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THE RETURN OF GLAMOUR

COUPLE'S THERAPY

Never mind spa days with your girlfriends – the hottest trend for staying young and beautiful is all about cosmetic surgery dates with your significant other

Words by Lucy Wildman

It's date night. So what are you and your partner planning? Dinner and a movie? A sunset stroll along the beach, followed by a few drinks? Or a visit to your favourite aesthetic surgeon for pre-supper Botox and fillers? According to recent research, it's the latter that's becoming increasingly popular for couples in the Middle East who want to share more than just their starters. Dubbed "beauty matching" – a plastic surgery trend that sees couples heading to the surgeon's office to double-up on aesthetic procedures – the UAE has seen a dramatic increase in the number of men and women in a long-term relationship undergoing cosmetic surgery together. While plastic surgery was previously considered more of a female market, in recent years the balance has shifted, with more men than ever choosing to go under the knife. Fast forward to 2019, and the most rapidly-growing marketplace is couples choosing to go for a tandem tweak, nip and tuck. Consultant plastic surgeon at Aesthetics by King's College Hospital London Dubai, Dr. Rory McGoldrick, says a high proportion of women he has operated on are now bringing in their husbands to have cosmetic treatments too. "Since we opened the Aesthetics wing at the hospital about a year ago, I've operated on between 30 to 40 couples," says Dr. McGoldrick. Introducing their partners to cosmetic injectables like Botox and dermal fillers, as well as more significant procedures including liposuction, rhinoplasty and gynecomastia surgery, the 41-year-old doctor says the taboos that once existed around men having non-surgical cosmetic procedures have quickly dissolved, allowing them to admit they've had a bit of work, without being subjected to any kind of judgement. "I recently had Botox for the first time on the crow's feet around my eyes," says Dr. McGoldrick. "I did it not only to soften the fine lines on my face, but also to experience it, and be able to explain to first-time patients what having Botox really felt like. It seemed a bit weird to be injecting patients on a daily basis, when I'd never actually tried the procedure myself."

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> *Dr. Matteo Vigo*

One of the first to notice the spike in couple's requests for beauty matching in the UAE is Dr. Matteo Vigo. Performing couple's surgery between two to three times a week, procedures he carries out range from dermal fillers and Botox to face lifts and, most popular of all, matching liposuction and tummy tucks. Whilst not neccessarily requesting procedures take place at the same time, more often than not, it's a case of one spouse wanting to keep up with the other who has undergone a recent treatment. "It is more common to see the wife coming in for treatment first," says Dr. Vigo. "Once the husband sees his partner's results, he comes in for surgery himself." With the most common triggers for tandem surgery being major life events, like their forthcoming wedding or a big anniversary party, right the way through to 'gifting themselves' a physical enhancement following significant weight loss, while couple's treatments are more prevalent in those aged between 40 to 50, younger couples are also

Photography: Getty Images

requesting joint surgeries, with experts suggesting social media could be a driving force behind the trend. “People have never looked at themselves so much as they do now,” says Dr. Dany Kayle, founder of Dr. Kayle Aesthetic Clinic Dubai. “The effect of social media and the importance people now place upon their physical appearance directly impacts upon their self-confidence. It’s caused people to start scrutinizing their appearance, noticing things that they may not have really seen before, and wanting to change things that they don’t like about themselves. Both men and women of all ages are deciding that they want to look better. And significantly, couples are choosing to make those changes together.”

