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Horrified at Christian Troy's playboy antics in *Nip/Tuck*, Dr Robert Rey insists that not all Beverly Hills cosmetic surgeons are money-grabbing lotharios



'Not all LA plastic surgeons are sex addicts'

Dr Robert Rey is a top plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills, LA's most silicone-enhanced district. He's young, good-looking, head of a multimillion-dollar cosmetic surgery practice and even stars in his own TV show. But that's where the similarities between Dr Rey and Christian Troy – the money-grabbing, narcissistic, immoral sex addict in the hit Channel 4 drama *Nip/Tuck* – end.

'That show presents plastic surgeons in such a bad light – I'm really insulted,' says Dr Rey. 'The main character is a hypersexual, unethical playboy and we're not all like that.'

Nip/Tuck was first shown in the US in July 2003 and, annoyed by the negative portrayal of his profession, Dr Rey decided to develop a reality TV show to set the record straight. Now he stars in *Dr 90210*, a behind-the-scenes look at real surgeons in LA.

'At first it was annoying having the cameras following us everywhere,' complains Dr Rey, 42, 'and we actually had shouting matches with the producers. But

we're the best of friends now. The show has allowed people to see that most of us are good guys. I'm religious, a family man, and I'd never dream of cheating on my wife.'

Although he's now living in a mansion in Bel Air, life wasn't always so easy for Dr Rey. Born in the slums of São Paulo, Brazil, he slept on a table for most of his childhood. 'We had nothing and lived in a real beat-up place,' he remembers. 'When I was 11, some American Christian missionaries arrived at my home and said to my father: "Let us take these kids back to the US to educate them for you."'

'My dad, being a total loser, said: "OK, take them." He was happy to get rid of us. My sister and I ended up living with a family in Utah. They were a very academic family and we both made it to Harvard. Later my mum came to the US to join us, but my dad died.'



Dr Rey says he's nothing like *Nip/Tuck's* Christian Troy

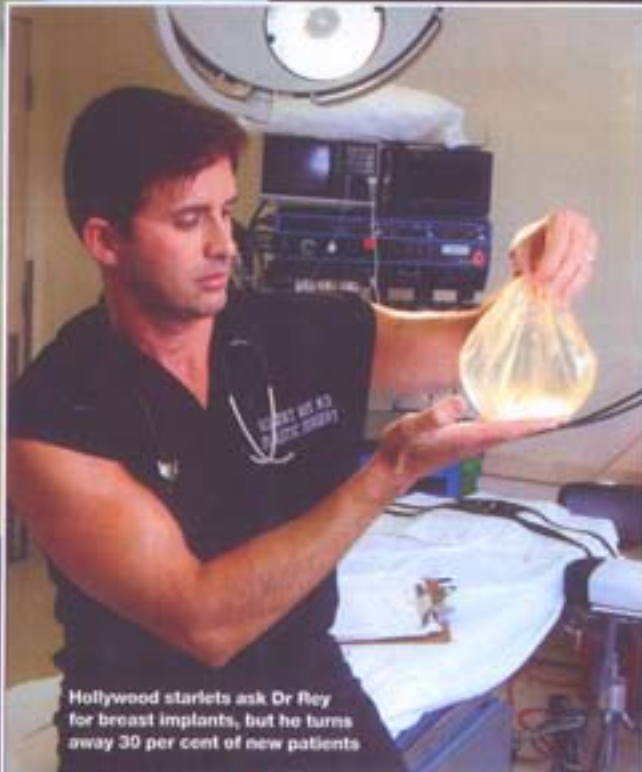
In college, Dr Rey was torn between art and science before realising that plastic surgery is a perfect marriage of the two. 'If you don't have artistic sense,' he explains, 'you can't make someone a beautiful nose.'

After completing his training at the prestigious Harvard Medical School, the only place he wanted to practise was in Beverly Hills, the cosmetic surgery Mecca. But the first couple of years were a struggle. 'It's such a competitive town,' he admits. 'One in 12 of the

world's qualified plastic surgeons practise here, so I had no patients at first. I used to spend my weekends as a general doctor for the Native Indian reservation about six hours away.'

