



Aqua Dental Spa

Versha Miyanger speaks to Anoop Maini, clinical director and practice principal of the award-winning Aqua Dental Spa in London on his philosophy of patient-centred care in a relaxed spa-based environment

VM: Can you tell me a bit about your background and qualifications?

AM: I qualified from King's College London in 1992 and in 1993 I gained my Diploma in General Practice from the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners in 1993. I undertook my vocational training in Luton before working as an associate in a mixed dental practice in High Barnet. In 1998 I became a Principal of a practice in Central London.

VM: When and why did you become a practice owner?

AM: I enjoyed the business aspect of dentistry and I wanted to develop a dental practice in accordance to my own visions and philosophies. So in 1998, I relished the opportunity to acquire a rundown retirement dental practice in Marble Arch.

VM: How did you build your business?

AM: The practice in Marble Arch was predominately NHS-based with a small patient base and a low turnover. Over the next six years the practice was totally refurbished and was converted to a busy fully private two-surgery dental practice offering general dental care. The practice consisted of an associate, a dental hygienist and myself. The practice grew by internal and external marketing involving

newsletters, leaflet drops, a website and local business affiliations. In 2004 my interest in dental implants and cosmetic dentistry developed. After submerging myself in as many courses as I could attend in the UK and the USA, including joining the AACD and BACD I decided that I had outgrown my existing practice and wanted to develop it into a restorative and cosmetically focused practice. So, in 2006 when my lease expired, I decided to take a huge gamble and abandon the general dental practice I had created and relocate to a larger premises in Manchester square. I created my vision, 'Aqua Dental Spa' which is an aesthetically designed practice to reflect the style of cosmetic dentistry I wanted to deliver. About 50% of the patients followed me to the new address and accepted the new style of practice and care.

Aqua Dental Spa had to be heavily re-marketed to attract the cosmetically driven patients we needed in this very competitive market. With our primary focus on patient satisfaction we have grown to now receive an average of 15 new patients a week seeking cosmetic or implant treatments and our turnover has exceeded that of our old general practice. The team now consists of myself full time, two part time associates, part-time endodontist and periodontist and a full-time hygienist.

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VM: Why did you decide to concentrate on aesthetics?

AM: My most personally rewarding and satisfying treatments have been when a patient with low self-esteem is given the opportunity to lead a normal and fulfilling life without the psychological hindrance of an unattractive smile. It still touches my team and I, every-time a patient lifts up a mirror and smiles and a tear rolls down their cheek in joy and they feel beautiful and complete. It is this warm feeling that drives me with passion to go to work everyday and use my cosmetic skills to change people's lives for the better.

VM: What training have you undertaken apart from your University education?

AM: Too many courses to list but the main ones are: Larry Rosenthal's Aesthetic Advantage Programme, Roy Higson's one-year IPSO occlusion course, David Hornbrook Occlusion and full mouth rehabilitation Synergy courses, Ashok Sethi's one-year Dental Implant course, Pascal Magne's Hands on Anterior Porcelain Restoration course and the Hands on Sinus lift and block grafting cadaver course at the University of Paris.

VM: Who was your biggest influence, and why?

AM: The Aesthetic Advantage programme with Larry Rosenthal organised by Independent Seminars (www.independentseminars.com) was the major influence on my career and it was here my eyes were truly opened to the possibilities of cosmetic dentistry and it was an opportunity to absorb the clinical skills and business strategies of hugely successful cosmetic dentists from the US. I was also able to meet like-minded UK dentists on the programme with whom I forged long lasting friendships and together we have aided each other in developing successful niche cosmetic dental practices.

Through the Rosenthal programme I met Bobbi Anthony from Bobbi Anthony Consulting who guided me on developing protocols to deliver high-end dentistry encapsulated by five-star customer service. Bobbi gave me the confidence and drive to pursue my dreams 'close your eyes and visualise your perfect practice, now open your eyes and create that vision. You are only limited by your imagination and your desire to succeed'.

VM: What is the most satisfying aspect of your work?

AM: Having contented patients who are happy to refer their friends and family and comment on the level of care from all the team.



We love making patients feel special and it is great when reciprocally patients make us feel special. Creating value in my team and seeing them grow into more responsible roles is also very satisfying.

VM: What about your practice do you think is unique?

AM: One business philosophy I have learned over the years is to keep things simple and do them well. One concern I have with a lot of practices is that they over complicate systems such as include too many patient activities for the staff to deliver that the result can be chaotic.

I wanted to portray a simple and pure environment which is why I chose the word 'Aqua' in the practice name. We keep our reception area and washroom environment minimalistic and as a result it is kept clutter-free and easy

to maintain. The reception area is devoid of dental literature and posters so that the reception area feels less intimidating and overwhelming. We keep the smells light and pure using aroma stones and scent diffusers. We keep the patient journey through the practice as simple as possible without over fussing by offering too many spa amenities or too large a range, we like to give maybe one or two services delivered very well and not rushed.

The practice works on the philosophy of generous appointment times so patients are seen on time, and never feel rushed. It also helps to handle patients who occasionally arrive late and subsequently run a dentist late. We have a third party telephone call handling service which is used when a patient is standing at the reception desk so that they are not kept waiting by the receptionist answering calls. By keeping things simple it helps the



team to maintain a relaxed environment to enable us to deliver quality painless dentistry which is our primary purpose.

