

{ BEAUTY }

IN HIGH DEFINITION

Cheekbones are the new lips — the feature that just can't be plumped up enough.

By KAVITA DASWANI
Special to The Times

PERHAPS the pretty things traipsing up and down Robertson Boulevard don't quite know yet that their poufy, pulpy lips are so 2006.

Today, it's all about the cheekbone.

In yet another phenomenon in cosmetic procedures — taking off from Botox, eyelash extensions and, of course, those collagen-injected lips — women (and plenty of men) are taking another look at their cheekbones, using injectable fillers to help shape, plump and generally restructure the cheek — an area that has until now been overlooked.

At the heart of the upswing, doctors say, is that people are no longer fixated just on the lines and wrinkles in their face, but in how to get the effect of a full face-lift without going under the knife. The general obsession with celebrity culture is helping to drive cheekbone mania too: Surgeons often get requests from patients specifically to replicate the spectacular cheekbones of Angelina Jolie or the rosy, youthful cheeks of Katie Holmes or Jessica Alba.

"When Bo Derek came out in '10,' everyone was thinking about the cheekbone, but it fell out of favor," said Dr. Anna Guanche, a dermatologic surgeon and owner of the Bella Skin Institute in Calabasas, who later this month will perform a cheek procedure on TLC's makeover show, "10 Years Younger." "What's happening now is that people are focusing on more than just the obvious areas like around the eyes, the smile lines or the forehead. They are noticing that their cheeks are rolling downwards and inwards as they age, and that something can be done about it."

The procedure involves one or two injections around the cheekbone area, either through the face or, as some cosmetic specialists practice, through the mouth. The area is anesthetized so there is minimal discomfort. It rarely takes longer than 20 minutes, and though there might be some short-term redness, the effects are almost immediate. No recovery time is needed.

Among the more popular fillers are Radiesse, an FDA-approved injectable made from calcium hydroxyapatite — essentially calcium-based microspheres in a water-based gel. Originally designed to smooth out wrinkles and lines (specifically, the nasolabial folds, which form around the mouth and nose area), the dermal filler is now being used increasingly above the cheekbone to add definition. A cheek procedure with Radiesse will run \$1,500 to \$2,000, with results lasting a year or longer. Other fillers include Sculptra, also FDA-approved, which is made from poly-L-lactic acid and tends to be pricier but does last longer. Side effects can include occasional redness, swelling and discomfort around the injected area, and in cases where the injection is done through the mouth, doctors say there is also a chance of infection.

Dr. Bruce Katz, director of the Juva Skin & Laser Center and MediSpa in New York, says he has performed three times as many cheek



Photographs, from top, by: ©Bettie Archives; GABRIEL BOUYS AFP/Getty Images; MICHAEL DALDER Reuters; STEVEN HENRY Getty Images

ON THE MENU: The cheekbones of Bo Derek, Angelina Jolie, Sophia Loren and Jessica Alba are among the most requested looks in plastic surgeons' offices.



Photographs by DR. HENRI P. GABORIAU

BEFORE AND AFTER: Your basic non-celebrity cheekbone before, left, and after Radiesse injections. The procedure runs \$1,500 to \$2,000.

procedures in the last year as he had done previously. His clients are split into two categories: those who want cheek fillers to try to counteract the effects of aging, and younger people who want to emulate celebrity cheekbones.

"Those nice high cheekbones give the face an almond shape that's very attractive," he says. "A lot of women in the past haven't realized that their cheeks are going to sag as they age, and younger women want to have promi-

nent cheekbones," he added, citing ideals as Nicole Kidman and Sophia Loren.

"I've always admired those actresses with the amazing cheekbones," says a 36-year-old Los Angeles actress and stuntwoman who did not want to be named. "It's looked at as really beautiful and striking. A part of me wanted a little piece of that." She had the procedure done five months ago, and then a more recent touch up. The result, she says, is "more defined cheekbones and a chiseled line. I like me

a little better now."

Angela Wolf, a 42-year-old Los Angeles sales and marketing executive, began noticing drooping skin and heavy lines on her face. She was first advised to have cheek implants but instead opted for the far less invasive fillers. "For someone who doesn't want to do an extreme surgery, this makes such a wonderful difference," she says. "I have more volume in my cheeks and my face doesn't look droopy anymore."

Indeed, the fillers may well spell the end of cheek implants, which are more expensive, permanent and require major surgery.

"We don't have to do cheekbone implants and face-lifts anymore," says Dr. Phil Werschler, a cosmetic dermatologist and clinical investigator in Spokane, Wash., and former president of the American Society of Cosmetic Dermatology & Aesthetic Surgery. "Today, the most important component of facial shaping is to put product along the cheekbones and lower eyelid, and that lifts and redefines the whole face."

And it's not just surgeons and dermatologists who are seeing the focus shift to the face. Hair, makeup and skin care experts are noticing, too.

"The emphasis is back," says Diane Ranger, the founder of the mineral makeup line Colorescience. "In our classes and seminars, we are being asked more and more about the illusion that makeup can bring to the cheek. From an artistic standpoint, you can flatter the depth and height of the cheekbones."

Hair stylist Suki Duggan, owner of the Donsuki Townhouse Salon in New York, said more clients are asking for haircuts that will accentuate their cheekbones. "It used to be all about the long eyelashes or the full lips," she said. "Now, everyone wants high cheekbones."

And it's true, high cheekbones are on that list of features that make a beautiful face — a list that is pretty universal across cultures and millennia.

"It's about proportion and expression, and something that happens in a secret language that your mind understands very deeply," says Dan McNeill, author of "The Face: A Natural History."

Where full lips are symbolic of sensuality and large almond-shaped eyes are a hallmark of classic beauty, high cheekbones signal youthfulness and radiant health. "What we're trying to replicate is youth," says Leanna Wolfe, a social anthropologist in Los Angeles, "and youth has to do with fertility and sexual attractiveness."

But Shari Graydon, author of "In Your Face: The Culture of Beauty and You," said the current obsession with cheekbones goes beyond classic anthropology.

"Frankly, it's likely to be more about the triumph of tabloid journalism and the saturation coverage of celebrities," she says. "This is all happening at a time when the beauty industry in general, and plastic surgeons in particular, are intoxicated by the possibility of being able to make over new and different parts of women's bodies."