



Ideas of Beauty

The rebirth of The Lu-Jean Feng Clinic

By Jessica Nelson | Photos by Scott Pease

*"T*he minute I walked into my office I felt something," says Dr. Lu-Jean Feng, medical director of The Lu-Jean Feng Clinic at 31200 Pinetree Rd. in Pepper Pike. "Sometimes you go to a place and you think that everything is possible, that all that you dream is going to come true."

For Feng, one dream has indeed come true as the clinic is celebrating the success of an impressive, \$1 million renovation partially completed this month.

A luxurious, one-stop shop for modern health and beauty treatments, The Lu-Jean Feng Clinic specializes in microvascular plastic and reconstructive surgery and skin care. It currently offers body sculpting and contouring, liposuction, laser resurfacing, facial reju-

venation, reflexology treatments, hair transplants and permanent makeup. Soon, patients and clients will be able to take advantage of a range of fitness and nutrition programs as well.

This elegant, 15,127-square-foot Northeastern Ohio medical establishment was remodeled to evoke Feng's poetic idealism in every detail. The renovation work embodies her personal medical philosophy: "To view each and

every case as a challenge to transform something ordinary, damaged or unusual into a beautiful masterpiece.”

Acting on opportunity

Last summer, Feng’s practice was flourishing. The clinic simply needed more room.

“We decided we wanted to grow our business,” says Linda Haas, the clinic’s director of operations. “We were evolving from an outpatient surgery center to more of a total health and wellness center.”

From January 2000, the clinic occupied the building’s third floor, while other businesses leased the first and second floors occasionally. Less than a year ago, a tenant vacated. The timing was right. Business was booming. Two floors stood empty. It made sense for the clinic to take over the whole building.

Acting on the opportunity to expand, Haas, Feng and the building’s owner Mark Munsell of Mander Properties put together a lineup of specialists to meet their goals. Principal Architect William Ayers and Project Architect Mike Lipowski, of Perspectus Architects;



COMFORT ZONE Examination rooms are designed to relax with soft colors and multiple sources of lighting.

Construction Manager Dave Lynn, head of Building Industry Consultants; Dave Brashear, of Rosewood Contractors; Space Planner Sharon Brockman, of Brockman and Godfrey Designs LLC; and Interior Designer Andrew Blank were the key players.

The design process began in January 2005 with the construction drawings issued in August of that year, Lipowski says.

“The owner was involved in every design meeting and drove the layout and utilization of every space,” he says.

“The clients knew exactly what they wanted and how the suite layout would affect their practice.”

Prior to the project, the interior had been designed to accommodate realtors and insurance companies. There were several perimeter offices and office partitions compensated for the lack of actual walls. As the team needed to reconfigure the space for plumbing, windows and HVAC and to accommodate patients’ needs for privacy, the project entailed a total gutting of both the first and second floors, which was followed by an extensive redesign of the interior.

Construction started in September and the clinic’s examination area on the second floor opened around the first of the year, Lipowski says, adding that additional work on the second floor will be completed soon, followed by the creation of a new fitness and exercise center on the first floor.

Facing challenges

Most challenging in the process was the timeframe, and synchronizing the progress of multiple jobs throughout the building, Lynn says.

Another major challenge was meeting strict state requirements particular to medical, beauty and wellness centers. Accreditation associations, in this case the State of Ohio and the Accreditation Association of Ambulatory Healthcare, required the clinic to use special paints, fabrics and laminates.

Hallways had to be of a certain size, fire exits had to contain built-in regulatory unlocking systems and the surgery areas required a special HVAC unit.

Also required was emergency power back up.

The team met this challenge with a custom-made rooftop power generator. Converted from a 460-square-inch V8 diesel car engine, it now runs on natural gas.

“The other challenge in this project was not only how to fit the

The Good Doctor

The ideas of balance and beauty behind the style of Dr. Lu-Jean Feng’s newly renovated clinic reveal much of her personal medical philosophy. Her practice prides itself on a focus on fine details, not just its patients’ medical needs but also their personal needs.

“Even as hard as hospitals try, you really are another number,” says Construction Manager Dave Lynn, head of Building Industry Consultants. “What I’ve noticed here is that everybody is important.”

Feng credits this approach to her own personal experiences growing up.

She left Taiwan in her youth with one suitcase and a coveted student visa to reunite with her father, who was undergoing pilot training in America.

“He really thought this was the most beautiful country, and the land of opportunity,” she says.

A Taiwanese minority awash in a sea of blond, blue-eyed, American-looking children in high school, Feng was taunted about her exotic looks.

“I really was kind of like a social outcast, because you know how kids are when you’re different,” she says.

She graduated high school at age 16, went on to graduate from Yale, and completed eight years of further study and training.

She spent two years at Bellevue and New York University before accepting a position at Cleveland’s Metro Hospital from 1988-1990. In 1988, she became the first surgeon in the American Midwest to successfully use abdominal or buttock tissue for breast reconstruction.

