



Dr. Eric Finzi of the Chevy Chase Cosmetic Center “Combining Art & Science To Help Patients Achieve The Look They Want”

Q: Dr. Finzi, you are founder, medical director and president of the Chevy Chase Cosmetic Center, can you give us some background on when you started the practice and what you feel are your specialties regarding cosmetic dermatology?

A: I started my practice in 1991 after finishing my residency in Dermatology at Johns Hopkins Hospital. I have focused on various forms of noninvasive surgery that can be performed in an office setting using local anesthesia, thereby making it safe and easily accessible to all my patients. I have a very strong interest in what I call "natural cosmetic surgery". I have been blessed to have always had very good hand-eye coordination, and the ability to see in three dimensions, which has helped me in surgery and in my art. I started painting in second grade, and have always loved it. I continued my fine art studies as a scholarship student at 13 at Pratt Institute in New York and at 15 at The Art Students League of New York, to which I was elected to lifetime membership. When I started at the University of Pennsylvania I continued my art instruction along with my science studies.

In medical school I was fortunate to be able to continue my artistic education, which I have always felt complemented my medical studies. I spent 8 months during my medical studies painting and sculpting full-time. Art and science really do mix and help one another. Since I began my medical practice in the DC/Maryland area I have painted and sculpted at least 2 full days a week during the last 17 years. It is a commitment I keep up and cherish my good fortune to be able to do both each week.

Q: Since there are many choices for the same services in the Washington area, what do you feel makes your practice unique and would be the better choice for someone seeking a cosmetic procedure?

A: My practice is unique for several reasons. First, you must be able to have the end in mind to do a great job in cosmetic surgery. I am lucky to be able to see what would look good for each individual, and to be able to draw on my patients, whether using a laser as an artists brush or a liposuction tool to sculpt one's body, or reconstructing a nose after cancer surgery. I am a firm believer in improving my patient's looks without leaving traces of my work. In particular, I dislike when patients have those telltale signs of cosmetic surgery, whether it be that stretched look, or scars that are visible. Everything I do aims to prevent scarring and to look completely natural. For example, I am currently using fat transfer to naturally rejuvenate the aging face, in a way that really restores what we once had at age 18. Second, my Ph.D in biochemistry has allowed me to be at the forefront of making and evaluating new technology. Medicine is an art but also a very rigorous science and a good physician must be able to scientifically evaluate all new emerging therapies for their safety and usefulness. There are many procedures and therapies which turn out to be useless, or worse yet, harmful, but which initially are fashionable. My scientific background has really helped me in this regard.

Q: You have been on the forefront of some exciting discoveries and techniques in the cosmetic dermatology field, can you tell us about those?

A: I discovered how to enlarge breasts in many patients by performing tumescent liposuction on their abdomens and waists, without operating on their breasts. Recently I have been the first surgeon in this area to be able to increase breast size even more by performing fat transfer to the breast while removing unwanted fat from other body areas during liposuction. I have developed new technology to help with this procedure. I can reshape breasts by adding fat to the upper part of the breast, or toward the center of the chest to improve visible cleavage. We can increase breast size by up to a cup size with one procedure. I also pioneered the use of Thermage to perform a medical version of a facelift, including an eyelift, that allows one to return to work the next day without any bruising or downtime. My protocol is now taught around the country by the laser company. Recently I have found a way to remove stretch marks, wherever they are, by using a noninvasive laser. After 3-4 treatments we see a remarkable improvement. We have not yet reported this advance, but I suspect it will become very popular once it becomes widely known. Last year we published the first study to show that we could help depression with Botox treatment of the frown muscles.

Q: For someone trying to "beat the clock" who isn't ready or doesn't want an invasive surgical procedure on their face, what would you recommend?

A: I would recommend a thorough analysis in our offices (www.chevychasecosmeticcenter.com) to determine what would work the best. We have many options to choose from, whether they be off the shelf fillers such as Juvederm, or fat transfer, which I perform using local anesthesia. Our newest second generation laser delivers fractional technology (most of us have heard of Fraxel) without the blue dye, and superior results. We can reverse sun-damage, wrinkles and brown spots using this non-invasive technology. We can also help reduce the wrinkled, aging neck and chest skin using our lasers. Using Botox in the right places and amounts we can also help those deep creases caused by muscle over activity. Using the right creams you can reverse quite a bit of sun damage. For a noninvasive facelift I perform a threadlift, utilizing the body's natural healing powers to remove extra skin, instead of cutting it. I have seen some great results with this. I have also perfected a way to stimulate the shrinkage of skin under the neck as I do liposuction.

Q: What about body sculpting and achieving a sleeker figure?

A: Many people are scared of liposuction. They associate it with older techniques that required hospitalization and general anesthesia. I don't think that the word has gotten out there yet that you can perform liposuction with patients comfortably talking to you during the procedure. I have even had patients ask for mirrors in my operating room so they can see what I'm doing, since they don't feel any discomfort and are not all drugged up. In an hour I can flatten a stubborn stomach without pain, and 100 times more effectively than the widely advertised, but painful and illegal lipodissolve, which was banned in Brazil because of safety issues. Britain won't provide malpractice insurance for anyone who does lipodissolve. I think these countries, and our own FDA, which made transport of lipodissolve chemicals illegal, are trying to tell us something. I don't think most patients know that lipodissolve has never been tested or approved by the FDA!

Using true tumescent liposuction, I can reshape one's body, from the face down to the ankles. I have worked on every area of the body using this noninvasive technology, including the back, waist, breasts (to reduce them), stomach, hips, thighs, calves, buttocks, arms and even that unsightly little bulge that the bra creates on the back and on the chest. As long as you have the vision of what you want as the end result, you can achieve it. That is why the surgeon's three dimensional vision is so important for a great result. It really is body sculpture, and I find it highly satisfying to give someone the figure they have always wanted.

Q: And speaking of sculpting, you are in the unique position of being both a respected dermasurgeon and accomplished artist--can you tell us more about that?

A: What I enjoy the most about being a cosmetic surgeon is using my background and training as a visual artist to be able to help my patients achieve what they have always thought about. One day I am drawing with paint and the next day I draw on my patients. It's kind of nice for me to think about my artwork walking around every day. That way my "work is showing" naturally every day. Speaking of artwork, my next one-person show of paintings will be here in Bethesda, at Heineman-Myers Contemporary Art, 4728 Hampden Lane, www.heinemanmyers.com, with my opening on March 1st. I will have an exhibition of new epoxy resin paintings based on the life of the great 19th century stage actress, Sarah Bernhardt. I have been fortunate to be able to exhibit my paintings and sculptures all over the country. I will be showing at the Bridge Art Fair in New York in March, and Gallery Imperato in Baltimore in April. You can see my paintings by visiting www.ericfinzi.com .I look forward to seeing you at the opening in March right here in Bethesda.

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