



The truth behind celebrity good looks

How often have you read that the celebrity secret to looking great is to drink more water and get more sleep? Insider Nadine Baggott knows the truth and isn't afraid to tell all

I have a guilty secret. I am a little bit obsessed with celebrities of a certain age who look unnaturally youthful. You know the ones, regularly seen in the Daily Mail website's sidebar of shame and on the magazine rack at the supermarket checkout, who have somehow stopped time and seem not to have aged, yet who are well into their 40s, 50s and sometimes their 60s. How do they do it, I ponder, as I compare my own sagging features with theirs?

I should know better. As the Beauty Editor of Hello! I have spent countless days interviewing celebrities and enough time backstage at TV shows, awards ceremonies and photo shoots to know that much of it is smoke and mirrors or, in most cases, good lighting and great hair and make-up. But that doesn't stop me from wanting to know more: more about the injections and lasers, more about the fake hair and face peels, the skin tightening and neck lifting. Forget re-touching, now it's all about the pre-touching.

'The harsh truth is that looking good is a celebrity's job,' says Dr Norman Leaf, the man behind many an ageless Hollywood face. Says Dr Leaf, one of LA's most discreet and in-demand cosmetic surgeons: 'If you were to put as much money, time, pain and effort into your looks as

you do your nine-to-five job, then you would look that good, too.'

So what are the A-list procedures that hold back the years? Gone are the wind tunnel face-lift surgeries. They've been replaced by relatively non-invasive treatments like Botox, fillers, thread lifts, laser resurfacing and dermarollering, explains Dr Leaf. 'It's why, if they start in their 30s, celebrities can seem ageless – because a procedure once every six weeks with little down time is much more subtle and can go undetected by the press and public.' But how to escape the long lenses of the paparazzi? 'I open the surgery early and the celebrities arrive at 6am in blacked-out limos, driving straight into the lower-level garage entrance,' reveals Leaf.

The latest treatments use laser, radiowave, microwave and ultrasound energy to heat up and shrink the skin, in a sort of controlled damage and repair process. Jennifer Aniston freely admitted that she was a laser junky and her best friend Courteney Cox has gone on the record to say that she has the new Ultherapy ultrasound face tightening. This celebrity association makes them seem like glorified facials, but they aren't. For many treatments you need Valium sedation and intravenous painkillers, and may have 10 days of peeling

skin (although you'll also see sun spots coming off, your skin firming up and lines fading away).

In LA, if you appear on screen, you'll be offered all those new non-invasive procedures, plus nose tip refinement and, if you're over 40, a lower face lift. 'In Hollywood it is hard to find a natural nose or breast, and at 50, most famous faces have gone under the knife,' says Leaf. That got me having hours of fun comparing pictures of some famous faces in their teens with images of them today.

In London the hottest cosmetic doc on the block is Dr Jean Louis Sebagh - I've seen European royalty, catwalk queens and society gals emerge from his office. He doesn't name names, but is well known for being the man behind the beautifully ageless face of Cindy Crawford. I heard that he regularly turns away another supermodel who wants more and more work, yet who told me that she doesn't believe in Botox because, 'Who would want to put toxins into their third eye chakra?' Dr Sebagh says, 'Give me a face at 30 and I can slow the passage of time until they are in their late 40s, but eventually a needle cannot replace the knife.'

On the whole, we Brits like a more subtle approach. We admire women like Nigella Lawson and Helen Mirren who look great but aren't chasing youth. 'I beg people not to get filler and too much Botox,' says Christian Vermaak, the hair stylist and make-up artist who works regularly with Dannii and Kylie Minogue and Amanda Holden. 'Often it looks great in pictures but not on TV or film when a face moves.' Only the very best work goes unnoticed in today's high definition world.

The trouble is that there is a generation of celebrities so used to seeing themselves in pictures that they lose sight of how they look in real life. They are all starting to look the same, with their overblown cheek filler, smooth, glassy foreheads and puffy lips. It's a look that defies age, but not in a good way. It's a look that doesn't say 'young', it just says 'done'.

So the real celebrity secret is to get work done but to never look as if you have - or to admit it. One Hollywood actress famously sued the surgeon who was rumoured to have done her face-lift. The fact that he had done it, and brilliantly, wasn't the point. By denying it and naming him, she got to sign an anti-ageing cosmetics contract worth millions and he got acres of press coverage. That's what you call a win-win in the war against wrinkles.

And if you keep your cosmetic surgeon close, you keep your hair and make-up artists closer still. Hair stylist Sam McKnight reveals clip-in wefts of hair are what give many female celebs that much needed extra volume when hair has naturally thinned. Mary Greenwell, the make-up

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artist on many an A-lister's speed dial, including Uma Thurman, Demi Moore and Cate Blanchett, says, 'There is no hiding from the hair and make-up teams. They see famous faces straight off planes, jet lagged and with no make-up or extensions - and you can't hide scars from a hairstylist.' They'll notice when someone has had work done and a face is even subtly different. 'But often no one speaks about it,' she confides.

It's the collusion of silence that allows a celebrity at a skincare launch to tell me she has rejected Botox and is now relying on a great serum, yet never to acknowledge that she is recently back from LA where Dr Leslie Stevens had given her a face-lift. That's the very same Dr Stevens who is responsible for Sharon Osbourne's work. It's the modern equivalent of lying about your age: you just lie about your 'work'.

People often complain of airbrushing but the truth is that hair and make-up artists and pre-touching tools make celebrities look their fabulous best. This is why you - and I - should stop comparing ourselves with them. The truth is that in the harsh light of day when the make-up comes off, even their mums would struggle to recognise them!

Insider know-how

Just because someone hasn't gone under the knife, doesn't mean they are *au naturel*. Here's the (sometimes gruesome) list of the latest procedures.

Botox the muscle relaxing injections that can erase forehead lines and crow's feet in four to five days. Most famous faces have mobile Botox: mini injections of micro doses so they can still emote and express without deep furrow lines. That way they can deny having anything done.

Filler is usually hyaluronic acid, a natural plumping ingredient found in skin that diminishes as we age. Usually injected into cheeks, nose to mouth marionette lines and lips, but also into the backs of hands and acne scars. It's the overuse of this, often by

untrained beauty therapists, that gives rise to the infamous 'chipmunk cheeks'.

Lasers These can work to heat up and destroy pigment in the skin, so can get rid of sun spots and broken veins, and also to 'resurface' the skin to lessen lines and wrinkles.

Ultherapy is the latest ultrasound treatment. It sends energy deep into the skin to heat it up so it shrinks and tightens. It is said to be very painful but very effective. And it works where lasers and Botox cannot: the jawline and neck.

Dermaroller An almost Medieval instrument that pinpricks the skin, forcing the body to repair itself and grow new cells and firmer skin. Needle length on the roller - which looks like a mini lawn roller - ranges from 0.5mm to 2mm; the latter done under sedation.

Thread lift Puncture wounds are made in the hairline and a fine barbed thread is passed deep into the skin, following the plains of the face, usually down the forehead or cheek, which, when pulled back, grips the skin and holds it back in place where it was before it sagged. □