

# 'Altaring' Your Look

More brides are using plastic surgery and cosmetic dentistry, as well as quick fixes like Botox, to enhance their natural beauty in time for their wedding day.

BY SUSAN MITTLEMAN

Ever since you were a little girl, you've dreamed of being Cinderella. Now that it's almost time for you to walk up the aisle, it's your turn to be a gorgeous princess. But, remember, even Cinderella had a little help.

Today's bride may not have a fairy godmother, but she does have more options than ever to enhance both her inner and outer beauty. If diet, exercise, massages and make-up don't quite do the trick, there are other ways to pick up where Mother Nature left off.

Cosmetic surgery and non-surgical procedures, as well as cosmetic dentistry, are all becoming more accepted, more affordable and more common practices among women of all ages. In addition to improving a woman's appearance, cosmetic procedures can boost her self-esteem, enabling her to feel more relaxed in her own skin.

Grooms are also taking advantage of medical and dental enhancements in preparation for the big day. And in some instances, cosmetic procedures performed by a doctor or dentist can become, like the wedding itself, a family affair.

Such is the case for the Downing family of Atlanta, in which three generations of women altered their appearance surgically. The bride and groom also had their teeth whitened.

On learning that her daughter, Lisa Marie, was engaged, Marian Downing decided it was a good time to remove her old breast implants, get a breast lift and have her "saddlebags" eliminated (liposuction on her thighs).

"I wanted to look good at my only daughter's wedding," Marian says. "I couldn't have worn the dress I wore to her wedding if I hadn't had the liposuction done. I could've exercised till I died, but it would not come off!"

Marian put her trust in the hands of Dr. Mark Codner, an American Board of Plastic Surgeons-certified physician in Atlanta. When Lisa saw her mother's results, she decided to talk to the same surgeon. Lisa has a petite frame, and her breasts were so large that she was having back problems. She couldn't get bras to fit and never wore anything tight.

"I wanted to look good in my wedding dress and not have to wear a corset," Lisa says. "You're

"You want to look like a princess, no matter what."

## HOW MUCH DOES THIS COST?

Surgical Procedure	U.S. Ave.
Blepharoplasty (eyelids)	\$2,544
Botox	\$399
Breast augmentation	\$3,301
Breast reduction	\$5,180
Chemical peel	\$825
Collagen injection	\$399
Facelift	\$5,722
Laser hair removal	\$382
Liposuction	\$2,394
Microdermabrasion	\$220
Rhinoplasty (nose job)	\$3,751

Source of sampling of 2002 surgeon fees:  
American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery  
at [www.surgery.org](http://www.surgery.org)

### TOP 5 SURGICAL PROCEDURES FOR WOMEN

1. Lipoplasty (liposuction)
2. Breast augmentation
3. Blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery)
4. Breast reduction
5. Rhinoplasty (nose job)

### TOP 5 NON-SURGICAL PROCEDURES FOR WOMEN

1. Botox
2. Microdermabrasion
3. Collagen injection
4. Laser hair removal
5. Chemical peel

Source: American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, 2002

spending a lot of money on this dress, and you're only going to wear it one day. You want to look like a princess, no matter what."

Lisa was 30, and she knew she wanted to have children someday. After addressing all of her concerns with the plastic surgeon, she decided to undergo a breast reduction and lift about six months before her wedding.

"It was the best decision I ever made, because it gave me a new confidence about myself," she says. "I went from being a walking hunchback to being able to stand up straight. And, I could wear a two-piece bathing suit."

Her husband (then fiancé), who at first thought she'd lost her mind, Lisa says, later saw how happy and self-assured she had become and agreed that the operation had been worthwhile.

Liliane Phillips, Marian's 75-year-old mother and Lisa's grandmother, became intrigued and decided, "Okay, let's do my neck." She, too, paid a visit to Dr. Codner and, two months before Lisa's wedding, had a neck lift and a partial facelift. "I'm glad I did it. I'm very satisfied. If I were younger, I think I'd fall in love with my doctor!"

All three women also had Botox injections.

