



Paediatric practice gives tomorrow's smiles today

By Joseph Allbeury

Paediatric dentist Mala Desai and her husband, Dilip had a dream when building their brand new practice in the Melbourne suburb of Balwyn. Put simply, their vision was to create an environment where they could help a "whole generation of children to grow up without fear of going to the dentist".

"I've worked in several paediatric practices around Australia as well as in the US, Canada, the UK and South Africa" Dr Desai said, "Our vision for the practice was formed from a collection of our positive experiences from these countries.

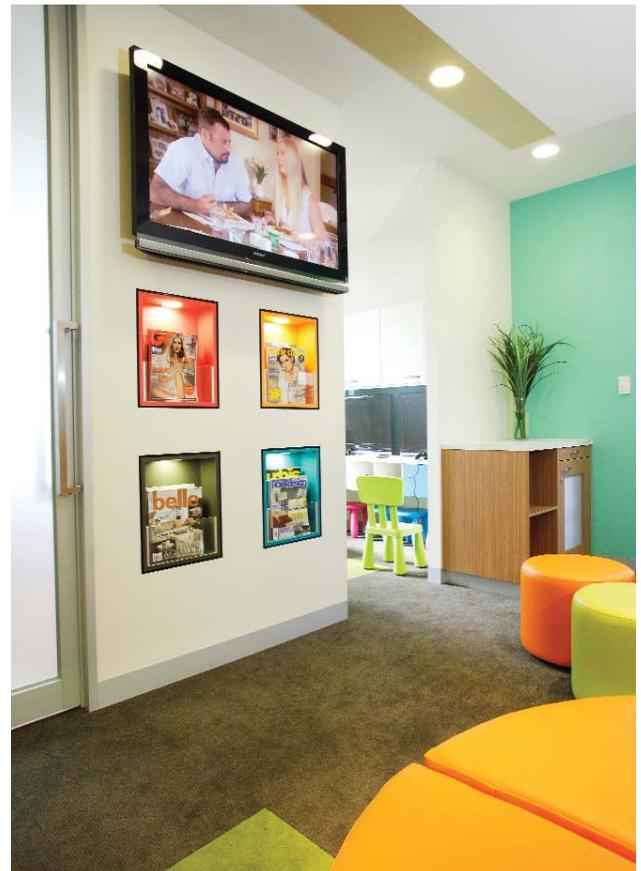
"Key to that was an environment where our young patients would enjoy their dental experience. Fear comes from both the child having had a bad experience first hand as well as from parental anxiety rubbing off. We wanted to counter any such



negativity at every level when providing the overall dental experience."

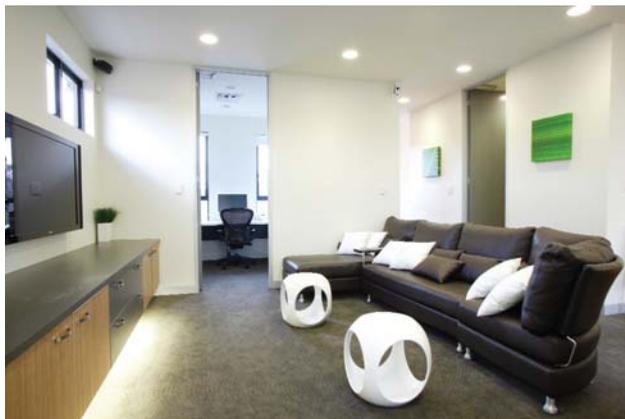
Dr Desai had been renting rooms 2 kms away from the new practice. Given the quality of the care she provided, the practice grew faster than anticipated requiring larger premises.

With a young family of their own, both Mala and Dilip commenced looking for a site to build their visionary practice. In late 2006, they bought a block of land with a view to build a state-of-the-art paediatric specialist practice. With design being their passion, they analysed the needs of their patients, ideal patient flows and future needs of the practice. Over a few months and extensive research, they formed a mental picture of the ideal practice that then had to be worked through design and Council requirements.



Before commissioning any design specialists, Mala and Dilip had researched many featured surgeries around Australia. “We’d seen a lot of Levitch Design Associates’ work in past editions of *Australasian Dental Practice* and really liked what we saw,” Dr Desai said. “Dilip and I wanted someone who could manage the whole architectural and interior project and knew what they were doing. We are both busy with work and our family and didn’t have the time to fully devote to the building process.

“So we approached LDA and some others companies. It came down to LDA and one other. We then visited a lot of reference practices they had built. We really liked the level of finish and the high standard that LDA’s work reflected and that was why we decided to go that way. There was no one comparable.”



Mala and Dilip's brief to LDA was for a modern, fresh, "kiddie friendly" environment with state-of-the-art equipment and technology.

"We were pretty specific and detailed in the brief we provided. My husband and I were very involved. We are both passionate about design and had a lot of influence in designing our own house. So we knew what we wanted and gave LDA a very detailed briefing. We met with Anne Levitch, Antony Poate and the LDA team several times to ensure we were all on the same page.

