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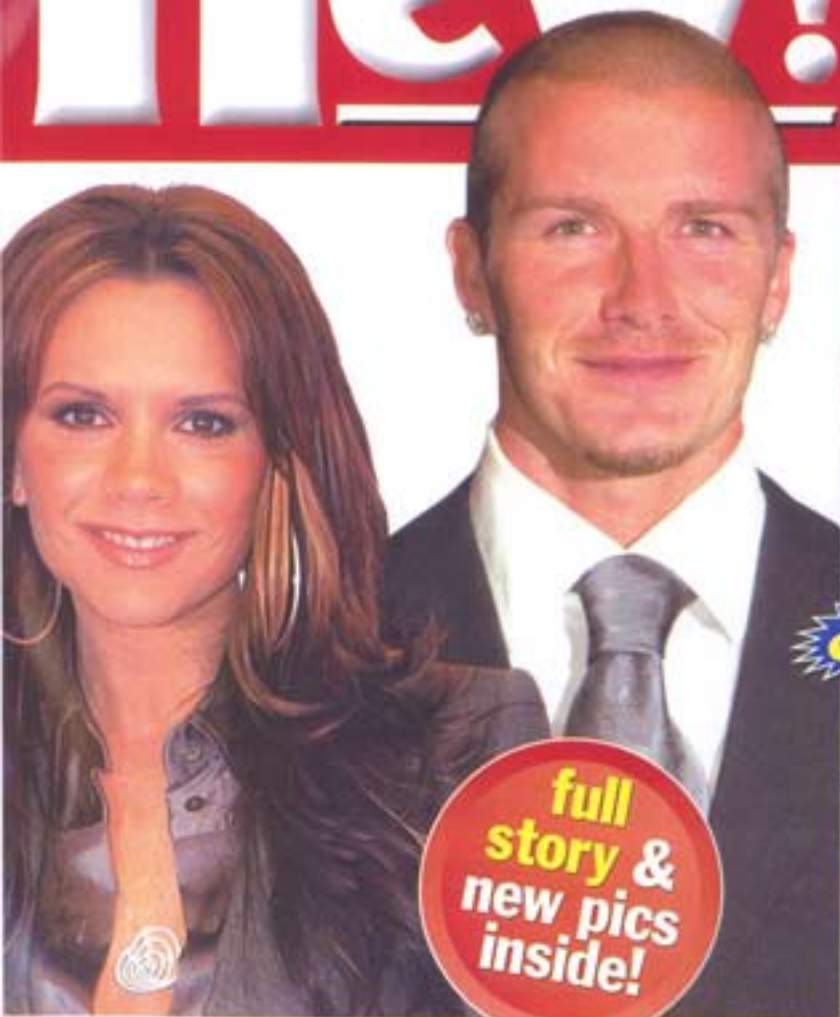
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Feel

the real nip/tuck

His show, *Dr 90210*, has been dubbed the true-life *Nip/Tuck*. Here, Dr Robert Rey reveals why he thinks plastic surgery is good for you – and which celebs his patients want to look like

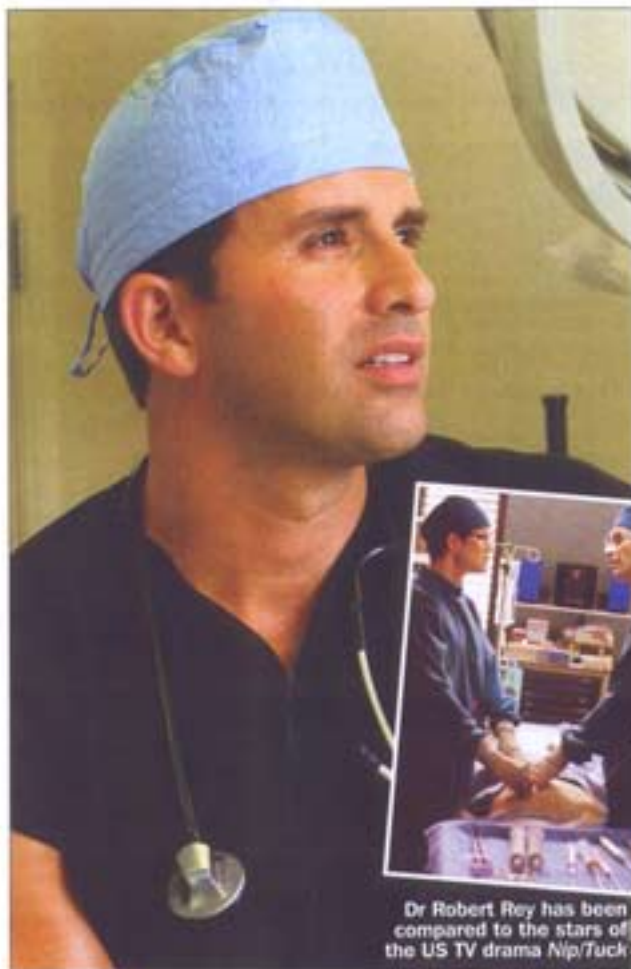
Cosmetic surgery is big business. Just ask Dr Robert Rey, 42, a plastic surgeon whose Beverly Hills practice is now worth \$4million. With increasing amounts of celebrities going under the knife, and shows such as *Extreme Makeover* and *Nip/Tuck* hitting the headlines, it seems that using plastic surgery to transform your looks will soon be as normal as booking in an appointment with the dentist.

