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Man In The LED Mask

Amit Torres is making women
glow in Monaco.

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Plus **Power Lunch** | **Monte Carlo Living**



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Sage Before Beauty

An Unwrinkle In Time

Money can't buy you love but it can buy you a youthful face.
Why aging in macho Monaco is not for the faint-hearted.

Seventy is the new 60. Wait, 60 is the new 40. But now 40 is the new 30. And then with the FaceTune app you can erase ten years. So is 70 the new 20?

Forget the old chestnut: "It's what's inside that counts." It's what's on Instagram that counts. We are living in an ageless digital world, an alter reality airbrushed to elite perfection, where looks have become a currency to secure a wealthy partner or brand endorsements. No generation is spared: those over 35 are trying to chase eternal youth; those under 35 are chasing flawless beauty. In either case, any individuality seems to have been overshadowed by over-plumped lips and a symmetric nose, all gift wrapped in a wrinkle-free package of skin.

A 2020 International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery report showed that 19- to 34-year-olds accounted for the highest proportion of those undergoing rhinoplasty (67.9%) while those 35 to 50 made up for the majority of Botox procedures (50.2%). The global facial injectable market size—which includes Botox and fillers—was valued at \$16.1 billion in 2021 and Grand View Research claims it is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 9.1% from 2022 to 2030.

"It is a constant battle to keep your values and beliefs intact in a world where you're expected to look, act and be perfect at all times," admits Brit Lucy Coote, who has been living in the Principality for nearly twenty years. (She is one of three women willing to have their name on record). The 52-year-old massage and bodywork therapist says, "Monaco is a tight-knit community spread over only 200 hectares of land. Add to this dynamic the combination of high-net-worth wealth, huge power and incredible beauty found pretty much on every street corner and, lo and behold, you have a recipe for an insatiable demand to keep hold of those eternal, youthful looks."

TOP 5 SURGICAL PROCEDURES WORLDWIDE

Breast augmentation

16%

Liposuction

15.1%

Eyelid surgery

12.1%

Rhinoplasty

8.4%

Abdominoplasty

7.6%

TOP 5 SURGICAL PROCEDURES WORLDWIDE FOR MEN

Eyelid surgery

Liposuction

Gynecomastia

Rhinoplasty

Ear surgery

Sheeva Moshiri, author of *The Cupid Index*, says, "The competition is high between single women in Monaco, particularly those after a rich man. The category of women, however, is quite mixed and I wouldn't put all single women in this category. For instance, business women, entrepreneurs or financially independent women wouldn't feel the pressure of aging as much as those in search of financial support from a man. I'm not saying all rich men are after 20-year-old supermodels but, from what I've seen, the majority seem to be. It's a strange world but this isn't exclusive to Monaco."

For 42-year-old Moshiri, "Aging is a natural process and women would all like to age gracefully, but I personally wouldn't kill myself trying."

Another resident, a 60-year-old architect, says that while the pressure on aging for women is hard everywhere where a lot of money is around, it is specifically tough as an expat wife with the strict divorce laws in the Principality in favor of men. "With the potential omnipresent option for husbands to swap the existing wife against a younger version, former decent husbands seem to turn into complacent narcissists shortly after moving to Monaco. They start buying cars, start showing off and start having affairs because they have options served on a silver platter left, right and center, and because it's completely acceptable in Monaco to do so. Monaco lacks a social fabric with conservative values that most of us were raised with."

Psychotherapist Gavin Sharpe of Riviera Wellbeing started a women's group in Monaco for those who feel under pressure by their husbands to have cosmetic surgery or stay in super shape. "One client was told it was time for her to have a boob job and that she should go to the gym a bit more—and not that it matters but she was objectively a beautiful and fit young woman. This is emotional abuse and invalidating behaviors which are part of the myriad of ways that women

are sometimes controlled. If you have low self-esteem or fear being abandoned, this can be quite overwhelming,” says Sharpe.

As Coote describes, “I felt like I was the only person sitting at the dinner table with lines on their forehead and wrinkles around their eyes.” She tried Botox. Once. “At first it left me looking like I’d done six rounds with Mike Tyson. As things healed, I did like the effect. My husband said I did not look like me. This was true, I looked different, slightly and discreetly, but different. I stopped as I felt I had lost my values of being true and accepting to myself.

“I don’t regret trying, though. My path to aging gracefully involves a plant-based, whole food diet, high in plant protein, grains, legumes and low in sugar and fat, with lots of water and regular exercise. I also advocate positive thoughts because good energy is infectious and makes us appear more youthful in spirit.”

One 34-year-old Monaco resident, a documentary maker, confesses she had a breast augmentation after the birth of her second child and two years ago started doing Botox every four to six months for wrinkle prevention. “Any pressure I feel is definitely internal. Living in a community obsessed with being a size 0 and injecting themselves to plump up their lips and freeze their frown lines is hard, but scrolling Instagram and seeing post after post of gorgeous women with no cellulite and flawless skin has made me feel envious and motivated to achieve perfection. I have to regularly remind myself that most of these photos have been filtered and are not ‘real’ life.”

She shares the story of a photo taken at a kid’s birthday party in Monaco. “I was shocked as I was unrecognizable. The mom had filtered the image with Everlook and put a full face of makeup on all the women in the picture. It was 35°C outside and I wore no makeup. I asked her to send me the original, which she did, but requested I didn’t post it as she didn’t want the world to see her without the filter.”

