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scene

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Big Butts on the Rise

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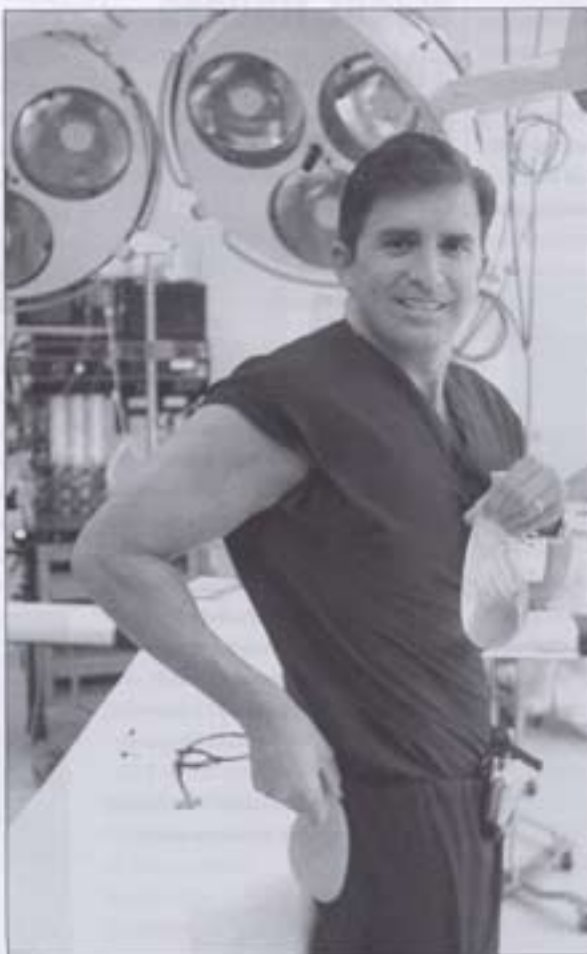
Each generation brings new fads with clothing, music and of course, plastic surgery.

Marilyn drew attention to breasts in the 1950s. Later, Britney brought the attention down to the navel. Then J. Lo brought it even further down and around to the butt. What people are choosing to make bigger or smaller on their bodies these days depends greatly on which celebrity is hot and what they got.

"The icons of our time focus the attention on certain areas," said Dr. Robert Rey, a plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills.

Indeed they do. When a prospective client comes to Dr. Rey's office for a consultation, they usually have a picture of the celebrity they wish to emulate. When it comes down to the butt, J. Lo's is the one they want.

In the 2001-2002 year, when Jennifer Lopez's rear was all the



Dr. Rey shows off breast and butt implants

rage, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons found that butt augmentation went up 600 percent. The number of hits on

Dr. Rey's website for butt augmentation surpassed that of breast augmentation, and he went from performing just a few butt augmentations a year to a few every month.

Baby gets back

The butt implant is a semi-solid that is stiffer than Play-Doh but also very soft, Rey said. They differ from breast implants, which are fluid-filled. Each implant is placed into the buttock area through a two- to three-inch incision that is made between the buttocks in the midline. The buttock muscle is lifted and a pocket is made on each side to fit the implants. Once the implants are inserted into the pockets, the incision is closed with dissolvable stitches. The recovery time after

butt augmentation tends to be a bit longer than other cosmetic surgeries, because the location of the soreness is in an area that is required for walking, sitting and

lying down.

Complications that may occur with butt implants include infection and being able to feel the implant. In some cases the implant, which should have a snug fit within the pocket, rotates, creating what surgeons call the "double-bubble" effect. Unlike breast implants, which need to be replaced every 10 years because they tire, butt implants need not be replaced, Rey said.

The cost of a new derriere could run a person at least \$6,500.

Seeking perfection

This business is a media-driven frenzy, Rey said. As the idea that

there are perfect looking people is continually propagated, the plastic surgery industry will thrive. Plastic surgery has already increased tenfold in just a decade. More than 8.7 million cosmetic procedures were done in 2003, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

The sudden surge in the number of people opting for plastic surgery in recent years could be attributed to several reasons, including better technology and quicker healing times. Cosmetic surgeries can be done in just a few hours and the patient can be released the same day with nothing

but instructions on how to take care of themselves and a new look. Complete healing may take a few months, but surgery scars are often undetectable.

Dr. Rey says the surge can also be

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credited to the world becoming very competitive, especially in the media-related industry. It is not often that you see an unattractive newscaster, Rey said.

"Being good-looking helps, unfortunately," he said.

Even though Rey estimates 96 percent of his patients are women, men are focusing more on their appearance than ever. The number one procedure Rey performs on men is liposuction, followed by rhinoplasty (nose job), blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery), breast reduction, and facelifts.

The age of his patients keeps getting younger, Rey said, but the Food and Drug Administration has rules about age. It's a gray area but persons under the age of 18 are not allowed to have plastic surgery unless it's reconstructive or congenital, for professional reasons or if a psychiatrist recommends it.

There are two plastic surgery peaks related to age, Rey said. The first peak is from persons ages 18-21 and the second peak is from persons ages 26-32. The first peak is to "get all the things they do not have" and the second peak is more like maintenance procedures.

