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# Why Hollywood's Plastic Surgeons Decamped to Dubai

7:00 AM PDT 7/26/2013 by Elizabeth Sheard

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Douglas Jones

Kim Kardashian's nose, J.Lo's butt, Angelina's eyes: "It's a gold mine," says one Beverly Hills plastic surgeon of the new craze for U.S. doctors -- and celebrity looks -- in the Middle East.

*This story first appeared in the Aug. 2 issue of The Hollywood Reporter magazine.*

Blame one canceled reality TV show for the explosion of plastic surgery performed by Hollywood doctors in Dubai, the Las Vegas of the Middle East.

*Dr. 90210* began titillating American viewers in 2004 with its salacious, sometimes gruesome look at the physical transformations of Beverly Hills' beauty-obsessed denizens through breast implants, reductions, face-lifts, rhinoplasties, liposuction and whitened smiles. Its tagline: "If you weren't born with it, buy it."

After the E! show went dark in the U.S. in 2008, it continued to air in 22 other countries, including the United Arab Emirates. As a result, its stars have become hugely in-demand surgeons, with all of the attendant hoopla -- and additional business -- that comes with fame. "Anyone who has any kind of media exposure here is considered an A-list celebrity, not just a reality TV asshole," says **Jason Diamond**, *Dr. 90210's* former facial expert. He also is the ringleader of a *90210* plastic-surgeon posse that is part of a lucrative partnership with the American British Surgical & Medical Centre, a facility that brings U.S. and U.K. doctors to the Middle East, located on Abu Bakr Al Siddique Road in Dubai's Deira district.

### PHOTOS: Get Healthy, the Hollywood Way

After being approached by the ABSAMC, Diamond, who specializes in noses and face-lifts, brought in other former

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▲ 1 Trailer #1 (Universal) 2/5/13  
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Movie release: May 24 | 126,896,110 total views
- 4 The Hunger Games: Catching Fire**  
▲ 7 Trailer #1 (Lionsgate) 4/15/13  
**1,852,029 views last week**  
Movie release: Nov 22 | 40,111,868 total views
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90210 docs including **Kevin Sands**, the Kardashians' family dentist who also has created winning grins for **Charlie Sheen**, **Miley Cyrus**, **Kanye West**, **Emma Stone**, **Robert Downey Jr.** and **Britney Spears**.

"The whole royal family comes to see me in my Beverly Hills office -- half my patients are from the Middle East, Kuwait and

Qatar -- so it was very natural for me to go there," says Sands. "It took a while to get our licenses and insurance. You don't want to mess around over there if you want to come back with both your hands," he jokes. "For four days, I'm prepping patients' teeth and taking impressions. Then I fly home, have the veneers made in Beverly Hills and fly back and finish them. That's what they're paying for -- the best."

Another 90210 star Diamond enlisted is **David Matlock**, the show's liposuction, body sculpting and vaginal rejuvenation expert. (Matlock's loudest celebrity shout-out notoriously has come from *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*' **Brandi Glanville**, who devoted an entire chapter in her best-selling book, *Drinking & Tweeting and Other Brandi Blunders*, to his down-under skills at making her naughty bits look 17 again.) Of his entrée to Dubai, Matlock says: "It was amazing. When I first arrived, I had instant name recognition and an instant practice. They love you here; they talk to you about the show. That's a huge part of the success of this project."

To assist Dubai patients with booking appointments, the 90210 doctors' in-country dates are announced on the ABSAMC website. "Hollywood's top Smile Makeover Dentist available in Dubai. Book now!" announced one tweet from the center's feed.

### STORY: Audience Member Rushes Stage at Justin Bieber Concert in Dubai (Report)

The doctors' schedules fill fast, compelling them to work from 7 a.m. to midnight for four or five straight days. "We don't even have time for dinner," says Diamond. "We work and sleep." But they do have to make time for patients to pray during procedures and appointments. Muslims perform the soul-cleansing *Salah* prayer five specific times daily. Says Diamond, "Religion is a big part of their lives."

What has surprised the doctors is that while Dubai is a sophisticated international city with a large representation of English-speaking residents and European expats, many devout Arab women -- including wives and daughters from uber-wealthy and royal families -- wear hijabs and veils in public. But "while they come in with traditional garments, it's amazing how quickly they throw them off and how many Rolexes, Guccis and Fendis are underneath," says Matlock.

The doctors also marvel at the mysterious lack of conflict for Muslim women undergoing purely cosmetic procedures that change the creations of Allah and therefore are haram, or against Islamic law. "Despite that, a lot of these women are very competitive about their looks, much more so than Beverly Hills wives," says Diamond. "A woman's job in Islam is to be beautiful for her man. There's no women's lib. They can't work, so they stay home and try to look pretty. A lot of the women have to compete for their husbands with the other, younger wives."

Matlock adds that he often hears: "'Oh, my husband's taken his fourth wife.' They want to keep themselves together, and that's very good for our business." He also is surprised by how many Dubai patients want their vaginas rejuvenated: "More and more women are requesting it. European women? Yes, of course -- I knew they would want it. But I never thought it would be a possibility for Arab women. It's only 10 percent of my procedures in Dubai, but it's building as word spreads among the wives."

