

Bite

Better business for dentists

The art of dentistry

Dr Yvonne King believes there should be more respect in the profession for aesthetic dentistry—and has blazed a trail for others to follow

No-handed dentistry

Are you doing yourself out of business by adopting a CAMBRA approach? Page 14

11 practice management myths exposed!

Busting the assumptions of practice management

Best practice guidelines

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Bite's annual guide to the best implants and related products

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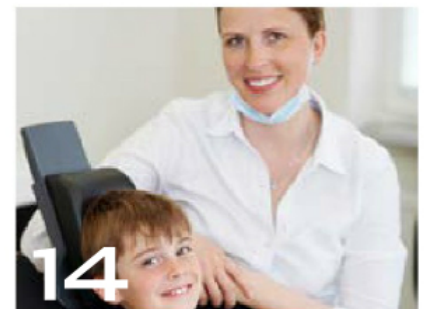
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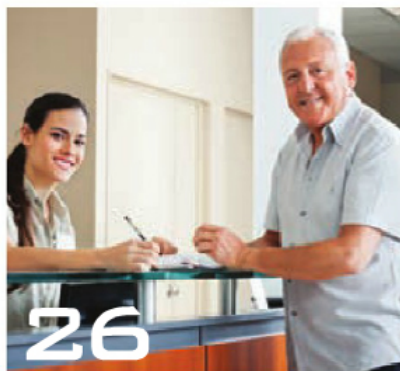
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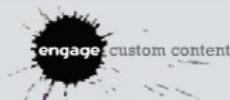
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life

It has been a long climb, but Dr Yvonne King has become a pioneer for the recognition of the important role of aesthetic dentistry in the medical marketplace. By **John Burfitt**

imitating art

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It comes as little surprise when Dr Yvonne King admits one of the passions of her life has always been art. As someone who has spent almost two decades of her career working in aesthetic dentistry, her admission of the love of beauty of aesthetics explains a great deal about the career path she had not only followed, but had become an industry pioneer in.

"My interest in aesthetic dentistry happened gradually, but I do believe it comes from the fact I always liked art," Dr King admits in her practice, Cosmetic & Laser Dentistry Centre, in Caulfield, Melbourne.

"I liked dissecting things that were aesthetically pleasing, and that then translated into dentistry. I would take pride in providing a tooth colour restoration that looked beautiful as well as being functional. I would take pride in doing anterior restorations and seeing

the joy on the patient's face and hearing the feedback as to how it changed their life. From that, it built to where it became a passion."

Yvonne King's passion has proven to be a powerful force in dentistry, and crossed many boundaries in her career. In the years she has focused on aesthetic dentistry, she recalls a time when it was dismissed as 'cosmetic work' or the pursuit of vanity, through to today where it has finally earned respect for its own place within the many fields of dentistry.

It is with a sense of pride in her voice when Dr King talks about her efforts to bridge the gaps and work to bring credibility to aesthetic dentistry.

In 2012, Yvonne King proudly became the first Australian dentist to earn a Masters degree in Aesthetic Dentistry (with distinction) from London's King's College.

"Yes, I am thrilled and it is wonderful," she says. "I am excited as I feel I have helped contribute to the

acknowledgement of aesthetic dentistry as a speciality and thus reinforcing its credibility. Previously, no matter how much education there was, there was no consideration of aesthetic dentistry being a speciality, in spite of many dentists being very knowledgeable and doing beautiful work.

"To be an aesthetic dentist is now a speciality just like prosthodontist or an orthodontist," she concludes.

It was not that long ago that Dr King found a number of her Australia dental community colleagues either didn't really understand the importance of aesthetic dentistry, or they had little respect for it.

"We were just not considered credible, and you couldn't advertise without being frowned upon," she says.

"Now the image of the profession is changing and aesthetic dentistry is a speciality. I believe there will be more people who will take it up as a speciality because all of us want to provide treatment that is good, strong and valid,





This page, from left; Dr King at work in her Melbourne surgery; a glimpse of the interior; and before and after an aesthetic smile makeover.

and not be the superficial treatment dealing purely with appearance that at times it was perceived to be.”

In her three-year Masters course, Dr King worked in Australia with a number of case studies conducted in her own clinic as well as extended periods each year in London.

Her research thesis explored the survival of composites in the treatment of an anterior pathological tooth wear. “We are seeing more people today who, due to lifestyle factors, are wearing their anterior teeth to a point where there is very little left of their teeth, so it’s first and foremost a functional issue, but it’s also an aesthetic issue,” she explains.

