



Aesthetically pleasing...

Dr Harry Singh of aesthetics in Hatfield, Hertfordshire speaks to Versha Miyanger about how his vision and determination made his dream practice into a reality

Nestled in the corner of a business park in Hatfield, Hertfordshire, aesthetics is truly a centre of excellence in dentistry. This dental practice started as an empty shell on a building site and today it is an award-winning dental practice with a focus on facial aesthetics. The practice occupies one large retail floor area and had to be designed making use of the limited natural light available.

There is plenty of glass and soft lighting with a continuous flow of floor to ceiling curved glass partitions. There are two separate consultation rooms, away from the clinical treatment rooms, which allow the patient to feel at ease. Looks were essential and this is apparent in the spacious patient lounge and luxurious restrooms, but hygiene and functionality were also important design features.

Cross-infection control is essential and aes-

thetics boasts a centralised sterilisation area, operating to hospital standards. Efficient patient flow has been achieved by having two walkways, one for the patients and one for the team. The attention to detail and clever design succeeds in merging both the clinical and non-clinical environments seamlessly and to extraordinary effect.

Practice principal and founder of aesthetics, Harry Singh studied at Leeds University and graduated in 1996. 'My family wanted me to go into medicine but I decided to opt for dentistry. I was always a very artistic person and good with my hands. I had heard that they earned good money and I couldn't see myself sitting at a desk all day. We were a typical Asian family, encouraged to study hard and go to university. No one was a dentist in my family, so I decided to break the mould.' Harry was born in Hitchin in Hertfordshire.

'I decided to go to Leeds University, and not study in London. I wanted to live further away from the family home, to experience life a bit more and do things for myself. After my degree I returned to Hertfordshire and went straight into vocational training and then became an associate at a practice in Potters Bar.'

'In 2000, I bought into a practice in Watford, which was mixed. I was always very eager to learn. In the same year I completed the Eastman course and stayed in Watford until February 2002. In February 2002 I opened a squat practice in Luton NHS with a colleague. I stayed there until June 2007. During my time at Luton I trained new dental school graduates for a period of three years. In terms of ambition I wanted to do more smile makeovers and facial aesthetics. The Luton practice did not have the right type of

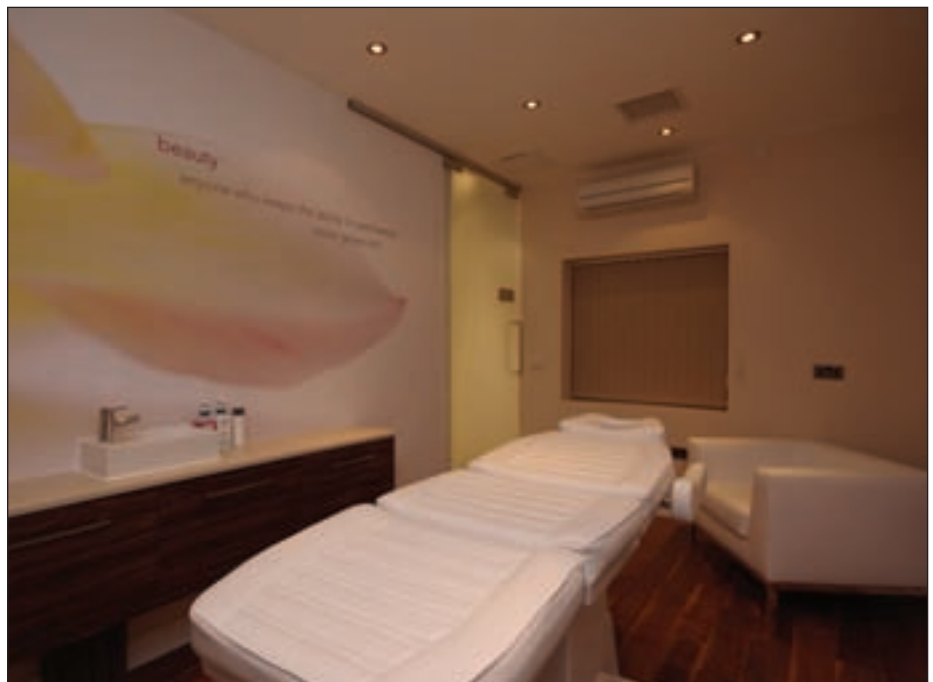


patient base for these treatments. I decided I wanted the freedom to choose which patients I worked with in a practice designed to complement the type of dentistry I wanted to deliver.'

Harry opened aesthetics in November 2007. But it was not all plain sailing. 'We were burgled twice before we even opened. The metal shutters were taken out from the back of the practice And various items including new plasma screens were taken. Also, another problem we encountered was our location was too new for satellite navigation systems to recognise our postcode. We had open days during the first week and not many could find us. The location was too new for satellite navigation systems to recognise our postcode. This was addressed by ensuring all literature, and the website, had clear, concise directions.'

'When we started there were only six patients on our books. However, I had done my research before I opened and wanted to cater to the corporate in the area. We signed up T-mobile who have 4000 staff and many of the employees get dental cover paid for.'