Dr. P.B., a plastic surgeon in Monaco for over two decades tells me, “Today there is no set age



TOP 5 NONSURGICAL PROCEDURES WORLDWIDE

Botulinum toxin
43.2%

Hyaluronic acid
28.1%

Hair removal
12.8%

Nonsurgical
fat reduction
3.9%

Photo
rejuvenation
(3.6%)

for aesthetic medical or surgical procedures, patients are between 18 and 90. Young people are very influenced by social networks and also want to prevent the appearance of wrinkles. Adults want to feel good and fit and seniors want to take care of themselves.”

The doctor adds, “Patients are very well informed from the internet or through their networks. They know what they want and even the operating procedures and risks that entails. Our role is to train ourselves regularly in the best techniques to offer the best surgical procedure with a very high-quality technical platform.”

Tracy Cohen Sayag, director of the Clinique des Champs Elysées in Paris for Medicine and Aesthetic Surgery, commented on France Bleu radio about how the Zoom Boom changed the way a new generation of people see themselves, likening their obsession to 18- to 35-year-olds: “If you look at the trend, it’s an effect that has already taken place against a generation that is used to taking pictures of themselves and talking live.” She also stated men represent 20% of their patients compared to 5% ten years ago.

Amit Torres, CEO of Richmond Monaco, states that men make up 30% of his clientele. Torres,

who has been offering anti-aging and cosmetic treatments on boulevard des Moulins since opening in 2021, has a contagious confidence. The 34-year-old's apprenticeship as a cosmetic specialist began in Hawaii, where he ended up after he left his native Israel to explore the world for two years. "We were working on a woman with a pigmentation on her face. I saw how it changed her life. And I knew I found what I wanted to do."

The more he learned just how unique each person's type of skin is, the more he delved into solving various kinds of skin problems non-surgically. "This is where our idea was born. We use non-invasive treatments safely without the need for a long recovery. As a result, imperfections such as wrinkles, pigmentation, cellulite and blemishes, have become a thing of the past, while our technologies are simply a thing of the future."

Beyond the technology, he developed a method to enhance the client experience. "When you step into a typical beauty institute, you are asked to choose from a menu of various treatments and technologies that you have never heard of. We not only treat the skin but also help people to better understand the benefits so they can enjoy the journey of becoming a better version of themselves." Treatments range from neck and face (€90 for a 30-minute express microneedling; their signature 90-minute non-surgical face lift costs €320) and body (EMS abs sculpting on targeted areas to burn fat and build more muscle, €450/1 hour) to massage and hands, with the option of a membership program.

Torres says what sets Richmond apart from the competition in Monaco is their tailor-made approach. "We personalize each treatment, beginning with a client-specific diagnostic and face mapping using our cutting-edge analysis device."

The results of the face mapping are tough to swallow—9% elasticity in my eyelids—especially for someone like me who has not used moisturizer or sunscreen on her face since 2005, when a freak allergic skin reaction landed me in hospital in Nice for second-degree burns. Further complications followed and as the years went by, I have stuck religiously to washing my body, face and hair with only soap d'Alep, which has an olive oil base and no preservatives, chemical additives or fragrances. Somewhere along the way, however, I confused being *au naturel* with neglecting my aging skin. Big mistake at 53.

Torres assures me he can improve skin quality by setting up a unique protocol. First with

TOP 5 COUNTRIES FOR COSMETIC PROCEDURES

U.S.
(First time number one for surgical and nonsurgical procedures)

Brazil

Germany

Japan

Turkey

HIGHEST PROPORTION OF FOREIGN PATIENTS

Mexico
28.2%

Turkey
25.8%

Colombia
21.8%

ALL STATISTICS SOURCE:
2020 GLOBAL SURVEY
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
OF AESTHETIC PLASTIC
SURGERY

microneedling, which he explains will increase collagen production and strengthen the skin's elasticity. The microneedling is followed by a radio frequency device that helps improve firmness to smooth out fine lines and wrinkles and make them less visible.

My tailor-made skin revival plan is designed around two cycles of three treatments, focusing on the lines around my eyes. The microneedling is not painful and the skilled therapists have a way of making my skin dance. Of the possible side effects—bleeding, infection, peeling and bruising—I had a bit of the latter but there is no denying the immediate results. My skin looks plumper, more radiant—and sighs with gratitude—but I still look like me. The tell-tale sign is that my husband notices the difference: "Incredible, your eyes look so much brighter."

"By personalizing each treatment," Torres insists, "you can reach an unbelievable result that will improve your skin faster and safer with long-lasting effects."

With Richmond Monaco booked to the nines, Torres has plans to open his second Richmond institute in Geneva in 2023. "In Switzerland, we will develop the medical aspect of the business—more invasive treatments like Botox, fillers, hair growth treatments, face and body surgeries—which is only permitted in Monaco if you are a Monegasque practitioner."

Torres has his eyes on Dubai and Singapore for 2025. "We believe that the Asian and Middle Eastern markets will show an increase in demand for high-end beauty treatments and technologies in the following five to ten years."

In Monaco, there is no shortage of demand—or supply. Dr. P.B. advises patients to "go small and often—effective, minimal invasive procedures two to three times a year to have and maintain good results." In listening to dozens of women, many of whom have dabbled in every procedure from Botox to eyelid lifts, there is a consensus that supports the doctor's recommendation. However, the overall feedback about aging comes down to being grateful in your own skin, no matter what age that skin may reveal. Not always easy. Recently, when I was reporting live at the swimrun world championship in Sweden, a spectator told me, "You look exactly like John McEnroe." Tough to swallow that, but fortunately thick skin requires no cosmetic intervention.

Charlotte Baddeley, 70, perhaps sums it up best: "I have no desire to be young again but I wish people would act surprised when I tell them my age."