

*America's  
Finest*

Dr. Sheena Garner has  
created a concierge-style  
practice with gorgeous  
eyewear in beautiful yet  
comfy surroundings.





White, gold and navy blue decor and furnishings bring a unified, upscale look to EyeBar.



tacts. But the menu also includes services seen far less often at optometry offices: lash and brow extensions, makeup and makeovers, eyebrow waxing and threading — even injections to banish crow's feet.

"It's not just an exam. It's an experience," says Garner, who schedules just eight appointments daily at EyeBar (versus 16 to 20 at InSight Eyecare, a practice she co-owns in northwest Houston). "Coming here is like therapy," she adds, and quality time is her No. 1 goal. "It's time away, and you feel special."

After their eye exam, people can get their makeup done at no extra charge while Garner picks out frames for them to try on. Frame styling is her favorite part of the business, and a big reason she started EyeBar. After graduating from Texas A&M with a major in biology, she interviewed at Neiman Marcus to be a fashion buyer. "I realized I had two lives, medicine and fashion, and optometry was the only way to marry them," she recalls.

Fashion drives EyeBar's selection of 450 frames, which retail from \$200 to \$800 and include Matsuda, Paul Smith, Emilio Pucci and Jacques Marie Mage, as well as Tom Ford, Chloe, Miu Miu and Balenciaga. Frames become art as they jut from clear Plexiglas fixtures on the wall or

# EYEBAR HOUSTON

ENTREPRENEURIAL OD LAUNCHES  
HIGH-GLAM VISION CARE SALON

Story by MICHELE MEYER

The party starts as soon as the lipstick-red Porsche Boxster convertible with license "EYE (heart) DR" pulls in front of a stone cottage in Houston's tony River Oaks section.

"My car is the 'we're open' sign," says Dr. Sheena Garner, the owner of EyeBar, a concierge-style eyecare practice and eyewear boutique that's just over a year old. At EyeBar, clients can get eye exams, Lasik surgery, spectacles and con-





Luxury designer brands and stylish independents dominate the selection of about 450 frames at EyeBar.



perch in clear glass cabinets.

Garner designed the white, navy and gold interior, culling ideas from Pinterest and shopping at contemporary furnishings stores. Homey touches include candle-wax-dripping on bottles at the fireplace and faux fur pillows on the sofa. Espresso, mimosas, wine, beer and bowls of Hershey's kisses offer comfort kicks, and "we bake cookies so the house smells good," says Garner. Rather than spa music — "It puts me to sleep" — she spins Norah Jones and Coldplay, with the tunes at their liveliest on Fridays.

EyeBar's clients are women and men, mostly under 50, often from arty professions. "We're all chasing our youth, wanting to be fashionable, staying up with trends," says Garner. The business definitely lives up to its slogan, "A Place to be Seen," with local TV news talent, fashion models and pro athletes among the clientele.

Famous or not, though, "everyone feels at home," Garner notes. "Brandon (Brooks, a guard for the Houston Texans) sat on my blue couch watching football as he ate chips and queso." And kids can watch Netflix movies with milk and cookies, or do their homework at

the kitchen table while their parents get exams.

Garner chose Houston's River Oaks area for its gracious homes (many turned into businesses) and reputation for luxury. Yet a week after she signed a lease in 2014, major construction on her street was announced. Major floods last April and May also cut into traffic.

But as the child of entrepreneurial parents, Garner is undeterred. She and EyeBar are building a clientele through word of mouth, creative giveaways (like sno-cones on a scorching National Sunglasses Day last June) and pop-up shopping events with wares from local clothing boutiques carrying Suno, Roksanda and other hip designers. Garner also cultivates a strong



social media presence, noting how it's "a lot of work but worth it." On Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook and Twitter, she shares beauty tips, inspirational quotes and party photos of her patrons, with the occasional red-carpet shot of Rihanna in Balenciaga shades or James Franco in Ray-Ban Wayfarers.

"I want to give the sense that my customers belong to a club," she says. That club can include valet service, girls-night-out makeup parties or even an exclusive exam. Garner says, "If you want an after-hours exam and plan to buy something, shoot, I'll open up for you."

In fact, Garner plans to open another location, minus the EyeBar trimmings, where she'll team with a plastic surgeon and obstetrician/gynecologist. ("You can get all your necessary evils in one place," she says.) Meanwhile, she dreams of attending her first Silmo, too: Art of the Eiffel Tower decorates her office, near a sign reading, "Just sitting here on the corner of awesome and bombdiggity." Garner's long days and endless whirl make her realize "I don't have enough time in the day — and I'm not invincible," she says. "But I am a dreamer. That keeps me going."

#### QUICK FACTS

**LOCATION:** Houston, TX

**OWNER:** Dr. Sheena L. Garner

**OPENED:** 2014

**AREA:** 2,233 square feet

**EMPLOYEES:** 2 full-time "EYEBARistas" and 5 part-time (including one makeup artist, registered nurse and lash technician).

