

# Changing

COSMETIC SURGERY IS NO LONGER EXCLUSIVE TO THE RICH AND FAMOUS, WITH MORE PEOPLE WANTING TO CHANGE THEIR APPEARANCE FOR THE BETTER. WE CHAT TO PLASTIC SURGEON **PAUL BANWELL**, OF **SPIRE TUNBRIDGE WELLS HOSPITAL**, WHO HAS JUST BEEN NAMED BY *THE TIMES MAGAZINE* AS ONE OF THE TOP DOCTORS IN THE UK

*faces*

#### Tell us a bit about your background.

I was born in London, but grew up in Kent and Sussex, attending The Skinners' School in Tunbridge Wells and St Mary's medical school in London. My plastic surgery training has taken me all over the world and I've been fortunate to count some of the world's best plastic surgeons as my teachers. Today I'm responsible for helping to train the next generation of plastic and cosmetic surgeons in the areas in which I specialise, including skin cancer and cosmetic surgery to the breast, body, genitals and face.

#### Have you noticed any measurable upturn in consultations or procedures?

There is no doubt that the recession affected many businesses last year and cosmetic surgery was included in this. However, I have seen a definite up-swing in the desire for surgery now, as confidence is restored. When times are hard, people still would like to feel good about themselves and so we have also seen an increase in enquiries for non-surgical procedures such as chemical peels, Botox and dermal fillers.

#### What are people looking for? Give us the top three procedures.

The perfect body is difficult to achieve but many people would just like to improve what they have. Perhaps flatten their tummy or make their breasts bigger or more pert. From a facial rejuvenation perspective, my patients like natural results with a freshened appearance. The top three would have to be breast augmentation, tummy tucks and liposuction. Labiaplasty is also becoming extremely popular.

#### How do you feel about foreign clinics offering impressive savings on treatments?

The attraction of cheap surgery abroad is understandable, but the qualifications and quality of the surgeon must be checked. One of the most important considerations is the aftercare (or rather lack of it) that is in place and what happens when complications occur.

#### Have you had to come to the rescue when treatments abroad have gone wrong?

Unfortunately, I have seen a number of complications from surgery abroad and this has put a huge burden on the NHS. Whilst there are some excellent surgeons abroad, patients must be cautious about being seduced by glossy advertising and sunshine.

#### Tell us your three best bits of advice for those thinking about cosmetic surgery.

Do your research - understand you may need to pay for quality, expert advice. Do you have a good feeling about your surgeon? Make sure you meet them before surgery, ideally at least twice. And ensure you choose a surgeon who is a member of BAPRAS or BAAPS.

#### Would you have cosmetic surgery?

Do I need it?

Nice riposte!!

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