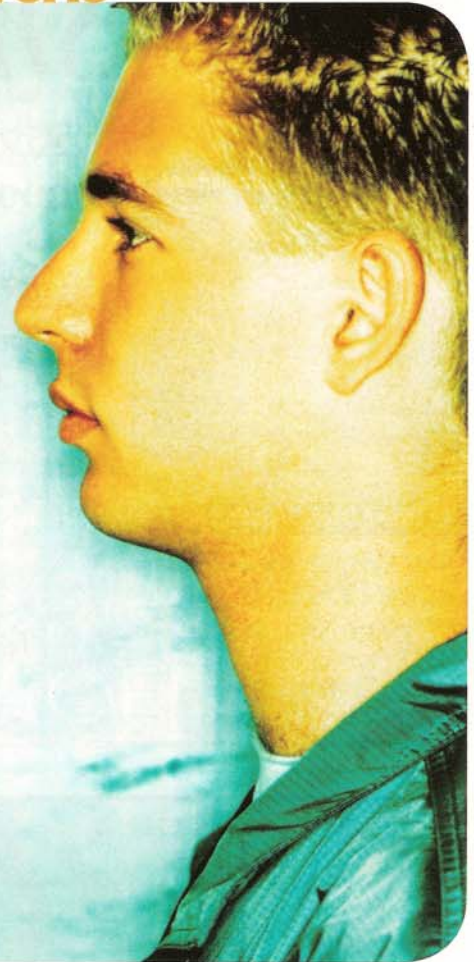


# The New Men's Club

With more and more men interested in improving their looks, cosmetic surgery and skin rejuvenation procedures are not just for women anymore.

by Stacie Williams



**M**att Medina had been contemplating a nose job since he was an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. The 26-year-old had never particularly liked the tip or bridge of his nose, and he felt it looked crooked. But it was a 2002 car accident that left him with breathing difficulties that finally gave him the impetus to go ahead and get the surgery, called a rhinoplasty.

"A lot of people have things they are self-conscious about," says Medina, who had his rhinoplasty performed by a licensed plastic surgeon in January. "But obviously, the face is a big deal because people are trying to sell themselves in all kinds of situations."

Medina is one of many men who has decided that cosmetic surgery and skin rejuvenation are no longer exclusively a woman's domain. With the rise of metrosexuals – men

with exquisite grooming habits who are known to frequently embrace facials, pedicures and lots of specialized hair products – and makeover television shows in pop culture, men are

increasingly paying for services to improve their looks. They want facial skin care to treat acne, rosacea, wrinkles and sunspots, but a few will opt for surgeries involving a knife

## Treatment Costs

One of the biggest aspects to note with skin rejuvenation services is that costs are largely out of pocket, as are most cosmetic surgeries unrelated to injuries or illness. Treatments can range from **\$175** for a Botox injection and **\$350** for a chemical peel or microdermabrasion treatment to almost **\$3,000** for several combined laser treatments over a period of time.

Surgeries can cost even more. According to 2003 statistics from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, an average eyelid tuck costs **\$2,525**, not including surgeon, anesthesia or operating room

fees, which could add an additional **\$3,000**.

The doctors emphasize, however, that these treatments are not the equivalent of going to the local spa for a mud facial and eyebrow wax. These are treatments using complicated technology found only in a medically directed setting. "One thing that separates many spas is the efficacy of products," says Dr. Roger Mixer of the Skin and Laser Clinic of Cosmetic Surgery. "I think what is changing are technological adjuncts to skin care. We have a stronger product line and remarkable improvements on skin."

and strong anesthetic, like nose, eyelid or chin surgery or breast reduction.

One of the biggest drawbacks for men requesting skin care treatment is the amount of down time required for many procedures. Men want procedures that will allow them to go back to work the next day or the same day. "What characterizes men is that they have no time to do anything," says Dr. Roger Mixter of the Skin and Laser Clinic of Cosmetic Surgery in Glendale. "They want everything now."

Mixter points to two procedures used for acne scarring and facial resurfacing that have aided men in a time crunch: Thermage, a nonsurgical face-lift that uses radio waves, and a needle-directed Erbium laser.

Thermage is a 40-minute treatment that introduces radio waves through the skin after it is cooled with a numbing medicine so there is no surface heat on the skin. The radio waves tighten pores and help smooth bumps and scarring from cystic acne, usually in one procedure, though touch-ups may be needed. Mixter says that when men leave the clinic, it is not plain to the naked eye that the face has been touched.

The Erbium laser, says Mixter, is the gold standard for treating acne scarring. Use of the laser at its full power, however, involves five to seven days of scarring and four to six weeks of redness and flaking of the skin. The needle-directed Erbium laser, which enters the skin at the exact area of the scar, reduces healing time from weeks to days and makes redness and flaking lighter than what one might see on someone with dry skin.

Mixter says the majority of his male clientele, about 20 percent total, come in for rosacea treatment. Rosacea, a severe reddening of the face, particularly the cheeks and nose, affects an estimated 10 million Americans. Mixter uses an intense pulse laser to clear most of the redness, although rosacea, like acne, can never be cured, only treated, so it requires more than one treatment to see results.

Because of the emphasis on procedural brevity for male clients, Mixter does not perform as many cosmetic surgeries for males but says the ones he has done are usually for the boomer generation – males in their 40s, 50s and 60s.