**TOP BRANDS:** Paul Smith, Emilio Pucci, Matsuda, Tom Ford, Balenciaga

**WEBSITE:** [eyebarhouston.com](http://eyebarhouston.com)

**FACEBOOK URL:** [facebook.com/eyebarhouston](https://www.facebook.com/eyebarhouston)

**TWITTER HANDLE:** [twitter.com/drsheenagarner](https://twitter.com/drsheenagarner)

**INSTAGRAM URL:** [instagram.com/eyebar\\_houston](https://www.instagram.com/eyebar_houston)

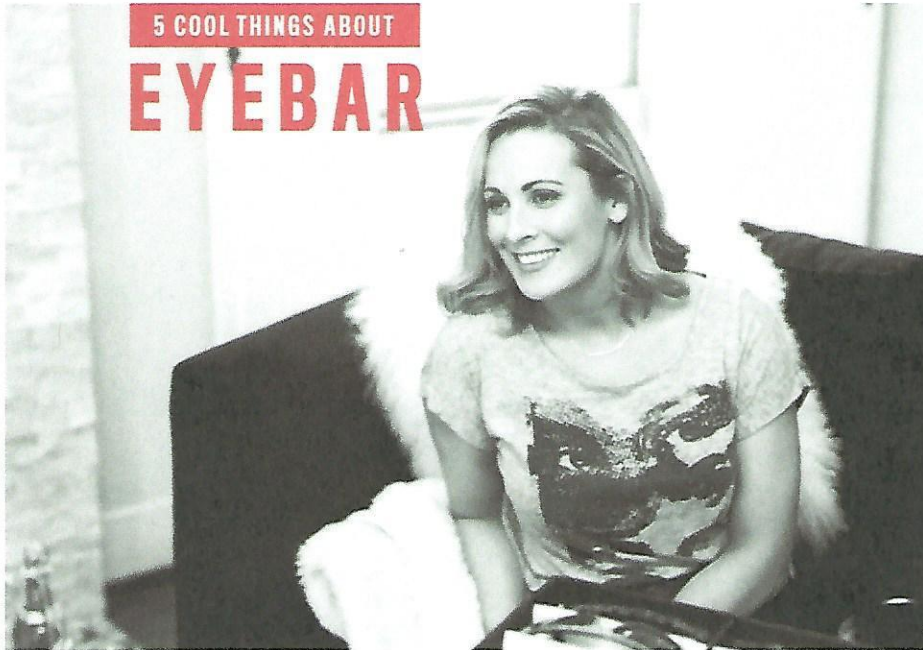
**PINTEREST URL:** [pinterest.com/drsheenagarner/eyebar/](https://www.pinterest.com/drsheenagarner/eyebar/)



#### FULL TIME, AND THEN SOME

**Dr. Garner** began her vision care career as an optometric assistant to Dr. David Bridges and Donald Norcini at InSight before attending the University of Houston School of Optometry. She ultimately bought Bridges' half of InSight and continues to work there on Tuesdays, Thursday afternoons and Friday mornings. (She's at EyeBar on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Thursday mornings and Friday afternoons.) "I still work at that location because I can't seem to let go of my patients," she says. "You develop relationships and patients become family."

## 5 COOL THINGS ABOUT EYEBAR



**1 Giving gal:** A nominee for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Woman of the Year competition in Houston, Garner also donates to charities including Love Gives Back, CanCare, animal welfare nonprofits and the Alzheimer's Foundation.

**2 Something to talk about:** Garner has had perfect vision since Lasik surgery five years ago, but she still sometimes wears glasses as a fashion accessory and conversation starter. "If I wear glasses, 10 more people will



talk to me than without them," she says.

**3 Plentiful perks:** working at EyeBar has its benefits: free Botox, makeup and lash extensions as well as monthly spray tan and an annual pair of glasses. "My staff's beauty maintenance is advertising for me," Garner says.

**4 Makeover heaven:** The winner of Viva la Girls Night drawing and her BFF got professional makeovers and champagne at EyeBar followed

by dinner at preen-and-be-seen night spot Ruggles Black. "We wanted to bring back college days when best friends would get dressed together and play with their makeup," Garner says.

**5 Handsome times 10:** Michael Afshari, a friend's brother, got an eye exam just to be supportive — and was surprised to learn he needed glasses. When his Montblanc specs arrived, "his reaction was priceless," Garner says. "He gazed in the mirror and said, 'I'm not as handsome as I thought.' Mind you, he's very attractive." He now owns 10 pairs.

### FINE STORY

While helping makeup artist Aubrie Layne choose new frames, Dr. Sheena Garner overheard Layne's pre-teen sons, Max and Hanz Jimenez, admiring a framed story on her kitchen wall about Garner's good friend and ex-Houston Dynamo soccer player Michael Chabala. So Garner phoned him. "He was there in no time to meet them," she recalls. "I had to leave to see patients at my other office, but he stayed behind to dribble and sign soccer balls with them in our parking lot."