"This is a new chapter in someone's life, so why not take the opportunity to re-evaluate how they feel about themselves," says Dr. Codner, who wasn't surprised to see three people from one family. "They all had different procedures that applied to them at different ages." Having seen young brides, older brides, even identical twins, *(Continued on Page 170)*

"I've operated on more mothers of the bride and mothers of the groom than brides. They want facelifts and body-contouring procedures so they will look their best at the wedding. With brides, it's usually smaller procedures, because they tend to be much younger."  
- Dr. Foad Nahai of Atlanta, who was listed in *W* magazine as one of the top plastic surgeons in the world

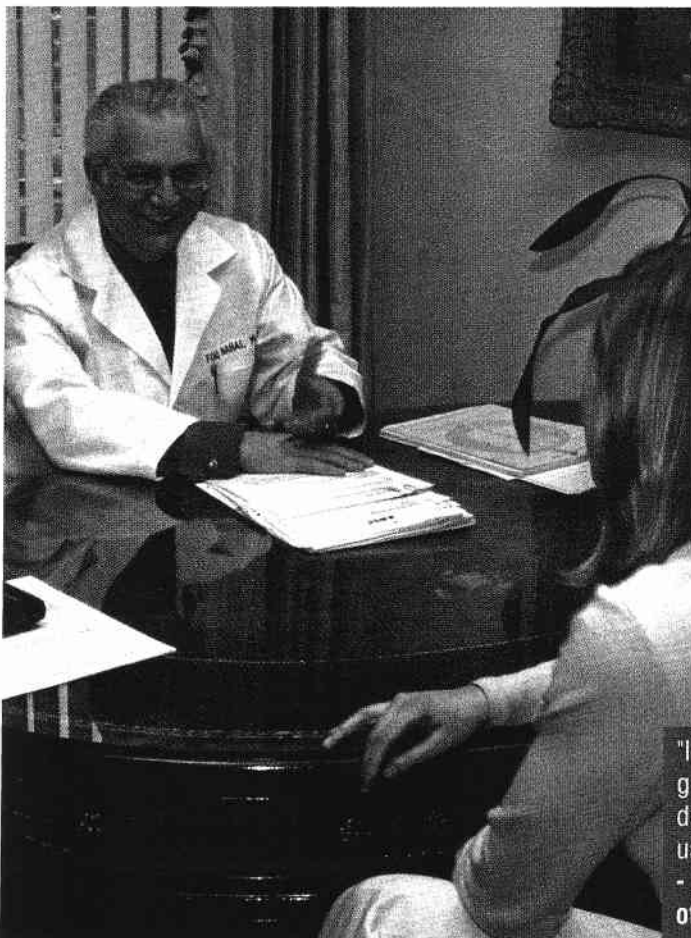
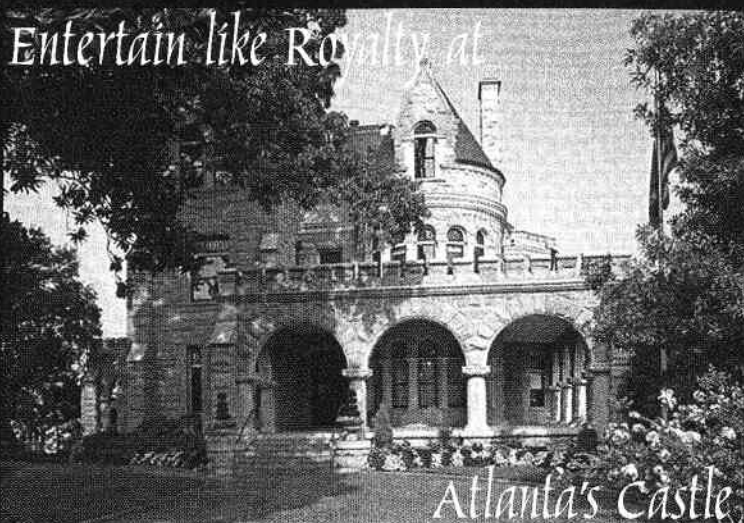


Photo by Lester Robertson/Paces Plastic Surgery, Atlanta, Ga.



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(Continued from Page 72)

he says, "Often the mother of the groom finds out the mother of the bride is having a lift, so she comes in as well."

Every bride has her reasons for undergoing a cosmetic procedure. Gretchen Hintz, a nurse then in her 20s, had lost 42 pounds before her wedding and gave herself a gift — liposuction: "I just wanted the areas resistant to exercise and diet to be fixed. I wanted to wear a strapless dress, and wanted my arms to look firm and toned." She ended up getting her arms, back, hips, thighs and stomach done, and was pleased with the results.

While liposuction is the most common medical procedure for people about to get married, less invasive procedures are increasingly popular, says Dr. Frank Elliott, spokesperson for the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. "You can help people acquire healthier skin so they look and feel better."

