

# DESIGNER VAGINAS

Bringing new meaning to the phrase "a little nip and tuck"!

## ASSIGNMENT TWO

### cosmetic vaginal rejuvenation

First there were nose jobs, then came boob jobs and lip jobs. And now, for the woman who's had every "job," there's the "vagi job," the latest new trend in plastic surgery. "You won't believe how good sex can be!" promises a newspaper ad for the Vaginal Rejuvenation Center of Los Angeles, which was situated next to other plastic surgery ads for "love handle" removal, Botox injections and penis enlargements. "We completely resculpt and rejuvenate the vagina in a one-hour laser procedure," promises the Vaginal Rejuvenation Center's ad.

Located in Beverly Hills, where many women's desires for plastic surgery verge on obsessive-compulsive, I visited the Rejuvenation Center to find out how a coochie operation could make sex better. There, I met with Dr. David Matlock, a gynecologist who calls himself the "Picasso of vaginas." Dr. Matlock told me that he performs three basic procedures: The first, which he calls laser rejuvenation for the enhancement of sexual gratification, is geared toward the 30 million women who suffer from "vaginal relaxation."

"This," he says, "is when there is damage to the pelvic muscles and ligaments due to childbearing and age. There is a loss of optimum structure of the vagina, and the muscles become flaccid." In other words, having sex with your vagina in this state is like throwing your man's proverbial pickle down your coochie hallway. This procedure, which is his specialty, costs between \$3,000 and \$7,500 and is, according to Dr. Matlock, a "modification of a standard accepted gynecological vaginal surgery for treatment of vaginal relaxation and stress urinary incontinence." With a laser, he cuts the top and bottom of the vaginal canal, then sews the muscles and ligaments back together, which reduces the diameter of the vagina and makes it tighter. The result, he says, is a "post virginal/pre-childbearing state." Matlock says that the husbands of satisfied customers send him flowers and thank-you notes. One husband wrote, "It's like having the same wife, but a new woman."

The second procedure the surgeon performs is a cosmetic one called designer vaginoplasty, considered by some to be the ultimate in vaginal vanity. "I have women who come in and show me photographs from porn mags and say, 'I want to look like this,'" he reports. Dr. Matlock says that women come to him because they want their

Designer vaginoplasty resculpts the appearance of the labia minoris and labia majores (the inner and outer lips). There are two things that he fixes. He is able to make "flattened" labia—also due to childbearing and age—look more desirable by giving them a "puffy" or "pouty" look with "microsurgical liposculpturing." This is accomplished by taking fat from the patient's thighs or stomach and injecting it into her labia for, as he says, "a more youthful appearing external vagina."

He also clips uneven or saggy labia (a "lip clip") or unusually long labia that cause pain when they are thrust back into the vagina during intercourse.

Matlock cites a study of 60 men that concludes that the aesthetic appearance of the vagina is important to men. But the men I "scientifically" surveyed said they could care less about the way a vagina looks. One 28-year-old guy said, "I'm more concerned about how it feels and smells." Another said he rarely studies them because he's too busy making sure he's "getting it in right."

A third (and less commonly performed procedure) Matlock performs is hymenioplasty, or hymen reconstruction. "In some ethnic cultures," he says, "when a woman consummates the marriage, she must bleed to prove her virginity to her partner. In this day and age, a woman's hymen is rarely intact [by the time she is an adult]. Nevertheless, some women do request a hymen repair. This of course, is strictly by request of the woman," he says.

After my visit to the Center, I couldn't help but contemplate the aesthetics of vaginal beauty. While men seem to like it when women compliment them on the sizes and shapes of their penises, we women spend so much time on other aspects of our appearances that being complimented on our genitalia is low on our list of priorities.

But I'm all for Matlock's vaginal tightening procedure. "Laser vaginal rejuvenation empowers women with the choice and freedom to enhance sexual gratification," says Matlock.

On the other hand, aside from the minority of women who are self-conscious about an unusually shaped labia that has bothered them for years, obsessing that yours doesn't measure up is something you don't need to stress about. (There aren't too many "Miss Labia 2000" contests out there, anyway.)

-By Anka Radakovich

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