

THE RADAR BEAUTY

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DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS From top: Dr. Monte Harris and Dr. Eliot Battle are pioneering skin treatments and plastic surgery care for a booming demographic.

FACE TIME! *It won't be long before the hot docs of DC's Cultura hop on Oprah's couch*

Ferragamo shoes. That's about the only thing famed facial plastic surgeon and otolaryngologist Monte Harris and cosmetic dermatologist and laser surgery pioneer Eliot Battle, Jr. have in common. Oh, that and taking over the world one face of color at a time.

It's a classic case of the odd couple. Dr. Harris loves funky Cartier glasses and rocks the K-Swiss tennis gear. Dr. Battle feels flashy in light brown Canali. But the ying-and-yang partners of the Chevy Chase-based Cultura Cosmetic Medical Spa are quietly building an empire of never-before-seen laser treatments, specially formulated products and trademarked techniques for the burgeoning, worldwide population of ethnic women, and some men, seeking out cosmetic procedures. Venus Williams, Patti LaBelle and Alonzo Mourning are just a few of the boldface names the doctors serve. These celebs are joined by a bevy of ambassadors, first ladies (one who jets in from Ethiopia, no less), and other international heavies who come for the "mixture of a Harvard or a Hopkins and a Ritz-Carlton or a Four Seasons," says Dr. Harris, describing both the level of medical care and posh pampering at the retreat-like setting, which caters to people across the skin-tone spectrum.

Harris isn't exaggerating. While completing his fellowship at Harvard's renowned Wellman Laboratories of Photomedicine, Battle helped perfect some of the first lasers ever designed to combat the hypo- and hyperpigmentation that can result during procedures such as hair removal and acne scar repair on people of color. Harris specializes in a holistic approach to plastic surgery for his patients, which will soon be taking place in a brand-new, mid-century-modern-styled surgery center right down the street. For six years, the pair has cultivated the spa and the brand. Their skin care line was formulated using the initial locale as a lab to gauge their patients' needs and their products' efficacy.

After countless features in pubs from *The New York Times* to *O* magazine, the beauty world has taken note. Cultura is partnering up with some major names this season—Macy's and Bliss spas among them. Their products will be repackaged and on national shelves by spring. In late 2008, the bricks-and-mortar expansion will begin with Cultura spas opening in New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston and London. Wherever these docs bring their gospel, they expect to hit exactly the right tone. ■

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