

Women of the moment

IN THE BUSINESS OF BEAUTY

Pauline Ng went from selling pages of her colouring book when she was just seven to running an award-winning face spa with her mother at 28. The enterprising lass tells ANKITA VARMA what it's like being a young boss.



Pauline and her mum Jenny (right) overcame their many issues, and now run Porcelain The Face Spa together.



Five years ago, Pauline and her mother Jenny, then 45, started Porcelain The Face Spa – a tiny two-bed outfit on Cantonment Road. Fast forward to 2014: The business has since expanded and now boasts its own range of skincare as well as an aesthetics branch, Porcelain Aesthetics (which opened this June at Orchard Gateway). Porcelain The Face Spa was even named Best Luxury Beauty Spa in Asia at the 2013 and 2014 World Luxury Spa Awards. A surprising tidbit about the mother-daughter duo: They used to quarrel all the time. When they started working together, sceptical friends and

relatives gave them six months before they called it quits!

Starting a business at 23 seems daunting...

"It was! My mother is a fantastic beauty therapist but a terrible businesswoman – she wouldn't charge customers for products and services because she just wanted to help them improve their skin condition. I've always had an entrepreneurial streak – when I was seven, I photocopied pages of my



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alike – emotional and easily upset. Interestingly, we've never had huge fights when it came to the business. Focusing on our strengths helps – I handle the finances, human resources and operations, while my mum is in charge of the treatments and staff training."

Any tricky situations when handling older staff?

"I have to make sure they see me as more than 'Auntie Jenny's daughter'. The key is working harder than everyone else. I also have all new staff practise their facial and massage skills on me so I can assess if they can adequately educate our clients and use the equipment."

How did your skincare line come about?

"We have a no-makeup policy at work (none of the spa's therapists wear makeup while working) and we encourage our customers to improve their skin condition instead of hiding their flaws under makeup. Creating good skincare was the next logical step. We did a year's worth of research and worked with skincare houses in the US, Taiwan and Hong Kong to formulate our line." *HW*

"PEOPLE THINK I SNEAK IN FACIALS AT WORK... I CAN'T! I'M ALWAYS BUMPED OFF THE LIST BECAUSE OUR CUSTOMERS GET PRIORITY."