

Truth is beauty

Dr Ellis Choy has combined the artistry of plastic surgery with a patient-centred philosophy to create a new collegiate type of practice.

There was a hint of what Dr Ellis Choy's practice would end up looking like when he was completing his Master of Surgery thesis back in 2005, following his completion of sub-specialty training by attaining fellowships in both breast surgery (at the Sydney Breast Cancer Institute) and surgical oncology (at the Sydney Melanoma Unit, now Melanoma Institute Australia). His thesis involved something quite radical—inviting patients to the clinical meetings about their cases.

"The standard approach in a hospital setting for breast cancer management is to conduct regular multidisciplinary meetings where specialists from different background meet and discuss patients around a table," he explains. "A lot of time they can be very clinician-oriented, and could sometimes be very dry and detached. I did a study where I invited the patient to be physically present at the meeting in order to evaluate the impact of involving breast cancer patients in the multidisciplinary discussion of their disease and treatment plans. By having the actual patient involved, we analysed the impact from both patient and clinician perspectives in delivering a more patient-oriented treatment plan."

Fast forward six years and Dr Ellis Choy is now leading an interdisciplinary specialist practice set up to provide a platform for a comprehensive breast surgery service undertaking the full spectrum of oncological, reconstructive and cosmetic breast surgical work. "The Swan Breast Sanctuary by Zilver Lining is a different practice in that it provides an end-to-end integrated solution to promote a more healthy collaborative collegiate environment in delivering a complete package for breast patients," he adds.

He is able to offer that because of his dual qualification in both breast and plastic surgery. Further to his first fellowship with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (FRACS) with a focus in breast and surgical oncology in 2005, Dr Choy went on to complete his full plastic surgery training in Sydney with a predominant focus in breast reconstructive surgery before obtaining his second FRACS in Plastic Surgery in 2010.



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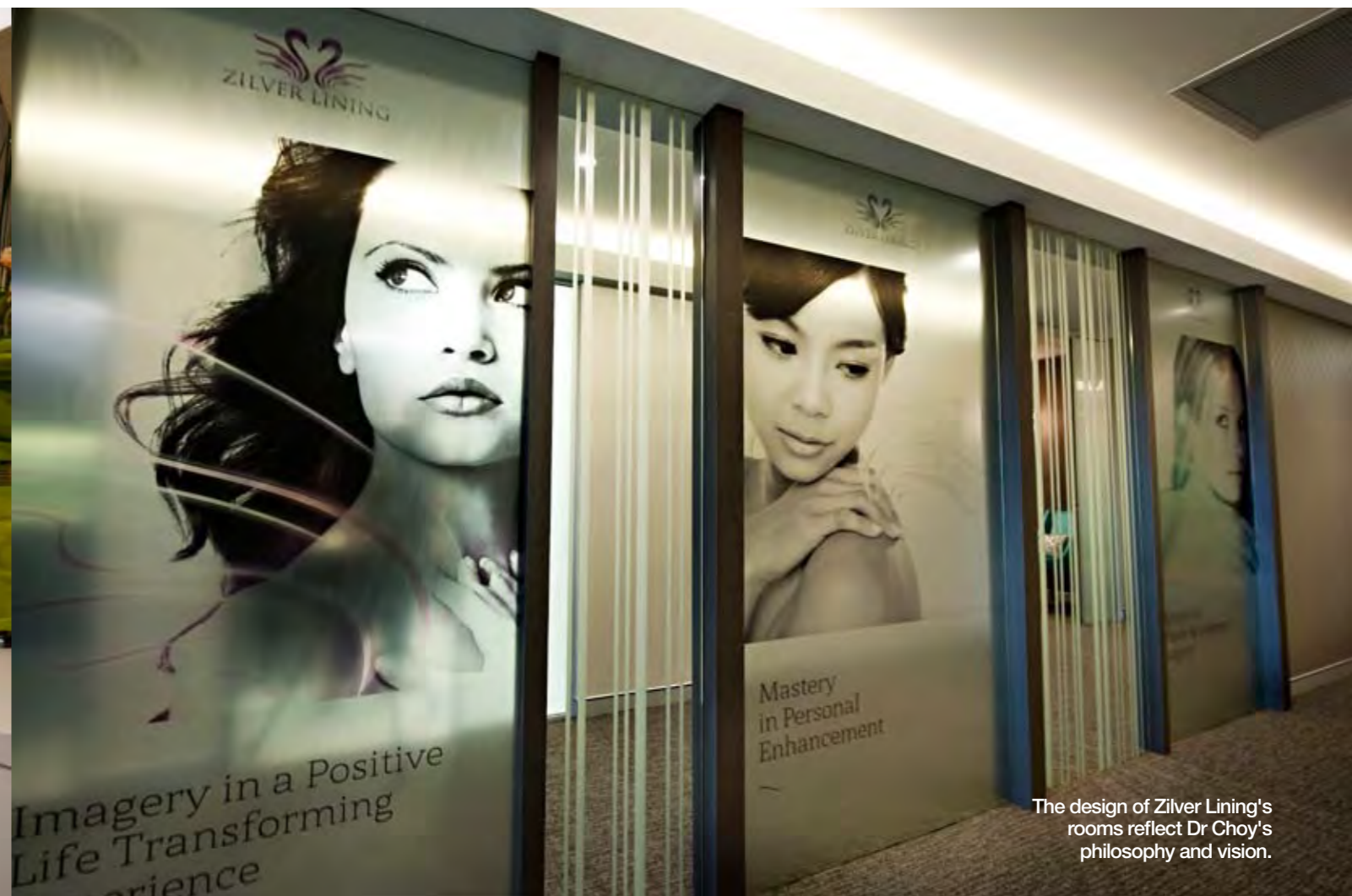
Stafford Hamilton

