

CHANGING LIVES

CONSULTING WITH ANTI-AGING EXPERT OZ GARCIA

by Megan Steintrager

Manhattan-based nutrition guru Oz Garcia is a poster boy for good health. Make that poster man, though you'd hardly know that Garcia is 52 years old — his skin is buttery smooth, his posture is perfect, his body is lean and he has a full head of perfectly coifed black hair.

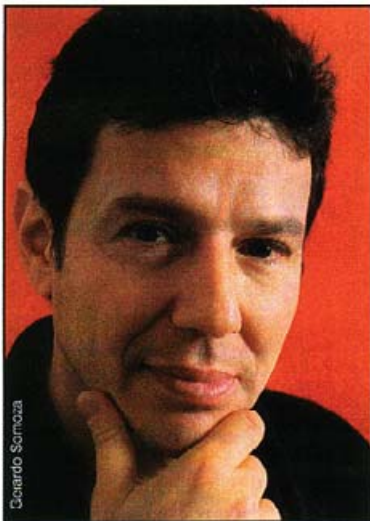
When I stepped into Garcia's office at his Longevity Lounge on Central Park West, he greeted me with an enthusiastic, "how ya doing?" Garcia's dog, a little daschund named Cosmos, was running around the airy office, which is filled with health books, vitamins and supplements. Even Cosmos, with his shiny coat and abundant energy, seems to be following the prescription in Garcia's latest book, *Look and Feel Fabulous Forever*. And despite the fact that Garcia had recently returned from a consulting trip to Moscow, he showed no signs of jet lag as he enthused about his trip, his work and the latest research in life extension.

Maybe it's this image of wellness that inspires Garcia's clients, who include many actors, models and celebrities — anyone looking to live better and longer. "I practice what I preach," says Garcia. But Garcia didn't always preach or practice good health. In the '70s Garcia was a successful fashion photographer in New York. Eventually he found that the fabulous life style was leaving him feeling not-so-fabulous. He suffered from debilitating migraines,

which no doctor was able to cure and he felt tired and run down.

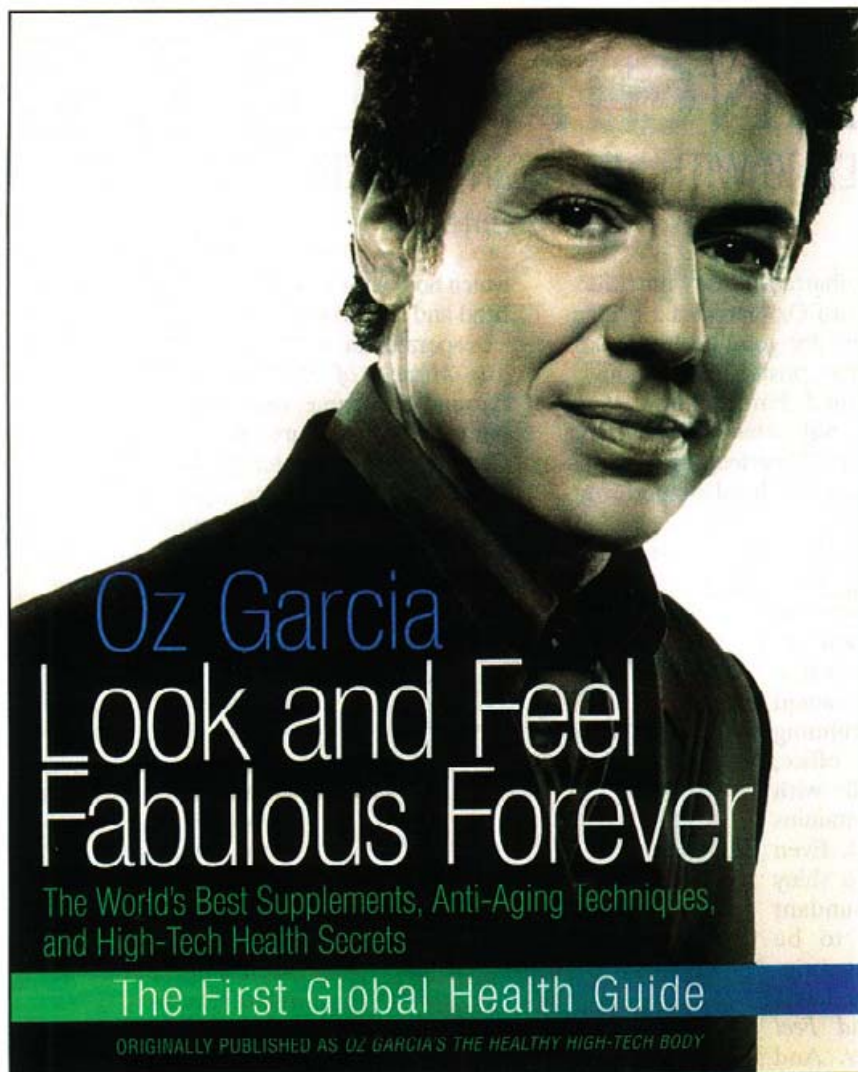
Desperate for a cure, he began reading *The Miracle of Fasting* by Paul Bragg. Around the same time he was sent to photograph a lecturer at the East West Center for Holistic Health. As he stepped off the elevator he saw signs leading to acupuncture, meditation rooms, a floatation tank, Chinese medicine and so on. He was fascinated. He began to take classes at the Center and started experimenting with alternative methods of health and healing. He slowly made the transition to a healthier lifestyle and eventually became a strict vegetarian (though he's not anymore), started fasting, cut out coffee and cigarettes and started exercising. Soon his migraines were gone and he was hooked on the fledgling holistic movement.

