

# GENTRY

JANUARY 2011



40 PROFILE: SILICON VALLEY

Authors Lily Hills and Karen Hudson

42 PROFILE: PENINSULA

Rosewood Sand Hill's Spa Director Melissa McMahon

43 PROFILE: SAN FRANCISCO

Dr. Carolyn Chang

44



46

56

## Dr. Carolyn Chang

How many doctors can say that the hospital where they were born happens to be the institution where they attended undergraduate school, medical school, and performed their residency? But Stanford University is just that for aesthetic plastic surgeon Dr. Carolyn Chang, who spent her formative years in between growing up in Tennessee.

"I always knew I wanted to do surgery," Chang says of her return to Palo Alto and entrée into medicine. "Everyone gets a mentor when they're first starting out. Mine was a female plastic surgeon on staff at the time. She got me into the operating room, and I really enjoyed it and started thinking about plastic surgery as a career." Chang followed up her combined general/plastic surgery residency with an aesthetic and facial surgery fellowship in San Francisco with one of the pioneers of the modern day facelift (Chang was the first female awarded the position). After another fellowship in New York, Chang was back in California to stay.

She opened her private practice ten years ago in San Francisco and specializes in cosmetic surgery, especially facial. "It really resonates with me. I've always been an aesthetically oriented person." And just as she selects her glamorous work apparel (no white lab coats here, thank you very much), Dr. Chang lends her specialty that same consummate attention to detail. "Surgery, unlike fine art, is not something created from nothing," she says. "You're taking what is there and rearranging it in a more aesthetic way; the little details matter."

As for being a pioneer in her own right (roughly 90 percent of plastic surgeons are male), Chang is modest about paving the way for the next generation of female surgeons. "I've noticed a big increase. At California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC)," where Chang is also Vice-Chairman of the Department of Plastic Surgery, "there has been a large increase in women in medicine in general." Chang herself represents "a new generation of plastic surgeons in San Francisco," who are impeccably trained, provide natural results, and have a good rapport with their largely female clientele. This isn't your mother or your grandmother's plastic surgery. "I have an extremely natural aesthetic," she explains. "Plastic surgery gets mixed reactions all the time, not because of the procedure, but because it's so obvious when it's done. Mine truly is a natural result." She also has a large following of women who seek her out for post-pregnancy breast and body work and was recently voted by her surgical peers to be a Best Doctor in America.

Chang is eager to note her philanthropic interests. For the past six years she has been a volunteer reconstructive surgeon for CPMC's African American Breast Health Program. "I have a really strong belief in providing breast reconstruction for all women," says Chang. "I get joy in providing this. It's a whole different kind of patient, who doesn't need plastic surgery, but needs it for her mental health after a mastectomy." Three years ago, she became active with the San Francisco Ballet Auxiliary Board. "I feel strongly about giving back to things that make our city more culturally interesting. That's why I chose the Auxiliary." Chang has also sat on the Board of Trustees of Pets Unlimited Veterinary Shelter and Hospital. So what does she do with her very limited free time? Take up tennis, of course. She has also discovered a new preferred pastime: the Monday *New York Times* crossword, downloaded right to her iPad. "It's my favorite thing in the world to do." ■ —JENNIFER MASSONI

