

# MD Spa is Pleasanton's first full-service spa

BY PHILIPPA COELHO JACINTO  
CORRESPONDENT

Virginia Hubbard of Castro Valley confides that watching TV reality shows like "Extreme Makeover" prompted her to take a closer look in the mirror. Hubbard is not alone. Today more and more people are becoming increasingly curious about the benefits of plastic/cosmetic surgery.

A nip here. A tuck there. A bit of Botox® perhaps. Or, something more drastic like a nose or chin job. Maybe it isn't such a big deal after all, they begin to think.

Nonetheless, there are a lot of maybes and a lot of questions. Dr. Robert F. Gray, MD, FACS, a plastic surgeon, says, "A lot of people have questions about plastic surgery but they don't know who to ask. They don't know much about it. It's a kind of mystery."

But, as Dr. Gray points out, it's much more common than people think. You've probably come across a friend or neighbor you haven't seen for a few weeks and suddenly she or he seems so much better-looking. Chances are they have discovered the benefits of cosmetic surgery/facial treatments.

The concept of medical spas is fairly new in the U.S. A medical spa is usually described as a place where traditional spa offerings like facials, massage and other beauty/body treatments can be enjoyed along with therapies like laser skin resurfacing, Botox®, Restylane® and even cosmetic surgery.

Opened in early 2005, MD Spa is Pleasanton's first full-service medical spa. Billed as a destination "where beauty and medicine combine to give you the look you've always wanted," MD Spa offers the indulgence of spa treatments with therapies you won't find in a typical spa — elite cosmetic procedures such as rhinoplasty (nasal reshaping) otoplasty (ear reshaping), blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery), chin surgery, and minimally invasive face, forehead and brow lifts.

The man behind MD Spa is the very innovative and personable Dr. Robert F. Gray. With more than a decade of experience, Dr. Gray is board-certified by the American Board of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and the American Board of Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery. This distinction recognizes his specialized and advanced training and expertise in facial cosmetic surgery. With the opening of MD Spa in Pleasanton, Dr. Gray is bringing his skill, knowledge and expertise in the latest cosmetic procedures to clients who would much rather experience them in a luxurious spa setting than in a medical office.

Clients Laurel Ann Morais of Pleasanton says, "I think I'd be a lot more nervous in a doctor's office. This is a really nice place to have the procedure done. It is very comfortable and the staff is very friendly."

Walk in the door at MD Spa and you are transported into a different world. Music. Soft lighting. Water fountains. "This is a calm, soothing environment. There's nothing fast-paced about it. It's relaxing. We want people to feel comfortable here," explains Dr. Gray.

It took months of remodeling and reconstruction, in consultation with medical spa designers, to create the inviting ambience

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that appeals to MD Spa's growing clientele.

During the recent Wine Stroll held in downtown Pleasanton in July, MD Spa hosted Concannon Winery. According to Dr. Gray, around 600 people visited his spa and were very excited to hear all about the services they offer. "This is a great retail setting with all the wonderful stores, antique shops and nice restaurants," says Dr. Gray. "We get a lot of walk-ins off the street."

That is exactly how Morais became a loyal customer. She has a little Botox® injected between her eyebrows for the frown lines and for the crows feet around her eyes. "I have a lot of sun damage since I work outdoors," explains Morais. "But after a week, the lines start to soften and pretty much go away." She has received many compliments from friends in the horse-show world who have noticed the change in her appearance.

Clients at MD Spa can request a complimentary consultation with Dr. Gray. Most clients would like to know how they can enhance their appearance and achieve a more rejuvenated, youthful look. Dr. Gray explains that MD Spa can offer them a whole spectrum of services from minor skin care services to laser and other cosmetic treatments as well as the latest advances in cosmetic surgery. Most of the surgical procedures can be done in the privacy and convenience of MD Spa's operating room itself. According to Dr. Gray, their state-of-the-art laser machine can perform several cosmetic treatments including hair removal, spider vein removal, micro-laser peels and more. "I can adjust the depth of the laser to a millionth of an inch," says Dr. Gray, who performs most of the laser treatments himself. This sensitivity gives him excellent control of procedures.

Virginia Hubbard, a makeover reality show fan, decided to consult with Dr. Gray a few months ago. "Dr. Gray is great at listening to a client's needs and doing exactly what they want," says a very happy Hubbard. After just two cosmetic treatments she tells us that her skin looks so much better. "The pores are getting smaller and the capillaries have disappeared."

MD Spa is staffed by a team of experienced professionals including estheticians, massage therapists and laser consultant Marilyn Gelnette. Spa Director Pamela Branchini

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An advertising supplement

**DR. ROBERT GRAY** consults with a patient in the serene facilities at MD Spa in Pleasanton. The center handles surgery, laser and other procedures for body and face enhancement.



MIKE RUSSELL/STAFF

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An advertising supplement

## MD Spa

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RN, BSN, oversees the spa, maintaining high standards and quality care.

Steve McKinley, a graphic designer in Pleasanton, discovered the benefits of a therapeutic massage at MD Spa recently. Like many professionals, McKinley spends long hours in front of a computer. "The massage is a bit like going on vacation," says McKinley. "It relieves a little of the stress. They might have me hooked."

Along with a variety of massage treatments, MD Spa also offers specialty skin care treatments including express glycolic facials, revitalizing eye treatments, relaxing scalp treatment, mega peel micro-dermabrasion, the express facial and the gentleman's classic facial. There are also a selection of wax services as well as a classic MD Spa package, a stress relief package or the head-to-toe package.

Branchini tells us that the micro laser peel package is one of their most popular pack-

ages. This is a multi-step process. Initially clients are advised to use prescription strength Obagi skincare products (available at MD Spa) to prepare their skin for the micro laser peel four weeks later. This is followed by a hydrating facial after a week. Branchini says the treatment helps get rid of fine lines, slight discolorations and slight acne scarring. MD Spa also carries the Jane Iredale mineral line of skincare make-up.

According to Dr. Gray, there is a lot of interaction between the dual aspects of MD Spa. Clients who come in for a Botox® treatment will often get a massage, or a person who came in for a facial may choose to consult with Dr. Gray on possible cosmetic facial surgery.

There is a lot of bonhomie and bon vivre evident here. On a recent Saturday morning a group of five friends were in for spa treatments and Botox®. It turned out to be quite a party with the women sharing nectarines from the farmers' market with Dr. Gray and his staff.

MD Spa cosmetic surgery and laser skin care center is at 531 Main St., Pleasanton, 925-846-2772.