery isn't uncommon but usually the nipples revert to normal.

Another option rapidly gaining favor - though as yet, only a handful of all surgeons have the necessary equipment

