



INTERVIEWS MIT ...
Kurt Beck, Günther Beckstein,
Christian Wulff, Craig Venter



BIRMA-AUFSTAND
Alles über die Mönche,
die Diktatur, das Land

DAS MODERNE NACHRICHTENMAGAZIN www.focus.de

FOCUS

Nr. 40 1. Oktober 2007 € 3,20

Impfen – gesund für immer?

Auch gegen
Übergewicht, Nikotinsucht,
Krebs, Rheuma, Schlaganfall



MÄNNER, MODE & STIL
60 Seiten Heft im Heft

PLUS: Großer Vorsorge-Check
für Kinder & Erwachsene





It is 8.30 a. m. on this rainy and bleak morning in New York and showtime in the operation room 5 of the Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat Hospital (MEETH). The wife of a senator – to be discreet, let's call her Dorothy – is lying narcotized and flabby on the steel table. In spite of the blue scrubs, the 5-member operation crew (surgeon, assistant 1, assistant 2, anesthetist, nurse) looks so attractive as if they were casted for TV. Physician assistant Alex, wearing cycling glasses and Nike sneakers, is popping in a CD. "Baby, it's all or nothing now!", Cher is belling.

Surgeon Sherrell Aston is suctioning fat with a long needle from the cheeks of slumbering Dorothy and stapling the forehead tightly. At 8.45 a. m. he is applying the scalpel and separating quickly the facial skin from the muscular tissue below. Dorothy's countenance looks like the gaping mouth of a fish. "Bella, bella, bella Marie," the loudspeaker is sounding.

Brisk Alex has the suction cannula under control and wipes

ne Deneuve. Did George Clooney really have his sagging eyelid lifted? The discreet doctor remains silent and reveals just this much: "More and more men realize that attractiveness is very important for their jobs." An Aston-nose costs about \$10,000, a smooth forehead also \$10,000 and the total facelift \$25,000. The wrinkle-doc achieved comfortable wealth.

His private apartment and office are on noble Park Avenue. In front of the office parks his black limousine with chauffeur, indoors there are delicious female assistants, nicknamed "Aston's Angels", hovering along the corridors. Pictures in his room confirm his Aclass-status: Aston with Prince Charles, Aston with Bill and Hilary Clinton, who wrote "with love" on the picture for him. Next to that there are framed odes of rich female admirers and a 120,000,000 years old fossil of the cretaceous period. Recently there were six Arabian princesses coming to his office on one single day, the surgeon reports. As soon as the

THE KING OF BLADES

Dr. Sherrell Aston, beauty surgeon in New York, rejuvenates politicians, stars & Wall Street millionaires. A closer look



BOSS AT WORK
Dr. Sherrell J. (Jerone) Aston in his surgery room at Manhattan Eye, Ear & Throat. Since 1992 the farmer's son from Virginia is Chairman of the department of Plastic Surgery at the renowned hospital

away every driplet of blood. The team is working highly concentrated – and at the same time they are chatting blithely about sportsters, CDs and the Oktoberfest in Munich. At 9.30 the lady's got a taut chin. At 10.50 a. m. the whole shebang is done: cheeks are smoothed, nasolabial fold is ironed out, skin is sutured again. The woman in her early seventies looks like one in her late fifties. Aston is contentedly taking his sassily flowered scrub hat off. Then a short break; new clients are already waiting. A teenager's hump nose, a man's jug ears. In the afternoon one facelift and one liposuction. Snoozing Dorothy is rolled out of the operation room. "Mona Lisa...", the (german band) Flippers are singing.

This morning spectacle appears like an episode of Nip/Tuck, an unconventional TV soap about plastic surgeons – but this is the everyday Dr. Aston show. Sherrel Aston rejuvenates about 700 patients a year, he is New York's no. 1 facelift expert and the doctor with the magic touch for the stars.

The outstanding surgeon of the highly respected hospital for plastic surgery refreshes Wall Street banker, politicians and celebrities. He is said to have treated the former presidential candidate Bob Dole, Tipper Gore, Anna Wintour and Catheri-

ne 60-year-old answers the phone and announces with a meaningful timbre: "This is Dr. Aston speaking," he is not the only one who realizes: It is really a good thing to be Dr. Aston.