"It was a process of moving over slowly from one lifestyle to another," says Garcia when asked how he gave up the partying associated with the fashion set. "As I accumulated certain rewards such as no migraines, great energy, better sleep patterns and improved digestion, making lifestyle changes became easier." He was determined to harness the power of alternative medicine and nutrition to continue to improve his health, as well as his performance as a marathon runner. He attended the Kushi Institute for Macrobiotics in Cambridge, MA, the Hippocrates Institute for training in Herbology and the Kelly Institute for



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Metabolic Nutrition, and studied at the East/West Center for Holistic Health, as well as the Himalayan Institute, where he learned about homeopathy.

Eventually he gave up his lucrative photography career and became an apprentice at a Holistic health center in Manhattan. He began to share his knowledge, lecturing to fellow runners about improving their performance through diet and nutrition. "I was finding that I was becoming not only a better runner, but a better person," he says. "I found myself preaching." Word spread, and he began consulting with a wider group of people, and opened his first office in 1981. There he moved beyond

the traditional definition of "Holistic" towards an approach that he calls "Holographic," which incorporates "various medical, behavioral, nutritional, nutraceutical and cosmeceutical approaches."

Flash forward to today, and Garcia is one of the most sought after and publicized consultants in the world. He has twice been voted "Nutritionist of the Year" by *New York* magazine and has been written up in countless publications. He uses his years of study and ongoing cutting edge research to help clients with a range of problems and issues, which he addresses by educating them about progressive nutrition, life extension, anti-aging and how to main-

tain and improve health. Garcia can tick off a laundry list of concerns people come to him with, including improving immunity; reducing blood pressure; improving mood; enhancing clarity of mind; reducing anxiety and diet induced depression; improving hormone levels in both men and women; reducing inflammatory damage and pain; improving energy; increasing lean muscle mass at any age; reducing body fat and increasing metabolic energy.

"I deal with quality of life issues," says Garcia. "Since I draw on a wide palette of technologies that affect health and well-being, I can help people think better about their relationship to food, emotionality, productivity and so on — how to structure everything from an exercise program to a highly personalized nutrition program and a top flight nutraceutical program. I will design the most advanced nutraceutical and supplemental program to affect everything from improving metabolism and weight control to improving human sexuality all the way to reversing skin aging."

During the first meeting with a client, Garcia will ask a battery of questions about his or her lifestyle. He works with a team of medical specialists, including the Longevity Lounge's in house osteopath, mesotherapist, hormone specialist and ophthalmologist, who help determine what diagnostic testing is required. "Everyone needs very comprehensive blood testing," he says, adding that these tests are along the lines of tests suggested by Life Extension. There are also often salivary and urine tests for further verification of hormone levels, oxidation type and metabolic type, and if necessary a "super fast cat scan" can be ordered. Among other things, these tests help determine what Garcia calls "real age," the "real wear and tear on the body" as opposed to chronological age.

