

NewBeauty seeks to “redefine the traditional beauty magazine and create a complete and trusted beauty and cosmetic enhancement resource.” This introduction is positioned opposite a photograph of a woman appearing to emerge from a nest of wooden twigs into a flight of butterflies, presumably reassuring readers that anyone can undergo a cosmetic metamorphosis.

The magazine has what appears to be an impressive editorial advisory board composed of 11 medical and dental specialists and industry analysts who, it is stated, carefully review the articles to ensure that the magazine is “editorially complete, scientifically accurate, ethically balanced, and visually stunning.” The biographical note about each doctor lists extensive credentials and associations with various societies.

NewBeauty begins with a beauty brief — overviews of new procedures, tips, and beauty products — that eases the reader into an intense world of surgical reconstruction. The heart of the magazine is divided into five sections: “Skin,” “Face,” “Smile,” “Body,” and “Mind.” The pages are sumptuously illustrated with photos of flawless, bronzed models posing by Infinity pools or in lush landscapes. The pictures are so striking that they might even cause J-Lo to yearn for a sexier butt or convince Scarlett Johansson to long for fuller lips. Remarkably, however, this is one magazine that doesn’t depend on celebrity exposure. This issue contains only two pages of Hollywood beauty icons.

Throughout, there is an abundance of information about various procedures, ranging from denervating injection agents (a non-FDA-approved method similar to Botox) to six different methods of breast augmentation. Each procedure is described in detail, with information about how it is done and the expected recovery periods. There are helpful sidebars with questions to ask the doctors before putting yourself in their hands. A number of articles include a preparation and recovery plan for the procedure. And the magazine, which is published in 13 different editions, also provides a “Doctor Finder” section for your region.

However, while *NewBeauty* presents an alluring picture of attainable perfection on the surface, you find on closer inspection that its content is only skin-deep. Although the magazine claims to be a beauty resource, there are relatively few articles dedicated to beauty products or tips. Every section aggressively recommends surgery or other invasive cosmetic procedures. And who is making these recommendations? Frequently, it is one of those specialists on the editorial board or one of the doctors advertising their services in the magazine.

There are alluring before and after pictures, but there is very little information about the risks of these serious surgeries. Aside from

small paragraphs that downplay recovery issues and possible problems caused by surgery, there is virtually nothing about the immediate or long-term health risks. Some of the recovery periods stated are more optimistic than the information provided by the magazine’s prided source, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. For example, the magazine states that dermabrasion, a procedure that scrapes off the top layer of skin to camouflage scars and wrinkles, has a one-week recovery period. According to the society website, you should anticipate two weeks for the first stage of recovery and four to six weeks before the resumption of strenuous activities.

One way of looking at *NewBeauty* is as the cosmetic equivalent of the shopping magazine *Lucky*. It sells surgery to consumers who are self-conscious about problems with skin, facial features, or body parts. While many magazines, such as *Allure* and *Glamour*, suggest preventive ways to care for your body and skin, *NewBeauty* puts the emphasis on ways to correct it, even pushing unnecessary microdermabrasion for twentysomethings. “You’re young and fresh faced so take time in your 20s to stay that way. For smooth skin, a little micro-dermabrasion goes a long way. Sloughing off the uppermost layer of the skin reveals a fresher, younger-looking face.”

Although *NewBeauty* presents itself as a trusted source, its credibility is subject to serious questions. There appears to be little if any separation of “church and state” — editorial and advertising — within the magazine. *NewBeauty* proudly boasts of a “record-shattering 650 national and regional ad pages,” which certainly is an astounding feat for a magazine startup. Most of the ads, however, are either for the services of doctors on the advisory board or for the kinds of cosmetic procedures that are touted in its editorial spreads.

Managing editor Paige Herman was initially hesitant to comment on the selection process for the advisory board. She later said, “Our editorial advisory board was selected based on their credentials, knowledge, level of respect within the field, and shared passion for educating the public about cosmetic enhancement.”

Along with the mission statement and list of the editorial board, the premiere issue’s introductory pages include a two-page spread containing nearly 300 doctors’ names, which might lead the reader to think that the magazine is well-researched, backed up by all of these medical resources. In reality, the names listed are advertisers, and this seems an indirect way to thank them.

