

JANUARY 2010

# AVENUE



*Designer Douglas Hannant with designer Nicole Hanley, entrepreneur Annie Churchill and green activist Ulla Parker*

## THE HOUSE THAT HANNANT BUILT

# As Young As You Feel

In his renowned Upper East Side plastic surgery practice, Dr. Robert Guida melds science and art

**D**r. Robert Guida, M.D., a board-certified Upper East Side facial plastic surgeon and head and neck surgeon, places the utmost importance on his patients' needs. Repeatedly cited in *New York Magazine's* "Best Doctor" issue, and clinical associate professor at the Weill Cornell Medical College of Cornell University, Dr. Guida combines state-of-the-art technical expertise with an aesthetic sensibility refined over his 20 years of experience. The services he provides, including cosmetic facelifts, facial implantology, rhinoplasty and skin resurfacing, result in dramatic yet natural looking improvement for his clients. While implementing the most exciting new technologies in his field, he believes that no one method is best for everyone. Instead, he takes special care to understand each patient's individual goals before recommending a course of action. "The most gratifying part of my job is being able to improve someone's physical appearance in a very positive, life-changing way while maintaining a natural, nonsurgical look," says Dr. Guida. "The happiness and increased confidence I see in my patients is enormously satisfying."

#### **What drew you to the field of cosmetic surgery?**

I wanted to work in a field where I could significantly improve people's lives in a very direct and visible manner. During my medical training, I was fascinated with the intricate anatomy of the face and head and neck region. Facial cosmetic surgery allows me to incorporate both my artistic capabilities and my technical expertise.

I actually feel I have evolved into a "facial architect." I look to improve one's appearance from a molecular level on up, using a

variety of resurfacing techniques as well as surgically reshaping skin, muscle, cartilage and bone to yield a more attractive, balanced and youthful look.

#### **When seeing a new patient, what is your primary goal?**

My primary goal is to truly understand what my patient's goals are and then educate him or her about realistic treatment options. Asking the right questions, listening carefully to the patient's answers and being empathic are essential to achieving the best cosmetic goals for a patient. I want to reassure them that facial plastic surgery is quite advanced, and obtaining a natural, more youthful look is a realistic and obtainable goal. We need to review all options and find the most appropriate choice for each individual patient.

#### **What range of procedures do you offer at your practice?**

The spectrum of my expertise ranges from cosmetic and functional nasal surgery, revision rhinoplasty surgery, face and neck lifts, cosmetic eyelid and brow surgery, facial reconstruction after skin cancer removal to injectables such as Botox and facial fillers. Additionally, I have always been a huge proponent of proper skin care and have extensive background in all types of facial skin resurfacing techniques ranging from procedures with no down time like a light chemical peel or a lunchtime photofacial to medium depth chemical peels. The most popular resurfacing technique in my practice now is a full face, neck and chest fractional CO2 laser resurfacing, requiring several days of recovery, but with dramatic benefits. This can actually be performed simultaneously with a face-neck lift, achieving wonderful results.

#### **What are your specialties?**

Because of my training in head and neck surgery as well as facial plastic surgery, early on in my career I became fascinated with cosmetic and functional nasal surgery. For more than 20 years, I have performed hundreds of rhinoplasties and revision rhinoplasties for patients from around the world, with a keen sense of achieving a balanced, attractive nose that also functions very well. Cosmetic nasal surgery should always be performed with equal emphasis on function and appearance.

My other area of expertise is my ability to surgically help someone look younger and more attractive while maintaining a natural appearance. Cosmetic eyelid and facelift surgery can be done with well camouflaged incisions that are almost imperceptible. Often, fractional laser resurfacing done in combination with eyelid and facelift surgery can literally "turn back the clock" and make someone look like they did when they were 10 years younger. It is very common for my patients to look better in their 50s and 60s than they did in their 30s and 40s by judiciously choosing the proper resurfacing and surgical options.

