

sin city surgery

WE'RE A TOWN BUILT ON SEX APPEAL,
AND BUSINESS IS BOOMING FOR LAS VEGAS'S
TOP SURGEON. BY LISA ARCELLA

Dr. Mary Herte's cosmetic surgery center in Summerlin may be the one place in Las Vegas where people are not trying to get noticed. But the soft-spoken surgeon has made it a priority that her patients turn heads everywhere else they go.

"Everyone here is in the public eye," Dr. Herte says, explaining why Las Vegas is great for her business. "People want to look good. It's very important in a town that's all about entertainment. We have a fast-paced society, and we are pretty beauty-conscious."

Dr. Herte, the first Nevada woman to be certified by The American Board of Plastic Surgery, has maintained a thriving practice here since 1983. And her business appears to be recession-proof. Her clientele is fantastically diverse, from the cocktail server wanting liposuction to trim her thighs to the casino worker intent on looking just a bit younger to stay employed, or the chief executive who wants a few inches off to keep her youthful figure. "Everyone is worried about their position in the job market," she says. "Most of the casinos have guidelines: You have to fit in your uniform properly and look good."

Las Vegans who seek plastic surgery want something different from patients in other locales. "In California, the goal is often to look a little bit more natural; here, we are a little bit more accepting of an edgy look," she says.

"False eyelashes are a big thing here. People want fuller breasts here, maybe a bit more lip, or a smoother finish to the skin. In the nightclub scene, they want to look good and really catch people's attention. I do a lot of facial surgery, including facelifts and eyelids, and I do a significant number of tummy tucks and liposuction."

Of course, nobody wants to look old. The telltale signs of aging, Dr. Herte says, are wrinkles near the eyes, indentations around the cheeks, and sagging jowls. Here in the Valley, skin takes a beating from the dry, desert heat, air

pollution, and smoke-filled casinos. Dr. Herte combats those skin abusers with the latest technology, such as a Fraxel laser, which quickly resurfaces the skin. "That allows us to do a percentage of the skin at each sitting so that it's fast recovery," she says. "It actually allows your skin cells to replace themselves."

Fast is a buzzword in our town. People who undergo cosmetic surgery often need to return to work right away. As a result, Dr. Herte finds an increasing number of patients opting for injectable fillers such as Sculptra Aesthetic, Perlane, Restylane, and Juvéderm XC. "They can be used to plump out and support the skin without using a million syringes," she says. "Skin resurfacing is also a big trend. You don't have to be laid up in your house anymore for two weeks. Now, it's two or three days of redness and a little bit of peeling, like you forgot to use your moisturizer, so it's a much kinder, gentler approach to getting a fresher skin appearance."

Cosmetic surgery can be a life-changing experience for some people, Dr. Herte says. "They start to do better and bigger things, relating to their general comfort in their own skin. I have had people change careers, get out of bad relationships, and move forward in their lives simply because they feel better about themselves. It's very rewarding. I have the best job." ▶

