

Just what the doctor ordered

Gone is the white, sterile look. Clinics these days are so swanky, you'd think they are spas or bars

Tay Suan Chiang

PATIENTS at Aesthete Smilestudio at Clifford Centre do not scream in pain under the dentist's drill. Instead, some have even dozed off during their treatments.

Dr Thean Tsin Piao, who runs the spa-like clinic, is not surprised. After all, his patients get to relax in an Osim iDesire massage chair while he works on them.

"Patients usually have a fear of dentists, so I want to make them feel relaxed and comfortable when they come," he says.

Plastic surgeon Dr Ivor Lim, who runs two chic clinics — the Plastic And Hand Surgery and the medSpa — at Camden Medical Centre, says it is about making patients feel comfortable.

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Designer Jason Yeang of Yeang Creative gave his clinics a luxurious look by padding the walls with suede.

Doctors are moving away from the cold, clinical look and are adding colours and plush furnishings to give their set-ups an inviting feel.

These designer clinics are usually located in town areas, such as Orchard Road and Raffles Place. Most are in the medical aesthetic business.

But Dr Kenneth Lee, medical director of Sloane Clinic in Chip Bee Gardens, says he opted for a swanky look not because he offers aesthetic treatments.

Generally, patients "are more keen to enter a clinic that looks pleasing rather than a drab-looking one", he notes.

And some are loath to leave these luxe clinics too. For instance, Dr Thean gets calls from patients who ask if they can go to his clinics just for massages.

"I tell them to come after office hours," he says with a laugh.

▶ taysc@sph.com.sg



Sloane Clinic

43 Jalan Merah Saga,
01-66 Chip Bee Gardens

Nestled among several eateries in Chip Bee Gardens, it is no surprise that Sloane Clinic has been mistaken for a bar.

The two-month-old clinic offers aesthetic services such as botox, intense pulse light and laser treatments.

Designed by Spacecraft, the reception (main picture) features black and white

mosaic strips that run from the wall to the floor for a retro feel. But it is far from being stark, thanks to colourful furnishings such as a red sofa and a matching red curtain that leads to the treatment rooms.

To keep the look clean, the treatment rooms do not have door handles. Instead, patients rely on a light outside each room to see if it is occupied.

At the end of the corridor is a dressing area (inset) fit for a celebrity. Done up to resemble a backstage make-up table, it has a vanity mirror with a row of light bulbs on each side and a Pantone seat.

It cost \$150,000 to renovate the 1,200 sq ft clinic. "Patients love this as they feel like a movie star," says Dr Kenneth Lee, 35, its medical director.