

PROFILE

A match made in Medico Heaven



MANY COUPLES WOULD FIND BEING IN BUSINESS TOGETHER TRYING, BUT NOT HUSBAND AND WIFE AESTHETIC PRACTITIONERS, DR PETER MUZIKANTS AND DR LESLEY WILD OF ADA AESTHETIC MEDICINE IN GLEBE, SYDNEY.

The Secret to Aesthetic Success

After 30 years in the business, there's no denying that Ada Aesthetic Medicine has more than stood the test of time, largely due to an astute business model and above industry standard approach to patient care, administered only by highly qualified and skilled doctors.

'Our business model from the very start was having a clinic that was doctors-only for consultations and treatments,' explains Dr Peter Muzikants, who owns and operates the clinic with his wife Dr Lesley Wild.

'We learned early on that what attracted many patients to us, was that we, the doctors, would be performing the treatments. Despite the explosion of competition

in Sydney (there are more than 20 cosmetic clinics within a 10km radius), the majority of our competitors have a work model where nurses and therapists are delegated to perform treatments. This point of difference created a niche that still serves us well.'

Lesley adds: 'Our clinic is a non-surgical practice, focusing on the skin to improve blemishes, scars, birthmarks and skin quality using lasers and injectables. We bought our current premises in 2000 and we have been gradually adding new lasers and equipment ever since. The word 'Ada' is derived from Peter's Latvian heritage and simply means 'skin.'

Indeed, patients come to Ada for firstly great skin, but also for the personal touch, friendly 'bedside

manner' and the guarantee they are being treated by the best in the business from the greeting they receive upon entry, to the treatments themselves.

'We have two wonderful colleagues, Dr Margot Campion and Dr Mandy Hu,' says Lesley. 'They have worked with us for over 10 years. All the doctors have different personalities and areas of interest and expertise; so between us we can cater to the needs of a large range of patient issues. We have a fabulous and friendly reception staff and many of our patients appreciate the casual atmosphere of our reception area.'

For the Love of the Job

Both Lesley and Peter receive enormous satisfaction from their practice, on a daily basis, and they see it as more than simply a job.

'The most rewarding thing about being a cosmetic physician is the ability to improve people's self-esteem,' comments Lesley. 'Some procedures can be 'life-changing,' which truly makes it worthwhile. Challenges can be unrealistic patient expectations, so educating a patient is of vital importance before embarking on a treatment.'

Peter adds: 'Being an aesthetic physician has been better than I had imagined. Apart from the sensible hours we work, the type of people we see are on the whole enormously grateful and satisfied with the work we can do. It still gives me great pleasure and satisfaction to be able to say to patients, 'yes I can help you', when often they have been told there is not a treatment for them, or they have had bad experiences in the past.'

'Aesthetic medicine is dynamic, with constant innovations and new treatments that demand constant vigilance and evaluation of existing treatments and techniques. I see this as a positive – keeping up one's interest and skills.'

Work Vs Play

When one enjoys their work as much as Peter and Lesley do, it's often tricky to distinguish when work finishes, and relaxation begins. However, they seem to have a great grasp on this.

'Ever since we started medicine, one of our main goals was to have good balance of work and family life,' stresses Peter. 'That's one reason this boutique niche area of laser and aesthetic medicine attracted us over 30 years ago. We were quick to establish a full-time career and business.'

'There were at times great demands to work, but we did seem to be flexible and adapt our work hours. One method we found particularly effective and fun was combining work and family time by taking our kids with us on our conferences, combining them with holidays. It was a great way to travel the world with young kids as a family. We have great memories of these times. We did continue this until they were in their late 20s, as they never said no and, if not for their own jobs, I think they would still be tagging along. More recently we have found 'downscaling' our practice as a great way to increase our desire to have more time for family and personal interests.'

Lesley adds, 'We manage to achieve balance because Peter works full-time and is largely responsible for management of the practice. I work part-time, which enables me to attend to family and domestic issues. However, we are always available to help each other out if pressing work or family issues arise.'

Getting Away From It All

Travel plays a huge part in the couple's work and personal life, and it's not something they intend to give up any time soon. Peter, an avid runner, takes the opportunity to compete in marathons around the

world wherever possible.

'I have always been a keen runner especially distance running,' he reveals. 'At high school I was able to reach the NSW state cross country school competitions. I have been competing in half marathon and full marathons for just over 25 years now. I still do at least one or two half marathons a year and it's a nice feeling to still this year be able to finish 11th place in my age group 60+ and overall top 15 percent finisher out of 8,500 runners!'

'Highlight of my running has to be the running the trial Sydney 2000 Olympic Marathon course and finishing in the main stadium and watching myself run, as I was actually running the final full lap of the Olympic track on the gigantic TV screen set up in the stadium!'

'There have been many great moments in running the various marathons around the world, but running the Boston Marathon was special, because it has an unbelievable atmosphere and community support such as around the half-way point, we run through the Wellesley College girls scream tunnel, with unbelievable deafening screaming.'

'Entry into this prestigious event is earned by having run a recognised qualifying time, compared to other big city marathons were you just enter by



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paying. I am very proud I was able to compete in it twice in 2007 and 2008.

'Travelling overseas to compete in marathons and attend conferences in laser and aesthetic medicine has been a fantastic way to satisfy both Lesley's and my other interest, which is of course travelling. Any destination in Europe is fine, but in particular I love visiting any town or city in Italy especially on the Coast. Favourite cities are Paris, Berlin and Boston.'