BEST PRACTICE

On paper, the risk involved in financing a start-up business is significant. However, Investec has a suite of products designed specifically to manage the transition from being a wage-earner to being self-employed. For example, organising finance for Ellis Choy was a matter of meeting directly to “flesh out” his business plan and get an understanding of what he wanted to achieve with his practice, says Investec’s Stafford Hamilton.

“He was transitioning to being self-employed from being a wage-earner, and obviously when you do that your cashflow goes down, because you don’t have the time to be back in the hospital working,” Stafford explains. “Our escrow product gave him the flexibility to build the practice, and cover his costs across two or three months, which bridged the cashflow gap between being employed and being self-employed.”

The Investec escrow product accrues interest over that period where cash flow is difficult, but doesn’t demand repayment during the set-up process, and it’s Investec’s close understanding of the client’s circumstances that makes it both viable and flexible. ●



The design of Zilver Lining's rooms reflect Dr Choy's philosophy and vision.

That same year, he also attained further subspecialty fellowship experience in both reconstructive and cosmetic surgery in the breast and the face. He completed the Plastic Surgery Fellowship at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide with a focus on both reconstructive and cosmetic breast plastic surgery and related body contouring works. This was then followed by his Aesthetic Facial Plastic Surgery Fellowship in Sydney under the Australasian Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, specialising in both surgical and non-surgical cosmetic facial procedures.

Dr Choy is a fully trained and qualified dual diplomat from both Breast & Plastic Surgery. His clinical practice encompasses plastic and cosmetic surgery of the face, breast, body and skin.

“This is not just about what I can do,” he says. “But I believe by having those unique credentials, I am better equipped to take a leadership role in building a platform

to provide a true comprehensive breast surgery service. This contemporary collegiate approach also complements very well the multidisciplinary setting that exists in the majority of hospitals.”

When working with the designers to build his rooms, Dr Choy was keen for his philosophy of patient-centred treatment and his vision of the artistry in his work to be reflected in the physical practice itself.

It starts with the name Zilver Lining: “We wanted to reflect the brighter side of life with a z-plasty,” he says. “Z-plasty is a traditional plastic surgery procedure which aims to optimise both the appearance and the function of a physical scar. It’s a twist by a specialist plastic surgeon. We deal with form and shape defined by lines. And it is our aim to bring forth the brighter side of life in our team and our patients.”

“What we offer is also a quality of life decision,” he explains. “Professionally, I have come to that intersection—going

“I’d like to combine what I do and the influence of my position in a positive way. So this is more than just a specialist practice, because you get to see things with a new outlook from a fresh insight. This is not just about how you look. This is about what you see.” DR ELLIS CHOY

from saving lives to giving better lives, and stepping up to develop a platform where the whole team here can do both in an elegant, creative and special way.”

The connection between what he does and how his rooms were designed lies in his understanding of beauty—a subject he

is frequently asked about. “Beauty is not just being pretty. True beauty comes from the inside out,” he explains. “Function determines form. Life is meant to be beautiful. *Doing* the surgery is a craft. *Being* the surgeon is an art. The art of perfection is like the horizon—it is a vision you can see but a destination you can never reach. Beauty is more than just the aesthetic destination. Beauty is also the artistic journey.”

As Dr Choy sees it, his surgery gives patients the opportunity and ability to see beyond their immediate medical circumstances. “From cancer surgery to altering appearance, this is more than the surgery that I do. This is about what my surgery brings to the lives of my patients,” he says. “I’d like to combine what I do and the influence of my position in a positive way. This is more than just a specialist practice. You get to see things with a new outlook from a fresh insight. This is not just about how you look. This is about what you see.” □

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FYI

Investec’s page for Medical and Dental professionals: www.investec.com.au/medicalfinance

Dr Ellis Choy’s practice:
www.zilverlining.com.au