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THE DIET SECRETS OF HOLLYWOOD'S FOOD DOCTOR

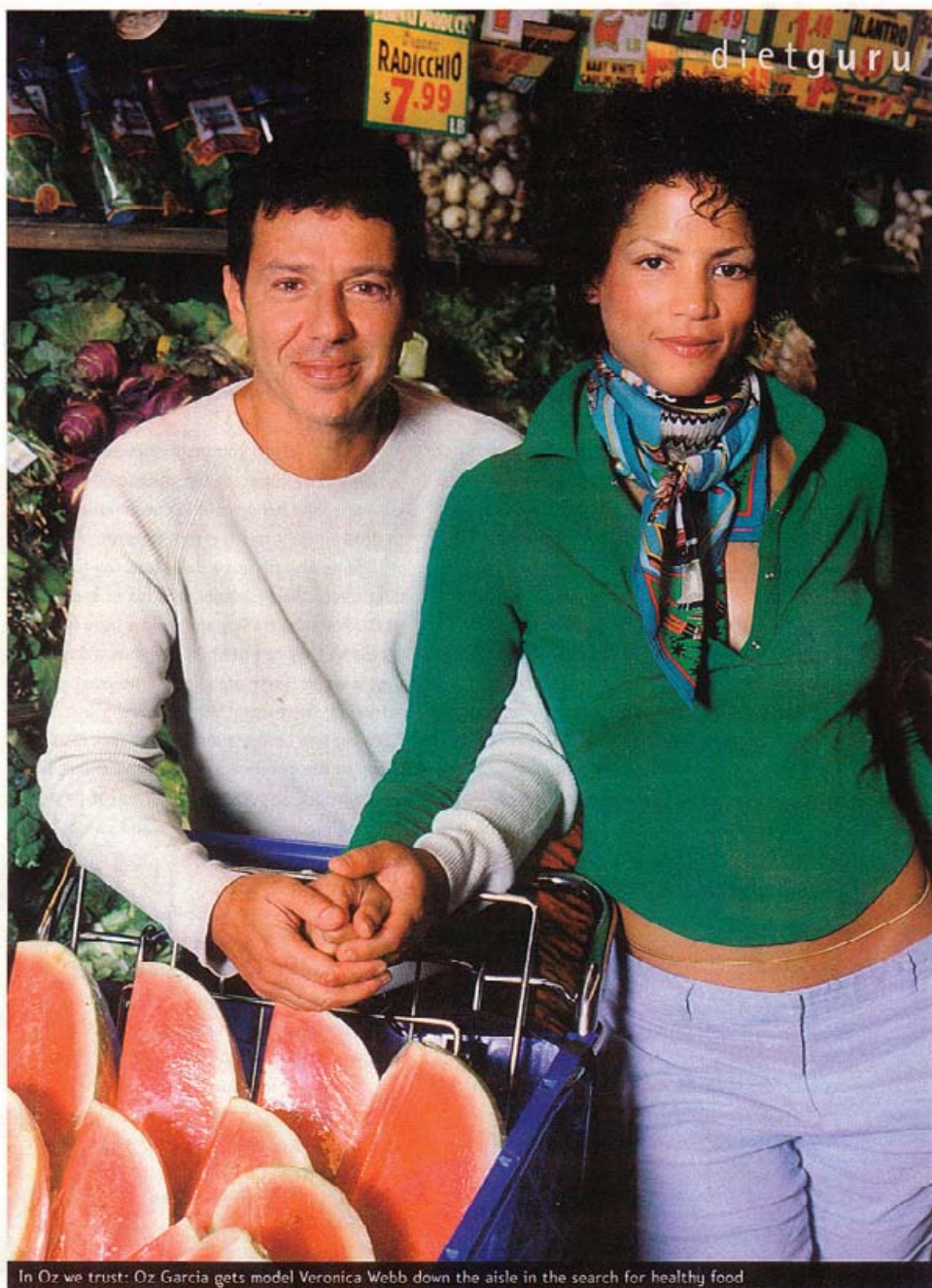
His client list not only includes supermodels Daniela Pestova and Veronica Webb, but also Robert De Niro, Donna Karan and many other celebrities he's far too discreet to name. And when Winona Ryder was feeling low on energy during a hectic filming schedule recently, she didn't call in sick, she called her nutritionist. Or rather, she called Oz Garcia. Author of the best-selling nutrition bible, *The Balance** (Element, £6.99) and food guru to most of A-list America, Oz is the first person Tinseltown calls on when a public appearance beckons and a lithe, energised look is needed – fast.

