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## A SNIP IN TIME

By PATTY ONDERKO



**Camille Morrison, assistant to a renowned plastic surgeon, gets chocolates from desperate would-be patients.**

- Lorenzo Ciniglio



Print

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February 10, 2004 -- COACH bags, courtside seats, dinners at Cipriani and tickets to "The Producers" are just a few of the gifts Gina Bradshaw is offered every day.

As an office manager for a top plastic surgeon - NYU's Dr. Nolan Karp - she's all that stands between an aging New Yorker and a perky bust line.

"They all have something they need to be ready for," says Bradshaw, who does not accept the booty her clients offer. "They want to look perfect in time for a wedding, a bat mitzvah or a vacation, so they want to get in as soon as possible."

More people than ever are going under the knife - more than 872,000 Americans had some type of cosmetic procedure last year, according to the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery.

New York, of course, is silicone central - and just like chic restaurants, hot cosmetics docs have months'-long waiting lists that have would-be patients resorting to bribery just to get in the door.

"It's wild," says Dr. Z. Paul Lorenc, a plastic surgeon with a relatively humane waiting time of four months. "It's such a unique phenomenon in New York."

Hopeful patients routinely offer plastic surgeon Dr. Laurence Kirwan "over asking price" - say, \$8,000 for a \$6,000 nose job - just to see him sooner.

"Image is everything in this city," he says.

Roz Kaufman, a Long Island personal trainer, canceled her vacation when she found out she'd scored an appointment with Dr. Stephen Greenberg, a plastic surgeon she'd been trying to see for a "mini" tummy tuck.

"I had to tell my husband and family to go without me," Kaufman says. "I focus my schedule around Dr. Greenberg's schedule. Whenever he can see me, I'll go."

Dr. David J. Goldberg, a cosmetic dermatologist, tells of one patient who called his office last year for cosmetic laser treatments and Botox injections.

When she was told she'd have to wait two months, she went online and discovered that Goldberg also treats skin cancer.

So she called the office again and said she'd been diagnosed with melanoma - and was immediately given an appointment.

When she went in, she confessed, rather flippantly, that all she really wanted was cosmetic laser treatment and Botox injections.

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After Lorenc was featured two weeks ago on the "Today" show performing a brow-lift, his office voice mail was jammed with more than 100 calls by 8:30 a.m.

"Patients perceive you as being the best when they see you on TV," Lorenc says, "and when they perceive you as being the best, they'll do anything to see you."

"It's very weird," he admits. "I consider myself one of the best doctors in the city, but I also know that I'm not the only one. Other people can do what I do."

Camille Morrison regularly gets chocolates and flowers since her plastic surgeon boss, Dr. Thomas Davenport, was featured on a series of Discovery Channel shows about cosmetic surgery.

"You do tend to remember those people," she confesses.

"Charm goes a long way," says Dr. Scott Wells, a New York plastic surgeon.

"It's like anything else in New York - a restaurant, a hair salon - you can get into booked places with either a little charm or through connections."

That's what it took for fitness instructor Kristen Gagne, 32, to bypass Dr. Wells' waiting list. Gagne teaches a spinning class that Wells' wife regularly attends. After becoming friendly, Gagne told her, "OK, I helped you with your body, now you help me with mine." Gagne got in immediately and is extremely pleased with her breast augmentation.

The long waits to see New York's renowned cosmetic doctors may be worth your time.

"You want to go to the busiest doctors," says John Connolly, president and CEO of Castle Connolly Medical Ltd., which publishes "America's Top Doctors," "Top Doctors: New York," and the brand new "America's Cosmetic Doctors and Dentists."

"The busier a doctor is, the more experience he or she has performing certain procedures. And that's what you want."

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