

Secrets of a (Not-So-Secret) Plastic Surgeon

How S.F.'s Dr. Carolyn Chang stays a cut above the rest **BY EMILY HSIEH**

Creating aliases for patients at the hospital and arranging special nighttime operating hours to ensure privacy are fairly routine for San Francisco-based plastic surgeon Dr. Carolyn Chang. “My practice attracts higher-profile people who want to stay under the radar,” she says. “A lot of individuals come to me from places like Southern California both to escape the media and because my aesthetic is more minimal and less obvious.”

Discretion is everything, and with an A-list client roster rife with actors, rock stars, dignitaries and socialites, Dr. Chang has become the go-to for those who want nips and tucks carried out quietly—with natural-looking results.

Flipping through the before-and-after photos in Dr. Chang’s sleekly designed Pacific Heights office reaffirms her core values. “The proof is always in the pictures,” says the Stanford-trained surgeon, whose portfolio contains no traces of overly taut, shiny, plumped-up countenances. Instead, images show a parade of subtly-yet-distinctly younger and more refreshed faces, though without reading the captions, it’s difficult to put your finger on exactly why or how.

First impressions are everything when it comes to choosing the right plastic surgeon. “You’ll get a sense of your doctor as soon as you meet him,” says Dr. Chang, who also serves as the Vice-Chairman of Plastic Surgery at the California Pacific Medical Center and has been singled out by *Vogue* as a member of their Vogue 100 (a group of tastemakers from around the country). The American



FROM TOP
Dr. Carolyn Chang. The doctor’s Pacific Heights office reflects her “minimal aesthetic.”



Board of Plastic Surgery-certified doctor, who favors designers like Alexander McQueen and Jean Yu during her off-hours, says, “My office is very clean. I like simple lines and tailored clothing. And that minimal aesthetic goes with my surgery, too.”

“One thing that tends to be forgotten is every plastic surgeon wants their patients to look perfect,” she says. “Sometimes, surgeons lose sight of the natural facial anatomy and overdo things to the point that the patients no longer looks like themselves.”

Dr. Chang also cautions against fillers and fat injections that can distort the natural contours of the face: “When you open certain checkout-stand magazines and you see people singled out as having awful surgery, chances are, it was actually too many fillers and injections that gave them that chipmunk look.”

To pull off a procedure without close friends or family taking notice, Dr. Chang says less is more: “I do only what the patient needs to give them the result they’re expecting. If they have extra skin on their

eyes, I’m going to remove just the skin but not the fat. The fewer procedures, the less scarring.” Operating in stages can also help: “By doing just the eyes and waiting several years before doing a lower face lift, there’s not as much overall change.” Starting early also has its benefits; the shift in appearance isn’t so dramatic.

Clever styling tricks can also go a long way in camouflaging a procedure. Post-op, good makeup (Dr. Chang favors mineral-based varieties) will cover any second- or third-week residual redness and bruising. Another tip: “Get new glasses or a different haircut or color just before your surgery,” Dr. Chang suggests. “People won’t be able to tell what’s going on—they won’t know if you’ve simply lost weight or if something else is different.” 2100 Webster St., S.F., 415-923-3070; drcarolynchang.com.

C **FALL FASHION**
7th Anniversary Special Issue

ALL AMERICAN
Supermodel Maggie Rizer
Mehran, the Ultimate Girl Next Door

CALIFORNIA STYLE

LONG LIVE McQUEEN
Sarah Burton's Crowning Moment in San Francisco

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

KATIE HOLMES

REVEALING A SEXY NEW LOOK AND A FRESH LEASE ON LIFE

SHOPPING GUIDE
Slim Suits, Fantasy Gowns, Evergreen

DR. CHANG'S TOP 3 POST-OP PRODUCTS

- COLORESCIENCE CORRECTOR PALETTE \$50, colorescience.com • SKINCEUTICALS
- SHEER PHYSICAL UV DEFENSE SPF 50 \$32, skinceuticals.com • NEOCUTIS
- LUMIÈRE RICHE BIO-RESTORATIVE EYE BALM \$90, neocutis.com.

