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Meet the MD who's click bait
for youth-obsessed men

\$2.00 | \$3.50 OUTSIDE THE GREATER
NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA



ILLUSTRATION BY RUSS TUDOR



Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank.



Fifty Shades of Dorian Gray

Men are not just
looking in mirrors ...
they're looking to one
New York City doctor
to get that perfect look.

BY LAREN STOVER

OSCAR WILDE, THAT PEACOCK OF WORDS AND wit, said it best in his 1891 novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: "As he stood gazing at the shadow of his own loveliness, the full reality ... flashed across him. Yes, there would be a day when his face would be wrinkled and wizen, his eyes dim and colorless ... They say he sold himself to the devil for a pretty face."

The very word narcissism, a fixation with oneself, has masculine roots; it is derived from the ancient Greek myth where the handsome hunter Narcissus fell in love with his reflection in a pool of water and unable to tear himself away from his beauty, drowned.

While it is true men are not immune from mirrors, looking at other men is instilling them with new ideas and archetypes of masculine beauty.

Late at night, when spouses, lovers and children are not around, men are Googling men on the Internet. Men they admire for one reason or another. *Brad Pitt acne scars. Hugh Jackman steroids. Tom Cruise jawline.* According to Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank, founder and director of The Fifth Avenue Dermatology Surgery and Laser Center, Internet cruising, more than referrals, sends most of his male patients his way.

"When I follow the logistics on my website, I see that there's spike between 12 and 2 in the morning of people watching male educational videos," said Dr. Frank in a recent interview. "I know it's men watching them. So it's kind of like the new porn."

Perhaps the most striking and aspirational icon of masculine beauty of all on his site is the doctor himself. Six-foot-two and looking svelte and dapper in a Dolce & Gabbana suit (no tie, shirt unbuttoned à la Tom Ford) when we met, the 45-year-old can be found at SoulCycle four to five days a week and admitted to using his cosmetic dermatologic tools—Fraxel (the registered trademark name for a laser resurfacing treatment that reduces the appearance of wrinkles, scars, sun-damaged and loose skin), Botox and fillers on himself since he was 30, which is when he started his practice.

According to the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS), the number of cosmetic procedures for men has increased by more than 106 percent between 1997 and 2012. Studies also show they prefer the non-surgical approach.

"The signs of aging start as early as your late twenties," said Dr. Frank whose first "bible" for the consumer, *Turn Back the Clock Without Losing Time: A Complete Guide to Quick and Easy Cosmetic Rejuvenation*, was published by Three Rivers Press in 2002.

The aged-out male population is looking to turn back the clock, only the verbiage has changed.

"No one comes in and says, 'Doc I want to look younger.' They're like, 'You know what? I've really been looking tired around the eyes.' Or, 'I just don't have the jawline I used to and it makes me feel old.'"

James Aguiar, national fashion director of *Modern Luxury* magazine, said he has observed showroom sizes getting smaller and slimmer for men, as masculine ideals in fashion evolve toward youthfulness. "The body types are much leaner, the ages are much younger and the look is more androgynous," he said. "At the Yves Saint Laurent fall 2015 show that just walked we've gone from men to boys."

"Society is very youth obsessed. Let's be honest about that," said Joseph Scott Grigsby, the vice president of global marketing and

creative for Lab Series Skincare for Men and the newly created Men's Skincare Group, explaining the spike in Dr. Frank's late-night site views. Mr. Grigsby has been working with Dr. Frank to develop new products for Lab Series, a pioneer in men's skincare since it launched 28 years ago.

"Men have the permission to look good and the expectation, but have a hard time asking for help and often they don't even know what to ask for," he said. "How many men do you know, when they're lost, stop and ask for directions? As much as masculinity roles are changing, there are some things that are tried and true. In the privacy of their own home, they're busy looking for information."

Men's grooming products are one of the beauty industry's fastest growing segments, with global revenues rising by an average of 6 percent a year—reaching almost \$33 billion in 2011, according to Euromonitor International, a London-based market research firm. In the U.S., Mintel, a leading marketing intelligence agency, forecasts that men's toiletries will be a \$3.2 billion market by 2016.

Dr. Frank provides insights that keep Lab Series on the cutting edge. "He whispers into our ear and gives us really good insight into what men are looking for and what they're asking him when they come into his office," said Mr. Grigsby. One of these so-called whispers was sagging jawlines, which resulted in Lab Series' January launch of a new MAX LS Age-Less Power V Lifting Cream that promises to "target areas that need volumizing, sculpting, lifting or firming."

