

Clean Cut

California's new generation of plastic surgeons are using a radically light touch

BY KAREN PALMER

A

certain set of 35-plus actresses share more than just serious acting chops. And they're easy to spot: Despite the fact they're maturing (gracefully), you'd never know it from their flawless complexions and perfectly chiseled faces. ¶ Hollywood and the media are growing to accept

the "freshening" of faces with a little help from a professional. Check out any celeb gossip rag, and you'll see starlets who've had a little work done—many of whom aren't afraid to admit it. ¶ That same attitude is trickling down to the public, too: According to a study commissioned by the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) and conducted by the independent research firm Synovate in 2007, among all Americans, 78% of women and 79% of men said they would not be embarrassed if others knew they had cosmetic surgery. ¶ For a younger generation of plastic surgeons—and their increasingly younger patients—this attitude allows them to take a "less is more" philosophy when it comes to maintaining

a never-grow-old glow. Unlike previous generations, patients are no longer coming in looking for a dramatic change; instead, they'd like to look like themselves, only better. ¶ "I believe people are seeing cosmetic surgery in a healthier, more organic way: as a process, rather than a single episode," says **Dr. Carolyn Chang**, 41, of San Francisco's Women's Plastic Surgeons. "From my experience, a lot of my patients are in their late 30s and early 40s, and we're definitely doing procedures that use a lighter hand. And as a younger doctor, I feel it's a fit for me to be seeing younger patients." ¶ Dr. Lisa

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—**DR. CAROLYN CHANG** L.A.-based plastic surgeon featured on the likes of "Dr. 90210" and Lifetime's "Women Docs," agrees: "If anything, I have patients who come in and tell me they don't want to look like someone who has had work done. They're looking for a fresh approach. And I always try to think, 'As a woman, what would I want?'" ¶ It's no surprise, then, that some of the doctors' most oft-performed procedures are less invasive and achieve **CONTINUED**



A new charge of young, female surgeons are carving a fresh path with feather-light techniques.

a more natural aesthetic. "The recovery time is shorter, and patients can ease into the change more slowly," explains **Dr. Chang**, who often performs endoscopic brow lifts, aesthetic eyelid surgery and facelifts with minimal scarring. Dr. Cassileth developed a new technique called Thread Light, which allows doctors to make tiny incisions around the hairline. Breast lifts, which account for very minimal scarring, are also a popular request.

The combination of a lighter hand and less scarring means a more natural, more finished look—one that's closer to the patient's original appearance. "I want people to look like themselves but to look the best they possibly can," **Dr. Chang** says.

Empathy and patient counseling also play large roles in this new approach. "I make sure patients are of good sound mental and physical health before they have a procedure," **Dr. Chang** explains. "Plastic surgery isn't a panacea for happiness."

And as Dr. Cassileth says, "I try to really hear people and talk to them about what they want. I'm in Beverly Hills. People care about how they look." ●