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> *Dr. Dany Kayle*

While beauty matching may raise eyebrows in some circles – with critics suggesting there could be more sinister reasons behind a couple’s desire to go under the knife, such as wanting to look like one another – Dr. Kayle says surgery requests to make a couple appear physically alike are extremely rare. “If a couple came to me insisting they wanted to look each other, I’d have to turn them away,” he explains. “Wanting to look so very alike, as if you were siblings, for example, is a major red flag in this particular arena. That would suggest there are issues of far greater importance than aesthetics that need to be addressed in their relationship. The aim of cosmetic surgery is to make people look better in their own skin, thus making an improvement to the way they look – not changing the way they look.” When beauty matching isn’t about coercion or copycatting, but a mutual decision to share an experience and its subsequent benefits, surgeons say that getting procedures with your partner is totally normal – practical even. The premise being that if both partners are interested in undergoing a procedure, going through the process together offers the chance to help one another prepare for surgery in the lead up to it, keep each other company during recovery, and support each other when others may not understand exactly how they feel. The ability to offer emotional support is a major advantage,says Dr. Julius Few, a board-certified plastic surgeon and clinical professor of plastic surgery at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine, who says having your partner there to give you advice is a big plus when getting procedures done together. “Now more than ever we have so many ways to treat a given issue,” he explains. “Sometimes having another person in the room who really knows you is vital to making to making the best decision possible for you.” Dr. Kayle agrees. “Here in the UAE, couple’s surgery is a more romantic endeavour, where the couple want to share the experience of undergoing procedures to look better or younger. The mutual encouragement required to endure the efforts involved, to go under the knife and tolerate a bit of discomfort in order to achieve the positive changes they are after are made far easier when they can discuss everything with the person closest to them. And then it’s about sharing the joy – the joy of looking better.” Spending anywhere between around Dhs3,000 for injectable enhancements and up to Dhs75,000 for a full facelift, with shared experience a key factor in taking the plastic surgery plunge together, while it’s usually the woman who starts the cosmetic surgery conversation, Dr. Kayle says it’s both partners that are equally involved in the in-depth decision-making process surrounding the details of the procedures they will undertake – including who carries out the surgery. “This is a couple who share many things, and one of those things is the surgeon who they have brought into their circle of trust,” he explains. “Whether it’s Botox, fillers, thread-lifting, eyelid surgery, face-lifting, rhinoplasty or liposuction, they need to be performed by the same plastic surgeon who they both trust, and who understands the reasoning behind this very significant joint decision.”

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DR. DANY KAYLE

Dubbed Dubai’s Godfather of non-surgical facial rejuvenation, Dr. Kayle has forged a reputation for providing an improved – though natural – look for all of his patients thanks to his three-step non-invasive facial procedure that showcases his mastery of thread lifts. Graduating from the American University of Beirut, and establishing his eponymous private practice in the UAE in 2000, Dr. Kayle is a recognised member of ISAPS – the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. *Dr. Kayle Aesthetic Clinic, Al Wasl Rd, Umm Sequim, Dubai, +971 4 330 6611*

DR. JAFFER KHAN

Medical director and head consultant at Aesthetics International, Dr. Jaffer Khan is one of the most esteemed plastic surgeons in the UAE. Specialising in liposuction and body contouring, as well as aesthetic and reconstructive surgery of the face, breast and abdomen, Dr. Khan was an original pioneer of facial resurfacing in the Middle East, having introduced the first Erbium YAG laser to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1997 and Dubai in 1998. *Nova Clinic Dubai, Al Wasl Rd, Jumeira, Dubai. + 971 4 384 5666*

DR. RORY MCGOLDRICK

With over 17 years’ experience in plastic and reconstructive surgery, Dr. McGoldrick’s experience is extensive and ranges from multi-region reconstructive surgery after cancer, trauma and burns to all aspects of aesthetic surgery and non-surgical treatments. Practicing in Dubai since 2016, in recent years, his personal interest has focused on aesthetic breast surgery, body contouring, non-surgical rejuvenation and the wider medical aesthetic arts. *Kings College Hospital London Dubai, The Residence at Marina Gate 1, Dubai Marina, Dubai. + 971 4 581 3222*

DR. MATTEO VIGO

Trained in Italy, Ireland and Brazil, and graduating from Milan in 2004, Dr. Vigo has been practicing in Dubai since 2012. Specialising in plastic, aesthetic and reconstructive surgeries, with specific expertise in breast surgery and fat grafting, Dr.Vigo is a member of AICPE, the Italian Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, and ISAPS, the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. He is currently the specialist plastic surgeon at Amwaj Polyclinic, Healthbay Polyclinic and Bioscience Clinic in Dubai. *Amwaj Polyclinic, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Street, Dubai Marina, Dubai. +971 4 422 1331*