

OCTOBER 25, 2010

People



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 SPLIT**

THE INSIDE STORY

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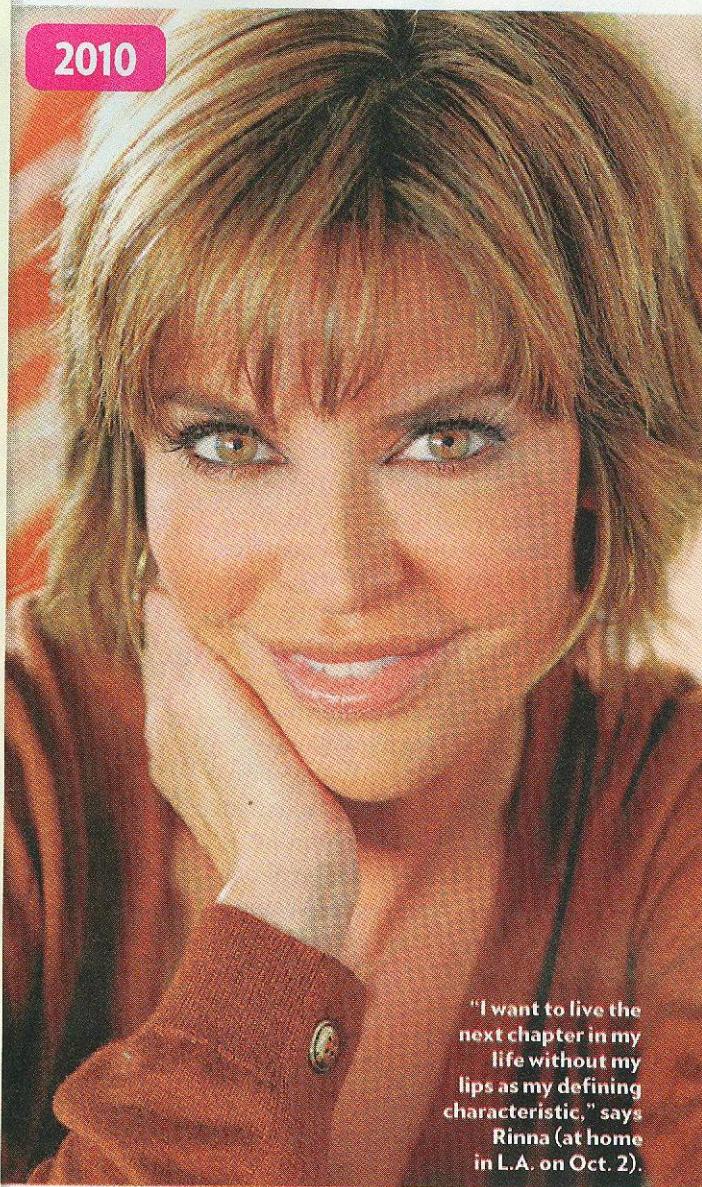


2008



LISA RINNA'S

2010



"I want to live the next chapter in my life without my lips as my defining characteristic," says Rinna (at home in L.A. on Oct. 2).

LIP REDUCTION

WHY THE REALITY STAR DECIDED TO RESHAPE HER INFAMOUS MOUTH BY ALEXIS CHIU

Sure it's been her signature feature throughout her career, but Lisa Rinna knew her upper lip was becoming an issue. More than two decades after getting silicone injections, it had become so misshapen that red carpets would yield a routine round of criticism. "I'd get photographed, my lips would look a certain way and then people would start to talk," Rinna says. Even her daughters

Delilah, 12, and Amelia, 9, found themselves fielding remarks about their mother when a friend asked, "Are your mom's lips real?"

But it wasn't until the actress, 47, signed on for the TV Land reality show *Harry Loves Lisa* with husband Harry Hamlin, 58, that the idea of finally taking action began to take shape. "The producers really wanted me to speak about 'the pink elephant in the room,'" says Rinna of her lips. "Harry

