

catalina

For the mind, body, and soul of today's Latina

The L Word's **SARAH SHAHI**

From acting with a naked
Will Ferrell to starring in
Showtime's controversial
series. This former Dallas
Cowboys cheerleader
is a risk taker.

Perfect Skin

our easy daily guide

Attorney General **Alberto Gonzales** opens up

USA \$3.95
CANADA \$5.95



LITE

LATIN FOOD
p.

Uncover Spanish Tradition

from Trinidad
to The Philippines

OBI BERMÚDEZ

as seen on MTV

PLASTIC SURGERY

goes ethnic



IS plastic surgery GOING ETHNIC?

About a decade ago, most South Americans were getting breast reductions. Today, most women think (very!) big is beautiful.



BY CARRIE BARNES

In 1988, Flyvia Aspesi, a Brazilian neurologist who'd recently moved to the U.S. to study English and transpersonal therapies, got what were considered fairly small breast implants compared to the implants American women were getting at the time. Breast implants were not very popular among South American women, who were mostly interested in breast reductions.

Seventeen years later, Aspesi's 21 year-old daughter, Renata, a fashion design student in Brazil, has come to Utah for a visit and to have her own breasts done. Renata has cho-

sen much larger implants. "My breasts were just so small," says Renata. "A lot of my friends already had implants, so I've wanted them for a while. I was like 'Mom, I want silicone, I want silicone.'"

Renato Saltz, the plastic surgeon who performed the surgeries for both mother and daughter, began his career in Brazil and now has a practice in Salt Lake City, Utah. Saltz says the mother's and daughter's different preferences reflect what he sees as the diminishing of cultural ideals of beauty. Something Aspesi refers to as the "global-

ization of beauty."

"Ten years ago, most South Americans were getting breast reductions, while American women were getting augmentations," explains Saltz. "When breast augmentations started to get more popular in South America, Latinas still wanted smaller implants than their American counterparts. Now, in South America and in the U.S., Latina women are asking for much larger implants."

Cosmetic surgery in the U.S. is also being influenced by Hispanic culture. The increased demand for buttock implants in the

What you don't know about breast implants

#1: Today's breast implants are part of a long tradition. In the 1880's, women tried to increase their breast size with paraffin injections; later, glass or ivory balls were used.

#2: At the end of WWII, barrels of industrial grade silicone mysteriously disappeared off the docks of Japan. The silicone was injected into the breasts of Japanese prostitutes to make them more attractive to American GIs. Unfortunately, the silicone often migrated to other parts of the body, causing many health problems, and sometimes death.

#3: After the war, thousands of Las Vegas showgirls, actresses, and others in the entertainment industry were injected with liquid silicone.

#4: Silicone breast implants were first "tested" on a thirty-year-old divorced mother of six who went to a Texas charity hospital to have the rose tattoos removed from her breasts.

#5: Saline implants were approved in 2000, despite the fact that 40 percent of augmentation patients and approximately two-thirds of breast cancer reconstruction patients had complications within the first three years.

(Source: National Research Center for Women & Families)



Did you know?

Cosmetic surgery in the U.S. is being influenced by Hispanic culture. The increased demand for **buttock implants** in the U.S. is considered, by some industry leaders, to be directly related to the popularity of one celebrity: **Jennifer Lopez.**

U.S. is considered by some to be directly related to the popularity of one celebrity – Jennifer Lopez.

The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) reports that buttock augmentation increased by 533 percent to 3,885 procedures in 2003. Saltz says he has experienced this increase in his own practice. "It's only really the Caucasian women who ask for 'J Lo buttocks.'"

The preference for ethnic features, along with the growth and affluence of Hispanics, African-Americans and other ethnic minorities, has also led to new techniques developed by plastic surgeons to remove flaws while still preserving ethnic identity.

Whether or not the world is moving toward a more common idea of beauty, an increasing number of women see plastic surgery as an opportunity to improve on Mother Nature. According to the ASPS, cosmetic surgery procedures in the U.S. rose by 32 percent between 2002 and 2003. Breast implants, second among the top five most popular cosmetic procedures behind liposuction, rose from 32,000 in 1992 to 280,000 in 2003.

That's what worries Diana Zuckerman, president of the National Research Center for Women & Families, which also hosts www.breastimplantinfo.org to help inform teens and young women about the potential health risks of breast implants. "There is no conclusive evidence on the long-term effects of breast implants, so women really have no

idea what they are getting into."

Zuckerman gives two main reasons for the rising popularity of breast implants. One is the increasing number of doctors who, tired of dealing with HMOs and insurance companies, are opting to get into plastic surgery. "Any doctor can decide to become a plastic surgeon without any additional training," explains Zuckerman.

Another reason for the increased demand is magazine covers and other media that feature actresses and models with breast implants—or airbrushed breasts that look like implants. "Breasts with implants are rounder and more separated; there's no cleavage," explains Zuckerman. "We see those breasts so often that they are becoming the ideal. So, you have women thinking they are getting something that those models and actresses have naturally, but none of it is really natural."

The increase in breast implants began before TV reality shows like *Extreme Makeover* and *The Swan* made radical plastic surgery a part of America's nightly television consumption. Zuckerman is interested to see the breast implant numbers for 2004. "That's when we'll be able to get a better idea about the impact of these television shows on young women getting breast implants and other cosmetic procedures."

For Aspesi, who has had her breast implants replaced three times over the past seventeen years, it comes down to a basic desire. "Every woman wants to be beautiful. That's much more important than avoiding surgeries."

Her daughter Renata isn't too worried either. "I was a little bit afraid, but my happiness is bigger than my fear." ●