#### **Why is it so important to understand how the nose functions when you are doing a rhinoplasty for cosmetic reasons?**

My training as a facial plastic surgeon as well as a head and neck surgeon has given me a holistic view of form and function of the nose. I love noses that look great, but they should also function. Rhinoplasty surgery involves incisions and alterations of structures in the nose that intimately and permanently affect function. I feel it is my responsibility as a facial plastic surgeon and rhinologist to give equal attention and make improvements to both aspects.

An emergency phone call from a patient late on a Friday evening several years ago powerfully demonstrated to me the need for balance of form and function in nasal surgery. A young man accidentally amputated the lower third of his nose and went to the emergency room in his hometown with the amputated piece in a baggy filled with ice. The doctor on call said he "never saw anything like this before." Somehow, the family was able to reach me and I was able to reconstruct the amputated nasal tissue back on the remainder of his nose. This involved detailed understanding of internal and external nasal anatomy. By appropriate realignment of the inner nasal lining, piecing together severed pieces of cartilage that supported the nasal airway and finally meticulously closing the severed skin edges, proper form and function were restored and the nose survived. He was able to return to the track team at high school and went on to pursue a film major in college.

**We assume that women comprise most of your clientele for cosmetic surgery. Is that the case, or have you seen an increase in your male patients?**

Of course I have many patients who are women, but I have always had a significant percentage of male patients in my practice. Cosmetic and functional nasal surgery is often motivated by former athletic injuries or snoring issues combined with cosmetic concerns, and these are frequent problems in the male population.

Also, many men now understand that cosmetic eyelid, nasal or facelift surgery can be done in such a way to appropriately camouflage the incisions and obtain a significantly improved, more youthful look. Most of my male patients are physically fit and mentally at the top of their game, but competing with a younger competitive work force. Looking younger and feeling good improves their confidence and makes them more competitive in a tight job market.

**What procedure do you think offers the quickest way to refresh your look?**

The most efficacious way to surgically obtain a significantly refreshed, more youthful look is with cosmetic eyelid surgery, either with or without laser skin resurfacing. The first part of the face to show signs of aging is around the eyelids: puffiness and wrinkles of the lower eyelid and hanging, hooded skin of the upper eyelid. The puffy, bulging fat of the lower eyelid can be removed without an external skin incision and the upper eyelid utilizes an incision well camouflaged in the natural eyelid crease. The recovery time is less than a week and it can give the most significant, long lasting refreshed, more youthful look in the shortest amount of time.

The quickest way to refresh your look nonsurgically is with a combination of injectables that eliminate or minimize facial lines and wrinkles—either Botox or Dysport to relax the muscles that cause deep lines, or a variety of fillers, such as Restylane or Juvaderm, which can fill in deep lines and wrinkles. These injectable treatments, of course, are temporary and won't last as long as a surgical procedure.

**What's the one piece of advice you give all of your patients?**

If you are considering facial surgery or skin resurfacing, do your research, obtain a thorough knowledge of what your cosmetic and



Dr. Robert Guida

functional goals are and a detailed understanding of your options. Feel reassured that some of the best doctors are here in New York City. Don't be afraid to ask questions, expect appropriate answers and to be treated with respect and care before, during and after your procedure.

**How does it feel to be able to give a patient what they've been dreaming or hoping for?**

It is hugely gratifying and humbling to be able to positively change someone's life or to boost their confidence in a significant way by altering their facial features. Before surgery, I try to reassure the patient that I understand what they want and I will take good care of them. Frequently, their response is, "I trust you." I take that trust very seriously.

**What's the most popular procedure that you do?**

Because of my training, one of the most popular procedures I perform is a combination of cosmetic and functional nasal surgery. This type of surgery is complex and requires the surgeon to have the technical expertise, artistic capabilities and the ability and concern to listen to the patient's desires cosmetically and achieve them while improving nasal function. Over the years, I have performed hundreds of primary and revision nasal operations on patients from around the world, and have learned that this procedure requires the surgeon's attention to detail and constant vigilance in the operating room. The results can be quite rewarding. ♦