Mr. Grigsby added, "A more youthful, vigorous guy, usually has a sharper jawline that

'WHEN I FOLLOW THE LOGISTICS ON MY WEBSITE, I SEE THAT THERE IS A SPIKE BETWEEN 12 AND 2 IN THE MORNING.'



communicates to a female that he is up for the challenge, if you know what I mean."

But when more extreme measures than crème are called for in the quest for the virile jawline, Dr. Frank has developed and trademarked a minimally invasive neck and jaw line procedure called UltraTight to remove fat from the neck and jowl area while simultaneously and internally tightening the area with ultrasound technology. Patients are so trusting and comfortable with the charismatic doctor that one patient even appears on his website. Elie Mamie, a singer until the year 2000 when he started a private language instruction business, told the *Observer* he has always understood the importance of his public image. Unhappy with a little pocket of fat under his chin, he is the subject of a jawline makeover in Dr. Frank's instructional video for UltraTight. (Though it is bloodless and he appears relaxed, it is not for the squeamish.)

"Anything I can do to enhance my appearance, I will," confided 40-something Mr. Mamie. "I had the Ultra Tight procedure on a Friday and removed my bandage the next day. I was sore, but there was not a scratch on me. My jawline is actually the chiseled Tom Cruise jawline. For men's procedures I've done almost everything he has to offer men from Fraxel and Juvederm to laser hair removal and I've always had great results. Some men think cosmetic dermatology is a girl thing. This is the 21st century. It's not a girl thing. Men are becoming more glamorous." His role models? "I still like the old Hollywood actors, like Cary Grant."

Does how a doctor present himself influence male patient decisions?

"He and I are the exact same age," said Mr. Grigsby who met Dr. Frank for his professional expertise and ended up a patient.

"When I met him I thought, 'My goodness, if he is practicing what he preaches, then I want some of that medicine.'"

Being a male dermatologist may also give Dr. Frank an advantage. John Demsey, group president of Estée Lauder, called Mr. Frank the new dermatologist of record.

"You can go to a dermatologist and look totally freakish or totally fantastic," he said. "I think for men it's even trickier."

At 48, Mr. Aguiar bucked the trend slightly and admitted that he likes getting older. "With that experience you come into your own ... to erase those things is not terribly interesting to me," adding that on the West Coast, men seeing a cosmetic dermatologist is part of routine maintenance but it is still pretty covert in Gotham. "I get a little bit nervous with the waxy vacant look. There's a new thing in male plastic surgery where it's a feminizing thing, and they tend to look like older, slightly butch women."

"You cannot do treatment the same way for men and women or you can feminize features," said Dr. Frank, whose practice began with 5 percent of male patients and is now pushing more than 40 percent and includes not only celebrities and newscasters but police officers, teachers and retirees.

"All of the research in skin care, lasers and injectables has always been done on women. But there is a significant anatomical difference between men and women's skin. So the Botox I'm going to do on a guy is different than I'm going to do on a woman. As is the lasers and the peels and the liposuction. Their musculature is different, too, but you also have to treat the man's psychological differences and expectations. It would be silly to get rid of all the lines



From left: Super-groomer Tom Ford; Estée Lauder's perfect male beauty, David Beckham; he's got the lot, Barack Obama.

around a man's eyes or their forehead. Women in New York come to me saying they don't want to look like they've had stuff done, but for a man that's a serious deal breaker," said Dr. Frank.

"I am not going to do the most aggressive treatment for a first time male patient, even if they complain about it and say that they want to do the most aggressive thing, I think the biggest mistake for men is overindulgence. Because men want quick fixes and sometimes they say they'll be willing to do whatever is necessary, but the fact of the matter is that's not true."

"No one wants the fat trainer at the gym," said Pierre, 46, co-founder of Ivory Row, a luxury cashmere company based in New York who felt instantly at ease with Dr. Frank when he became a patient a little over two years ago.

"I was impressed with how he looked, we're the same age, and one of the reasons I felt comfortable with him was that from the very first consultation, it wasn't like he was pushing procedures on me. It was a very low-key, low-maintenance approach." Pierre's first procedure was Fraxel, followed by a relatively new technology called Clear + Brilliant (laser resurfacing helps improve skin's texture, radiance and tone while reducing the appearance of pores; patients are able to return immediately to their daily activities with only a few hours of redness) and Ultherapy (a non-surgical "mini facelift," the only FDA-cleared non-invasive treatment to lift skin on the forehead, brow bone, neck, chin and décolletage).

