

# Our Cosmetic World

## ...then & now

by Joyce Bruné

*If someone of the female sex were to step out of our history books into this century and witness the beautifying processes that exist in our society, undoubtedly, she would be unable to believe her eyes. For one thing, she would probably observe that women's facial features were often less prominent than they had been in her lifetime. She may meet a lady with a hooked nose one day, a few days later her nose would be impeccable. She may even come across a person with breasts the size of watermelons and notice later they had been shrunk (sucked out by microsuction) to perfection. Or breasts the size of mosquito bites that have been fattened up by implants. She could run into someone whose lips had been changed from thin to voluptuous and vice versa or hollow cheeks into well-rounded ones, or vice versa. Even eye-lids and foreheads that had been lifted, fat necks to slim ones, huge thighs and buttocks could be slimmed down and saggy knees fixed by liposuction, and so on and so forth.*

If someone of the male sex were to step out of our history books he would be under the impression he was having hallucinations as I did when I was greeted by a friend.

'Why, Jonathan' I exclaimed, 'I hadn't recognised you!' I recalled the last time we had met he was slovenly, shabbily dressed with a 65 year-old paunch. So, when an elegant, slim, poised-looking man greeted me I had to plead guilty to not recognising even one of his traits and features. Blushing to the roots of his dark hair, which had previously given way to baldness he confided his secret to me. 'I went to a plastic surgeon who specialises in hair grafts' he said. *'The hair follicles were removed from the back of my head and transplanted singly into my thinning frontal patch. It now grows like freshly sown mustard and cress!'* 'But Jonathan, it's remarkable! Its not only your hair but your whole appearance has changed.' His long pointed nose had been bobbed to perfection and his sagging facial muscles and wrinkled skin were as if ironed out – rejuvenating him, by at least ten years.

Aside from our advanced plastic-surgery and modern methods of beautifying ourselves, a cosmetician points out that the more natural means haven't really changed as much, over the centuries, as we tend to imagine. *'For example, Cleopatra is said to have used crocodile fat as a skin softener and bathed in asses milk.'* Today, by



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comparison whale grease, tortoise and mink oils are used as a basis for various face creams. *'The ancient Egyptian women,' she said 'wore lipstick and rouge containing the extract of a seaweed called Fucas. To date, a secretion from the holothurian sea slug is useful in the preparation of some cosmetics.'* (At one time the secretion was used by the British navy as a shark repellent!) We put on mascara to darken our eyelashes. The ancient Egyptians used Kohl (a product from antimony) applying it with an ivory or wooden stick instead of with a brush as we do. Barley flour was and is still considered soothing for pimples and skin eruptions. In ancient times women would bleach their skin with white lead and chalk and they polished their teeth with pumice-stone. (Fortunately we draw the line at that!)

*'Although against my interest to do so,'* our cosmetician advises, *'it's quite unnecessary to spend ones' earnings on facial creams and lotions; the contents from your refrigerator can serve equally as well.'* She maintains that a head of lettuce chopped up, covered with rose or rainwater and left to draw for several hours can then be squeezed and strained to produce a lotion which has a toning effect on oily skin. She recommends also, unsalted bean water for greasy skin. (By comparison, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was the rage to take baths in bean water.)

In 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe they advised, washing ones' face with red wine to make it fairly ruddy. Today our cosmetician suggests that her clients use the following as a skin tonic: *'White wine for dry skins and red for oily skins owing to the large amount of tannic acid it contains.'* Another dry skin remedy out of the refrigerator is one of pure lard mixed with a few drops of fruit juice (raspberry or strawberry in summer and carrot, celery or orange in winter) and massaged well into the skin with long upward strokes to make the skin soft and fresh.

Whether we decide to follow the example of the women of history or use our own modern methods we can indeed be thankful we live in a very tolerant age. In contrast, the following is taken from a bill introduced in the English parliament in 1770. (Similar measures were passed in France and Italy.)

It reads:

*'All women of whatever age, rank, profession or degree, whether virgins, maids or widows, who from and after the passing of this Act, impose upon, seduce and betray into matrimony any of His Majesty's subjects by scents, paints, cosmetic washes, artificial teeth, false hair, Spanish wool, iron stays, hoops, high-heeled shoes, or bolstered hips, shall incur the penalty of the law in force against witchcraft and like misdemeanours and their marriages, upon conviction, shall stand null and void.'*



# Lifting or laser?

In today's image conscious society cosmetic surgery is accepted as a part of everyday life. But what is actually possible? We spoke to cosmetic surgeon Dr Jan Pampurik to learn more.

## *What exactly is face-lifting?*

'Face-lifting is a technique used to counteract ageing and to give back the brilliance of a youthful appearance. A good lifting not only pulls back the skin but also the muscles and the ligaments to the level of the sub-cutaneous tissue which results in a more natural and durable lift. Patients generally come to me because they have either skin loosening, fatty deposits at the base of the face, relaxation of the shape of the neck and the jaw, or sagging of the middle part of the face.'

## *At what age would one have this done?*

'There isn't an age limit – in fact age is irrelevant – what tends to be of most importance is the condition of the skin, amount of exposure to the sun's rays, hereditary factors, and sadly the number of cigarettes smoked and/or alcohol drunk. But generally patients come to me at around the age of 40 years.'

## *What types of lifting are available?*

'Frontal temporal lifting allows access to wrinkles at the front of the face and gives a harmonious lift to the eyebrows resulting in a face which is bright, young and relaxed looking. The repositioning of the eyebrows allows not only for an 'open look' but also the stretching back of crows' feet. In Switzerland there is a growing interest in endoscopic frontal temporal lifting. By making three small openings at the level of the cranium and within the hairline scars become invisible.'

## *Surgery of the eyelids seems very popular?*

'This is also called blepharoplasty. It is necessary to do a blepharoplasty in 95% of cases of women who wish to be more attractive. The look is incontestably the most important element of expression. Which is why we remove the fat deposits and the excess skin and the muscle beneath the eyelids which demands considerable experience and rapidity of execution on the part of the specialist.'

## *Are laser treatments used often?*

'Lasers have become the technique of choice for ophthalmologists, dermatologists and cosmetic surgeons because they can be focused on a minuscule point. In fact the laser allows you to work at considerable speed. The development of laser techniques has been rapid meaning that now they are even used for wrinkles below the lower eyelids, around the eyes and the mouth, plus crows feet, sun spots and birth marks.'

## *Are there any less invasive treatments available?*

'Botox is a non-allergenic revolutionary technique that causes wrinkles to completely disappear and relaxes the muscles immediately upon treatment. Injectable products such as collagen, restylane, dermalive, also revitalise the skin giving the effect of regenerating a layer of skin.'



Rhinoplasty



Laser Resurfacing



Lifting



Blepharoplasty



Botox + Dermalive

*Dr Jan Pampurik specializes in Cosmetic Facial Surgery and Laser treatments. He is Director of the Centre Esthetique in Fribourg.*