"We had a done a lot of research ourselves beforehand and LDA were then able to offer their experience from building so many outstanding practices. The whole process was very collaborative. We were really pleased with the end results and the whole experience was very pleasant. Trying to get it through council was frustrating, but it gave us time to evolve the plans and our thought processes and it gave us time to choose colours and refine details. By the time the approvals came through, we knew exactly what went where.



“LDA had great ideas. They took the brief really well and nothing was too hard. They took on board everything we said and came up with an outstanding result for both the building and interior.

“Our whole idea is to create an environment where the parents relax and watch TV, read current magazines and sip a gourmet cappuccino. The waiting room achieves this exactly. With relaxed parents, the kids get managed with less anxiety and half the battle is already won.”

For the kids of all ages there is plenty to entertain them. These include Playstation consoles, wall mounted activity panels, toys, and books in the ‘Kidz Zone’ section of the waiting room as well as an outdoor play area. There is even a wide selection of movies to watch on the ceiling mounted TVs in the treatment rooms.

“These distractions for kids promote behaviour management and cooperation and reinforce positive experiences about going to the dentist whilst allowing us to deliver uncompromising and high quality paediatric dental care.



Four identical treatment rooms with Sirona equipment throughout, Schick digital x-ray systems, Sirona intraoral cameras and monitors, and a Sirona OPG. The OPG is located in a separate room that is painted with a submarine theme. The result: kids love having their OPG taken! Each surgery also has nitrous oxide plumbed in for direct and easy access if treatment is to be performed under relative analgesia.

The practice also has a lab where mouthguards are made during the sports season and bleaching trays fabricated for teenagers. A consult room similar to a glass cube works very well and has become an integral part of the practice where most of the treatment plans are discussed. All the intraoral x-rays and OPGs are network accessed to visually build and present comprehensive treatment plans for parents.

The sterilisation area has all the latest equipment and features two Mocom autoclaves, a KaVo Quattro handpiece maintenance system and a Miele thermal disinfectant.



Summary

The Practice

Principal	Dr Mala Desai
Type of Practice	Specialist Paediatric
Location	Balwyn North, Melbourne, Victoria
Size	372 square metres
No of chairs	4

The Team

Design	Levitch Design Associates
Architects & Designers	Anne Levitch, Antony Poate and Thom Wright
Construction	Newvan Constructions
Project Manager	Liam O'Shea
IT Installation	Modern Clinic Technology/Abraham Jaber

Equipment

Dental Units	Sirona C4+ and C8+
Autoclaves	Mocom Millennium B+
X-Ray	Schick CDR digital intraoral system
OPG	Sirona Orthophos XG-5
Compressor	Dürr Trio
Suction	Dürr VS900
Software	Oasis

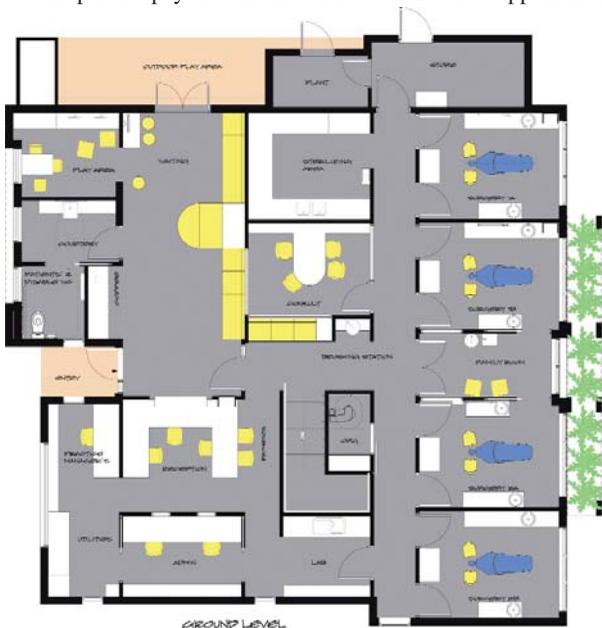
"In the treatment rooms, the kids only see the chair, their favourite movie on the ceiling and a beautiful garden outlook," Dr Desai said. "All the equipment is concealed."

"On the way out, we have a custom designed area full of treats. As the parents pay the bill and make further dental appointments,

the kids get to choose a treat for being cooperative patients. They really look forward to selecting a treat and it's a nice way to get them out of the chair. We also have a helium tank to give balloons to kids on their birthdays or those having more complex treatment."

The staff are very well catered for as well. The upstairs area has a private retreat with a fully furnished modern kitchen; laundry, bathroom and adjoining staff room and lounge area. This area is also equipped with internet, computers and a plasma for staff training/meetings and study group meetings and presentations to dental practitioners and students.

"Everyday we enjoy coming to our beautiful new work environment and our staff are happy too. We invested a lot of time and energy in ensuring the kids have a positive experience with every touch-point. The proof is now in the pudding given most of our young patients love coming to the dentist.



"The feedback from parents has been phenomenal. Most of them wished they had such a practice to visit when they were kids! We suppose this represents our vision coming to light.

"Thanks to the team at LDA for helping to make our dream a reality- They encapsulated our vision perfectly."