

MEDICAL

Grapevine

Hair now,
gone tomorrow?
Treating alopecia

Double the beauty
Eyelid surgery techniques

Hope for psoriasis
Recent advances revealed



A finger in every pie

Dr Patricia Yuen

how many of us can deny having gone down that "what if" road? At least once, regardless of how happy you are now, you would have wondered how different things would be now had you picked a different vocation when at the crossroads. Would you have made a better lawyer? Did you miss out on being a savvy businessman or a talented artist?

Dr Patricia Yuen doesn't have this problem – she simply made herself a composite career as a cosmetic dermatologist, fusing her interests in medicine and architecture. To keep her veterinary surgeon dream going, she raises funds for man's best friend at a local organisation. What more could anyone ask for?

Skin's her thing

Currently managing her own cosmetic dermatology practice with Pacific Healthcare, the 41-year-old was almost going to be an interventional cardiologist as she was "always excited about balloons and stents, and was immensely awed by the functionalities of the heart". However, a rotation through the Coronary Care Unit during her residency programme in San Francisco changed all that.

"On that particularly bad day, I went through 48 hours without sleep and with hardly anything to eat. The next morning I collapsed at morning rounds, and had to be resuscitated," she laughs.

Though able to see the humour behind it now, it set her thinking and Dr Yuen realised that there was more to life. Having a career was important, but equally important was having a family life and a social life. So she picked dermatology, where things weren't as fast-paced, and she didn't have to concern herself with being on-call.

She also drew inspiration from the late Professor Chan Heng Leong, the then head of Dermatology at NUH. Moving back to Singapore from the US, Dr Yuen felt lucky to be accepted by Prof Chan into his department. "He was a fantastic mentor and boss, and I learnt a lot from him. He's one of the most humble, most intelligent doctors I have ever met. Very kind too," she recounts.

With her decision made, Dr Yuen completed her advanced specialist training at NUH, and did her fair share of institution work. By this time, she had become increasingly aware of the growing demand for cosmetic dermatology and aesthetic procedures especially in private practice. While some dermatologists are more traditional and prefer to stick with the medical aspects of the specialty, she slowly geared toward the former, which besides being a rather forward-thinking business decision, also satisfied her design and aesthetic interests.

Dr Patricia Yuen

Multi-tasking mummy

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LOCATION PIERSIDE KITCHEN & BAR

