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## **Pressing the Flesh: New Treatments Promise to Melt Excess Fat Like Butter**

Sandra Ballentine gets the skinny on a new beauty trend.

On a recent trip to Paris for a friend's birthday, I marinated in Champagne, ate fromage at every meal, and had an exceedingly dangerous liaison with the salted butter at Guy Savoy. The only thing not on the menu was restraint. So when I heard there was a woman in the 7th arrondissement massaging models, actors, and directors into better shape—sans exercise!—I squeezed my rapidly expanding derriere into an Uber and hightailed it to the Left Bank so fast I nearly choked on my morning croissant.

Although noninvasive fat removal is one of the buzziest growth areas in the beauty industry, Martine de Richeville has been slimming jetset silhouettes for years using Remodelage, a proprietary technique she says aids in weight loss and cellulite reduction. Combining elements of traditional Chinese medicine and various massage modalities, de Richeville employs a strong figure-eight pinching motion to release blockages in the tissue, assist in lymphatic drainage, and improve circulation. Her goal? To get everything moving properly again and rid the body of toxins.

De Richeville, who has a bachelor's degree in psychology, maintains that weight is directly connected to emotional well-being. "Fat buildup is a form of protection," she says. "Liberating the circulation enhances metabolic activity and triggers weight loss." De Richeville scrutinized me as I lay nearly naked on a table. "You have a blockage in your solar plexus," she decreed, kneading me like putty. "Do you ever cry, allow yourself to just let go? Stress, anger, upset—it all ends up in the stomach." And here I thought it was all the frites and Bordeaux.

After 50 minutes of head-to-toe ministrations, I felt woozy but refreshed. And I could swear my stomach was flatter. This was probably wishful thinking—for optimal results, De Richeville recommends at least five sessions. She plans to open a Remodelage atelier in New York, but I couldn't wait for that.

After my trip, I became determined to lose the bacchanalia-related bulges. Diet, exercise, exorcism—nothing worked. I was about to resign myself to a life of Lycra when a friend tipped me off to the Manhattan-based body whisperer Jeannel Astarita. "Having curves isn't a bad thing," says Astarita, a former interior designer. "It's about creating the best proportions." She does this with a highly customized cocktail of the latest contouring technology, like CoolSculpting (a fat-freezing procedure that is the mack daddy of noninvasive fat removal), and BTL Vanquish ME (which destroys fat cells over broad areas via carefully controlled heat). She also sprinkles in BTL Exilis Elite (a radio frequency treatment designed to reduce fat and tighten skin), ZWave Pro (a small "acoustic shock therapy" device that helps flush out dead fat cells), and Futura Fit (a machine that aims to tone muscles with ultrasound energy and electrical current). And like a lot of people in the business, she's intrigued by SculpSure, a new fat-melting laser that's being touted as a game changer.

No matter the approach, you will surely need multiple sessions, which can be tedious, not to mention expensive. But for the squeamish, it's still a more appealing option than liposuction. The machines are not, however, one size fits all. During my consultation with Astarita, she declared my fat too firm for CoolSculpting, which is more effective on pinchable fat. (I wasn't sure whether to be relieved or annoyed by this news.) "I think you're more of a Vanquish girl," she said. And, sure enough, after five 45-minute sessions (which felt kind of like being microwaved without actually being cooked), any skepticism I might have had melted away along with some of that firm fat. My abs looked slightly more defined, and my flanks a tad trimmer. I could even button my favorite jeans again.

Of course, not everyone is convinced. "You can burn only so much garbage in your backyard before you have to cart it out," says the New York cosmetic dermatologist Paul Jarrod Frank. "I do a lot of SmartLipo Triplex," he says, referring to a form of laser lipo that melts fat and tightens skin. "I'm the person to see for those extra 10 to 15 pounds. I'm for areas that are resistant to diet and exercise, not people who are resistant to diet and exercise."

Still, at least until I get over my lipophobia, I'm sticking with Astarita. Always available for a pep talk or text, she keeps clients on track with nutrition and fitness advice. She cautions, however, that the relationship has to be a partnership. "If we don't work together, it won't work." I silently swear to never eat frites again.

Unless, of course, I'm in Paris.