Men are so influenced by other men that Estée Lauder conducted a global study two and half years ago (not released to the public) "to understand the changing perceptions of beauty in men," according to Mr. Grigsby. "It was very foundational qualitative work on professionals in the industry from Hollywood casting agents to dermatologists. We asked them who in today's world embodies masculine beauty. And two men rose to the surface. One was David Beckham—he's athletic, he's fashionable, he is very handsome, he takes good care of himself, he has a very, very affirmed wife, he is a father, he is a multitasker, he looks good in his underwear, he looks good in his jeans, he looks good on the soccer field, he looks good at a black tie event. The other one was President Obama. Obviously he's a physically attractive man, but he's the most powerful man in the world, if you will. So there is beauty in that power and there is power in being handsome and looking good."

'A MORE YOUTHFUL, VIGOROUS GUY USUALLY HAS A JAWLINE THAT COMMUNICATES TO A FEMALE THAT HE IS UP FOR THE CHALLENGE, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.'

Would Mr. Grigsby say masculine beauty is helpful or even essential to success not just in the world of fashion but in the business world?

"The definition of masculine is moving from a physical aesthetic to an emotional form," said Mr. Grigsby. "Men are emoting and men are acting differently in today's world so that the definition of beauty and also the definition of success is looking very different than it did, because of the evolution and the relationship of men and women in today's world—men now have the right to take care of themselves."

"And there's also an expectation from the women in their life to look good. It's no longer reserved for the trendsetters of the gay community to take pride in and receive some of the benefits of being handsome; because there really is power there."

When asked who his male role model is, Dr. Frank was quick to reply.

"Tom Ford is my idol. He's the perfect mix between an artist and a business man," he added, likening his practice to that of business and artistry. "And the reason I love him even more now, he did a talk at the 92nd Street Y about a year ago before he adopted a child, the interviewer asked if he could be anyone else other than himself, who would be. He said he'd be a cosmetic surgeon."

Tom Ford may be credited for popularizing cosmetic dermatology among fashionable men when he publically admitted using Botox and fillers—mainly by bragging that now that he was a father he would start aging since he had no time to see his cosmetic dermatologist—but his influence among the masses is more oblique, according to Mr. Demsey.

"Tom Ford is the ultimate grooming aficionado," said Mr. Demsey. "He loves men and women looking as sexy and good as they possibly can and he makes no apologies for it. And the fact of the matter, he's developed hundreds of millions of dollars worth of business based on his ability to sell sex appeal and to sell beauty to men and women around the world. But does the average Joe know who Tom Ford is? Perhaps not. But they may not realize that Tom Ford is directing the way that Justin Timberlake looks, or the way that Jay Z looks. They certainly care and know how Justin Timberlake looks or how Jay Z looks or how Drake looks. And those people are influenced by people like Tom Ford."

"Tom Ford is someone from the world of

fashion and beauty aesthetic so in that world it seems normal," said Pierre, noting most of his friends are not in glamorous fields. "What's more interesting, is that the guys that I know who are going to see a cosmetic dermatologist for the first time are guys in their 40s, guys who are just finding out that other guys are doing it. Other regular guys. It's not a Tom Ford aspirational thing. You're trying to juggle the kids and the house and your time. It's just one more aspect of having a healthy, well-balanced lifestyle."

Phil, a 65-year old dentist in Brooklyn who found Dr. Frank on the Internet, said he initially went in for spots on his face 10 years ago. "Dr. Frank eradicated them, I looked much better and that's how the window of aesthetic treatment began," explained Phil, who has since then had Fraxel, Thermage and injectables. "It's like fixing your teeth. The skin is just another part of our body. Dr. Frank is very gentle and has the ability to sense with you exactly where you want to take it. He'll take a mirror and show you everything so you understand and be open to certain things. Because a lot of times we don't see things as they really are."

Does he view cosmetic work as vanity? "Is it vain when you want to buy a new dress? A nice pair of shoes? It's just another manifestation of wanting to look and feel good," said Phil. "I think I get a good response from people in terms of youthfulness ... I have a sense of well being about what I have done and it makes me feel good and I'm sure it reflects in my personality."

The quest for beauty is an uphill battle, noted Mr. Demsey.

"It's the myth of Sisyphus in that being handsome or being sexy is a forever quest. No one ever thinks they're too good-looking or too perfect. The quest for youth and those aspirations are eternal, because ultimately, we all fade."

But seeing yourself as you really are, and being comfortable with aging is not the same thing. Oscar Wilde wrote:

"Some day, when you are old and wrinkled and ugly, when thought has seared your forehead with its lines, and passion branded your lips with its hideous fires, you will feel it, you will feel it terribly. Now, wherever you go, you charm the world. Will it always be so? ... You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr. Gray. Don't frown. You have. And beauty is a form of genius—is higher, indeed, than genius, as it needs no explanation." ■