



Specialist endodontic practice sure to create an impression

By Joseph Allbeury

When partners in life and practice, endodontists Guy Shipper and Michelle Heffernan, migrated to Australia in 2006, it was always going to make an impression on Sydney's dental community. With a small number of endodontists practising in the New South Wales capital, their arrival alone heralded a near double digit percentage increase.

Three years on however, it is their contribution to the education community and their brand new practice in Macquarie Street's BMA House that is the talk of the town.

Prior to arriving in Australia, Dr Shipper studied dentistry and completed a Masters in Prosthodontics in South Africa before moving to the United States to obtain a Masters in Endodontics at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. There, he met Dr Heffernan. Dr Heffernan originally



was a dental hygienist who went on to graduate dentistry at the University of Pittsburgh, USA and likewise completed her training in Endodontics at UNC.

After completing their specialist training, Dr Shipper and Dr Heffernan practised in Scottsdale, Arizona, before immigrating to Australia. Dr Shipper has lectured at endodontic meetings in the United States, Europe and Australia and has been active in continuing education courses in Australia during the past 3 years. He has published numerous papers in the *Journal of Endodontics*, *International Endodontic Journal* and *Dental Traumatology*. Dr Shipper's papers have become one of the most cited in Endodontics during the past 5 years and he is currently a Senior Lecturer in Endodontics at the University of Sydney.



Dr Heffernan is the Head of Discipline of Endodontics at the University of Sydney. She is a prominent lecturer and clinical educator in Australia. Dr Heffernan has given numerous lectures in the USA and Australia and over the last three years, has introduced rotary endodontics and microscopes to the student clinics at the University of Sydney.

“We love teaching, writing journal articles and researching,” Dr Shipper said. “We’re both very passionate about that and it carries through with every aspect of our professional lives. We’ve both been enjoying roles at the University since arriving in Australia as well as in private practice and we’re now excited to have a practice of our own.”

Drs Shipper and Heffernan started their search for the right location for their new practice in the Sydney CBD in late 2007.

“We started to look around and thought about leasing, but given the amount you need to invest in a fit-out, we decided to buy premises,” Dr Heffernan said. “We were told that it would be difficult to find what we were looking for but in January 2008, we managed to find what has turned out to be the ideal site.

“When we first looked at this space though, you really had to stretch your imagination. We knew we would need specialist help if we were to turn it into what we envisaged our practice would be like.”

The location chosen for the new practice is on the lower





ground level of historic BMA House, located at 135 Macquarie Street and already home to many dental and medical specialists. Three suites were combined to give a total area of 240 square metres for the practice.

Several of Dr Shipper's colleagues had had their practices designed by Anne Levitch and her team at Levitch Design Associates (LDA) and he had seen first hand the level of detail and expertise they offered. Based on this, he saw no need to shop around and commissioned LDA to bring their vision to fruition.

"We knew as soon as we brought Anne to the new premises that we had made the right choice," Dr Heffernan said. "She was as excited as we were and had a vision of what we could create.

"We then gave LDA a very detailed brief of what we wanted. We made drawings, cut pictures out of magazines and made notes on colours and styles that we liked. We gave all this to Anne, Antony and the team and to their credit, they came up with exactly what we were after. They were able to incorporate everything and we got exactly what we wanted."

Beyond the two heritage-listed entry doors to BMA House Endodontists, is a warm, sophisticated, inviting and contemporary environment designed to make patients, staff and practitioners feel comfortable and at ease.

Patients entering through the left-hand door are presented with a reception area featuring their new logo and corporate identity of the practice developed by LDA. The right hand door is the staff entrance and while they are side by side, a sliding internal door cleverly partitions staff and patient areas during business hours.

Warm, natural colours and tones are used extensively to reflect





the heritage strength of the building. Lighting is designed to give emphasis to the high level of detail throughout.

A large illuminated feature wall in the waiting area and its custom made furniture in soft, inviting fabrics and warm colour palate, adds texture and a feeling of openness. A magazine rack at reception has also been incorporated into a timber panelling wall.

A glass door separates reception from the clinical areas and also provides privacy for the payment desk attached to the side of the reception counter. Patients proceeding for treatment walk past a wall covered in the framed qualifications of the practitioners before arriving at one of the five treatment rooms.

The treatment rooms receive natural light courtesy of an architectural feature of the building allowing in light. The centrepieces of the rooms are Belmont Clesta II dental units that feature knee-

break chairs. Zeiss Pico operating microscopes also feature prominently and include the latest Xenon lighting option for maximum operating efficiency. The treatment rooms are set-up American style with two doors – one for the dentist and one for the nurse – which allows the nurse to enter and leave the room without interrupting the operator.

Hi-res medical grade monitors are mounted on the chairs and these are used to review microscope images, videos, and digital x-rays courtesy of the New Digora Optime DeLuxe PSP imaging unit.

The practice uses Apple Macintosh computers throughout running specialised MAC endodontic software that manages all aspects of clinical patient management apart from the appointment book. For the latter, Apple's iCal software is used which has the advantage of allowing schedules to be viewed remotely using an iPhone.



Summary

The Practice

Principals	Drs Guy Shipper and Michelle Heffernan
Practice	BMA House Endodontists
Type of Practice	Specialist Endodontic
Location	Sydney, New South Wales
Size	240 square metres
No of chairs	5

The Team

Design	Levitch Design Associates
Senior Designers	Antony Poate & Anne Levitch
Graphics & Marketing	Summer Thompson, Christina Lilley & Shona Wilson
Construction	Inline Interiors
Project Manager	Colin McDougall

Equipment

Dental Units	Belmont Clesta II
X-Ray	Belmont Phot-XII with Digora Optime DeLuxe PSP Scanner
Microscopes	Zeiss Pico with Xenon light source
Compressor	Werther Albatros Dry Air Compressor
Suction	Cattani Turbo Smart A

A large office for the practitioners, a practice manager's office, separate and stylish bathrooms for staff and patients, a storage room, a staff kitchen area and conference room complete the floor plan.

Dr Shipper and Dr Heffernan's passion for education is also fully accommodated in the new practice with one surgery wired for audio and video transmission to the conference room where dentists can watch treatment live. Drs Shipper and Heffernan are offering continuing education under their "EndoED" brand, which has again seen them work with LDA to develop the graphics and associated marketing material for this adjunct to the practice. EndoED offers seminars and hands-on workshops for dentists in a personalised approach to continuing education.

Less than a year after opening, BMA House Endodontists have just over 100 referring dentists and Drs Shipper and Heffernan are building a reputation for their precision and attention to detail in their chosen field.

"I can't help but smile every time I walk through the door of our new practice," Dr Shipper said. "It makes me very proud to come here to work and we are very pleased with the results that LDA and the builders, Inline Interiors, delivered for us.

"Patients continually comment on how beautiful the practice is and we can never hear enough of that kind of feedback. It is exactly what we wanted and suits our needs now and for the future. We couldn't be happier."