'Winona wasn't eating her meals regularly and as a result it affected her energy,' Oz, 49, says. 'I put her on a structured three-meals-a-day plan. Her programme included a variety of complex carbohydrates and grains, high-quality protein, fresh fruits and vegetables, and she also had a fresh fruit and soya milk shake every day for breakfast. Her energy levels really improved.'

Business is booming at Personal Best, Oz's Manhattan-based nutritional counselling firm. The phone rings constantly with clients demanding nutritional guidance.

MODEL DIETS

'Top models often suffer the most,' Oz reveals. 'They're in terrible condition from flying, living out of suitcases and snacking on Chinese food! The trouble is, their profession dictates they must look glowing and slender at all times. And >



In Oz we trust: Oz Garcia gets model Veronica Webb down the aisle in the search for healthy food

THE STARS WON'T EAT WITHOUT HIM

IF YOU'RE A HOLLYWOOD CELEB AND NEED TO KNOW WHAT, WHEN AND WHERE TO EAT, THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN FOR THE JOB – MEET OZ GARCIA, NUTRITIONIST TO THE STARS. BY OMEGA DOUGLAS

THE A-LIST

(Left to right) Donna Karen, Daniela Pestova, Robert De Niro and Winona Ryder – just some of the famous faces who turn to Oz in their hour of dietary need



this is where Oz steps in. 'Some celebrities put on a good public face and then go on starvation diets in private. Others are naturally slim but eat junk and feel terrible. They come here for advice on weight loss, an energy boost or a lifestyle change.'

Oz made the switch from a successful career in fashion photography to nutrition over 20 years ago, when too much partying started taking its toll. 'I suffered from debilitating migraines, which were made worse by my lifestyle,' he says. 'No doctors could help. It was only when I was asked to photograph a guru who was giving a lecture on holistic health that my life changed. I picked up some books and it wasn't long before I realised that exercise and, more importantly, food affected everything from my immunity to my cognitive capacity.' He gave up photography to work at a holistic health centre and eventually set up Personal Best.

THE A-LIST NUTRITIONIST

Models and designers were among Oz's first clients, but since he was voted best nutritionist by *New York* magazine in 1997, word has spread through Beverly Hills like wildfire. His waiting list is currently over a month long.

So good is Oz's dietary guidance, it has apparently enhanced the success of several actors, including Winona Ryder and Robert De Niro. 'Robert is very committed to taking care of himself through diet and exercise,' Oz says. 'Their professional lives improved as a result of learning to eat correctly – that is, recognising what foods were and weren't right for their metabolisms.'

At \$4,000 for a three- to six-month 'contract' you'd certainly expect improvement of some sort. During the first appointment, clients are interviewed about everything from their personal life to the number of hours they work. Hair biopsies are taken to test for possible mineral deficiencies, and blood samples collected 'to measure a person's real metabolic performance'. After that, a nutritional programme is drawn up. Oz doesn't lay down an inflexible daily menu, or put clients on calorie-controlled diets. 'Instead, I teach them how and when to eat according to their own individual

metabolism. When you teach someone to eat metabolically correctly, the volume of food they consume, and hence calorie consumption, tends to drop without much effort,' he says.

Clients also fill out a daily food log for the duration of their contract, and fax or e-mail it to Oz. For an extra fee, some stars have hotline access so they can get him 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 'There are clients who want extra attention,' Oz reveals. 'Veronica Webb was once PMS-ing just before a major New York fashion show, so she gave me a call. Her hormones were out of whack, so I told her what to eat to stop the bloating and balance her mood swings.'

LOW-CARB KING

Oz is a firm believer in the low-carb diets that stars like Jennifer Aniston have made so popular. He says many of his clients' problems derive from consuming too many carbohydrates, and it's one of the first things he moderates. 'I don't put them on low-carb diets, but carb-, protein- and fat-accurate diets: Translated, this means reducing the consumption of bread, pasta, cakes and cereal, all heavy, wheat-based products which

Garcia believes are damaging – particularly for women. 'Oestrogen works with carbohydrates to store fat which leads to exhaustion, heart disease and gives you that doughy look,' he says. 'When you move to less provocative carbohydrates – like rice or pumpkin, rather than white flour – the digestive system starts to function better.'

