



## ENTREPRENEUR Erica Breining

**Owner, Bellava MedAesthetics  
& Plastic Surgery Center**

Bedford Hills

SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO TAKE A LEAP OF FAITH. IN 2011, IN A DOWN ECONOMY, Erica Breining opened Bellava MedAesthetics & Plastic Surgery Center, a 3,000-square-foot spa in Bedford Hills that combines medical services with decadent pampering. "It was really scary," she admits now, but the risk has paid off with a solid pattern of growth that shows no signs of letting up. (The business raked in \$1.5 million in sales last year.)

Bellava isn't Breining's first business launch. She was working in management at IBM in 2002 when she started a high-end online handbag venture, HGBags, which has since grown into an international company that nets some \$5 million in annual revenue. But once HGBags was "running on autopilot," Breining says she was anxious for human contact beyond the computer screen.

"I missed the face-to-face interaction with clients and coworkers," says Breining, who holds a BSE in chemical engineering from the University of Michigan and an MS in operations research from Columbia University. "Plus the medical and technology aspect of Bellava allows me to reconnect with my love for science," she says. Her goal? To create a luxury spa with the same level of clinical care as a doctor's office.

The "medi" side of Bellava, led by board-certified plastic surgeon Chang Soo Kim, MD, offers injections, fillers, CoolSculpting, laser hair removal, and skin resurfacing, along with medical procedures like tummy tucks and breast enhancement that are performed in the Joint Commission accredited surgical suite. Luxurious facials, massages, and body wraps make up the other side of the beauty business. Expanding the medi side of the spa accounts for much of the growth, Breining says, noting a 50-percent increase in surgery from 2012 to 2013. Surgical procedures now make up an estimated 50 percent of her business, followed by laser services and injectables bringing in 35 percent, and spa treatments 15 percent.

"We have been successful because we understand what our market wants and we deliver a good product focused on quantifiable results at a fair price in a safe setting," Breining says.

—Nancy L. Claus

