



## COSMETIC SURGERY

### And in This Hand ...

**P**EOPLE ALWAYS TOLD Jill Mattek, 55, that she looked a good decade younger. After all, the Vero Beach, Fla., spa owner works out regularly and uses Botox, sunscreen and Retin-A creams on her face. But Mattek didn't think her hands, with their lumpy veins, matched the rest of her body. "The hands were the giveaway," she says. So she had vascular surgeon Asad R. Shamma perform a laser treatment to eliminate the lumps.

Having turned back the clock on their faces, baby-boomer women are now tackling their hands. Plastic-surgery associations don't yet track exactly how many patients undergo these cosmetic procedures, but Houston dermatologist Marjory Nigro says, "Five years ago, nobody would ask you about hands. Now they say, 'Look at my veins. Look at my brown spots.'" Robert Weiss, an associate professor of dermatology at Johns Hopkins, says he had treated the ropy-looking veins of five to 10 patients annually as of two years ago; this year he expects to work on hundreds.

Shamma's treatment—he zaps bulges using a laser fiber that lets deeper veins take over—is the newest method. Traditional procedures involve

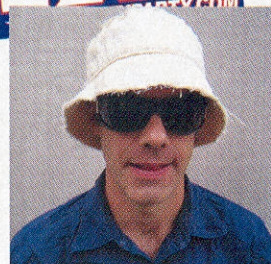
the injection of solutions or fillers—or vein removal. They all, however, can create a problem for doctors looking for an IV spot. That didn't deter Patricia Wharton, 54, who hated her "blue, bulging veins" so much that she paid \$4,300 for a treatment. "I would have paid more," she says. "You don't have to tell the doctors that."

—KAREN SPRINGEN

## DJ'S Cuttin' Up C-Span

**N**EW YORK-BASED DJ RX says he voted for George W. Bush in 2000. But he couldn't get behind the invasion of Iraq: "It was absurd we were going to war in a region where oil was a potential benefit."

So he decided to lampoon Bush—with Bush's own words. RX (who doesn't reveal his real name) combed through videotapes to build the bogus phrases he needed to have the president "sing" songs like U2's antiwar anthem "Sunday Bloody Sunday." He expanded his madcap raps to other politicians, recording their speeches on C-Span



**RX:** The DJ pokes at pols

and layering their rearranged words over remixed classics. (Or mostly their words: at times, RX will slice, say, the P off "pass.")

RX's "mash-ups" have now been downloaded more than 2 million times. And though he hasn't held a job in five years, his DJ'ing cred might help him cash in: he was recently approached, he says, by an L.A. creative agency that makes movie trailers, a New York ad agency that wanted to discuss working on a beer commercial and a "major" U.S. music label. RX's new, original single "White Lines," in which Bush gossips about Kate Moss, hits record stores later this month. Upcoming targets? "If Condi Rice has any intention of running for president," RX says, "she'll find herself a pop star."

—BENJAMIN SUTHERLAND

## TRANSITION

**AUGUST WILSON, 60** When a famous writer dies, it's a natural response, and a kind of homage, to visit the local bookstore and read up. Last week the playwright August Wilson, author of a 10-part cycle of works about the black experience in 20th-century America, succumbed to liver cancer. But in this particular case, you should keep your wallet closed. Reading Wilson is a satisfying enough experience. But in order to fully appreciate what all the fuss was about, his plays need to be seen and, above all, heard.

Each of the 10 plays in Wilson's cycle was set in a different decade of the last century, and the most celebrated of the bunch—his breakthrough hit "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" (1984) and his two Pulitzer Prize winners, "Fences" (1987) and "The Piano Lesson" (1990)—felt like the blues alchemized into spoken words. (Remark-

ably, Wilson quit school in his early teens; he was an entirely self-taught virtuoso.) He set most of his plays in Pittsburgh's bruising Hill District, where he was born and raised, and wrote about the invisible



**LISTEN UP:** Wilson's plays had to be heard

men and women he witnessed there: cabdrivers, garbagemen, struggling musicians, petty crooks. His stories churned with anger and often ended in tragedy. But they weren't medicine. More than anything, they were a thrill.

They were also successful. In an era of flagging appetites for nonmusical theater, the original Broadway production of "Fences," starring James Earl Jones, ran for 525 shows and grossed \$11 million in one year. In two decades, Wilson's work was performed on Broadway close to 1,800 times. The author is gone, but the plays will be back.

—DEVIN GORDON