

*Special:
Third Anniversary
Issue*
Contests, Reflections and More!

A LO

HAYATI

Morocco

Where Snake Charmers
Are Just the Start

The Best of the Middle East

Your Guide to Food, Romance,
Sights, Souks and More...

*The Plight of the
Camel Jockey*

How I Conquered
Rape—A Story
of Courage

*First Person
with Lebanese Diva
Diana Haddad*

USA \$8.95 CAN \$12.95
JULY 15-OCTOBER 15, 2007



**Recharge Your
Summer Look!**

**WIN
A TRIP
TO
JORDAN**
SEE PAGE 152

The Giving Doctor

BY JACK REED

Dr. Paul Nassif keeps grounded through giving

You could say that Dr. Paul Nassif is an average 40-something. But then again, what's average these days? We're guessing the average Beverly Hills plastic surgeon doesn't spend his spare time worried about how he can help the next person in need. But Nassif does, because his credo is "when you produce a gift for someone, it will come back to you." Based on that way of thinking and what he has achieved, it's obvious that has given far more than he has taken.

You could say that helping people is too generic a goal to have any real meaning. But it sounds believable coming from Nassif. The media-friendly guest of E! Entertainment Television's Dr. 90210 is hard at work trying to restore self-esteem to most of the patients that walk through his door.

It was an early interview by my standards—6:45 a.m. and via telephone—but Lebanese-American Dr. Nassif didn't want to waste time during office hours for an interview, so it was up with the birds to profile the region's top rhinoplasty surgeon. He called promptly to my office and asked for a few extra minutes to finish his Grape-Nuts and allow time to get in his car for a conversation "down the hill to work [at Spalding Drive Cosmetic Surgery & Dermatology]." Typically "a few minutes" turns into

hours, but true to his word, the call came in six minutes later.

"Always on the go," he explained. "I want to get a lot done in a day, so I have to use every available minute." Nassif is not like your typical buttoned-up, stiff-shirted doctor and definitely not your stereotyped big office plastic surgeon. So how does he do it? During his drive, he gets unbuttoned for a few minutes in a tight Q & A session.

ALO: It seems tempting that being on television and running a successful Beverly Hills practice that you would become Mr. Hollywood and forget who you are, so how do you stay level-headed?

Dr. N.: My personality hasn't changed since I was a kid. Sure I have more responsibilities now, but I know who I am, and that's important for me. That goes back to the way you are raised. I was lucky because I had a good family. Mom was from Pennsylvania and Dad was from Bismarck, North Dakota, and they settled in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Those were interesting places for the Lebanese to live back then. I grew up in a traditional household with great values and, of course, good Arabic food. We had a lot of conversations around the table. My parents taught me that taking care of family comes first—it's more important that anything you do in life. This is the best thing about our culture, the love of family.

ALO: Who is your typical patient, and how do you set yourself above the other high-end surgeons?

Dr. N.: Fully 75 percent of my clients are females who are usually depressed. I get a lot of patients who have something horrific going on with their noses. Collapsed noses. Noses that don't look



right. Botched jobs. Some can't breathe at all. Others have noses that are pinched or ruined. I get the hard patients that most doctors do not want to tackle. Some are on their seventh or eighth surgeries, trying to get it right and there's very little tissue to work with. Of course there's the person who wants to change the way they look as well. Maybe there's the person who has a big nose that has been teased their entire life or a nose that doesn't work well—this is quite common. In Beverly Hills, everyone wants to look good. It makes them feel good on the inside. When I meet with a prospective patient, I want to find out why they want surgery and what is it about their look that is troublesome. Sometimes they elect not to have surgery after a consultation. Sometimes people want to just talk. Ultimately I become one part technician, one part surgeon and one part psychologist.

ALO: You mentioned that you just "gotta help." Where do you give your time?

Dr. N: FACE TO FACE is a pro bono program [of the Educational and Research Foundation for the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS) where we go to different countries to help those who suffer from facial deformities such as cleft lips and cleft palates. I'll help with anything on the face and above the neck. I also work with the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence for women victims of this crime. They have broken noses and severe scarring. I find that fixing these patients up gives them hope to move past the brutal situations that they have found themselves in. One of my favorite causes is the Los Angeles Sheriff's Youth Foundation, where I serve on the board of directors. This program gets good kids off the streets and gives them a

▶ Q & A

chance to build their lives. It's a great program, but helping really keeps me grounded and centered. Charitable giving is selfish and that's why you should do it.

ALO: Was there a moment or a patient that changed your life?

Dr. N.: When I was doing my residency at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, there was a three-year-old boy who was attacked by a Rottweiler. There was horrific trauma with multiple injuries. Despite all of the problems, he would come in and blow us kisses all of the time. Watching a little boy come in like that and always in a good mood was just wonderful. When we were finished with all of the procedures, he looked pretty good. The whole experience was dramatic in a way and career altering. It really pushed me towards what I am today as a doctor. ■