The commercial slant is especially evident in the back

section of the magazine, which, in the New York/New Jersey edition, contains 50 pages of ads for local plastic surgeons and cosmetic dentists in that region. Although the magazine does have a minuscule disclaimer saying it doesn’t endorse these doctors, some of them are members of the editorial board, which the magazine does endorse. Included in the “Doctor Finder” section are two plastic surgeons, Lawrence S. Reed and Darrick E. Antell, who court records show, each have had five medical settlements in the past 10 years. It should be noted that this does not necessarily imply malpractice, but Dr. Reed did have one malpractice judgment rendered against him in 2002, according to the New York State Department of Health.

In one major respect, the magazine does live up to its claims: it unquestionably is “visually stunning.” But what about the assertions that it is “editorially complete, scientifically accurate, ethically balanced”? On balance, the answer is that, like a bad facelift, *NewBeauty* is disturbingly flawed.

What Is Enlightenment?

By Channing Joseph

Readership: 75,000

Year of Birth: 1991

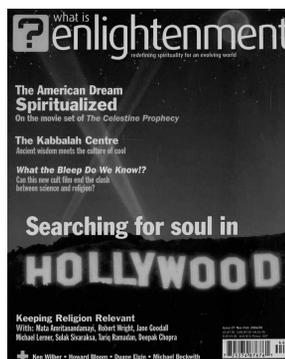
Frequency: Quarterly

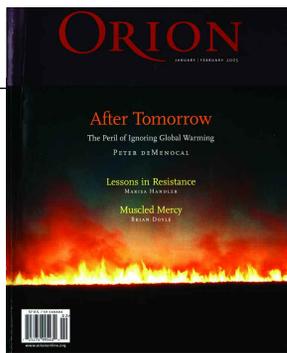
Price: \$7.50

Natural Habitat: Between the King James Bible and the latest Deepak Chopra bestseller, stuffed into the backpack of a spiritual seeker at a conference on world religions.

MANY folks think of the New Age movement as a fashion trend of sorts, a spiritual holdover from the heyday of San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district, composed mainly of rich former hippies exploring their LSD flashbacks while chanting and doing yoga. As with most stereotypes, there may be a seed of truth to this caricature, but (put in faith-based terms) certainly no more than a tiny mustard seed.

Potential readers who buy the caricature wholesale without looking deeper may dismiss *What Is Enlightenment?* as a marketing tool for corporate execs trying to capitalize on the deep pockets (and excessive free time) of some pop spiritualists. Those skeptics would be wrong — this is not a corporate enterprise and doesn’t even turn a profit. Besides, those who would overlook *Enlightenment* for being so bold as to aspire to enlightenment would be denying themselves an unusual and intriguing read through a publication that is “in search of a





radical new moral and philosophical architecture for the twenty-first century.”

Enlightenment tasks itself with “asking the hard questions of the new science and the ancient traditions, of art and culture, of business and politics.” After the reader absorbs the wide-ranging content of this 152-page quarterly (somewhat reminiscent of *Wired* with its love of bright colors and computer-based illustrations), it’s clear that for those who produce *Enlightenment*, its creation is not just a job (or a trend) but a serious spiritual mission.

“Our great challenge as a culture,” said the publication’s founder (and self-dubbed guru), Andrew Cohen, in the winter double issue, is “to liberate our hearts and minds from the two-dimensional, homogenized, superficial picture of the human experience. ... With this magazine, we are trying, in our own small way, to ... awaken a passion for depth, authenticity, and meaning.”

Yeah, I know. Cohen may seem full of himself — in fact, his name is noticeably sprinkled throughout the magazine’s pages, often attached to the moniker “visionary” — but he seems to take his mission seriously, and it shows in the pages of his creation.

Enlightenment’s writing explores a spectrum of spirit-related topics from an article by United Nations official Audrey Kitagawa on the importance of “living love” to an analysis of how the ancient Jewish mystic tradition of Kabbalah has become a pop-culture phenomenon to Tom Huston’s “The Gospel According to Pop Culture,” a piece that attempts to discern the moral lessons hidden deep within “Buffy the Vampire Slayer,” “The Matrix,” and the books of Dr. Seuss. Some articles are informative, some ponderous.

And a few are just amusing. An example from Huston’s piece, quoting Christian writer James W. Kemp’s “The Gospel According to Dr. Seuss” reads: “The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel reminds me of Sam-I-am. He is handed a plate of green eggs and ham in the form of a scroll ‘with words of lamentation and woe (Ezekiel 2:10).’ The scroll symbolizes the ... message... that Ezekiel is to offer to the children of Israel. ... Yet it is not surprising that the children of Israel might not agree with his tastes in cuisine.”