After the initial meeting and tests, Garcia's clients — who are spread across the globe — usually continue to meet with him either in person, on the phone or via email, every week for a month and then every other week for

six months to a year. They are asked to keep detailed food, exercise and sleep logs and these are discussed during the meetings. Garcia also encourages a lot of reading to help them "connect the dots" about what he's prescribing for them. He also asks that many of them become members of Life Extension, go to the LEF website and get the magazine so they can educate themselves and get many of the products he recommends. The cost of the yearlong program averages \$10,000. That might sound like a lot, but clients get tons of personal attention. In fact, some are even rumored to have Garcia tick off appropriate items on restaurant menus or call him on his cell phone to discuss questions at all hours of the day and night. "I'm available 24/7," says Garcia.

Of course, not everyone has the time or money for a yearlong, hands-on program with Garcia, but you can still follow his anti-aging tips, many of which are found in his books — *The Balance*, which espouses a system of health and nutrition based on each individual's metabolic type, *The Healthy High Tech Body*, in which Garcia expands his prescription for a healthy, long, good looking life and the new *Look and Feel Fabulous Forever*, an updated version of *The Healthy High Tech Body*. You can also visit his website at www.ozgarcia.com, where you can take an interactive test to find your metabolic type.

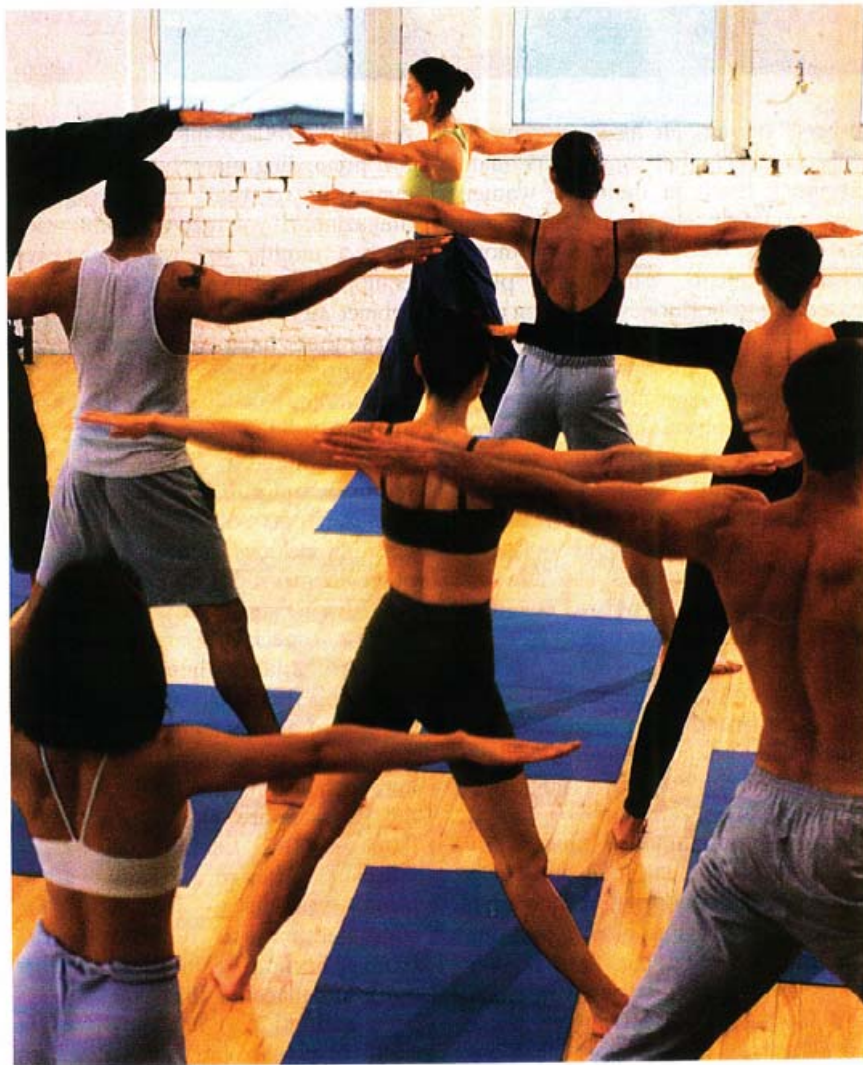
As with all problems and issues, Garcia attacks the topics of "anti-aging, reversing premature aging and by extension protecting yourself from the ravages of aging" with his broad holographic approach. He recommends that people who can't visit him get blood and other diagnostic tests and incorporate his recommendations for diet, exercise, supplements and behavior changes.