VM: What is your opinion on facial aesthetics such as Botox, dermal fillers, facial rejuvenation etc. and should we really all strive for a 'perfect' face?

AM: I think dentists are perfectly positioned to offer facial aesthetics due to their ability to deliver injections and their understanding of the facial anatomy. Facial aesthetics compliments cosmetic anterior dentistry since smile rejuvenation can be greatly enhanced by defining the lips or reducing peri oral wrinkle lines. I do not think it is a question about getting an absolutely 'perfect face' as this could almost be neurotic behaviour. I personally feel these techniques are great for normalising a face where premature aging may have occurred due to poor diet, smoking or UV radiation. I think we all want to look the best we can and there is nothing abnormal about this, which is why people use make-up and moisturisers.

VM: Are there any cases that you are particularly proud of?

AM: Two cases come to mind. My first case is a 21-year-old girl with severely mottled teeth who never smiled and had no pride in her appearance and was very reserved. She had no boyfriend and was looking for a job but she felt disadvantaged because her teeth looked rotten. I veneered her upper teeth and micro abraded her lower teeth. When I saw her six months later she lost weight, restyled her hair, changed her dress sense, wore make-up and

FACT FILE

Name of practice: Aqua Dental Spa

Practice principals: Dr Anoop Maini

Location: Boutique practice located in Manchester Square W1 London close to the renowned Wallace Collection

Patient mix: Fully private

The practice:

The practice occupies the ground floor and basement of a grade II listed building with a shop front style Georgian bay window. The practice is contemporary and minimalistic with the extensive use of glass and dark woods. The bay window houses an illuminated six-foot water cascade which complements the air of calm and serenity. The practice reception and patient lounge is devoid of stereotypical dental references as found in a typical dental environment. Apart from the reception area the practice has a glass walled consultation area, washroom, three treatment rooms and a spa room.

Staff:

- Principal- Dr Anoop Maini
- Part time Associates - Dr Neera Maini and Dr Lennart Jacobsen
- Endodontist – Dr Martha Suarez
- Implantologist / Periodontist - Dr Nami Farkhondeh
- Hygienist - Monika Patel
- Receptionist / treatment consultant – Alyson Fernandez
- Senior dental assistant - Zuzanna Marlinska
- Dental assistant – Lydia Bertova

Days a week in the practice:

Four

Treatments offered:

Advanced reconstructive and cosmetic dentistry, Periodontal treatments and Facial Aesthetics.

Big capital equipment/technology:

- Cerec
- Schick Digital Xrays
- Soft tissue diode laser
- Tek scan
- Bio JVA
- Air Abrasion
- Intra Oral Cameras
- Nikon D90 Digital SLR cameras
- Wand anaesthetic delivery system
- Diagnodent

Postgraduate education:

- Too numerous to mention but include – Larry Rosenthals Aesthetic Advantage Programme
- Roy Higson one year IPSO occlusion course
- David Hornbrook Occlusion and full mouth rehabilitation Synergy courses
- Ashok Sethi's 1 year Dental Implant course
- Pascal Magne's Hands on Anterior Porcelain Restoration course
- Hands on Sinus lift and block grafting cadaver course at University of Paris

Practice ethos:

We aim to deliver the highest quality cosmetic dental care within a relaxing spa environment where the patient is respected as an individual and is cared for by the whole team.

oozed bundles of confidence. She had got a job and had met a guy from work.

My second case is a 28-year-old girl who was completely dental phobic after a bad experience when she was 14, when a dentist severely lacerated her tongue with a drill. She now felt her teeth were getting bad and she was having recurring nightmares about dying in the dental chair during treatment. With the use of dental sedation initially followed by NLP, we slowly eradicated her phobia and she attends regularly as a normal patient.

VM: How do you manage your time?

AM: I work four days per week which gives me one day to work on the practice rather than in it and handle all the administrative issues. I like to leave the weekends free to spend time with my young family.

VM: What has been your biggest challenge?

AM: Relocating my practice and losing patients in the process and having to virtually

relaunch the practice with a new identity and philosophy.

VM: What do you think is the future of aesthetic dentistry?

AM: I can see the trend for aesthetic dentistry continue to grow in both young and old especially as the media continues to influence society's perception of ageing and beauty. As the male cosmetics and grooming market also grows there will more men seeking cosmetic dental care. As technology and techniques improve treatments such as rapid orthodontics and more predictable tooth whitening procedures may reduce the need for more invasive techniques like veneers. This will no doubt benefit many patients.

VM: What are your top tips in maintaining a successful aesthetic practice?

- AM:
- 1) Be passionate about what you do and always strive to be better
- 2) Have a smart practice environment that re-

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flects the dentistry you deliver

- 3) Develop a supportive, trained and well presented team. Invest in your team
- 4) Collect case studies with pictures and testimonials to show prospective patients this will build patient confidence.
- 5) Image prospective cases with a full-face picture. Patients buy the outcome – let them see what they may look like this may tip the balance and persuade them to accept the treatment proposed
- 6) Never compromise on a good laboratory. A good cosmetic laboratory is invaluable.
- 7) Have a good website and use a company to optimise it
- 8) Market you patients regularly with a newsletter to keep them up to date with practice news and maintain the profile of the practice in your patients minds
- 9) Keep abreast of latest techniques by attending courses. Invest in yourself.

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