

Shawna Chrisman



CO-OWNER, Destination Aesthetics

BY NATHAN FALSTREAU | CORRESPONDENT

When Destination Aesthetics co-owner Shawna Chrisman graduated from the University of California San Francisco as an acute care practitioner in 2002, she never thought that she'd be running a business centered around beauty.

"I wanted to age gracefully and not do Botox," she said. "And now, that's what I do daily, giving people Botox and fillers, but I've followed my heart."

Destination Aesthetics specializes in facial and body rejuvenation, and provides treatments like cosmetic injections, medical-grade skin care and laser treatments, among others. Prior to opening her first location, Chrisman worked for more than a decade in hospital settings at Kaiser Permanente and Pulmonary Medicine Associates.

"I was getting burned out working in hospital medicine and I wanted to find something that I could do for the sake of my family, to do something on the side."

Chrisman said when she started Destination Aesthetics in 2011, "my husband was super frustrated with me. I was all over the place – kind of fine-tuning my passion – when this came completely out of left field."

That's what Chrisman said is the "beauty of entrepreneurship," that you can have an idea but it's the process that you thrive on, not any of the tangible goals. "That was the biggest 'a-ha' moment," she said.

A nurse practitioner, Chrisman has always wanted to serve people. But what started as a flexible side business became her primary focus, which "was never in my plans," she said.

"I was thriving and becoming motivated and inspired by my patients' reactions to how the procedures made them feel," said Chrisman, who left her nurse practitioner job two years after starting Destination Aesthetics.

She recalls one of her clients who came to her before undergoing cancer treatment. "One patient said they had never thought about getting Botox, but said, 'I'm starting chemotherapy next week and I'm going to lose all of my hair, and people are going to see the vulnerability on my face. I want to feel as good as I can for other people.'"

That was the second 'a-ha' moment for Chrisman. "She was doing it as an empowering treatment," she said. "It wasn't until that moment that I realized the power I can give through treatment far exceeds my expectations. It gives wellness in a different way; it was practicing medicine in a different way."

Carol Dahmen said she first heard of Chris-



ABOUT SHAWNA Age: 43 • Education: B.S. in nursing, California State University Sacramento; M.S. in acute nurse care practitioner, University of California San Francisco • Family: Shawna recently celebrated her 20th wedding anniversary with her high school sweetheart, Josh Chrisman. The couple has two kids, Elyse, 14, and Josiah, 15. • Fun fact: "I was adopted from Korea. My parents literally picked me out of a book. I've taken my adoption as one of the biggest blessings of my life of opportunity, by being brought into a family of unconditional love." • Advice for younger women: "It sounds cliché, but my biggest advice is to follow your dreams and do what fills your bucket, not anyone else's. Everything else stems from that. If you are going to invest your time and effort — blood, tears and sweat — you have to do it for the right reasons. And money isn't the right reason. But if the money comes from that, great. But money can't feed passion."

man about seven years ago. At the time she was in her mid-40s and working in sales. "I thought, OK, maybe I'll give it a shot. I'd never tried anything like Botox before, but the second I walked in the door, she made me feel at ease," said Dahmen, who is now senior political manager at Comcast Spotlight. "She has worked so hard to remove any stigmas about helping women make themselves feel better about themselves."

Destination Aesthetics, which Chrisman co-owns with Dr. R. David Ferrera, has grown to include three locations in Sacramento, Folsom and Elk Grove. Chrisman said the company is on target for a 20% increase in revenue this year. Additionally, the company has continuously ranked among the top accounts in the nation for Allergan, the pharmaceutical company which markets Botox. "At the end of 2018, we were number four in the country," she said.

Chrisman describes the company's rapid growth as organic. Destination Aesthetics' first office space

was only 150 square feet. After a little more than three years, the company expanded to 3,000 square feet. "We still didn't have enough room due to patient demand," she said.

The company next acquired a spot in Folsom that's 3,600 square feet and finally its third office in Elk Grove in 2018. "We're expanding based on the needs of our patients. That's our mission. We're not doing it for notoriety."

Chrisman attributes part of her success to her staff. "I have an amazing team and we are all in it because we believe in the beauty of aesthetics," she said. "We've all partaken and feel the strength, in both mind- and body-type situations."

"You can tell a great entrepreneur if you are attracting top-level talent, which she is clearly doing," said Dahmen. "She embodies everything about entrepreneurialism and what it means to live the American dream. She's a great role model for women, and particularly minority women business owners."