According to Garcia, anyone who wants to have a longer and healthier life should "begin by cleaning up your diet and starting to exercise." He adds, "You have nothing without diet and exercise — I don't care how good the supplement." Though he designs

personal nutritional and wellness programs for his clients, he bases his recommendations on what he calls the "original" or "Paleotech" diet, which he outlines in his books. Elements of the diet which Garcia recommends for anyone, regardless of metabolic type, include eating a wide range of multi-colored vegetables and fruits, including tomatoes and berries (especially blueberries); eating lots of cruciferous veggies, including broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and kale; eating tree nuts such as walnuts, pecans and almonds; increasing olive oil; eating lots of fish, particularly salmon; and cutting out "dangerous carbs" such as flours, pasta, breads,

pizza and muffins. Garcia recommends combining elements of the Pan Asian, Japanese and Mediterranean diets, and following the research of "one of the great voices of reason in this area," Dr. Walter Willett, the renowned chair of the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Once you've incorporated good eating habits and started exercising regularly, Garcia recommends adding nutraceuticals for anti-aging. "The nutraceuticals I love include the most powerful antioxidants such as alpha lipoic acid, carnosine, glutathione, lycopene, tocotrienols, lutein, berry extracts, coenzyme Q10 and many





others," he says. He also recommends "nutraceuticals that support adequate hormone levels in men and women such as chrysin and muira puama and the proper use of natural hormone pharmaceuticals. These are plant based, phyto-hormones that when used properly can regulate the needs of the andropausal male and menopausal female. Natural hormones have a wide range of applications especially for women that suffer from a variety of hormonal imbalances." He recommends checking out the work of Dr. Erika Schwartz and her book *The Hormone Solution*. He's also "big on" nutraceuticals that improve cognitive efficiency and energy such as NADH, acetyl carnitine, vinpocetine, piracetam and glycylphosphorylcholine. In addition, Garcia recommends customized nutraceuticals that have an effect on things like muscle growth or the quality of skin and hair.

Garcia is constantly educating himself and charting the latest in anti-aging, and he recommends that anyone interested in improving health and life extension do the same. "I'm reading about ten books right now," he adds. "I'm fascinated with human emotional development at this point and my

reading list reflects this." In addition to recommending many books, he urges everyone to read *Life Extension* magazine. "If you read that publication once a month, you will be so well equipped to dialogue on the subject of public health in ways that have immense relevance for all of us," he says, adding that he's been a member of the Foundation since it started. "It is a phenomenal publication."

A big part of Garcia's research includes traveling to other countries. He says that in Russia and parts of Europe, especially Germany and Switzerland, there are anti-aging therapies, such as the use of animal stem cells, that have no comparable approach in America. "I think the Russians are way out in front in this field," says Garcia. "They're already using — get this — human stem cell extracts reduced from human umbilical cords and placenta that have been refined and are currently being used both inside

and outside Russia. In many ways this is the future. In my travels through Russia I met the leading researchers in this field, The work they're doing in life extension takes your breath away."

In addition to his ongoing research and expanding his consulting all over the world, Garcia would like to bring the technologies that affect life extension and enhancement to a broader audience. "I'm very concerned about the ongoing decline of health in America and its ever increasing girth and weight," he says. "I'm doing research in this area that I hope may eventually affect public policy regarding the current status of the American diet." To expand his message, he plans to lecture more than ever. "Everyday brings new and great discoveries and breakthroughs that are novel and stimulating to the human mind," he adds as he prepares to leave for a lecture at Rockefeller University on the nature of creativity. "This is why I want to live as long as I can — there's just so much to know."