Dr Rey's luck improved when he fell in love with his wife Hayley, now 28. 'Ours was a classic Hollywood story,' he confesses. 'I arrived in Beverly Hills with nothing and found a tiny, run-down apartment to rent. Hayley came from Canada to be an actress – she was my next-door neighbour – and we met!'

Dr Rey credits Hayley with making his business the success it is today. 'She's the brains behind



Hollywood starlets ask Dr Rey for breast implants, but he turns away 30 per cent of new patients

A true American pioneer

Dr Rey was one of the innovators of the trans-umbilical boob job, by which empty pockets are inserted into the breasts via the navel and inflated with saline solution. This radically minimises scarring and recovery time. Lipo-suction is Dr Rey's most popular procedure, followed by boob jobs, bottom implants and rhinoplasty.



tucks on Hollywood starlets, Dr Rey says 60 per cent of his work is reconstructive. He used leg bone to reform the jaw of a young man who'd blown half his face away with a shotgun in a suicide attempt. And he recently helped a deformed woman from the ghettos of South Central LA.

'She was born with four breasts, but she couldn't afford any treatment, so I operated on her free of charge. And next season I'm hoping to go to South America on a surgical mission.'

Having acted in TV ads to pay his way through medical school, Dr Rey laps up the attention he gets and he's now recognised

yell: 'Hey, Doc, you should be at home with your wife and kids!' because the editing on the show makes it seem as if I never leave the operating theatre. And some women want to tear me apart for going to the gym six days a week. But it's a very stressful business taking a knife to someone's face and if I didn't work out I'd go crazy. I can't have my hands shaking, so I do martial arts to calm me down.'

Dr Rey admits to 'a little wild streak', but insists that his partying days are long gone. 'Now I have no secrets,' he says. 'I have a regular family life and I'm no different to the next guy.'

'When I finally had enough money to buy a house in Bel Air, I went outside to do the gardening. I was getting all these strange looks from across the street. No one told me that in this neighbourhood

you're not supposed to mow your own lawn!' ■

Caroline Benjamin

Dr 90210 is on Sundays at 10pm on E! Entertainment Television, available to Sky Digital and Sky+ subscribers

Luckily Dr Rey gets immense satisfaction from his work. It's wonderful to be able to change people's lives. I can meet a shy girl and transform her with a few stitches. We're like psychiatrists with knives – we can allow a person's personality to blossom.

I'd say that God does 98 per cent of the work and I just fine-tune the last two per cent. I'm not ashamed to admit that I start my first operation of the day with a prayer – I have the lowest infection rate in Beverly Hills, so maybe prayers help. It's easy to vilify plastic surgery, but we do a lot of good work. That said, I know we mess up as well – look at Michael Jackson!

Dr Rey turns away 30 per cent of would-be clients because he feels they're not psychologically ready – including an attractive woman whose ex-husband said she was ugly – and anyone he believes is suffering from body dysmorphic disorder.

He's had a nose job himself ('I went to the guy who wrote the textbook on rhinoplasty') and Dr Rey also performed a breast augmentation on his wife. 'It was her idea,' he points out. 'When I met Hayley she was a beautiful C-cup, but she went down to an A-cup after she gave birth, so we just restored her to what she used to look like.'

Insisting his life isn't all tummy

I can transform a shy girl's life with just a few stitches

wherever he goes. Last week I was in a department store and this lady taps me on the shoulder and says: 'Hey, you're in Dr 90210! I love that show.' I look up and it's Diana Ross! I was like: 'No, I love your stuff'

'Most people are nice, but some will

Hayley Rey is the business brain behind her husband's success



Dr REY, M.D.
PLASTIC SURGERY

He's made it big in Beverly Hills – now Dr Rey lives in the same neighbourhood as Jack Nicholson

it,' he declares. 'When I found her I was about \$50,000 (£28,000) in debt because I didn't know how to run things. Today, because of her, our practice is probably one of the busiest in the world.'

But such success comes at a price and Dr Rey routinely works from 7am until 11pm, leaving him little time to spend with his young children, three-year-old daughter Sydney and a new baby son. 'When you're an immigrant, you're always trying to prove your worth,' he reveals. 'But I'd love to spend more time at home. I barely see Hayley. She's understanding, but I don't know how long her patience will last.'