

The Surgeon To The Stars Who Is Changing The Face Of Plastic Surgery



Andrew Cave Contributor
Leadership Strategy

Plastic surgeons in the UK and Europe tend to keep their heads under the parapet. Whether it is the spate of lawsuits resulting from treatment that went wrong or the British tendency to underplay ego, business interviews with the leading practitioners in the industry are hard to come by.

Changing faces: Tunc Tiryaki TIRYAKI SURGERY

An opportunity to interview Tunc Tiryaki therefore seemed hard to resist. Aged 48, he runs **Tiryaki Surgery** in London and Cellest Clinic in Istanbul, Turkey, specialising in aesthetic surgical procedures, including breast and body surgery and stem cell-assisted mini face-lifts. And he has no qualms in sticking up for his industry.

"The thing I really don't like is when I hear people saying that they don't agree with cosmetic surgery because they want to age naturally or gracefully," he told me.

"I really don't like this approach. What is wrong with improving yourself? Going to a plastic surgeon isn't about trying to combat aging. It's about having confidence and self-respect.

"There's a big difference between the genders. Women can tend to feel attractive only if they are physically desirable, whereas for men feeling attractive can be more about their power, positions and self-respect."

Tiryaki believes that the plastic surgery industry has been damaged by publicity about a comparatively small number of unsuccessful operations.

His own experience is that there exists a significant and substantial group of patients who are extremely happy with a transformation of their lives that has given them back their self-respect.

"I think it's about patients having hope and taking responsibility for themselves," he says. "People sometimes seem ashamed of looking good and being beautiful. I don't know why. The younger people come to me, the less it matters. Young people don't have the same social and cultural boundaries and that makes it easier for them to ask for these things."

Celebrity clients

Tiryaki has carried out procedures for a host of celebrities, business people and other A-listers.

Don't ask who because he won't tell but he does have strong views about the industry and feels it has been wrongly characterised as being literally only skin-deep.

"If a patient asks me for perfection, they are a candidate to not be the operated on because it is not possible," he says.

"Actually I have to tell about 40% of the people who come to see me that they can't have what they want. There was a very famous woman I had to tell that to because there are limitations to what can be done. She didn't understand why she couldn't have what she could afford. But there is also an increasing demand for slight imperfection. People actually don't want to look completely perfect. They just want to look better."

Suited and booted: Tunc Tiryaki TIRYAKI SURGERY

Innovation

Tiryaki says he has pioneered innovations including a quicker and more aesthetically-pleasing method of abdominoplasty and suspension techniques such as "micro lifting," which, for example, enables the lifting of a nose without the need for a full operation.

However, he also believes that the days of cosmetic and regenerative surgery being the preserve of the wealthy are numbered.

"They are going to be accessible to all levels of humanity" he says.

"Already, I really don't think that economic considerations are the main limiting factors for people who want to stay young and in good health."

Tiryaki is a scion of one of Turkey's leading aristocratic families, which controlled a large swathe of what is now northern Greece but lost everything in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13.

His father was a professor of molecular biology, while his grandfather was an admiral in the Turkish Navy.

"My father always told me that the best thing you can do in life is to change something for the better," he says.

"I was always going to be a soldier or a surgeon. And if you become a surgeon, it's a tough choice. If you are a normal surgeon, usually what you do is something from a textbook. With plastic surgery, it is more like being an artist. Every patient is different. With every patient you have to recreate something. That's what was attractive about it to me."

Regeneration

How Tiryaki ended up specializing in being a regenerative plastic surgeon is another story.

After finishing his specialization training in 2003, he found himself with time on his hands and came across an article about work being done to inject into patients the stem cells that are essentially the body's factories.

"It's about using a patient's own regenerative cells to heal them and it is very creative," he says.

"I loved the idea, so I started collaborating with my father's team to take cultures from people's skin and inject them back into them."

The patients Tiryaki worked with were among the first in the world to have this treatment and he saw huge potential in this brave new world.

Now he is trying to take the idea a stage further.

"Stem cell technology is going to change our lives over the next 20 years.," he says.

"But, due to the extent and the character of these therapies, stem cell work is very expensive and needs laboratories, which is one of the reasons why it is still not very widespread. However, we are working on a project with an international team that's trying to create a kit so that stem cell therapy can be carried out even in very remote areas such as Africa. It can be done very cheaply and can be carried out by nurses in areas where there are not many doctors. It's a very altruistic approach."

Disaster emergencies

Tiryaki also carries out humanitarian emergency surgical work for victims of earthquakes and other natural disasters.

Chair of humanitarian programs at the Internal Society of Aesthetic and Plastic Surgeons, he has joined surgical volunteer missions to Syria, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Georgia and Sudan and led rescue missions during a 1999 earthquake and 2011 earthquake in Turkey.

"The world only sees plastic surgeons as aesthetic surgeons," he says.

"But we are actually doing reconstruction surgery and microsurgery. What human beings need in times of natural disaster is emergency medical care and emergency surgical care and that emergency surgical care is basically plastic surgery. Basically, surgical triage is our job and nobody knows that."



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