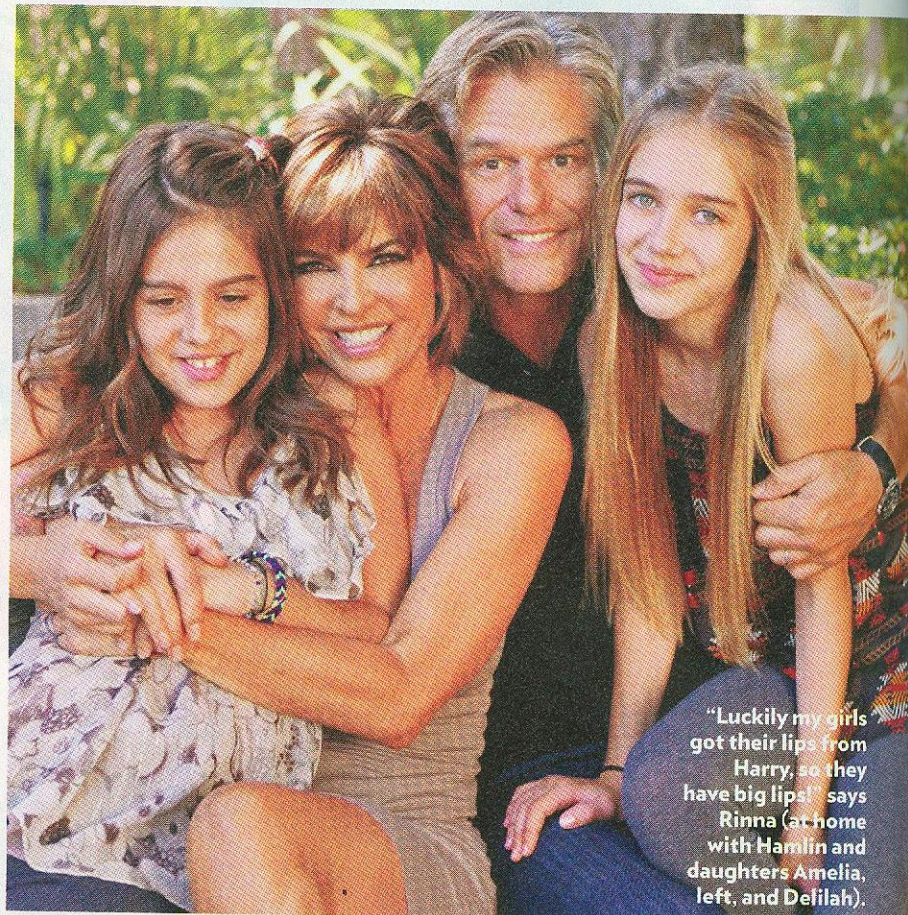
and I were against it. But they convinced us it was important to address and asked if I would go see a plastic surgeon." Adds executive producer Jason Carbone: "I came to realize how painful these lips had become for her psychologically. I was like, 'Let's solve this.'" Though Rinna had long been told her mouth was beyond repair, Beverly Hills plastic surgeon Garth Fisher shocked her with the news that he could reconstruct Rinna's upper

lip by removing some of the damaged tissue and reshaping what was left. "I was dumbfounded," says Rinna. "Then I started to get really excited."

Now, nearly two months after her Aug. 26 operation, Rinna is delighted with the results. "You can see my teeth when I smile now, which you couldn't do for a while. I've been smiling these big smiles!" she says. And though Fisher says it will take up to six months for all the swelling to disappear, Rinna says there's already "a huge difference. My lip is back to being smooth!"

The Oregon native readily admits, "I was crazy to even touch them in the first place." But after seeing Barbara Hershey's full pout in the 1988 film *Beaches*, Rinna, then 25 and an aspiring actress, was inspired to sign up for silicone injections—a permanent plumper, unlike temporary fillers such as collagen or Juvederm, which only last a few months. In total, she had four injections. "In the beginning, it was great," she recalls. But after about 10 years, the silicone started seeping throughout her lip and creating scar tissue that was "hard and bumpy, like peas." She later tried cortisone shots to reduce the swelling, but instead "it made them look worse," says Rinna.

During the one-hour procedure, Fisher downsized the lip by about 30 percent and "removed tissue in areas where there was more fullness than normal, such as the corners of her lips," he explains. "I feel confident it's going to be a positive change for



"Luckily my girls got their lips from Harry, so they have big lips!" says Rinna (at home with Hamlin and daughters Amelia, left, and Delilah).

her." Since the surgery, "talking is easier," says Rinna. "It feels lighter."

And what does Hamlin think of his wife's new pucker? "It's a part of her I loved, and nothing that I ever considered needed changing," he says. But now "she looks great and she's happy—that's the main point."

Looking back on her initial procedure, "I don't regret it for a second.

It's made me who I am," says Rinna, who just released her first novel, *Starlit*. But she hopes her missteps will be a life lesson for her girls. "I am the perfect poster child for what *not* to do on a whim," she laughs. "With all that's happened with the lip, I can show them that you need to love yourself for who you are and embrace how you look." ●

LISA'S LIPS THROUGH THE YEARS

1970



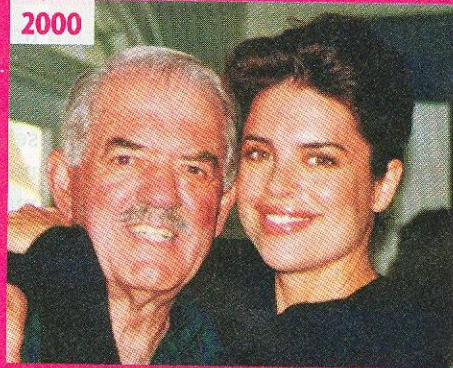
Growing up, "I was never insecure about my lips," says Rinna (in her first-grade class photo).

1983



"For the record: Bottom lip is mine!" says Rinna (in a modeling shot several years before she had the silicone injections).

2000



"I have the same lips as my father," Rinna says of her dad, Frank, who recently told his daughter, "I thought [the silicone] was a big mistake."