'I am lucky in that 60% of our business is facial aesthetics. This is slightly out of the norm. A lot of the dentists I speak to say that they have trouble getting patients for facial aesthetics. (I think here a lot of patients can't afford private dentistry in the current climate, but they are willing to spend money on Botox and such treatments). Our typical patients are women in their twenties and thirties. They are very aware of their appearance and many want to get rid of fine lines. We try to



Dental spas



administer very subtle doses. The treatments are so popular that we doubled our turnover over two years.

I knew that there was a big need for these sorts of treatments here. Not a lot of people in this area are carrying out these procedures. We also do orthodontics and veneers. I like going for the natural look and patient satisfaction is paramount. A lot of my female patients don't tell their husbands and partners about their treatment so we keep it as subtle as possible. Ninety percent of patients keep coming back. We now provide staff schemes for T-Mobile, Eisai, Veolia Water, Tesco, Computacenter, Asda and John Lewis, with a total potential market of in excess of 15,000 employees. We





try and think up new and creative campaigns which are now converting into new patient registrations. The aesthetics 'summer smile' campaign delivered nearly 50 new patient registrations in the first two weeks alone. We were fortunate enough to also sponsor Miss Herts and Miss England – the latter resulting in many people contacting me to see if I had any spare tickets!

Our interactive website is a key part of our business, and the signage creates a strong first impression of the practice. The whole team has been involved in marketing, with regular meetings and communications, as well as reviewing activity to look for improvements.

Professionally I am most proud of my achievements and the recognition I receive from my peers. We won the Best Team for the South East in The Dentistry Awards 2008.

I definitely couldn't do this without my excellent staff. We hold team meetings once a week and have an in-depth practice manual. I tell the team about the offers we have and they can actually help to sell them for you. My advice to anyone would be plan ahead, have regular team meetings and make sure you have brilliant staff working with you. My wife is very supportive – she is a part-time pharmacist and we have two young children aged two and four. If you have a stressful day at the practice and you come home to your family, it always cheers you up. It's all about creating the right balance. A

FACT FILE

Name of practice:
aesthetics

Practice principal:
Dr Harry Singh

Location:
Hatfield, Hertfordshire

Patient mix:
100% Private

Brief description of the practice:

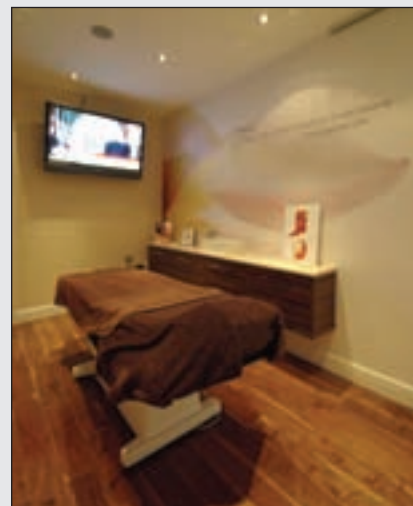
Purpose built cold squat, ground floor premises, 2000 square feet, two consultation rooms, four treatment rooms. The lounge area is spacious and relaxing with leather sofas, beautiful fresh flower arrangements, gentle music and soft lighting. Complimentary drinks are served in Royal Doulton tea sets and crystal glasses. The reception desk is deliberately small so it doesn't dominate. This theme of space and relaxation has been incorporated throughout, with curving walkways and spacious restrooms where Molton Brown toiletries and complimentary oral hygiene aids can be found.

The beautiful curving lines of the reception desk and continuous flow of floor to ceiling curved glass partitions behind, all immediately catch the eye and add to the experience of being surrounded by beauty.

Staff:
Front Desk Co-ordinator - Pub Sarai
Hygienist - Smita Mistry
Care Co-ordinator - Jenna Green

Days a week in the practice:
Five

Treatments offered:
General Dentistry, Cosmetic Dentistry, Implants, Invisalign, Inman, Facial Aesthetics



Big capital equipment/technology:

Castellini Dental Chairs
Air Conditioning
Digital Radiography
Projector
Glass walls and doors

Postgraduate education:

MFGDP(UK)- Royal College of Surgeons
Certificate in Restorative Dentistry - Eastman
Bob Khanna - Botox and Dermal Fillers
Chris Barrow - The Dental Business School
Perfect Smile Academy - Hands on Smile Design

Practice ethos:

At aesthetics we don't simply want to be the best, we also want to look the best. We know our patients are receiving the best treatment and care and we have designed our purpose-built premises so that they receive that care in the most attractive surroundings. Our maxim is 'your dreams, our vision'. The minute patients walk through the door we aim to deliver their dream of top-class dental care in a beautiful, luxurious dental spa. Our vision is to practice high quality dentistry in a pleasingly aesthetic environment which both inspires our patients and enthuses our team. Our focus from day one was the patient and what would be most appealing to them. We did not, as is so often the case, start with the surgery and incorporate patient elements as we went along. Everything was designed with the patient in mind.