The other constant in the diets Oz prescribes is a supplement of a substance called NADH, a form of vitamin B3 (available in the UK from Holland & Barratt, £19.99 for 30, or visit the website at www.nadh.com). Most of his clients are taking it, and the excitement in his voice is tangible. 'It's a remarkable supplement,' Oz exclaims. 'It's a powerful re-builder of energy pathways, so you feel great. It also helps regulate cravings and weight. It was one of the first things I put Veronica on and she felt amazing.'

Oz tries to take one day off a week, but it's not always possible. When your schedule's packed with celebrities needing urgent nutritional advice, sometimes something's just got to give. This time it's the interview, which needs to be cut short – an unnameable 'A-list' client requires attention... ■

OZ'S CELEBRITY DIET

'The typical daily menu below is one way of lessening the starch and carbohydrate in your diet and increasing the volume of lean protein, such as fish, poultry, eggs and cheese, and the volume of raw and cooked vegetables. If you must have starch, stick to rice, corn and boiled potatoes. If you have a sweet tooth, eat berries, such as blueberries, blackberries and strawberries.' Follow for up to two weeks.

TYPICAL DAILY MENU

Breakfast 3-egg omelette, served with vegetables and perhaps cottage or feta cheese; ½ cup of berries
Lunch Salad Niçoise: 4-6oz tuna, 1 hard-boiled egg, sliced small potato, sliced tomato, olives, large serving of mixed greens, olive oil and vinegar dressing
Dinner Chicken breast; 1½ cups of vegetables, such as

asparagus, broccoli or string beans, ½ cup rice

WINONA'S ENERGY SHAKE

'This is such a simple recipe, yet it can make a huge difference to energy levels. Just mix all the ingredients together,' says Oz
 ● 16oz soya milk
 ● 2-3oz blueberries, strawberries and raspberries
 ● 1 small pot of natural yoghurt

VERONICA'S PMS REMEDY

'This is a great cocktail for regulating PMS,' Oz says 'If you take it before you're due, it will help ease blood sugar swings, cravings, mood swings and water retention'
 ● 100mg of P5P – a form of B6 (available by mail order from BioCare, call 0121 433 3727 for details)
 ● 50mg of magnesium
 ● 500mg of dandelion leaf

Robert DeNiro, Donna Karan and Miss Russia '98, among many others. All of his clients are required to do a substantial amount of reading. "No matter what brings them to me, I find it important to cultivate their knowledge of the subject at hand. Without exception, this makes for a more successful program."

Garcia believes in a cooperative working relationship with his clients as opposed to a treatment program or diet plan. His recommendations for nutrition, exercise and relaxation are made after carefully evaluating a client's daily living habits. "We look at the person's life, how (s)he is living day-to-day, literally—eating, sleeping, communicating, emoting and so forth. My goal is to penetrate deep into their life with proper coaching, so that they can begin to make the appropriate changes to benefit their health." Garcia is in fact prepared to advise his clients on all matters related to their health. This may include proper diagnostic testing and recommending medical specialists and fitness trainers. Says Garcia, "If I have to, I'll even review restaurant menus with clients."

His customized nutritional program spans at least six months, with an approach that omits nothing. "I really want my clients to develop the perspectives required to live well, to

"I really want my clients to develop the perspectives required to live well, to develop autonomy when it comes to issues of health... I would not leave something as important as health in the hands of doctors alone."

Key Nutrients Supplements at the top of Garcia's list of recommendations

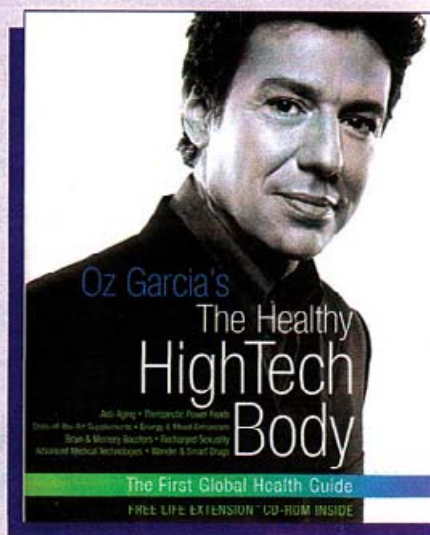
□ DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid found in fish and olive oils that is effective as an anti-inflammatory and may also increase neuronal fluidity. "DHA multitasks all over the place. It is critical for controlling everything from arthritis to depression and overall systemic inflammation."