Dr Rey claims his new show, *Dr 90210* (named after the Beverly Hills zip code where he works), is nothing like *Nip/Tuck*. But it's easy to see why people have made comparisons. Rey is as toned and good-looking as a Hollywood actor, and many of the real-life cases featured on his show are as bizarre as those in the controversial drama. His wife Hayley seems to have as raw a deal as Joely Richardson's character (she plays the long-suffering partner of Dr Sean McNamara), staying at home looking after kids Sydney, four, and two-month-old Robert Michael Rey III, while Dr Rey works 16-hour days in his clinic.

home truths

"The stuff they show of me at home doesn't portray me in a flattering light," Robert admits. "People who have watched *Dr 90210* shout, 'You should be home spending time with your kids'. Sometimes I'll be at the grocery store and they'll say, 'You've been a little rough with that wife, haven't you?'"

Although he may come across as arrogant, and not dissimilar to the characters of Dr Christian Troy (Julian McMahon) and Dr McNamara (Dylan Walsh) in *Nip/Tuck*, Dr Rey insists this bravado is part of his job. He says, "I need confidence to do my job. When you cut the faces of these beautiful people, if you don't have self-belief, you don't belong in the operating theatre. You have to have unshakable



Dr Robert Rey has been compared to the stars of the US TV drama *Nip/Tuck*

I know some singing celebrities who have had surgery before they turned 18

self-confidence, otherwise how is your patient going to trust you?"

However, Dr Rey is quick to deflect any comparisons between himself and the fictional surgeons. "*Nip/Tuck* presents plastic surgeons as hypersexual,

unethical playboys and that's not what plastic surgery is about. The people on *Dr 90210* are my regular patients and the show is about their real life stories.

"One of my patients was very homely-looking. She didn't have a great job and was down on

her looks. I tweaked her lips, nose and breasts. After I finished she looked amazing and was approached to be a model.

Another success story is a woman who was born with four breasts. "I removed two as made the other two as perfect as possible," Robert says. "The change it made to her life was unbelievable. Next time I saw her she was upbeat and buoyant. She speaks with a lot more confidence – it's been a life-changing experience for her."

botched job

Although not a *Nip/Tuck* fan, Dr Rey can relate to the intense desperation of people begging for plastic surgery, portrayed in the series. "People can be so desperate for me to work on them that they threaten to kill themselves if I don't agree to operate. One woman had had a very bad botched breast job and the damage was irreversible. Her husband could not accept this and told me, 'If you don't fix my wife I'm going to wait for you outside.'"

In *Dr 90210*, Dr Rey bills himself as "a psychiatrist with a knife". He receives 120 calls an hour and 800 emails a day from men and women asking for his help, but is keen to emphasise that he employs a psychiatrist and will refer patients for psychiatric screening if he has any doubts about their state of mind.

"Fifteen per cent of those seeking a plastic surgeon have Body Dysmorphic Disorder and they should be turned away. I reject three per cent of the people who come to see me. If a person says they want to look exactly like a certain celebrity, alarm bells ring and I turn every single one of them away."

It's clear that Dr Robert Rey has a long list of celebrities on his books, although client confidentiality means he is unable to divulge further details. But while the A-list's quest for perfection through plastic

Dr Rey (below) says plastic surgeons are artists, which is why they like to draw on their patients' bodies!



surgery is nothing new, over the years Dr Rey has seen a transformation in what that perfection actually entails.

celebrity lookalikes

"In the 60s Marilyn Monroe started the craze for breast implants," he says. "More than 30 years later, Britney Spears put the focus on the belly and tummy tucks went through the roof. Then J.Lo came along and put the attention on the back. Buttock implants have gone up 600 per cent since 2002. Many patients bring in a picture of J.Lo's ass. The curvy bum is really in."

"Lips are also very hot right now. The night before the Oscars, all the stars come here and want some collagen injections to get them pumped up and looking their best."

And who are the A-list stars who Dr Rey would rate as perfect? "I think Michelle Pfeiffer is a timeless beauty. She's as beautiful now as she was 20 years ago and that's special. Time hasn't taken any beauty away. Most of the men who come to see me want to look like Brad Pitt. There are lots of stunningly beautiful celebrities that women may aspire to look like. But it's important to have realistic expectations."

Dr Rey's patients can be aged from three months old to 80. However, he acknowledges teenage cosmetic plastic surgery is a controversial issue. "I don't agree with young girls having breast implants. Breasts haven't stopped developing at 17, so you shouldn't operate on girls below the age of 18. I know some singing celebrities who have had plastic surgery before they turned 18. Unfortunately there are some unethical surgeons out there." We can hazard a guess at who he's talking about...

But before working in the lucrative business of plastic surgery, Harvard graduate Dr Rey trained in a hospital trauma unit. "I don't see what I do now as frivolous. People who look better feel better, which gives me immense job satisfaction. All plastic surgeons are artists, too. Perhaps that's why we like to draw on the body!"

"But all I do is improve what is already there. God does 98 per cent. I just do that two per cent. Image is everything - the pretty ones in life are the ones that get ahead. Beautiful people are just going to do better in every aspect of life, so what is wrong with striving for that?" □

Catch Dr Rey in Dr 90210 on E! on September 12 at 10pm

stealing beauty

Although Dr Rey rejects patients who want to look exactly like a celebrity, he gets requests from people who want their noses, boobs or bums to resemble their

favourite star's. But whose body parts are the most popular, and whose are considered the most beautiful? According to Dr Rey, most women want...



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