

## Fit &amp; Fab

# Coming to the surface

COSMETIC DERMATOLOGIST **PATRICIA YUEN** SOMETIMES DOUBLES UP AS AN AGONY AUNT FOR HER PATIENTS. SHE TELLS **JUDITH TAN** THAT IT HELPS HER PRESCRIBE THE RIGHT TREATMENT.

**You are a consultant cosmetic dermatologist. How different is that to say the work of a plastic surgeon?**

Well, there is a great deal of overlap in what we do, for example non-invasive procedures like Botox, fillers, mesotherapy, lasers and thermage. In addition, dermatologists treat skin disorders, like acne, rosacea and melasma and do mole assessments.

**A lot of GPs seem to be proliferating into your speciality, offering services such as Botox and mesotherapy. How has that affected your speciality?**

It hasn't really. Dermatologists undergo many more years of speciality training on the pathophysiology of the skin, so we are better able to diagnose and make therapeutic choices as well as to tackle any complications that may arise. Hence patients choose to see us for that reason.

**As a dermatologist, do you feel there is a need to take care of your own skin?**

Of course, it is the first thing my patients look at!

**What do you find harder to treat — the acne and pimples or a patient's self-esteem because of the pimples and acne?**

Self-esteem, that's why it's challenging doing what I do. It's not just about prescribing the right medicine, there is always some hand-holding involved.

**Do you find that you have to sometimes double up as an "agony aunt" to your patients? How do you handle the situation?**

Sure. I don't mind really as their stories keep me entertained! Also, it is important to listen to patients and establish a good rapport, so that you can prescribe the most appropriate treatment for each individual.

**Do you ever feel the need to keep up with the trends in your business?**

Yes, being up to date is crucial as products, technique and technology keep evolving. I try to attend at least two major conferences a year.

**Ever need time out? If yes, what do you do?**

I spend time with my Jack Russell

terriers, Dakota and Alabama. They are funny, intelligent and loving, and it's always therapeutic to be with them.

**You started the Marmalade restaurant with your friends. Often people tend to think restaurateurs enjoy food and are rather big in size. Yet you are slim and fit. Is there an image conflict here?**

Since when do restaurateurs have to be overweight? However, I do exercise to keep slim and fit so that I can eat what I want, and keep up with the weekly food tastings at Marmalade Pantry. Sometimes we taste up to 15 desserts in one sitting!

**Are you paranoid about gaining weight?**

No, but I am a compulsive exercise maniac. I have a personal trainer to whip me into shape twice a week. And on weekends, I usually go for a nice long run or swim.

**Do you think the term superwoman is a fact or a myth?**

Most of my women friends are superwomen, so how can that be a myth?

**As a cosmetic dermatologist, what would you say is the fountain of youth?**

From a cosmetic point of view, it has to be the new radiofrequency treatments. They stimulate collagen production to smoothen out scars and wrinkles, tighten pores and make the skin look radiant and rejuvenated.

**Is keeping fit a pleasure or penance?**

Great pleasure. I am addicted to the endorphin high, so I get grumpy when I don't exercise.

**Any pet peeve?**

People who don't mean what they say.

**If you could change only one part of your body, what would it be?**

My teeth... guess I should have listened to mum and kept those braces on when I was a kid.

**I love my life because...**

I've got a loving family, fabulous friends, fulfilling jobs and the cutest dogs — can't complain right now.



NG SOR LUAN

**What are some of the pitfalls of being a dermatologist?**

**'A typical scenario at a nice dinner party: "Ooohh, so you are a dermatologist? I have this really itchy rash over here..."'**

— Dr Yuen (above)