□ NADH, a coenzyme formed from vitamin B3 that increases energy in both the body and the brain. "NADH is being studied for its application in neuropsychiatric and brain disorders, chronic fatigue, Alzheimer's disease and clinical depression. It is a magnificent product for enhancing fitness and sports performance."

□ ALPHA LIPOIC ACID, a potent antioxidant that can be used by almost every tissue in the body. "In the battle against free radical and inflammatory damage to our cells, ALA increases the performance of a variety of antioxidants such as glutathione and vitamins C and E, making them 'hold on' longer. It is a super antioxidant that can very specifically regulate the damage of inflammatory compounds such as cytokines that damage cells and accelerate aging."

□ ACETYL-L-CARNITINE, an amino acid that protects cells from the effects of aging by assisting in the production of cellular energy. "This nutrient has far-reaching benefits for brain performance. It inhibits lipofuscon spotting in the brain, increases attention span and alertness, and may also inhibit senility. Research may find that acetyl-L-carnitine is effective in the prevention of Alzheimer's disease."

As Garcia explains in *The Healthy High Tech Body*, "The closer we get to maximum life expectancy, the greater the push against the battle of the aging body. Supplements are part of the advancing technology allowing us to win that battle." An expanded list of his recommendations includes lycopene, gamma tocopherol, vinpocetine, SAME, folic acid, carnosine, glutathione, DMAE, Huperzine A, probiotics, MSM, secretagogues, arginine pyroglutamate, IP-6, bioflavonoid formulas and grape skin/seed extracts.



develop autonomy when it comes to issues of health, to be educated and fully responsible when it comes to the management of their health and the direction that it takes. I would not leave something as important as health in the hands of doctors alone.”

Garcia says people seeking advice at his nutritional consulting firm, Personal Best, come for a multitude of reasons.

◆ **Weight problems.** When every diet and weight loss program has failed, people turn to Garcia for help. “I work with some of the most difficult and intractable problems individuals have in managing their weight and body fat. People have harmed themselves metabolically simply because of the bad information, bad programs and bad diets out there. We do a lot of metabolic repair so our clients can regulate and manage their weight and body fat, properly,

often undoing years of metabolic and behavioral damage.”

◆ **Premature aging and stress.** “The amount of stress and pressure that many people function under wears them down in several different ways. Stress causes weight gain, hair loss, listless skin, damaged immunity and illness, with poor recovery times. Many of these problems are the result of driving their bodies beyond their physical capabilities.”

◆ **Poor energy/depression.** “This is a huge complaint and nearly universal among the people coming to see me. Clients complain that they are not sleeping enough, not eating properly and not enjoying enough recreational activity. Often they are overworked and overtired. I find that many people are unable to feel well and are often depressed as a consequence of having very poor energy. Whether it’s chronic fatigue or systemic exhaustion, we work to find the underlying ‘structural’ causes and lifestyle practices that contribute to the problems and then correct them.”

◆ **Appearance.** “Whether it’s a 60-year-old who wants to build muscle mass, a teenager with severe acne or someone with hair loss and premature wrinkling, I’ll design a program for their needs. Of course, being 50 myself, the whole subject of maintaining my appearance, my leanness and my muscle mass has led me to thoroughly research this aspect of health. Therefore, my clients continually benefit from my research.”

