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WEDDINGS

Till Wrinkles Do Us Part: Introducing the Brotox Groom

Field Notes by ALIX STRAUSS

If some men look a little facially frozen in their wedding photos, it's now perhaps because of the Botox. If their chins appear more chiseled, their pores smaller, their necks tighter, it may be thanks to in-office procedures, which many grooms, groomsmen and even a father-in-law or two are getting before the big event.

"Last year I got hair transplants," said Joshua Baggett, a 35-year-old sound engineer. "After seeing the results, I wished I had done it sooner. I noticed I was getting crow's-feet, and I'm getting married in August. I want to look young and good for my wedding photos, which will hopefully last a lifetime."

Years ago, the only ones getting perfectly prettified were brides. But now, grooms are going for a brotox boost. They are making appointments with dermatologists and plastic surgeons to reduce fat, restore volume to their face, lose inches in their waist, remove wrinkles and hair, and erase those 11s — no one wants to look angry in their photos.

Recently, Dr. Dendy Engelman, an aesthetic dermatologist at Manhattan Dermatology and Cosmetic Surgery, entered one of her treatment rooms to find three patients: Mr. Baggett; Rosie Noesi, 35, his fiancée; and Corey Baggett, 32, his brother and best man. The three were there for pre-wedding fixings.

"We look at Corey's wedding photos often, and that was a bad point in my life in terms of how I looked," Mr. Baggett said. "My head was shaven and I was a bit heavier. They're tough for me to see. I don't want that to be the case for my wedding pictures."

And so chins and necks were inspected for Kybella, an injectable treatment that reduces fat in that specific area. Eyes were scrutinized for crow's-feet. Foreheads examined for lines. Reflections were stared at in the mirror while Dr. Engelman gave her suggestions. Because of timing issues, Botox was decided that day as the treatment of choice for the two nervous men, who both sat with round, pink ice packs by their eyes to numb their skin.

In March, Alfonso Diaz, 44, a director and host with the international television channel Nuestra Tele, went to Dr. Jennifer Levine's office in New York to have his first of four sessions of SculpSure, a light-based body contouring treatment that, through intense heat and cold, targets and destroys fat cells in the flanks and stomach. Mr. Diaz and his partner of three years, Richard Saenz, 34, will wed June 4 on the beach in Cancún, Mexico.

"I gained 32 pounds over the past three years, so I couldn't fit into the linen jacket I want to wear at our wedding," Mr. Diaz said. "I've already lost 20 pounds, but fat has memory, and if I wanted to wear the jacket I needed this treatment. This is the biggest day of my life. All of my friends, family and co-workers will be there. I really want to look good."

SculpSure, which is one of a handful of contouring treatments, takes 25 minutes per session, and one can lose a belt notch after a treatment. Results can take six weeks to see, which is why Mr. Diaz scheduled sessions for his stomach and flanks in March, and had two additional treatments five weeks before his wedding. Each session cost \$1,500.

“It’s not like liposuction, and this wasn’t painful,” Mr. Diaz said. “There’s no downtime. It’s not invasive. You can do it during your lunch break. Men who have the money find all these things very attractive.”

Mr. Diaz attributes some of this gender-free acceptance to the gay community.

“We’ve been very honest and open about wanting to look better,” he said. “The TV show ‘Queer Eye for the Straight Guy’ made looking good and caring about yourself acceptable to everyone, which has helped heterosexual men be O.K. with getting these procedures. And women want their husbands to look as good as they do, so looking good has become a competition.”

Some say it’s just a movement for treating men the same as women, and whether that is for better or for worse is in the eye of the beholder.

“For a very long time, emphasis was placed on what a man did, not how he looked, while women were judged on the opposite,” said Miles Groth, a professor of psychology and chairman of the psychology department at Wagner College in New York, who specializes in men’s gender studies.

“We’ve gone away from that,” Dr. Groth said. “Today there’s as much pressure on men to look good and take care of themselves as there is on women. That’s a new phenomenon. Men are now being judged on their job, on the quality of the bride, and on how they look, which is why these kinds of enhancements have become more acceptable and almost expected.”

In 2015, the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery reported recently, procedures for men were up 63 percent over a five-year period; men had more than 1.2 million procedures performed, representing 9.5 percent of the total procedures.

As for the marrying men. ...

“Millennials are marrying older; they’re what I call the removal category: unattractive tattoos in the wrong places, long regretted piercings and acne scars,” said Dr. Jeffrey Spiegel, chief of facial plastic and reconstructive surgery at Boston Medical Center, who has seen a 15 percent increase of men coming in for pre-wedding reasons. “That’s four or five times a week, which is a large number considering years ago they weren’t coming in at all.”

Another category of men he sees in his office are second-timers trying to recapture their youth.

“Those marrying again have hit a turning point in life,” he said. “They want to look younger, or they’re finally getting around to changing the things they wanted to thanks to support, or pressure, from their fiancée.”

If word of mouth is helping spread the news, then words themselves, ones created specifically for men, are blending into the mainstream. Besides brotox, there is xeoman, a spin on Xeomin (a botulinum toxin injection like Botox), and a manlycure, the male version of a manicure. Then there’s gymbrows, which the brow specialist Ramy Gafni trademarked two years ago when he saw how popular the word had become.

“There is a psychology when addressing men and skin care,” Mr. Gafni said. “Using words that appeal to them makes them feel comfortable.”

Over the last few years, he has seen a huge jump in his male clientele. Each month, he reshapes 250 to 300 men’s brows. He said that 20 percent of that number is for weddings.

“Men are 50 percent of my business now,” Mr. Gafni said. “Brows are a great baby step. Once they get this ‘home improvement,’ they get the confidence to move to the next level.”

Even plastic surgery and medical facilities are creating groom-specialized offerings. Shafer Plastic Surgery, in New York, has the Groomsmen Package, which includes 600 units of

Botox — enough for four faces, targeting lines around the eyes, eyebrows and forehead, and for axillary sweating under the arms — and four Kybella treatments to remove double chins. The cost? A mere \$13,000.

The Tiffani Kim Institute, in Chicago, has the groom-to-be treatment: a 50-minute Swedish massage, a sports buff manicure and pedicure, a gentleman's Facial, Botox and Restylane. It costs \$980.

"I'm not a spa guy; I'm a construction worker," said Mike Vazquez, 48, a project manager for a real estate company in Chicago who bought the package. "But my wife waited 11 years for this day, and I wanted to look good for her."

Mr. Vazquez said a friend had undergone the treatment before his wedding, and another friend mentioned that he, too, had been to Tiffani Kim to have work done. Both suggested Mr. Vazquez have a consultation, and he later emerged a younger-looking man.

The couple married in November 2015. When Mr. Vazquez said, "I do," his face was wrinkle-free, his marionette lines and the deep indentations around his nose gone.

"It was a lot of money," he said. "I did it to surprise my wife, who was really surprised. I'm 12 years older than Jessica, and I didn't want to look like her dad in our photos."

By the time the Baggett brothers emerged from the treatment room, it was clear both were hooked on reclaiming their youth. They promptly made joint appointments for Kybella treatments.

"This was Josh's best-man's gift to me," said Corey, a clothing manufacturer, who was married in 2011. "I feel like every time I smile, I see my double chin. It would be nice to have that gone, especially so people don't see it at his wedding."

The older Mr. Baggett paid the bill, a grin on his face, disbelief in his voice. "It didn't hurt at all," he told his fiancée, who had received filler in her smile lines.

"This was really special for us to do together," Corey said. "It's one more thing we'll remember about his wedding."