

TATLER

In the war against ageing, it seemed that Eloise was light years ahead. Much to the envy of her friends, she'd been Botoxed, lifted, tucked and lipo'ed so that no one could possibly guess she was pushing 40. But in the cool, beige surgery at HB Health in Harley Street, she was about to discover how old she really was. Maybe it was winter's evil way, but she'd had too many late nights and stressful days recently, to say nothing of family incidences of cancer. So while she might appear to be a youthful thirtysomething on the outside, she felt as though her insides were queueing up to collect their bus pass.

Dr Yong, a disconcertingly gorgeous Lucy Liu lookalike, set to work straight away. Blood tests for hormones, minerals, stress levels, thyroid, you name it, were taken.

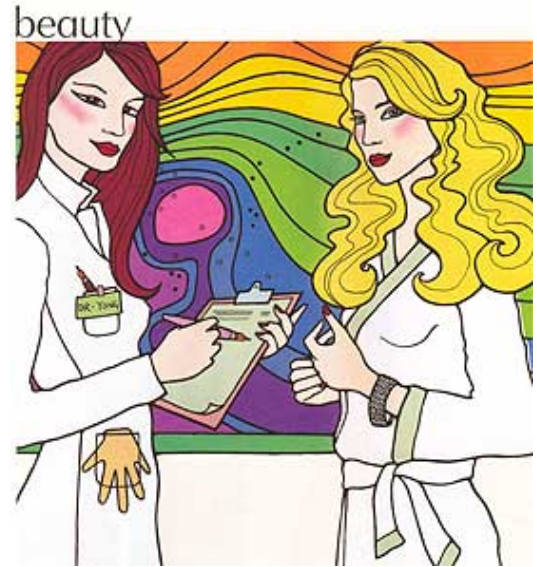
Measurements were noted and scales - yikes - were stood upon. Breasts were checked for lumps. An ageing test, which involved pressing buttons rapidly, revealed that her reflexes were reflexing.

Then Eloise was sent for a highly advanced Electron Beam Tomography scan, conveniently around the corner at the European Scanning Clinic. Its results are as accurate as a CT scan, but its radiation is much lower (slightly more than on a transatlantic flight). Eloise lay on a bed and had air pumped up her bottom to distend her colon. The bed was shunted backwards and forwards as she was X-rayed. It wasn't comfortable but, later, she found radiologist Dr Colin Ferrett's explanations fascinating. There, on a screen, was a technicolour map of her innards.

'Look, there are your ribs,' he said. 'Did you know you have one so small it barely exists?' Did she know? She'd built a whole wardrobe of narrow-waisted Azzedine Alaia dresses around it. 'And here,' he said, pointing to unusually smooth colon walls, 'is where you have had inflammations... that's not so good. But the main thing is that there are no polyps which might indicate trouble ahead. Ninety-five per cent of people have these before getting cancer of the colon.'

Ah! The C-word. Dr Ferrett, one of the few people who operates the scanner in this country (after Turkey, he says, Britain has the smallest number of radiologists in Europe), recommended another scan in five years.

Back at Dr Yong's, Eloise picked up the results and was advised that there was nothing a good diet, some vitamins and a little TLC couldn't fix. At least she had a secret weapon against anyone who suggested she might be older than she claimed. Dr Ferrett had given her a CD of images of her youthful-looking colon. It was time to get the girls round for a light supper and a little show-and-tell. After all, beauty comes from within, doesn't it?



HMW
High-maintenance woman
executes a brilliant master scan