



THE BEAUTY OF DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

BY

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AND

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When Erik L. Mertens, MD, FEBOphth, and Claudia Doeser began working together, the only cosmetic procedure they offered was blepharoplasty. Now, they run complementary clinics offering full aesthetics and ophthalmology services.

How did you meet?

Erik L. Mertens, MD, FEBOphth: We met at my practice, Medipolis. Claudia started working there at the beginning of 2009 as the office manager, and we started our relationship at the end of 2011.

Claudia Doeser: When we began working together, the only cosmetic procedure available at Medipolis was blepharoplasty. Within 2 years, we were in a relationship, and in another 5 we had built an aesthetics practice (Figure 1) with me as CEO (see “The Beauty of Collaboration,” *CRST*, August 2017) and an ophthalmology empire under Erik. We married in 2016 (Figure 2).

Did you have any reservations about working together?

Erik: During our working relationship, it hasn't always been easy, and we have had quite a few disagreements.

What role do you each play in the practice?

Claudia: I am CEO of FIRM/The Esthetic Clinic, and Erik is medical director of Medipolis, Antwerp Private Clinic.

How do you maintain balance with home obligations?

Erik: In the beginning, we tried to separate our businesses from each other, which led to frustrations. We had to learn that, by listening to each other, we could give advice and learn how to overcome personal problems in the practice. Because we have different backgrounds, we can bring out-of-the-box ideas to the workplace.

What is the biggest reward?

Claudia: Working separately but together we build a stronger bond, and



Figure 1. Working in different specialties allows out-of-the-box problem solving.



Figure 2. The couple's 2016 wedding.

this gives us the opportunity to balance our private and professional lives. ■