'And of course, it's not just about putting on the running shoes and pounding the pavement!

'I have long been into surfing, board riding since age 15 years, when I would wake up at home in western Sydney and run in the dark with my board under my arm to catch the early train to Circular Quay, then catching the first ferry to Manly in order to be the first in the waves at Manly beach at sunrise,' reveals Peter.

'I even designed and made my own fibreglass surfboard in my dad's garage. I continued my passion though medical school, banding with other med surfer students to make 'surfaris' up to Noosa and down the South Coast. One highlight has been surfing incredible waves in the cold, shark infested waters of Jeffreys Bay,

South Africa. I still regularly check out the surf at my local break and enjoy the company of my old Maroubra surf buddies when the swell is running.'

'Travel is a shared passion,' adds Lesley, who also cites weekly jazz, burlesque, hip-hop and Zumba dance classes, learning other languages and caring for adopted cats as other fervent passions. 'We are most fortunate that, because we work together in the same industry, we are able to attend international conferences together, then add on a short holiday afterwards. My favourite holiday destinations have, so far, been Italy, (anywhere in Italy, really!) the Greek Islands and the South of France. We have also enjoyed fabulous adventures in Turkey, Spain, Britain, USA, Germany, Portugal, Croatia, Cuba and Morocco. Actually, we

have been visiting Paris for an annual conference for over 14 years, so 'we will always have Paris!' One indelible memory is of watching a stunning sunset in Riomaggiore on the Cinque Terre, sipping a delicious Prosecco, on our 25th wedding anniversary.'

Peter pipes in with a memory that both might rather forget! 'One that still stands out as a great disappointment was our big hike in the South of France from the hilltop village of Sospel to Menton on the Cote d'Azur. It was storming, with driving rain and wind for the whole hike up and down through rocky ravines and forests. Plans for relaxing picnic breaks were canned as we struggled for almost eight hours without any breaks just to get to our final destination on the coast. Our water proof clothing and shoes lasted about 30 minutes. We were 100 percent wet through with feet sloshing in pools of water in our shoes; we were miserable, but the experience was worth it for the best hot bath ever.'

But it's these moments that cement relationships and, after 30-plus years together, the couple are closer than ever.

'Love was 'in the air' in our second year of university,' recalls Lesley. 'We were at UNSW and we were together for the rest of the course, marrying in

1984. We actually have quite different personalities, so our 'secret' is that we balance each other. I tend to be excitable, spendthrift and impulsive, whereas Peter is the logical, practical one, helping keep my feet on the ground. More importantly, however, is that we have always seen eye-to-eye on the 'big picture' – namely the welfare of our family and the running of our clinic. We also share a similar sense of humour and musical tastes, which are helpful during stressful times.'

'Our relationship has evolved,' comments Peter, 'but we still have those common interests and goals that keep us together. Being able to see and respect each other's interests and compromise if not both agreeable, is the key.'

Medpro Finance Success

'Finance and banking stuff have always been a necessary interest for us,' reveals Peter, 'especially running a practice dependent on being up to date with the latest equipment. It would have been great if there had been a Medpro Finance around when we were getting established and expanding!

'But our association with Medpro Finance began just a couple of years ago after hearing a talk they presented at a CPCA CME meeting in Sydney. Normally, I don't take much notice of these types of finance talks, but they seemed different and, after doing our due diligence on Ross and his partners, I decided to invest with them. With the excellent returns I receive each quarter, it was one of my better decisions in finance and it feels good to be providing financial backing to our medical health industry.' **AMP**

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Five Minutes With Dr Peter Muzikants

My perfect weekend is... early sunrise surf or, if no surf, a coastal beach run then a lazy brunch at a local café with Lesley and our kids if they're around. After a sunset walk along beach, settle in for a round of binge video viewing of British crime dramas.

My favourite place to eat is ... Grotta Palazzeze, a sea cliff cave restaurant in Polignano, Puglia Italy.

My favourite car ... my old 1973 VW type 3 station wagon, which has survived over 300,000 klms through snow fields, beach tracks and everything I did as a student and in the early days of starting our family and laser clinic. Lesley and I both cried when I finally sold that car. It was truly the end of an era.

My favourite place to travel is... anywhere in Europe.

My favourite way to let of steam is... going for a hilly run.

I reward myself by... going out for a meal or to the movies.

If I had more time I would... travel and see more of outback Australia

I'm most proud of... just being me, and also my family.

If I wasn't a doctor, I would be... an unhappy mechanical engineer.



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Five Minutes with Dr Lesley Wild

My perfect weekend would be...
a lazy brunch at our favourite nearby café, a dance class or a seaside walk, followed by a cosy night-in watching British crime dramas.

My favourite place to eat is...
Grotta Palazzeze, a romantically lit seaside cave restaurant in Polignano in Puglia, Italy. 'Snap', Peter!

My favourite car is... my old faithful Merc, which I've had for over 10 years and have no plans to upgrade.

My favourite place to travel is... Italy, anywhere in Italy, you can't go wrong!

My favourite way to let of steam is... with a sweaty dance class!

I reward myself with... a sparkly cocktail dress, or failing that, a stiff G&T!

If I had more time I would... take up studying languages again.

I'm most proud of... my children, who have both grown to be kind and caring adults. Both have achieved academic success, but their personalities are what gladden my heart.

If I wasn't a doctor, I would be... a linguist. Or else a hoarder, living in a hovel with 47 cats!

AS SEEN IN AESTHETIC MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

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