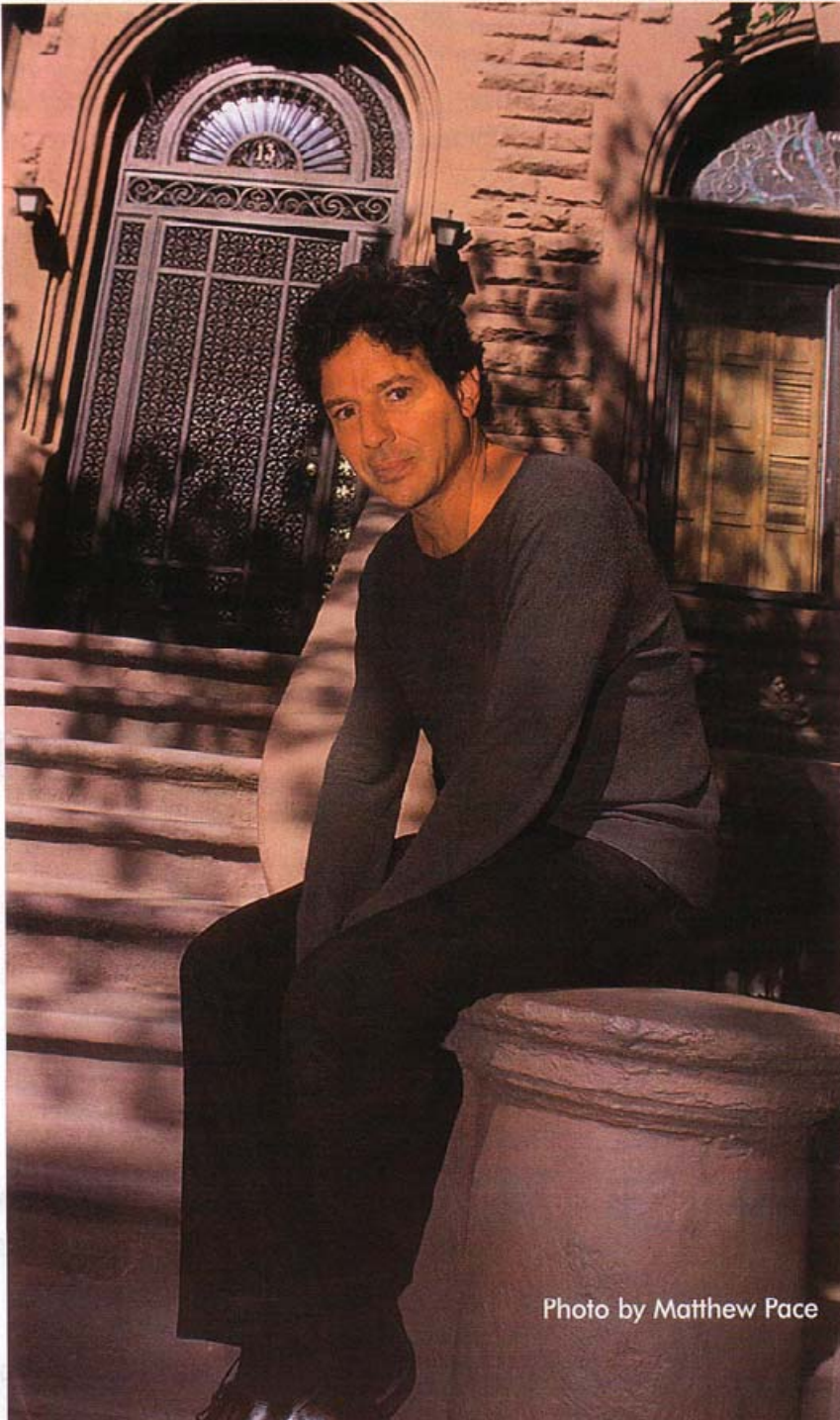


Photo by Matthew Pace

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Other complaints Garcia hears from his clients include impaired memory and declining cognitive function, poor sexual performance, and simply being confused about how and what to eat. Tired of experimenting with various diets, many clients ask him to devise a structured way of eating that provides energy, stability and efficiency.

Nutritional supplementation comprises a large part of Garcia's treatment protocols. He states, "Nutraceuticals are part of generating and maintaining youthful health. I can design a supplement program for anyone to deal with just about any concern. The program can be multifaceted or very specific."

Oz and Life Extension

Garcia has been a member of The Foundation since its inception. In fact, he still has a copy of the first *Life Extension* magazine, which he notes was only a newsletter in its earliest days. He enthusiastically states that the Life Extension website (www.lef.org) is unparalleled as an information source on everything pertaining to health. "It is so well organized and beautifully referenced. I constantly refer doctors and clients to the site." He also values the ease in ordering "a constellation of extraordinary products" from the website, many of which are available only through Life Extension. It has become a central resource for him, his clients and other professionals in the field of complementary and alternative medicine. "It goes without saying that Life Extension has been essential for the development of my own personal and professional growth."

