

## BLENDING SCIENCE AND NATURE

### The Swiss Family Polla Creates Alchimie Forever

– by Bernard Burt, Senior Editor, Spa Management Journal

The art and science of beauty inspired dermatologist Luigi Polla to model Forever Laser Institut in Geneva after the art gallery that he opened with his wife Barbara. Billed as the first **medical spa** in Europe when it opened in 1997, the art-filled day spa now has an American sibling in Washington, D.C., where daughter Ada Polla directs Alchimie Forever, the family skin care business.

The teamwork of Luigi and Barbara Polla brought together research on cellular aging and cosmetic lasers to repair damaged skin. Dr. Luigi Polla, a dermatologist and European leader in the field of cosmetic laser therapy, is an expert on skin aging. Research on antioxidants and stress proteins by Dr. Barbara Polla led to international acclaim for her work on cellular aging.

The Forever Laser Institut offers a wide range of dermatological and aesthetic services for the face and body, including massage, facials, collagen injections and Botox, as well as laser treatments. Current research by Dr. Polla focuses on using hyaluronic acid through fine canules, rather than traditionally shaped needles, which he says allows for a more even distribution of product and give a “soft lifting” effect.

Formulated to medical standards, Alchimie Forever products are used by leading spas as well as medical clinics, **and** retailed by **Park Plaza Beauty** in New York and Sephora in **Singapore**. The treatments yield visible results, combining aesthetics and state-of-the-art skin care. Created in Switzerland, the Alchimie Forever line of plant-based anti-aging skin care blends science and nature, sensorial pleasure and visual chic, dermatological expertise and gentle daily care. Alchimie Forever is a holistic skin care regimen infused with combinations of antioxidant botanicals. Through the alchemy of blueberries, rosemary, green tea, grapes, tomatoes, and turmeric, a synergistic healing process works on many levels.

The company's double-digit annual revenue growth is a trans-Atlantic family success story. The driving force behind the family skin care business' growth and development, Ada Polla, President and CEO, has been featured on the cover of Business Week magazine's *Small Biz*. About Alchimie Forever, Ada says: "We develop our products sensually, paying great attention to textures and fragrances. Our delicate scent relaxes you, while never irritating your skin or competing with your perfume. Our luxurious textures glide on smoothly, leaving a silky finish."

Active in the International Spa Association, contributor to numerous magazines, and a frequent speaker at leading universities and industry conferences, Ada Polla has positioned Alchimie Forever in the growing field of medical spas. "Skin care is about efficacy," she comments, "but also about pleasure, about making time for yourself to enjoy looking your best."

From her base in Washington, D.C., Ada Polla makes time for community service. Founder of The Network of Entrepreneurial Women, supporting women in the Capital region who start their own businesses, she also co-chairs the Washington Spa Alliance. Born in Switzerland, she attended Harvard University, graduating Magna cum Laude BA in art history and political science in 1999, and holds an MBA from Georgetown University.

In parallel, the Polla family shares a passion for contemporary art, and created in 1991 (also in Geneva) the avant-garde gallery Analix Forever, dedicated to the discovery and promotion of talented young artists worldwide.

Looking more like a fashion model than doctor, Barbara Polla has held a seat in the Swiss House of Representatives, written medical texts, and taught the science of skin care. Addressing a gathering of spa professionals in Washington, she said focus on a

creative lifestyle motivates her work. "What I am good at is discovering talents."

Daughter Ada's biggest beauty indulgence: "Flying to Geneva to get my Botox injections at our own Forever Laser Institut."

**Alchimie Forever - The Polla Beauty Group**

**1010 Wisconsin Avenue**, Suite 201, Washington, DC 20007 Telephone: (202) 530-3930; Fax: (866) 351-5587  
Email: [ada@alchimie-forever.com](mailto:ada@alchimie-forever.com)

[www.alchimie-forever.com](http://www.alchimie-forever.com)

[www.forever-beauty.com](http://www.forever-beauty.com)

## **Harmonizing Science and Nature**

A Swiss Approach to Wellness by Dr. Barbara S. Polla, co-founder, Alchimie Forever

*Dr. Barbara S. Polla joined her daughter Ada in hosting a SpaBuzz evening at the Alchimie Forever offices in Washington, D.C. From being an MD, academic career, 18 years of research (Geneva, Paris, Harvard) heading various lab projects on stress and anti-stress, on aging and anti-aging, she came to the conclusion that the best remedies are in nature.*

Let's talk a moment about aging. The aging process is one that science hasn't yet found how to prevent. But the plants have many secrets to tell us on this.

How come?

The single major factor of aging is oxidation - for the skin, exposure to UV. We are inside - plants are outside... anti aging.... anti stress

Now let me state my conviction that the best science is in nature extends way beyond my own experience. Let's talk about spas now.

What are we actually doing, in spas? What do we want to offer our clients, and what are they seeking from us?

I believe that what all spa clients essentially want, even if they don't always express it exactly like that, is to be well, to be happy, to be in harmony with themselves, with their own nature.

And what we really want to give our clients, in response to their requests is, indeed, well being and happiness and health and beauty. How do we do this?

We do this thanks to our knowledge and science - we have learned how to make other people feel good, how to treat them, well being is spa business and it is a real science.

And we know that what makes the people really happy is to be in harmony with themselves. So the harmony we are able to provide them is in fact the most important gift we give them... The gift of Harmony.

Harmony with what? Essentially, what we all want, is harmony with ourselves... ie, with nature ! Because yes indeed, we, as human beings, actually also are products from nature !

We are creatures of nature and we absolutely need to get back to our own nature... to get in touch with our own nature, to find harmony, an equilibrium between our own nature and the science we created to master it. Equilibrium not polarization. We as human beings are both science and nature! This quest for equilibrium is to my opinion what really hides behind the overwhelming desire for nature that is expressed by our consumers, who are looking for natural products, for natural treatments, for natural environments.

We know this intuitively, and in spas we tend not to show too much of our science, even in medical spas, such as my spa back in Geneva, or here at Hela, we tend to complement the science with some pampering - pampering by nature, pampering by equilibrium. In more nature-oriented spas such as The Still Point we should not forget either about all the fantastic amount of science within the organics.

It requires a lot of science to make natural products, it took me 18 years of hardcore pure science to finally understand the virtues of nature. If we think back at all the botanists, the alchemists, all these scientists who knew so much about nature ... and we still have a lot to learn from them, about our earth, about plants, about water and the benefits but also the threats and the dangers of the nature inside and around us. Other interesting examples are the fundamental spa treatment: SPA really meaning *Salud per Aqua*, health with water. Is there anything more natural than water? Water, the best of nature, is used with a lot of science at the Mandarin Oriental for example. Yes, it requires a lot of science to offer the very nature of the water and its benefits in such a natural looking way to the privileged clients of that spa!

We always need to work at reconciling the science, the efficacy of treatments, with the nature. Our customers want and need the best of both... and it is our goal to please them! In the beauty field, nothing should be in opposition, everything is in equilibrium. Equilibrium between science and nature, equilibrium between inside and outside, equilibrium between work and rest, equilibrium between taking care of ourselves and taking care of others, equilibrium between talking and doing. So let's go back to the essentials: enjoying ourselves all together and the very nature of beauty we are trying to define, every day of our life, tonight and forever.

Our natural beauty. Inside us.

