

# LIVING

JANUARY 2008

in the Gulf

FAMILY | FOOD | HEALTH | BEAUTY | LIFESTYLE

## Taste of Dubai

Festival of food set to cause a stir

## Discover Damascus

Uncover the secrets of historic Syria

## Hot-buttered toast

The ultimate in comfort eating

## Natural complexion

How an apple a day keeps wrinkles at bay

# Winter *warmers*

Soothing suppers for the New Year

+ **Antony Worrall Thompson** – talks exclusively on fame, food and fashion

  
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# Beautiful Solutions



Medical aesthetician Mona Mirza is the brainchild behind Biolite Skin Clinic which she originally set up in London. MICHAEL BATES spoke to her about her decision to set up shop at the Dubai Healthcare City and her experience living in Dubai.



## Explain your business.

Biolite Skin Clinic is a British based medical aesthetics clinic, specialising in non-invasive treatments for anti-ageing, body contouring, permanent hair reduction and skin health using FDA and CE approved technology. Our focus is on patient/client care and top end services with realistic results, within a framework set by the Healthcare Commission (UK), the body which licenses us.

## Tell us a little bit about your background.

Born and brought up in North London, I left school at 16 to pursue a career in Aesthetics and Cosmetology, studied accountancy at the University of London as a mature student at 23. I always worked for myself until 2000 when I was introduced to Medical Aesthetics by a group of doctors. This entailed training and specialising in Laser/Intense pulsed light based treatments.

## What's it like to set up a business here?

Certainly not what I was expecting it to be! And not for the faint hearted. Not to forget the heaps of patience required.

## What do you feel are the benefits?

Dubai offers a lovely lifestyle for working women with children. I can afford to have help at home and not worry about the kids, especially after a long day at work. The medical aesthetics industry is booming in this part of the world.

Dubai is a relatively virgin market when compared to London. Setting the correct standards in the medical aesthetics industry at this point is crucial and possible.

## Any disadvantages?

Most people are used to accepting poor health and safety standards and consider them normal. Re-educating on what is acceptable in Laser/IPL medical aesthetics clinics is essential.

## What is your daily schedule like?

I wake up at 6.30am with my girls and send them off to school. Wash, say my prayers and then connect remotely to my London clinic and monitor the diary and events there until 9am by which time I have had three tall glasses of water, a bowl of fruit, a cup of tea and slice of rye bread and then set off to the clinic at Dubai Healthcare City. My day there tends to be a mixture of patient / client consultations, patch tests, treatments and meetings. I'm home usually by 7pm, I have dinner, take a brisk 20 minute walk and then spend time with the girls before I tuck them into bed. Lights out by 10pm.

## What do you miss most about back home?

I miss my family and childhood friends. In the summer heat I missed the rain and the grey clouds desperately. With regards to work, I miss the streamlined processes and systems that have been in place in the UK for generations.

## What do you like and dislike the most about Dubai?

I love the boundless energy this city has and the fact that the sun shines everyday. I dislike the traffic and the increasing cost of living.

## Where do you see the economy heading in the UAE?

I have to commend Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum on his strategy for long-term economic growth for Dubai. Without doubt it is going to go from strength to strength and is fast emerging as a tourist hot spot.

## What is your opinion about the property market here?

Over inflated! Higher rentals and escalating freehold prices are forcing people away. A correction has to take place for Dubai to become attractive for more investors.

## List your top five restaurants in the UAE.

Thai Terrace, Noodle House, Goodies, MOMO's and Peppercrab.

## List your top five hot spots in the UAE.

ChoSo(Sundays), Jumeriah Beach, Basatkiya, Roof Top Trilogy and Nad Al Sheba race course, especially during the World Cup.

## Where do you like to holiday?

Thailand, Mauritius and the Maldives.

## Sum up Dubai or the UAE in three words

Dynamic, exciting, contagious ■