

LAST STITCH

PLASTIC SURGEON MAY TURN PENNSYLVANIA INTO AN EAST COAST VERSION OF 'WINE COUNTRY'

The sudden disappearance of migraine headaches that had plagued John Stratis, MD, Mechanicsburg, Pa., provided a benefit beyond the end of the pain – it allowed him to embrace *le dolce vino*, the wonderful world of wine. Wine once triggered the headaches, but today he's known throughout his family and greater Mechanicsburg as an up-and-coming "vintner," or wine maker.

"After the headaches stopped about five years ago I was able to drink red wine again, and for my next birthday my children gave me a wine-making kit," Dr. Stratis says.

"The kit contained instructions and two or three gallons of concentrate of Montepulciano d'Abruzzo grapes from Italy," he says. "Two unexpected developments resulted from this initial effort: One, it was surprisingly easy to do; two, it tasted good. That's when I jumped into it with full force."

At the time he had two Concord grapevines on his property. He expanded the effort, purchasing 40 grapevines from a grower in the area; however, the unforgiving Pennsylvania climate claimed a few prior to bloom. "Two vines in particular I had been shepherding for two years, and last year, they started to bud – then we had a late frost and they died. What are you going to do?," he says with a sigh.



Dr. Stratis checks the status of Concord grapes nearing harvest in his Pennsylvania vineyard.



John Stratis, MD, holds a bottle of his 2007 blueberry wine.

On the positive side, many of the other grapevines are beginning to show signs of life. But in a cruel twist, the first grapes that appear on a new vine need to be plucked. "That way, the root system grows; the vitality of the plant needs to get into the roots," Dr. Stratis says. "You pull the grapes off, yet this is what you've been waiting for. It's terribly ironic."

But being a vintner means possessing abundant patience and employing experimentation, creativity and

knowledge gained through study. "It's like the field of plastic surgery," he says. "There's science and knowledge, practical experience and art involved. Also, the more experience you have, the better you are, and pre-selection of what you work with is key: If you pick your patients and your grapes carefully, your results will be good."

Dr. Stratis recently built an addition to his wine cellar, which currently hold between 250-300 bottles. In all, he's made about 500 bottles of wine, he estimates.

"I hold a wine-tasting for friends and family around Thanksgiving," he says. "One year I'll have several great batches – the next year, not so good. I really enjoy that anticipation." **PSN**

15 YEARS AGO IN PSN...

Young Plastic Surgeons Committee Chair Rod Rohrich, MD, called for renewed attention to reconstructive surgery in conjunction with public and government outreach efforts. The article, "Plastic surgery needs to get back to its roots," appeared in the June 1993 issue of PSN:

"(W)e need to tell both the media and our patients stories about the ways plastic surgeons replant arms and reattach fingers for people after severe injuries. ... We are, first and foremost, physicians. We care about patients and want to help them. It's important to get this message out to the media, but it's much more important to communicate this to our patients." **PSN**

– Rod Rohrich, MD
Dallas



SURGEON SPOTLIGHT

Editor's note: The bulk of PSN's pages are devoted to specific elements of our mission statement – to keep members informed of the social, political and economic trends and educational opportunities that affect the specialty of plastic surgery.

PSN is pleased to take liberties with the "social" aspect of its mission statement by presenting a good-natured look at the lives of notable members who we believe are making significant contributions to the specialty.



Zubin Panthaki, MD

IN THIS ISSUE, we present to you ASPS Member Surgeon **Zubin Panthaki, MD**, Miami, assistant professor of clinical surgery, assistant professor of clinical orthopaedics and associate director of the plastic surgery residency program at the University of Miami. Dr. Panthaki completed his general surgery and plastic surgery residencies at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, in 1998 and 2000, respectively, and completed a hand and microsurgery fellowship at The Buncke Clinic, San Francisco. He has been a member of the ASPS In-Service Examination Committee, having served the last two years on the Hand Section. Dr. Panthaki found time in his busy academic schedule – and between volunteer mission trips to developing nations – to answer the following questions for *PSN*:

If I had to start my career over again, I would... Be lucky if I could do the same thing. It felt as if a strange series of coincidences conspired to lead me into a career in plastic surgery. I started off as an electrical engineer, then somehow got into medical school thinking I would be a radiologist or biomedical engineer, and finally ended up becoming a plastic surgeon and teaching in academia.

The best thing about being a plastic surgeon is... We get to operate all over the body.

The worst thing about being a plastic surgeon is... Our results are obvious for everyone to see and judge.

The best thing I ever purchased for the office was... A small area liposuction machine and a dermabrader. Office dermabrasion, liposuction and small-area fat grafting can make a big difference in patient satisfaction and don't take much time or effort.

The worst thing I ever purchased for my office was... An intense pulsed-light machine. It did not really give us the results we expected, and it kept breaking down.

My single biggest contribution to plastic surgery is... Training the next generation of plastic surgery residents.

An operation that I no longer perform is... Cleft lip and palate repair.

The best part of next weekend will be... Traveling. I love to travel, and conferences provide the perfect excuse.

I couldn't operate without my... Surgical loupes. For the first few years out of my microsurgery fellowship, I used to wear my loupes for everything!

The last book I read was... A Robert Ludlum spy novel titled *The Bancroft Strategy*.

Younger surgeons today... Have CVs that are so impressive, I wonder how I ever got accepted into a plastic surgery program.

The single biggest influence on my decision to become a plastic surgeon was... Lucie Lessard, MD, at the Royal Victoria Hospital of McGill University, Montreal, Canada. I did research in her laboratory as a medical student, and she funded my attendance at a plastic surgery meeting to present a poster of our results.



Dr. Panthaki moves tissue during a breast reconstruction procedure. (Photo by Image of Surgery)

The best vacation I ever took was... A cruise down the Nile River in Egypt from Luxor to Aswan.

The best thing a grateful patient gave me was... One of my breast cancer reconstruction patients is a professional photographer. She made me a framed set of photos of the flowers she was given by her friends when she was hospitalized for her breast cancer surgery. I have them up in my house. **PSN**