"We see a fair amount of nose surgery and liposuction for baby boomers in the midst of changing jobs and looking to get an edge on younger people. As far as the

## A Change of Attitude

Society and the media have played a large role in this trend of men seeking skin rejuvenation and cosmetic surgery. But according to Dr. Kathy Bushman of the Ritz Laser and Skin Care Center, older men still appreciate a clinical feel to the procedures. "My laser center looks more like a medical spa, so men feel more comfortable coming here," she says. "Men don't want to feel like they're going into [their] wife's beauty salon to get things done.

"There isn't a stigma toward men having things done like years ago," says Bushman, who saw a 20 percent increase in her male customers over the last year alone. "Men are feeling the crunch to maintain their youthful looks, especially in business. Years ago, it used to be bad for women to have gray hair. Men are more concerned about their looks now, too."

male market, cosmetic surgery is definitely an element of needing some competitive edge in the job place," says Mixter.

Dr. Kenneth Dembny of Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery Specialists in Wauwatosa agrees. "The type of procedure being performed depends on age," he says. "People who are seeking liposuction tend to be in their late 30s to 50s. People who seek eyelid surgery might be patients in their 40s to early 60s. Rhinoplasty individuals are younger, usually late 20s to 30s."

The one procedure Dembny says male and female clients ask for equally is Botox, the highly popular nonsurgical method of temporarily eliminating forehead, eye and mouth wrinkles with an injection of a strain of the Botulism toxin that paralyzes nerves.

"Botox is the number-one procedure across the country for men and women, counting surgical and nonsurgical procedures," he says. "More people will do nonsurgical things than have surgical procedures done because those types of treatments are relatively easy to maintain with minimal downtime. The results are immediate."

As far as nonsurgical procedures go, popular ones with males are microdermabrasion, which involves resurfacing the top layers of skin with tiny crystals or a granule-like material; chemical peels made up of alpha hydroxy acids that heal damaged skin and speed the renewal of healthy skin; and soft tissue fillers, generally used to treat acne scars that have an "ice-pick" appearance, although they can be used to fill lines and wrinkles. A substance called Restylane, or sometimes collagen, is used as the tissue filler and is injected into the skin like Botox. The procedure, which can take several treatments for very deep scars, smooths out the skin's texture and overall look over time.

Nonsurgical procedures are the only ones performed at the Ritz Laser and Skin Care Center in Brookfield. Dr. Kathy Bushman trained many of Wisconsin's practicing cosmetic surgeons to use specialized lasers and other skin rejuvenation tools over the last six years. Her clinic is the only one in Wisconsin that uses the ultrasound lasers responsible for the dramatic skin results seen on the ABC show "Extreme Makeover."

Bushman is highly skilled with the different types of lasers used for skin rejuvenation: the Yag laser for hair removal that gives the best results for people of color like African Americans, East Indians and Latinos; and the Smoothbeam laser, which stimulates collagen in the upper dermis of the face and is also effective on "ice pick" acne scars. One Smoothbeam treatment is as powerful as a prescription for Accutane, a pill form of acne treatment; four regular Erbium laser treatments; or the UltraSonic facial, which uses low-frequency ultrasound waves to remove dead skin cells and dirt from the face.

"We find that the results are better with the lasers than with chemical peels," says Bushman, "because the lasers stimulate collagen to build its own and create firming and tightening of the skin."

Bushman uses a combination approach to her skin treatments, which she feels delivers a one-two punch to persistent problems like acne, wrinkles and rosacea. Treatments include facials, cleansers, moisturizers and vitamins to help speed the skin's turnaround – a plus for men on the run.

One of those men is Tim Ihlenseld, who drops into Bushman's office shortly after noon for a laser hair removal and wrinkle treatment. Ihlenseld is considered a prime candidate for the wrinkle treatment because of the time he spends

in the elements hunting, sailing and doing construction work. Bushman sets the laser, which looks like a small gun and is connected to a larger machine that looks similar to a photocopier, to the specific designations for Ihlenseld's skin – "Every person's skin is different," she says – makes sure his protective goggles are in place and begins applying the laser to his ear and nose to remove unwanted hair. The wrinkle treatment, which Bushman does next, is basically the same procedure, switching only the type of laser and its skin designations.

The Yag laser, Ihlenseld says, feels like the slight flicking of a rubber band in his ear and makes a sound like one with every application on the skin. The procedure takes less than 10 minutes, and when she's done, Bushman places a cold compress on both sides of the ear to make sure there is no redness.

All of the doctors agree that hair removal is generally the biggest request for males seeking cosmetic surgery or spa practices; key areas are the chest, underarms and back.

"Men in their 40s through 60s usually have hair removed from their ears and nose," says Bushman. "It's sort of like their 'menopausal' curse that they have hair grow in the ear and nose canal. Bodybuilders always want all their hair done, and people who undergo sex change operations [male to female]."

Different lasers are used for different hair types. Curlier hair, found on people of color, requires a Yag or diode laser and more treatments than straight hair. Men have tougher, thicker skin and the hair is denser, so hair removal with a Yag laser may take five to eight treatments over a period of several months. The laser causes the hair to get thin, until it doesn't grow anymore. Laser treatment also helps men who suffer from ingrown hairs (folliculitis) that cause painful "razor bumps."

Tattoo removal is also in big demand; Bushman says 99 percent of her male clientele who ask for it want to have a name removed. The procedure, involving lasers, is fairly effective, but Bushman warns that there will always be a small amount of residual tissue. ■

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