This shows the lord of the scalpel the next day on Long Island, the Sylt of Manhattan's society, one hour's drive away from New York. Aston's red Ferrari convertible is waiting at the station of Locust Valley, the island's "Goldcoast". Vanderbilts and Rockefellers reside here and Francis Scott Fitzgerald wrote in a magnificent mansion his novel "the great Gatsby." Today Aston wears a white Ralph Lauren shirt, jeans and burgundy croc loafers matching his strawberry blonde parting like Robert Redford. He tears around the green hills, mansions and the country club. Several neighbors mounted patriotically the US flag in their garden. "It is a very conservative neighborhood," he says contented.

Then the Ferrari stops in front of his property at the end of a long avenue. Two grand white mansions made of wood, spick and span stables, a pool with a poolhouse, an organic kitchen garden, a park with a view to the bay. There is a flair of East Coast aristocracy in the house: walls paneled in wood, sofas patterned with flowers, family pictures framed with silver. ▶



As early as in 1982 he afforded the property which is proving his incredibly fast career: only in 1975 he settled down in Manhattan, right after his study. "I wouldn't have reached all of this anywhere else," he argues. For the son of a "Gentleman farmer" from Virginia, was New York, the city of extremes, eccentrics and extravagance, the right place for his plan to work only in the field of esthetic surgery, which was very daring at that time. *

To intend a career like this was almost embarrassing in the seventies, even in med school," Aston remembers. Today he is still New York's only doctor in esthetic surgery who is not a doctor for reconstructive surgery at the same time. But in the seventies, America was far away from today's narcissism and the obsessive cult of beauty in which esthetic surgeries, according to a diagnosis of the New York Times, spread "like a national epidemic.

Despite of all that people were gossiping badly about him in 2004. Within a few weeks two patients died in the MEETH during an operation, a bestselling author and a doctor's wife. Due to the general anesthetic they both lapsed into a coma. Although he operated only one of them and didn't even administer the anesthetic, the gazettes blamed the head of the hospital. Finally it turned out that before the operation both women kept their regular taking of drugs secret. The family of the doctor's wife sued the hospital for the amount of millions. The MEETH arranged a compromise with them. Aston gave evidence at court and was personally acquitted of any guilt. "A hollow victory," he is summing up quietly. "Both women are dead."

This topic was painful, Aston is suggesting to move to the pool for lunch. Housekeeper Tina serves chicken salad, soda and fruits. Aston is relaxing again and chatting about the uplifting sides of life.

AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE
Sherrell Aston with his horses and in front of the pool house of his weekend home at Long Island, with his wife Muffie and their twin daughters Bracle and Asleigh



Young Aston was favored by fortune – and by a mentor who passed his clients to him. Yet in his second year as an intern the newby operated on Katherine Hepburn – since then had a full appointment book. He developed a lifting procedure in which not only the first layer of skin is tightened but also sections of tissue below. Aston travelled to Teheran and Beijing to perform live surgical procedures. His world-famous Brazilian colleague Ivo Pitanguy invited the ambitious American to Rio. Pitanguy attest him today: "He is the perfect example of an ethical, responsible physician."

When Aston, like every year in November, appears as one of the stars of the MEETH's esthetic surgery symposium, he will, like he always did, argue against the excesses of his craft: "Botox" is the opening issue. The reputable Park Avenue doc is seen as a "gentle" rejuvenation expert, who doesn't conjure little designer noses on order and certainly doesn't appear he scalpel on everybody's crow's feet. Even some 50-year-old clients who want a face lift, "I just sent back home," he assures. He considers the sensation about Botox, a neurotoxin which one can easily inject in the lunch break, as an exaggerated hype. He puts emphasize on an excellent reputation as well as on his reliable-looking pinstriped Brioni business suits.

The scandal didn't harm his social status. Doctor Aston is a coveted dinner guest and likes to see himself in the role of a philanthropist and good American. He supports trauma surgery, cancer foundations, Alzheimer's disease foundations as well as the American Ballet Theatre. He leaves the showjumping course of partying to his (second) wife with the cute name Muffie Potter Aston. She's an elegant, blonde mother of two and a half years old twin daughters and a big star of the Upper East Side jet set. Her spouse prefers to go to bed early, at 10 a. m., for the sake of his health. At 5.30 a. m. in the morning he's already running through the Central Park with his coach. He drinks no coffee, hardly no alcohol because he wants to "live as long as possible – long enough for three liftings."

His cheeks are astonishingly smooth for a man who is past 60. Are there suspicious scars behind his ears? No chance. "Nothing has been done here," claims the doctor with the magic touch. What's his secret? "Oil of Olay," he assures. And, of course, he "inherited the good genes." Well, it is really a good thing to be Dr. Aston.

MARIKA SCHAERTL