

# Florida Skin Center helps residents take their skin 'to a better place'

By **KAYLA GLEASON**  
FEELING FIT CORRESPONDENT

With three locations already serving residents across southwest Florida, the Florida Skin Center has set its sights on Punta Gorda.

"We knew we wanted to come to an area that needed dermatological services, somewhere we could continue helping the surrounding community," said Dr. Anais Aurora Badia, founder of the center.

After researching the area, Badia found that Punta Gorda was relatively underserved when it came to dermatology, where wait times for new patients at existing offices could exceed a year and a half, according to Kaitlin Cangro Sherman, a public relations specialist.

And with specialists in every field from pediatric dermatology to skin cancer treatment — including Mohs surgery — Florida Skin Center is ready to take on all of their clients needs in a friendly, comfortable environment.

Touring the new Punta Gorda location, with its essential oil diffusers, snack bars and calming, ambient music, the facility feels more like a spa than a doctor's office and that was exactly Badia's goal.

"We want to offer the highest level of dermatological care. This is a service-based industry just like a restaurant or spa and a lot of medical businesses don't focus on that enough," she said.

"We want to make sure our patients feel comfortable and cared for, that is our guiding principle."

Dr. Chetan Vedvyas, a board-certified dermatologist and Mohs surgeon, added: "There's something special here that I've never seen before. We put our patients above all else and have a different concept of treating patients medically — we'll even call them 'guests' instead of 'patients.'"

And this style already seems to be a hit with



Dr. Chetan Vedvyas and Dr. A. Aurora Badia.

locals. Since opening in April of this year, the Florida Skin Center has seen nothing but growth. In fact, they are already planning to add more rooms on the general dermatology floor to accommodate the influx of patients.

"We get busier by the day and things are picking up quicker than even we expected," Vedvyas said.

A higher intake of guests, however, won't mean a decrease in the quality or personalization of treatment.

"We are incredibly choosy with our staff. We hire maybe one in every 100 candidates for even a medical assisting job and that reflects in our patient care," said Vedvyas.

"There are currently nine employees, including doctors, nurses and support staff, which means we have a high staff to patient ratio."

Many involved with the center also credit Vedvyas himself with drawing in patients and maintaining such a high level of care. Because Mohs surgery relies on local anesthesia, he is able to get to know guests throughout their often-lengthy procedures — many surgeries can last upward of two or three hours while layers of cancerous tissue is removed and carefully studied.

"Dr. V brings world class credentials right here to Punta Gorda. We're very blessed to have him join us and look forward to great things," said George Gulisano, Florida Skin Center's CEO.

Because certain procedures — like Mohs



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Members of the Florida Skin Center cut ribbon with the City of Punta Gorda's ceremonial scissors.



Florida Skin Center's CEO George Gulisano, Dr. Chetan Vedvyas and Dr. A. Aurora Badia cut a ceremonial ribbon at the grand opening.



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City Council members Jaha Cummings and Nancy Prafke pose in the photo booth at the Florida Skin Center's grand opening party.

surgery — can involve sitting for hours at a time, doctors were actively involved in designing patient suites to ensure the utmost comfort. In fact, Badia's parents are both engineers and helped her build all Florida Skin Center's locations.

The entire upstairs portion of the Punta Gorda facility is devoted to surgeries and more in-depth procedures. Comfort in these areas, therefore, was a major goal. And while the six suites vary in size and layout, they are all relatively spacious rooms complete with televisions, music, mini refrigerators and more.

"Guests have access to hot snacks, aromatherapy, the T.V.'s even all have Netflix and Hulu and the exam chairs swivel so they can watch shows, talk to the people with them, whatever makes them most comfortable," Vedvyas said.

Gulisano added, "We tried to construct things so that guests can stay in their rooms in between and throughout procedures. They don't have to move from one room to another or wait



Florida Skin Center employees enjoy the photo booth.

in a waiting room for results like they normally would."

The ground floor, dedicated to general dermatology, isn't without its perks either. Though the individual rooms are smaller, patients still have access to coffee, water and snacks while feeling the benefits of aromatherapy.

"We have so many different kinds of coffee and it's all the best kind, too," Gulisano joked as he gave city council members a tour of the facility.

For those interested in checking out Florida Skin Center and taking their skin "to a better place," as the motto says, visit [www.floridaskincenter.com](http://www.floridaskincenter.com) or call 239-316-4773.

The center also offers free skin checks, just call and schedule an appointment.

"We want to raise awareness. We did over 1,300 free skin checks last year alone and our goal this year is to increase that number," Badia said.

"We're just so honored to be a part of this

community and look forward to everything that's to come."

Florida Skin Center Punta Gorda is located at 329 E. Olympia Ave. They are open Monday-Thursday from 7:35 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (closed for lunch, 12:20 p.m. to 1 p.m.) and Friday from 7:35 a.m. to noon.

Other locations include Fort Myers: 13691 Metropolis Ave., Fort Myers; 4037 Del Prado Blvd., Cape Coral and 615 Williams Ave., Lehigh Acres.

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