At 43, Kristi Eckerson acquired an attractive, radiant glow by undergoing a series of mild facial peels about a month before her wedding. "I wanted to come into this fresh and new, and get rid of wrinkles, and this was recommended by someone I trust," says Kristi, delighted by the outcome.

There are many ways to look and feel like a princess bride. Just remember that for any cosmetic procedure, it's important to choose a qualified plastic surgeon and make sure that both of you have a clear understanding of your expectations.

Here's a list of some of the most popular cosmetic surgical procedures:

**BREAST AUGMENTATION** uses implants, usually saline, to enlarge and shape the breasts. Implants are inserted through tiny incisions, either behind the breast tissue or beneath the pectoral muscle. (Check with your doctor if you're considering breast-feeding in the future.) You may be able to return to non-strenuous work a week after the surgery, but it will

take several weeks to recover fully.

**BREAST LIFTS** raise and firm them, changing the shape and contour, not really the size. Plastic surgeons recommend waiting until the breast is fully developed. Breast lifts are commonly performed in conjunction with augmentation or reduction. You may be able to breast-feed later but should discuss this with the doctor prior to surgery.

**BREAST REDUCTION** is the surgical removal of excess tissue to make breasts smaller and firmer. It can be helpful for women whose breasts are disproportionately large and who suffer from neck, back or shoulder pain. It will leave a scar. Check with your surgeon before the procedure if you plan to breastfeed someday.

**EYELID SURGERY** (blepharoplasty) removes redundant skin from the lids. It can help correct puffiness or droopy eyelids, but it won't necessarily improve dark circles due to discoloration. Surgical procedures and results vary for each individual.

**LIP AUGMENTATION** creates fuller, softer, plumper lips and reduces fine wrinkles around the mouth. It's done with either injectable fillers or implants. Implants, which last longer, are inserted through tiny incisions in the corner of the mouth, using a local anesthetic and requiring sutures. Recovery takes anywhere from three days to a couple of weeks. (Difficulties in puckering may last longer, which is good to know if you're getting married!)

**LIPOSUCTION** (lipoplasty) surgically removes deposits of excess fat from specific areas of the body, face or neck. It can slim the hips

and thighs, flatten the abdomen or eliminate a double chin.

Liposuction is the most popular cosmetic procedure performed in the United States. It is recommended for diet-resistant areas, not as a weight-loss solution or a treatment for obesity.

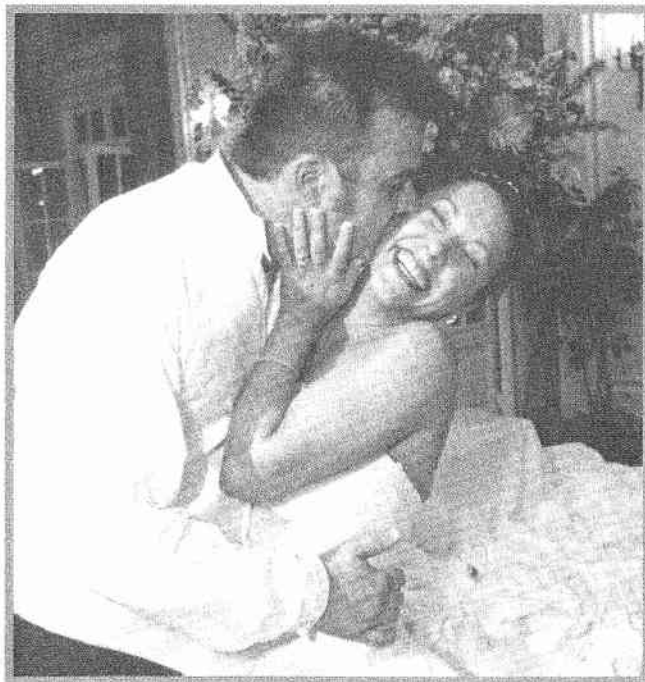
**A MINI-FACELIFT** restores smoother, younger contours to cheeks, jawline and neck by surgically pulling back and removing excess skin. With a "mini," scars

are shorter, and recovery is easier. The results are just as long-lasting but not as extensive. Discuss the timing with the doctor.

**RHINOPLASTY** (nose jobs) can enhance the shape, size and general appearance of the nose. Techniques vary, depending on the desired results and the surgeon's preferences. Procedures may be done in an outpatient or office surgery center or in a hospital. Allow at least three months to recover before the wedding.

**"I Do"**

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