

Saving FACE

Dr. Karam Provides Facial Rejuvenation Through Proactive Measures



We're all familiar with the proverb "aging gracefully." Although it's a nice thought and a pleasant adage, unfortunately aging gracefully is not a practical or realistic objective. "Natural aging is anything but graceful," explains Dr. Karam of Carmel Valley Facial Plastic Surgery. "Once we hit our 40s and 50s, the facial aging is in full swing. The result—a face that no longer resembles how we view ourselves." Dr. Karam sites those unpleasant transformations we all face with age: tired, drawn and hollow eyes, deflated cheeks and sagging along the cheeks, jawline and neck, all of which seem to happen overnight all seem to happen overnight; with each day, month and year, the change becomes more and more accelerated. Before you know it, you look like a different person, an unrecognizable reflection in a mirror. Aging gracefully can only happen if you proactively and comprehensively take care of the changes that come with aging. This has been Dr. Karam's approach to saving faces and it has served his patients well. "I have always been passionate about facial rejuvenation and driven to come up with the best ways to achieve it."

Photography by George Arguelles ✦ Story By Emily Glaser

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Considered one of the busiest and most specialized practices in the country, Carmel Valley Facial Plastic Surgery is an award-winning, unmatched practice to which we're lucky enough to have easy access. Focusing only on facial rejuvenation and rhinoplasty, Dr. Karam is the true definition of a specialist. His skills have earned him worldwide distinction; in addition to having a strong local reputation as a facial plastic surgeon, patients travel from all throughout the U.S and abroad to have procedures performed by Dr. Karam.

It's more than just incomparable expertise that brings patients to Dr. Karam. The reason is simple: trust. They trust that they will look refreshed and rejuvenated while maintaining a natural look with undetectable results. There's no chance of looking pulled, tight or loosing your identity—a concern patients and their loved ones share equally. Yet, for so many people, the changes that occur during the aging process can leave people feeling like they no longer look the way they feel, which can eventually lead to disharmony and a decreased self image. Looking tired and aged has important and often negative impacts on our social, professional and interpersonal lives. Ageism is a cross-cultural reality. Most people imagine themselves looking younger than their actual age; when reality hits, it's not always welcome. "Helping people restore their appearances so that they once again look as youthful, healthy and refreshed as they feel makes such a major impact on our patients' quality of life. It literally changes lives as a result of restored self-confidence," says Dr. Karam. "In essence, this is the real purpose of my work. This is by far the best part of my profession. It is what drives me."



to be awarded the Gordon J. Hatfield Award for the best overall performance in Surgery in his class. After graduating at the top of his class, Dr. Karam pursued surgical training in Otolaryngology—head and neck surgery—followed by a Fellowship in Advanced Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, which is offered to only 40 people each year. For the last 20 years, he has been honing his craft. Most people don't enjoy the pressure and responsibility that comes along with the field, but Dr. Karam thrives in the tough environment—it drives him to always want to deliver the best to his patients.

The importance of specialization cannot be overstated, especially in the case of delicate and impactful facial plastic surgery. Dr. Karam elaborates, "When you focus on a narrow range of procedures and do them over and over again, you naturally develop an expertise, allowing you to get results that are not just better, but safer. When it comes to the face, I believe you need to have this level of commitment and experience. You can't hide the face. You have to get it right the first time." Dr. Karam's unparalleled devotion to his craft has allowed him to develop innovative ways of treating the aging face with the goal of creating a natural and fully-restored appearance. "Not being distracted by other procedures allows me to focus on perfecting the limited procedures I perform." Unlike the results you'd achieve at a catchall practice, Dr. Karam provides his patients with a unique, specialized and perfectly crafted result.

From the beginning, Dr. Karam recognized the importance of comprehensively addressing the aging changes so that the whole face looks balanced and rejuvenated. Rather than treat one aspect of the face, thereby essentially aging the other areas, Dr. Karam treats the face as a whole. By simultaneously treating the skin, the loss of facial volume and sagging, what he calls the three components of facial aging, the results are remarkable; the outcome is seamless and totally natural. Recognizing the importance of safety, each procedure is minimally invasive and performed under local anesthesia with IV sedation. Dr. Karam's unique approach is the subject of a recent textbook, *Rejuvenation of the Aging Face*, which describes this method in detail. Today he performs over 300 facial rejuvenation cases a year, roughly 20 to 30 times the national average.

But it's not just a matter of practice or repetition that lends Dr. Karam his talents; some things can't be trained. An artistic eye is a gift, and Dr. Karam was blessed with such a gift. He sees each individual face differently than the average person or even the average surgeon. His gift allows him to give each of his patients a harmonious, natural and beautiful outcome, without looking like they have had work done. Rather than rely solely on raw skill or surgical practice, Dr. Karam incorporates his artistic talent into his practice, culminating in peerless results.

The work of Dr. Karam is not just a job or a career, it's a passion. "Every day I feel blessed to be doing what I am doing," says Dr. Karam. "After 20 years, I still feel like I am living a dream. I feel I am the luckiest person to have the opportunity to make such a positive emotional impact in my patients' lives." ■

The question that remains is how, exactly, was Dr. Karam lead to his true calling of facial plastic surgery? He explains that following his mother's heart transplant 23 years ago, he was inspired to be a surgeon. The life-altering precision practiced by his mother's doctors inspired Dr. Karam to pursue a career in medicine. But it wasn't until his first year of medical school that he realized that he wanted be a facial plastic surgeon. During those first months of early exposure to the field, he found that facial plastic surgery fit his personality and intrinsic qualities. It's a specialty that requires the perfect blend of demanding surgical execution, artistry and creativity. But more than anything, he understood how important people's appearances are to them; in choosing his speciality, Dr. Karam embraced his newfound ability to really help make an impact in his patients' lives.

Dr. Karam realized early on that with the face there is no room for error. "I felt that I owed it to my patients to give them the best result possible and you can only do this by pouring your entire focus and energy into it." He decided to devote all of his energy to becoming an expert in facial plastic surgery.

It was never destined to be an easy path. Dr. Karam spent 11 years doing clinical and scientific facial plastic surgery research while at UC Irvine School of Medicine, where he published over 20 scientific articles and presented over 40 scientific presentations. He went on

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