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It used to be only in the Polo Lounge of the Beverly Hills hotel that you could find the women known as "same-surgeon blondes". These days, though, any Hollywood party might have dresses by Gucci, shoes by Marc Jacobs and body by, say, Dr Malcolm Lesavoy.

But perfection is no longer just for screen icons, nor is it confined to the loonier parts of California: it's becoming increasingly acceptable for everyone, and the signs are that its more extreme practices are on their way over here. New techniques and phrases such as "non-invasive" and "non-surgical" are making plastic surgery more attractive to the average Brit — as well as more socially acceptable.

In America, there has been a 153% increase in the number of procedures performed since 1992. It's now way over 1m a year, and 25% of those are performed in the 19 to 34 age group. In Britain, in the past five years, procedures have increased by 50%, with £158.6m spent on self-improvement by knife last year alone.

Dr Jeya Prakash, who claims to have pioneered London's new trend for Botox parties, says: "There has been a huge increase in the popularity of cosmetic surgery over here, because people are happier to take responsibility for how they look. Plus, it is possible to achieve more subtle results, which appeals to younger people."

But it is not getting any cheaper. In America there are dedicated loan companies for cosmetic procedures, and surgeons have their own financing, so you can buy a new face like a new car. It can't be long before British financial companies follow suit to match demand.

It's also no longer about older women worrying about their fading looks; it's about 30-year-olds wanting to look 23 and 25-year-olds wanting to look 17. When the 33-year-old Patsy Kensit admits to breast surgery, Botox and collagen implants, and Catherine Zeta-Jones is rumoured to have had eyelid surgery at 31, the role models are already there for the young.

In Hollywood the fads of cosmetic surgery move as quickly as hemline lengths. The eyelid lift is the equivalent of the Fendi baguette bag — so last year. Along with chin and cheek liposuction, it has passed out of the top 10 most fashionable things to do, along with the apple martini.

Caroline, a 27-year-old publicist in Los Angeles, had the eyelid lift last year: "My eyes are already pretty small and they get smaller as you get older."

If you think 27 is young, even for America, then Jeya Prakash admits giving Botox injections to a 20-year-old in London, while Jenna Franklin, a 15-year-old from Nottinghamshire, caused a storm earlier this year when she announced that her mother was giving her a breast job for her 16th birthday.

But why just have one thing done when you can have several? Lucy, a 42-year-old LA yoga teacher, had an eye job, along with a nose reconstruction and the latest laser dermabrasion, all at the same time at a cost of \$20,000 (£14,700). Ludicrously, she said: "Oh, it's because I spent a lot of time in South America. I needed the peel to make sure I got rid of any cancerous cells."

Six weeks after her operation, she was looking a little sunburnt,

Chin tucks in your lunch hour? The craze for cosmetic surgery is endemic in America and soon will be over here, writes Chrissy Iley

but her friend told me: "You should have seen what it was like when she came out. She couldn't open her eyes for 10 days and she was in such agony she couldn't get out of bed. It was like her whole head was a burning, throbbing mass, but she thinks it's worth it to look 10 years younger."

Laura, a 44-year-old marketing consultant from London, has just had the same laser treatment over here. "The surgery worked brilliantly," she says. "Before the treatment my skin looked tired, now it

looks brighter. My friends were worried about me having the surgery, but have since expressed an interest in having it done themselves." As more people come out with what has up until now been considered a dirty secret, so it becomes more socially acceptable.

Lesavoy, MD, FACS, is a professor of plastic surgery in Los Angeles. To talk to him is like a seduction: he makes people feel safe. "The image and reality is that surgery has become safer. People used to feel embarrassed to say

they'd had things done, but that's changing. In fact, the reverse is true. Now some women brag about their Botox or their breasts, as if they've created a work of art."

For those who fear the gruesome procedures, there are newer, more seductive terms. Michael Persky, a Beverly Hills surgeon, says that his top two procedures are non-invasive: the endoscopic brow lift, which is basically a less invasive facelift where everything gets tucked behind your hairline, and fat injections into the face so that skin gets puffed out and there's no structural change and no scarring. And where does the fat come from? Your stomach or thighs.

Douglas Hauck, a Los Angeles dentist, has invented the non-surgical smile. "You can get that puffed-out lip look by using ridged veneers. If there's a little ridge at the top of the veneer, your lip will puff out. They cost \$1,500 [about £1,000] a veneer, so two would do, or four would be puffier." British dentists, prepare yourselves.

Another LA dentist, George Hashim, told me why models don't eat meat. Most of them have had their molars taken out, two on each side, eight in all, so their cheeks look more sucked in. The trouble is, it means a mostly liquid diet.

As the industry booms, borders blur ever more. I went to meet Miranda, 25, in her Los Angeles dermatologist's office, where I had to sit and watch her have a chemical peel in her lunch break, as if I were watching her try on new tops. Such a thin line. Where does the cosmetic surgeon start and the dermatologist end?

At the end of it all, she looked very pink, but said: "The power peel blasts away your old skin. Der-

matologists are the new therapists. I had my midlife crisis at 24. Being a grown woman is something you can get away with not being."

Breast surgery still remains the most popular choice on both sides of the Atlantic, but there is now an alternative: the Brava bra. Lesavoy says he sees five people a week for this bra, a vacuum-suction contraption that produces more breast cells, fat cells, and glandular and fat tissue. If you don't want to have surgery and only need an increase of one cup size, then the Brava lifestyle might be for you.

A Brava user I spoke to said: "It's totally changed my life, but only because you have to wear it for 10 hours a day and you can't go out with it on. It's rather like having a kidney disease, where you come home for dialysis. I'm in my tenth week, so nearly done. I think there should be a Brava support group, because it's very claustrophobic not to have a social life."

Leg surgery is also taking off. Tami couldn't shift the fat from her thighs, so she had liposuction for \$5,500 (£3,800). "It was excruciatingly painful. There was severe bruising and you have to wear this crotchless girdle from your waist to your knees for six months. You only take it off to bath, otherwise your skin puckers and has all kinds of lumps. My boyfriend was very understanding. He thinks it's a huge relief that we can go to a restaurant and I don't have a panic attack if I've eaten carbohydrates."

When LA women talk they can sound like victims, but then 10 years ago their fascination for plastic surgery sounded equally as alien. Chin tucks in your lunch hour? Book the Harley Street clinic now.



Kensit is a role model for teenager Jenna, awaiting breast implants