

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S AFFLUENT ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

BRENTWOOD

WWW.BRENTWOODMAGAZINE.COM

DECEMBER 2004



SPECIAL 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



U.S. \$5.95 / Canada \$6.95



DISPLAY UNTIL JANUARY, 2005

TEN SECRETS TO KNOW WHEN CONSIDERING A FACELIFT



By Dr. Renato Calabria

HAS THE THOUGHT OF HAVING A FACELIFT CROSSED your mind? If you answered yes, then the journey for finding the perfect plastic surgeon has just begun. It is a difficult decision to make. Whose opinion do you trust? Your hair dresser? The women at work? Your best friend that denies having any work done and swears it's "good genes,"

but coincidentally has a plastic surgeon's office number on speed dial. Although only you can make this decision, we can provide these 10 tips to help you make the right one.

1 DON'T WAIT FOREVER

There is no such thing as the "perfect age" for a facelift. Everyone ages differently and things like diet, smoking and genetics play an important role in your biological clock. Don't be obsessed by the media portrayal of ageless beauty which more than likely has been airbrushed to oblivion. With the advent of less invasive procedures, younger people are considering surgery, but there is such a thing as "too you." I have seen aspiring models who had their face "done" in their late 20s and are now regretting it. Most of Hollywood usually waits to turn 40 to have a full face lift. For the average person, mid-to-late 40s is ideal.

2 YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

Experience counts. Don't look for the best deal in town and compromise quality. Remember: it's your face and you're worth it. If you can't afford it, wait! Plastic surgeons at a certain level do demand higher fees because they have logged more surgery time and are therefore more qualified. Less qualified and inexperienced doctors will charge less to build clientele. Facelift surgery is difficult and takes years to understand, even more years to perfect. I can honestly say that I am better now than when I started.

3 NOTHING IS FOREVER BUT ...

In this world only diamonds last forever. The aging process continues despite surgery. Gravity still exists and will affect the surgery through the years. Yes, 10 years from now you probably will need a touch-up, but you will still look better than if you never had surgery. Keep in mind that technique has a lot to do with the results. A more aggressive procedure with wider undermining of the skin and repositioning of the deeper structures (muscle and fat) may last longer and look more natural than a more conservative one.

4 FIND OUT WHAT THE DOCTOR DOES BEST

Every plastic surgeon has a procedure they perform most and looking at the preoperative and postoperative pictures will give you a hint. If you see one to two facelifts but 10 breast augmentations, then this is not the doctor for you. Also ask to speak with a previous patient. If no one is available, that's a red flag!

5 DON'T GET AN EXTREME MAKEOVER

Television shows are fun to watch, but reality is different. Plastic surgery is a blend of art and science and is not glamorous. Risks and complications are just waiting to happen. Longer surgery equates to longer anesthesia and related complications. A facial rejuvenation procedure should not last more than five to six hours and that's usually all I would do at one time. Make sure your doctor spends enough time in the preoperative planning of the operation to minimize all the risks and clearance for surgery from your own internist is a must.

6 SCAR-LESS SURGERY DOES NOT EXIST

Any doctor that claims that the procedure is scar-less is lying. We are not magicians; we are surgeons. Scars will always be there. There are three important factors that will influence how you scar: your genetic background; the tension you place on the suture line; and how the suture line is placed and closed. New techniques, such as laser facelift closure, have allowed us to minimize the last two factors and give the patient the best chances of healing.

7 IF YOUR DOCTOR IS A MAN... LOOK AT HIS WIFE'S PICTURE IN THE OFFICE.

To get an idea of the result, look around the office. You may find a picture of his wife... if she looks pulled, leave immediately. The patient coordinator is another hint. Could you tell she had surgery?

8 DON'T FORGET YOUR SKIN

A common mistake is to think that the skin is loose, when instead it has a texture problem. There are two different problems that need to be addressed separately. A facelift will take care of the

loose skin while skin products, micro-dermabrasion, and Pulse Light Laser will improve the texture.

Surgery is only the first, although maybe the most important, step in facial rejuvenation. You also need to make sure that the lifted skin looks good. It's like buying a new car — the oil still needs to be changed and the tires checked. Diets rich in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, green salad, melon and berries) and exercise is important in improving skin texture and maintaining a good result.

9 GET YOUR OLD PICTURES OUT AND THINK VOLUME

I always look at old pictures before I make a surgical plan with the patient: youth is volume, aging is deflation. If we operate on a deflated face, by pulling only (and in the wrong direction, lateral vs. vertical), you are guaranteed to come out with a "wind-tunnel look." New techniques, like the vertical facelift, allow us to work in a three-dimensional plane. This helps with avoiding the wind tunnel look. That is why a facelift is more a volume restoration procedure than anything else.

10 MAKE SURE YOU ARE THE ONLY CASE OF THE DAY

Every detail is important when accomplishing the goal of natural rejuvenation. The way the tissues are prepared, the way they are moved, the way they are handled, every move is important — there are no short cuts. These steps, even for a skilled surgeon, take time and you must have the surgeon's undivided attention. Some surgeons do three to four cases a day, rushing to the next patient and leaving their assistants to do the sutures, the most important part of the surgery. I feel that you can't deliver the best if you don't pay attention to every detail — from the first to the last stitch. Also, make sure that you request to see the doctor (not his nurse) postoperatively. I like to take out my own sutures so I can appreciate how the tissues are healing and what can be done to improve and speed the recovery period.

Be smart. Don't schedule surgery on Friday if you know that the doctor is going out of town for the weekend. Look for a boutique practice, not a Wal-Mart.

Go to a doctor that can say no. There are times and occasions in which surgery is not needed. I can't tell you how many **P.S.** times I say no because patients don't need it, are too young, need to lose some weight, don't have realistic expectations or have had too much work done already. A surgeon that says yes all the time may have a mortgage he can't afford or too many ex-wives.

Dr. Renato Calabria is a board certified plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills. His latest techniques are often featured in the media. For more information go to www.verticalfacelift.com