

# SAVING FACE

Kate Farr chats to Yen Reis, founder of Skin Laundry about her start-up history, launching in a completely new country and finding balance as a working mum.

**Tell us about your family.**

My husband and I have been married for over twelve years and we have three boys aged ten, eight and six. My sons were all born in Singapore, however we are all originally from Australia. With three boys, everyone keeps telling me that I need to have a girl!

**What brought you to Hong Kong?**

My family and I recently relocated to Hong Kong in order for me to open and oversee three new Skin Laundry locations here at the pulse, Century Square and Lane Crawford IFC.

**What did you do before launching the Skin Laundry?**

I grew up in Sydney, however at an early age I moved abroad to travel. My first job was in web design for a dotcom in San Francisco, and I later moved to Singapore where I was offered a job as a crude oil futures broker. After my three sons were born, I decided to go back to work, launching Gallery Reis, a contemporary art gallery representing emerging and established international artists in Singapore.

During that time my husband and I diversified into investing in a variety of start-ups. I really enjoy the process of building a sustainable business from the ground up.

**Where did the idea come from to go it alone?**

There is always such a huge sense of achievement when you build a business from scratch. I love the challenge and really enjoy the experience – you learn so much very quickly.

**How did you translate your business idea from concept to reality?**

It's an ongoing process and you have to be prepared to begin with an idea that will continuously evolve. Transforming that idea into reality involves surrounding yourself with



a strong team of very hardworking individuals who – hopefully – will also believe in your concept as strongly as you do.

**What has been your biggest business challenge to date?**

Educating the market on the effectiveness and safety of using laser and light technology on a regular basis to maintain healthier skin. Laser facials are still very new to many people.

**What do you love most about what you do?**

I love hearing about and seeing such great results from our treatments – this really makes all the hard work worthwhile! Keeping

our treatments affordable enables a larger audience to access laser and light technology and enjoy the benefits on a more regular basis.

**And is there anything that you're not so keen on?**

We now have twelve Skin Laundry locations in total – in Los Angeles, New York and Hong Kong – so my job now involves a lot of travel, meaning that I'm often away from my boys. It's really tough to miss out on seeing them on a daily basis.

**How do you juggle running Skin Laundry with family life? What's the biggest challenge in maintaining a good balance?**

Since becoming a mother I've learned to be very efficient, and I always try to maintain that efficiency in everything I do. Whether it's packing the kids' lunchboxes or training my staff, I always try to use my time wisely and effectively, so that when I do have the chance to take time off it's spent with my sons doing something fun.

**What advice would you give to other working parents?**

I think that balance is key, however there are always going to be moments where one will outweigh the other. You need to prioritise your time so you're at your most efficient at work, and then the best parent you can be at home.

**What's next for Skin Laundry? What are your plans and aspirations for the business?**

Skin Laundry still has a long way to go! We have two more locations opening in New York City by mid-2016, and the Hong Kong launch opens up additional opportunities in Asia, which I find really exciting. I would also like to focus on educating consumers on the benefits of Skin Laundry and further expanding the existing Skin Laundry product business. ■