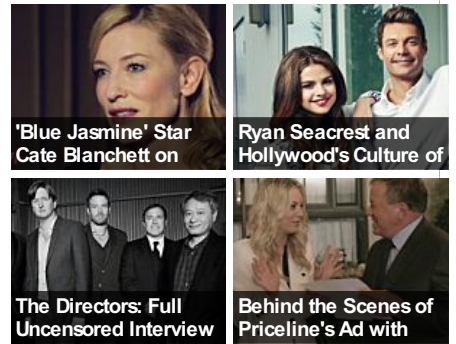
### STORY: Kim Kardashian Breaks Silence About Motherhood

The popularity of Western culture and Hollywood celebrities has influenced a global beauty standard, even in parts of the Middle East. **Angelina Jolie**, in particular her lips and eyes, ranks among the look-alikes most requested by patients, says **Renato Saltz**, a plastic surgeon and vice president of the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. "So much is because of globalization and everyone having access to everything beyond their borders," he says. "Celebrities like Angelina don't have a typical American face. You could say she has a global appearance, or features not unique to one race or one culture."

Not surprisingly, **Kim Kardashian** is huge in Dubai. "They also like **Elizabeth Hurley**," says Diamond. "A lot of women ask for **J.Lo's** butt, or what I call the Brazilian butt," says Matlock, who is happy to enhance what nature has bestowed through liposuction, body sculpting and fat transfers.

Sands finds his Dubai clients might not want blindingly white Hollywood smiles, but they want whiter shades than he initially expected. The same is true of noses. "It runs the gamut," says Diamond.

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"Many want to keep the little bump and just refine the tip. But just as many want the classic cute Hollywood nose."

Face-lifts, as in Beverly Hills, are performed as early as age 40. "But very few women in Dubai over 60 want one," he clarifies. "Then again, neither do many women over 60 in Beverly Hills -- they've already had them."

When it comes to culturally correct etiquette, though, differences remain -- and these American doctors in Dubai have stockpiled a few cautionary tales. "Don't hug the women," warns Sands, who had to train himself not to embrace happy female patients because it's unlawful according to the Sharia, the divine law that dictates pious Muslim women not shake hands or touch men who are not family members.

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Diamond once made the social error of accepting the dinner invitation of three young female patients, daughters of a wealthy man. "Afterward, the devoutly dressed women told me it would be best if they walked out of the restaurant first and I left later because local guys would not take kindly to them being seen with me," he says. Muslim co-workers later told Diamond he could have landed in jail if complications arose. "I thought their dad would bail me out, but I was later told that [because of appearances] he could be the first one to say, 'Lock him up!' I've been asked to dinners countless times since, and I politely turn female patients down."

All of the 90210 doctors are pinching themselves about the overnight success of their Dubai practices. "I go there, and in four days I can knock out 20 cases," says Matlock. "That's what I would do in two weeks in Beverly Hills." Says Sands, simply, "It's a gold mine" -- only one that requires commitments like 14- to 16-hour flights and travel expenses including, for Sands, bringing his assistants and equipment. "The jet lag is exhausting," he says of his monthly trip. "I just prepped 150 teeth, got back on the plane and flew home."

To cover extra costs, Sands charges \$50,000 to \$100,000 for a full-mouth makeover or \$2,000 to \$4,000 a tooth (most cosmetic surgery fees in Dubai are equal to or slightly greater than those in the U.S.). "We literally bring Beverly Hills dentistry to them," he says. "It saves them the time and money involved in coming here."

With no income tax on earnings in Dubai (or any of the United Arab Emirates), an enterprising doctor can structure his or her overseas revenue with a corporate sponsor to lessen the impact of U.S. taxes.

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Diamond's fees also vary from patient to patient. "We do a lot of revision work, and it's more complicated to repair bad work. Depending on the complexity, it can run from \$10,000 to \$40,000 for a rhinoplasty or \$15,000 to \$75,000 for a face-lift."

Even at those prices, the gold mine keeps giving. In fact, more and more Los Angeles-based docs are recognizing this rich new market, including plastic surgeons **Marc Mani** and **Neal Handel**, who both starred on Discovery's *Plastic Surgery Beverly Hills* reality series that aired worldwide from 2004 to 2005. Mani has traveled to Dubai every two months since June 2011, doing face-lifts, breast lifts, tummy tucks and nose jobs on men and women and on a diverse international clientele. "I compare Dubai to the bar in *Star Wars*," he jokes.

Expect the plastic surgery invasion to continue unabated across the map: Plans are in the works for ABSAMC and Dubai ringleader Diamond to create similar surgical clinics in Kuwait, Singapore and Qatar. Diamond recently was invited to Russia by what he calls "powerful people" for talks to set up his own shops in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Other emerging markets hungry for the Beverly Hills aesthetic include Africa, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong and India, specifically Mumbai. "The new surgical centers are determined where there is a demand and people can afford it. It's economics," explains Diamond. And while cultural differences are sure to crop up, the jet-setting plastic surgeon insists that "everyone on the planet aspires to looking Hollywood, whether it's Kim Kardashian's nose, Angelina Jolie's mouth, neck and jaw line, **Halle Berry's** cheeks, **Jennifer Aniston's** eyes or **Megan Fox's** nose. These are the photos I see all the time."

ANGELINA JOLIE

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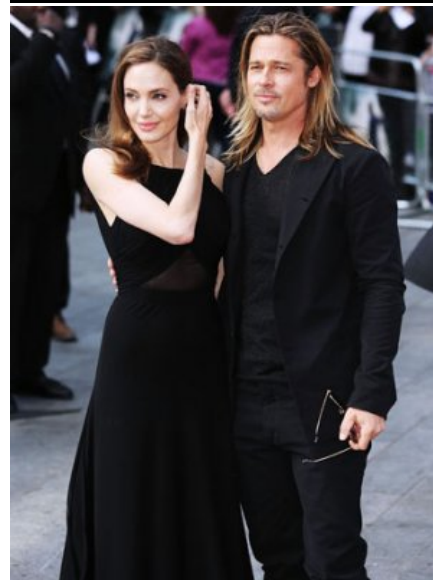
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