She is now sought-after by the media, renowned among the international medical community and in-demand in nationwide academia. And each week in Pepper Pike, she and Dr. Nicholas R. Husni, MD, PHD, treat at least one out-of-state patient, many of whom arrive from overseas. A tribute to her professional success, Feng acquired a second office in Strongsville last year, The Lu-Jean Feng Clinic Center for Skincare, near Route 82 and Pearl Road. —JN



FINDING BALANCE Working with the clinic's owner, Interior Designer Andrew Blank utilized Feng Shui in achieving a relaxing atmosphere, such as in this second-floor waiting area (above, left). Each room is different from the last, but they all convey a tangible flow of positive energy because of these shared motifs, like pieces of an intricate puzzle, Blank explains. In the facility's second-floor skincare center (above, right) is a glass block hallway, illuminated by fiber optical lighting. The feature adds to the decor and elegance of the space.

codes, but how to make it look good," Haas says. "That's what our business is all about: aesthetics."

Luxurious materials

While the project entailed work on the building's exterior, including new doors and improvement of the parking lot and front canopy, the clinic's interior design is what truly puts it in a league of its own. It is at once luxurious and understated, elegant and subtle. Everything looks pure, clean and smooth with a focus on the harmony of color and line.

"We wanted to make sure it had a very homey feel," Haas says. "We wanted the right kind of atmosphere. We didn't want it to look institutional."

Blank was responsible for selecting all materials to attain a warm, high-end, Asian environment.

"The materials and details were vitally important to the overall success of this project," Lipowski says. "Most clients cannot afford the extra costs for these improvements, but what a difference it makes."

"The materials in each room are of the highest quality available and set this suite apart from every other medical office project we have been involved

with. The bulk of our work is health care and we have completed dozens of medical office building tenant fit-outs, but nothing like this."

The exam rooms of the second floor have luxury tile floors and lay-in ceilings. Vinyl wall coverings and laminate cabinetry decorate the perimeter, and a combination of fluorescent and incandescent lighting is utilized.

In the reception area, the floors are carpeted and accent lighting is installed in the drywall tray ceilings.

Hand-cut bamboo trim graces interior doors throughout.

"We wanted to make sure [the clinic] had a very homey feel. We wanted the right kind of atmosphere. We didn't want it to look institutional!"

Linda Haas

The Lu-Jean Feng Clinic

In the facility's second-floor skincare center is a glass block hallway, illuminated by fiber optical lighting.

Also on the floor is a fully equipped kitchen.

Most impressive are the conference rooms and offices with their individual photography studios, drop-down projector screens and security monitoring equipment.

In the bathrooms, floors are stone and sink tops are granite, with Venetian plaster used on walls to create texture.

"People are surprised it's not wallpaper," Haas explains. "It's a process whereby they keep painting and varnishing and sanding to create this kind of unique look."

Blank used the same striking technique in a different color to accent the nearby reception desk.

Throughout the facility, Blank purposely avoided the color white, choosing calmer, warmer tones instead. ("It's about the feeling you get when you come in," Blank says.)

The color scheme transforms seamlessly and very gradually, room-by-room, from neutral nut-browns, creams and greens to cherry, plum and the occasional splash of pink or orange.

"You can go anywhere with color," he says.

Creating an "anti-hospital"

Working with the doctor, Blank utilized Feng Shui in achieving the clinic's relaxing atmosphere. Feng Shui, the Chinese art of strategic placement of



WOOD WORKS The clinic's main conference room is decorated with custom wood and special double crown moldings.

objects in one's surroundings, is said to bring mental or physical health, or harmony. Translating as "wind" (feng) and "water" (shui), the practice involves creating a balance of the elements: water, earth, fire, wood and metal.

Each room is different from the last, but they all convey a tangible flow of positive energy because of these shared motifs, like pieces of an intricate puzzle, Blank explains.

Water is a constant theme throughout the clinic. A bubbling fountain greets patients in the third-floor waiting room. Another fountain is a huge wall of water, flowing from ceiling to floor. Smaller fountains are scattered throughout the clinic. The delicate, constant trickling sound is instantly soothing.

Other aspects of the design incorporate the earth element. The clinic's recovery room gives recuperating patients an inspirational view of pine treetops. ("It just makes them want to get up," Haas says.) Additionally, well-crafted,

wooden furniture adds a more masculine, balancing touch.

Little details allude to wind, such as the glass block hall in the skincare center and decorative glass tile wrapping bathroom sinks.

As for metal, the clinic boasts state-of-the-art medical equipment.

"[A challenge] in this project was not only how to fit the codes, but how to make it look good. That's what our business is all about: aesthetics."

Linda Hass

The Lu-Jean Feng Clinic

The clinic appeals to the aural and aromatic senses as well. Each treatment room has its own sound system. The clinic uses aromatherapy lavender in its pre-operation room to relax patients, and subtle, fresh-smelling fragrance oils

in simple containers in the slate-tile hallways have a similar calming effect.

While additional work remains at The Lu-Jean Feng Clinic, including the addition of the first floor fitness and exercise center, Feng and her associates are "extremely happy" with the newly renovated space, Lipowski says.

Quality relationships between team members were key in the project's success, he adds.

Those with whom *Properties* spoke had positive things to say about everyone involved.

The renovation was a real collaborative effort that finished on a high note thanks to a strong, shared sense of teamwork and commitment.

"We were throwing out ideas constantly," Brockman says. "You just had a great team of detailers."

"Everybody was here for one goal," Lynn adds. "It made it a lot of fun." **P**

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