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*Visionary Fashionista*

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Eden Prairie optometrist blends eye health and latest trends.

Pei Ling Jamison’s mother had a clear vision of her daughter’s future. She could see it—directly in front of her in a Sioux Falls, South Dakota, mall.

Jamison’s parents were refugees from Thailand. While they were able to become business owners in their adopted country, there was one important area that Jamison’s parents couldn’t navigate. “My mom just knew she didn’t know anything about formal education in the United States, so she needed to find mentors for me,” says Jamison, who now lives in Chanhassen.

In the shopping mall, the family owned and ran a restaurant, which was located across from an optometrist’s office. Jamison’s mother set her sights and her daughter’s future on that office. “I was groomed for optometry since middle school,” Jamison says.

Before settling on a career, in addition to shadowing optometrists, Jamison observed an ophthalmologist, nurses and doctors. “I even went to view surgeries on my days off [in high school],” she says.

While pursuing a biology degree at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, Jamison worked as an optician, fitting patients with prescribed eyewear. “That’s where I really found the love of it,” she says of discovering her career path.

Jamison received her optometry doctorate from Pacific University, Oregon. “I’m the first generation in my family to have any formal education,” she says.

Jamison moved to the Twin Cities in 2009 with husband Terry Jamison with whom she has two daughters, 4 years old and 21 months. While she may be the first in her family to have an advanced degree, Jamison dug back into her family roots and became a business owner, opening Eden Prairie’s Jamison Optical in 2013.

The practice offers eye examinations, which include visual fields screening, retinal photos, dilation, refraction, personalized lens recommendation, frame styling and digital lens measurement. Medical eye examinations are also available and differ from standard eye exams by addressing a specific medical concern or health issue—examples being allergies, astigmatism, cataracts, conjunctivitis, glaucoma, macular degeneration, and strabismus.

While her primary focus is ensuring her patients’ eye health and prescribing accurate prescriptions for lenses, Jamison enjoys tapping into her days as an optician by helping patients find the best frames for their lifestyles and faces. “I’m only as good as your eyewear, at the end of the day,” she says. “I get to be at the beginning of your journey and at the end, knowing you’re getting something for your lifestyle and fashion wants.”

Fitting eyewear requires more than just picking out what looks good. A client’s head size, distance between the eyes and nose and face shapes factor into the decision. Comfort is also important: ill-fitting glasses tend to spend most of the time tossed aside, rather than perched on a nose.

Once those elements are addressed, the fun can really begin. “Right now, I’m obsessed with matte [finish],” Jamison says.

Round frames have had their moment on the East Coast and are doing the same regionally, she says, and plastic is making a stronger push in the materials space. It’s just as important to factor in the wearer’s hair color, skin tone and facial structure, Jamison says, adding, “It’s really about finding the right pieces. I love doing it.” In addition to benefitting from staff’s recommendations, customers can assess different eyewear looks through side-by-side comparison photos taken onsite.

Some eyewear consumers may think it’s easier and more convenient to shop online, but Jamison cautions, “There’s no professional to help you” find the right fit.

Jamison Optical clients can peruse frames on its website prior to visiting the office for a fitting. Hundreds of samples are featured from brands including Coach, Dolce & Gabbana, ECO, Fendi, MODO, Prada and Ray-Ban. “If it fits good, you’ll look good,” Jamison says. “Like shoes and jeans, (glasses) need to fit right.”