Although the publication contains many of the keywords you might expect to find in a panspiritual periodical — from “guru” to “gospel,” “pilgrimage” to “prophecy” — the content is not tailored to your New Age, Buddhist prayer-chanting, peacenik reader (you know, the one in the stereotype). What’s so refreshing about *Enlightenment* is that the editors seem to realize that some people are turned off by the notion of New Age spiritual-

ity, and they make an effort to embrace non-New Age points of view.

When it comes to acknowledging sincere spirituality, *Enlightenment* does a good job of bridging the gap between opposite ends of American culture — between pacifist liberals and pugnacious conservatives, between the science-based and the faith-based. Although the magazine’s slant is clearly left-liberal — “the progressives — people like us,” said founder Cohen quite openly at one point — its content also shows an impressive open-mindedness by acknowledging the spiritual merit it sees in some of conservative America’s views.

An example is “Real Men Have Broken Hearts,” a mostly positive feature on the right-wing Promise Keepers movement that has been harshly criticized by some left-leaning media outlets. *Enlightenment* writer Carter Phipps notes that “while much of this criticism is legitimate, the critics may also be missing the point. ... These men might not be voting on the progressive side of the ballot anytime soon. ... But if they keep their promises, to themselves and to their Lord, in the end, we might all be living in a more enlightened world.”

In another instance, an anonymous writer acknowledges that “there is a deep and widespread dissatisfaction with our secular culture.” A possible remedy, the author suggests, might just be a visit to your local creationism theme park, where “the displays actually tell you that the dinosaurs were all created on Day 6.”

Of course, *What Is Enlightenment?* is the kind of magazine that will never appeal to everyone’s tastes, but with a little bit of risk (and \$7.50), more people will enjoy it than you might suspect, from your Lama-lauding, Chopra-reading sister to (maybe) your Promise-keeping, Bible-thumping uncle, even if it’s just for a few cheap laughs at the crazy hippies.

Orion

By Sonya Fatah

Circulation: 19,000

Date of birth: 1982

Frequency: Bimonthly

Price: \$7

Natural Habitat: On the cluttered desk of an environmental studies professor at Oberlin College.

ORION isn’t a fresh face on the newsstands. It has been around long enough to see three American presidents serve out their terms. In those less turbulent times, as *Orion’s* people might remember them, their publication was a nature-writing journal, the kind of contem-

plative periodical you’d find on the bookshelf of an environmental science professor or in the rustic cabin of a park ranger.

Not any more. Since George W. Bush has occupied the White House, *Orion’s* mission has changed to cover a broader range of issues and reach a wider audience. The new *Orion* is more likely to share newsstand shelf space with general-interest publications like *Harper’s*, the *New Yorker* and *Mother Jones* than to sit in the more exclusive domain of environmental magazines.

“We had long ago stopped considering ourselves an environmental magazine and we wanted to move more in the direction of global issues,” editor Jennifer Sahn said. “The current political climate reinforces the fact that everything is an environmental issue — you can’t really separate those issues from work on nutrition or constitutional rights or the justice system.”

Orion is a welcome addition to the niche market of nature-and-culture magazines. Eighty pages in length and free of advertisements as before, the full-color magazine is visually striking, with high-end production and design values. And it has a roster of well-respected writers: Wendell Berry, Terry Tempest Williams, and Barry Lopez, to name a few.

The content in *Orion* is likely to draw the kind of reader who picks up the Sierra Club’s *Sierra* magazine, but it remains questionable whether it will be able to attract the wider readership it is hoping for. *Orion’s* subscription and newsstand circulation currently stands at about 19,000, almost double the level it reached before its January 2003 transformation, but still nowhere near the circulation figures for any of the general-interest magazines mentioned above.

Orion is affiliated with the Orion Society, a nonprofit organization, and funded through a combination of memberships, grants from organizations such as the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and contributions from members. Those resources have, so far, allowed *Orion* to avoid soliciting advertisements.

Previously the society had two publications, the *Journal* and *Orion Afield*, devoted to the coverage of grassroots organizations and issues across America. *Orion Afield*, now folded into the back of the new magazine, covers grassroots work all over the world.

The contents of the January/February 2004 issue are typical of the approach they now take. The cover story, “After Tomorrow: The Perils of Ignoring Global Warming,” explores the divide between the scientific and political communities on long-term environmental policy-making. It also examines the possible chaotic impact of these differences on human civilization. The writer, a Columbia University paleoclimatologist, warns that megadroughts and massive changes in ocean