Life Extension magazine is a must-read for Garcia. "Anyone reading it on a monthly basis will develop an enormous understanding of what is relevant when it comes to the maintenance of his or her body. I've had clients read the magazine and then

Recipes Galore

An unhealthy diet comprised of modern-day 'nu-foods' is one of the biggest health-related threats to our society, according to *The Healthy High Tech Body*. In our never-ending quest for convenience, we have developed a diet almost devoid of nutrients. Our bodies are designed to run on the same fuel as our Paleolithic ancestors. This means fruits, roots, tubers, nuts, seeds, herbs, vegetables and protein sources such as big and small game, fish, fowl and eggs are required to provide us with peak performance, health and longevity. The chapter entitled "The Paleotech Gourmet" features recipes, such as the one below, which help us do just that.

Warm lentil salad with spinach and broiled salmon

2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar	3/4 tsp. Kosher salt
2 tsp. Dijon mustard	Freshly ground black pepper
3 tsp. extra virgin olive oil	8 cups fresh spinach, washed and stemmed
1 cup brown lentils, picked over and rinsed*	2 tbsp. Basic Balsamic Vinaigrette**
1/4 cup finely chopped shallots	1 lb. skinless salmon filet, cut in 3 equal pieces
1/4 cup minced flat-leaf parsley	

1. To make the dressing, combine the vinegar, mustard and 2 tsp. olive oil in a small measuring cup and whisk to blend.
2. Bring 4 cups of water to boil in a saucepan and add the lentils. Boil gently, uncovered, for 20 minutes until tender but not mushy. Drain well and transfer to a bowl. Add the dressing, shallots, parsley, Kosher salt and pepper, to taste. Toss well and cover with foil to keep warm. (The lentils may be prepared up to 8 hours in advance and refrigerated. Reheat in the microwave before serving.)
3. Meanwhile, place the spinach in a bowl and toss with the Basic Balsamic Vinaigrette.
4. Preheat the broiler. Brush the salmon with the remaining teaspoon of olive oil and season generously on both sides with salt and pepper. Brown the salmon, skin side up, for 4 minutes. Turn and broil for 4 more minutes or until lightly browned and just barely cooked through.
5. To serve, divide the spinach among three plates. Spoon the warm lentil salad over the spinach and top with a piece of salmon. Serve immediately.

Makes 3 servings

*Although any brown lentils will do, the nutty flavor and firm texture of Spanish pardina lentils make them ideal for this recipe.

They are available from Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods, Inc. (503-654-3215 or www.bobsredmill.com)

Avoid overcooking.