“As a profession we are looking at materials we can restore the teeth with so we don’t have to cut the teeth further. Because these teeth are already destroyed, we really don’t want to cut away even the little bit that has been left behind. So we’re looking at composites as an alternative means of restoring these teeth and their long-term survival.”

While she was the first to achieve the distinction of the higher studies in aesthetic dentistry, Dr King says she is not the only one.

“I know there were at least three Australian dentists sitting the first-year exams when I was sitting the second year, so there would be a few following me,” she says. “And now King’s College has brought the course to Australia and

it’s being run in conjunction with Sydney University. So, times are changing, and that is a good thing for everyone.”

Yvonne King hails from a high-achieving medical family, with a father who has a PhD in virology and a mother with a PhD in physiology. The decision to go into dentistry was motivated, she claims, by the chance to combine her two passions of medicine and psychology.

“I remember telling my dad I didn’t feel like studying medicine, but I wanted

Perth, Dr King moved to Melbourne just over 15 years ago where she met her husband Peter and together they set up a new practice, where she has been based ever since.

“I remember in my initial studies in dental school, we were never taught anything about the psychological impact of dentistry,” she says. “It was later

Quote

Dr Yvonne King, Cosmetic and Laser Dentistry Centre

“I remember in my initial studies in dental school, we were never taught anything about the psychological impact of dentistry. It was later that the understanding began dawning on me—we’re dealing with so much more.”

to be in an associated field, and I loved psychology,” she recalls. “So to me, dentistry was like the great marriage between medicine and psychology.”

Dr King studied dentistry at the University of Western Australia in Perth, and later completed a diploma in clinical hypnosis.

After almost a decade of working in

during that the understanding began dawning on me that it’s not just the teeth we’re dealing with—we’re dealing with so much more. Each set of teeth comes with a real person with a mixture of emotions attached to it and the way that person feels will determine whether they will go through a course of treatment. It’s up to us to educate and motivate them



and understand them in such a way as to allow them to walk the road to what is ultimately of great benefit to them.

"I am talking about the whole treatment because really, the smile comes at the end. I am talking about empowering the patients to have a healthy functional mouth, to be in charge of it and how to maintain it. That is what I think we all need to work towards."

It is when Dr King gets onto the topic of the human smile that her true passion really comes to the fore.

On the website of her other clinic, the Melbourne Aesthetic Dental Centre, her mission statement is: "My goal is to fulfil every patient's dream of a beautiful smile, whilst establishing and maintaining a healthy and functional oral environment." It is an issue she insists on taking seriously, and as she explains her dedication, it highlights her commitment to dentistry as the true marriage of medicine and psychology.

"There is the very negative spiral that people can enter into when they are unhappy about their smile," she says. "When a person is not happy with or even ashamed of their smile, they don't

feel motivated to look after their teeth. Therefore, almost inevitably, their teeth are going to deteriorate.

"As the teeth deteriorate, these people tend to avoid social contact due to embarrassment. So their social life suffers, and their career may suffer because when people don't tend to smile, they are viewed as lacking confidence or difficult to work with.

"They may then slide into depression, and when people are depressed, they tend not to look after themselves, and that can go in many directions. So there are many, many facets to such a debilitating cycle."

Long before she earned her Masters, Dr King was already a pioneer in her field. She was the first dentist in Australia to utilise intra-oral cameras, in-surgery teeth whitening, and digital radiographs. She also pioneered in Australia the use of WaterLase and Hoya-ConBio DeLight hard and soft tissue lasers.

In recent years, she has been honoured as a Life Member and Diplomat of the World Congress of Minimally Invasive Dentistry, and is also a member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry as well as a member of the Academy of Laser Dentistry.

In her clinic, Dr King says she spends most of her time with patients dealing with acute cases ranging from crowded, discoloured and broken teeth through to decay and gum disease.

"Tooth wear is quite an issue these days and especially in the younger population," she adds. "And there is a lot of it.

"Periodontal disease is so prevalent and yet patients often say to me when I ask if they have ever had a periodontal chart done, 'What's that?'. Unfortunately they are often the ones who say that they have been going to the dentist every six months for years, however, they have never been educated or examined for presence of periodontal disease.

"Periodontal disease is the first thing we need to stabilise prior to moving on and considering cosmetic improvement with a patient. Healthy periodontium is a foundation of a healthy mouth.

"At the same time, as much as we would like to believe decay today has been eliminated due to fluoride, we are still seeing multiple patients with it.

"Healthy periodontium and decay-free teeth are the two very basic things we need to establish prior to getting our patients to where they really want to be." □