

"This is the me I had imagined whenever I looked in the mirror," says Bailey, "the me I wanted to be."



About FACE

Undeterred by bruises and bills, millions of Americans find outer beauty with plastic surgery

Shove over, Cher! Make room, Melanie! Average Americans, not only celebs or the super-rich, believing that looking good is a vital part of aging well, are putting their money where their (collagen-enhanced) mouths are. In 2001, 8.5 million procedures were performed in the U.S., up more than 300 percent from 1997. "Nobody wants to look old," says businessman Tom DeBonis, 56. "Some people never do anything about it—and some people go for it." Now he and others on the following pages are nipped, tucked and talking.



Before her eye-lift (top), "people thought I had a scowl," says Bailey.

Barbara Bailey

Getting her eyelids fixed helps a waitress lose the glowering look that kept people away

Ask Barbara Bailey what was so bad about living with droopy eyelids and she'll rattle off a list. For starters, "people perceived me as unapproachable," says Bailey, "because my eyelids made it look like I was angry a lot." Wearing eye makeup was near impossible, since the colors got smeared by her saggy skin, while looking in the mirror only became bearable after Bailey "developed a habit of raising my eyebrows," she says. "I was trying to see what I wanted to see, as opposed to what was there."

In September 2000, Bailey decided to reconcile the two visions. Having heard through a friend about Beverly Hills facial plastic surgeon Paul Nassif, Bailey, then 33, booked a consultation. "I thought she was in her mid-40s when I first saw her," says Dr. Nassif, who recommended a two-part approach. First, he gave her an endoscopic brow-lift, making three small incisions (later closed with staples) at Bailey's hairline so he could elevate her eyebrows.

About 11 weeks later, after the staples had been removed,