**Recipe available on p. 65 of *The Healthy High Tech Body*

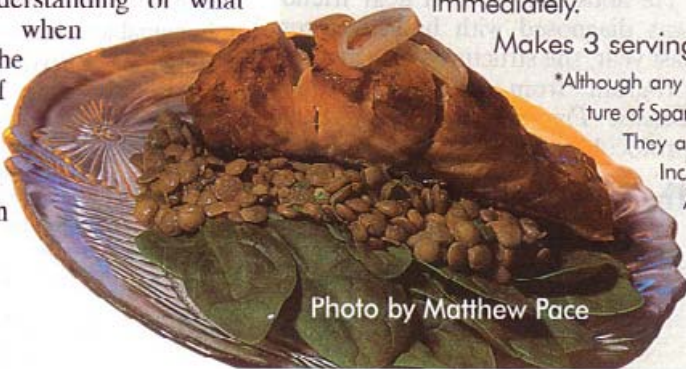


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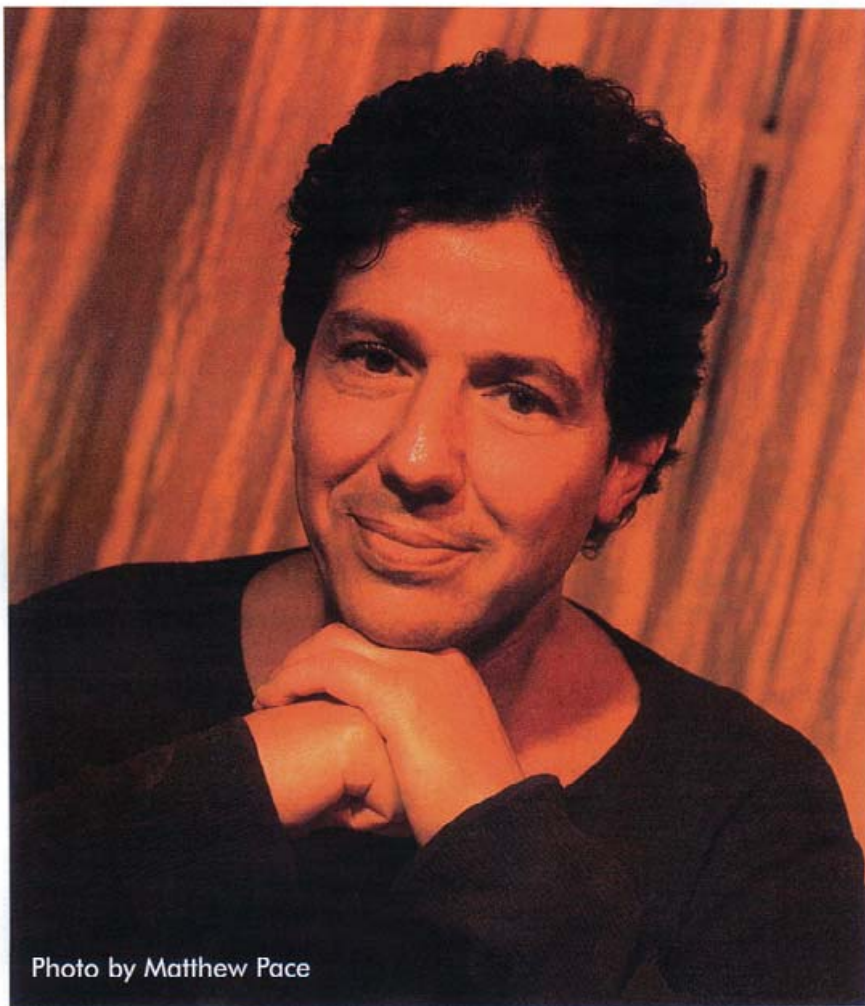


Photo by Matthew Pace

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understand everything, from the benefits of nutritional supplements to the events that contribute to aging.”

In the May 2000 issue, Garcia read about an innovative procedure involving human growth hormone to stimulate cartilage growth and joint mobility in arthritis patients. “I discovered Dr. Allan Dunn and his brilliant work using HGH to make joint tissue regenerate. Aside from the personal relationship I developed with him and the enormous amount of knowledge I received from him about HGH, I referred some of my most difficult joint cases to him with stellar results.” (Editor’s note: Dr. Allan Dunn, an orthopedic surgeon in Miami, has developed IntraArticular Growth

Hormone [IAHG] for the treatment of degenerative cartilage diseases.)

Through Life Extension, Garcia also made a connection with Houston dermatologist, Dr. Peter Proctor, a renowned authority on hair loss and baldness. “I learned about Peter Proctor from Life Extension. As a result, I have referred many clients to both him and his products.”

He adds that when a dear friend was diagnosed with breast cancer last year, she structured a treatment program from Life Extension’s *Disease Prevention and Treatment* protocol book.

The future according to Oz

Oz Garcia’s personal and professional interests go well beyond how

to achieve a “high tech body.” He is also intrigued by the study of evolutionary biology and psychology in order to more fully understand human behavior. “I’m reading the work of Robert Wright, author of *Moral Animal*, and I’ve had fascinating discussions with Jeremy Heaton, author of *The Evolution of Lust* and more recently *The Dangerous Emotion*, on the subject of human happiness. An almost silent revolution is occurring in psychology as researchers identify and literally code from a biological perspective the factors that generate true happiness in human beings.”

Garcia envisions a future in which people will enjoy continual good health from what he calls the emerging new biologies—stem cell research offering the potential of immortality, and pharmaco-genomics in which biologically engineered compounds will be created on demand to fit each individual’s unique genetic profile. “There is a dazzling promise of an illness-free future; a future devoid of the disease of aging. We may live to 150 years and beyond, looking and feeling no different at age 100 as we did at age 40,” says Garcia. “A kind of an extended middle age will be created in which we simply stop ‘getting old’. Molecular biologists are likely to figure out how to construct a living cell in total.”

Rather than a convergence of options to live well and live long, it appears that there will be an ongoing expansion of choices to address our health issues and problems. “Look for a future in which you may be able to literally customize your own cells from quasi-organic matter. We may be able to make our brain expand from multi-sensory to meta-sensory, engineered to provide capacity unimaginable today—no more misplacing the car keys.” ■

The Healthy High Tech Body, including the LEF Knowledge Base CD-ROM, is available in bookstores (hardcover \$26.00) and from the Life Extension Foundation (member price \$18.00).