

PROFESSIONS | THE DENTIST

Keep Smiling

—Dr. Wilson Kwong's
Practice Makes Perfect

WILSON KWONG ARRIVED in Canada from his native Philippines at the age of 16. He had never, up to that point in his life, visited a dentist. Safe to say it was not a lot of fun, those first few visits, but it made an impression on him, not only in terms of dental health: "I used to tell all my friends in high school I wanted to be a dentist, with an office in Oakridge Centre," he says. And that is precisely what happened.

In the course of things, though, Dr. Kwong saw ways to evolve his practice beyond dental hygiene and maintenance, and into cosmetic dentistry. "The reward of seeing someone smile, without any concern for their appearance—I find it really makes my day." It has been only in the last decade or so that the term "cosmetic dentistry" has gained any traction, and Dr. Kwong clarifies what it means, at least to him: "It is a way to restore things to their original form and ideal function. We provide the right team, and over many years we have studied all kinds of clinical methods. And I can say without hesitation that the specialists in Vancouver are the best in the world. So we can accomplish some amazing results."

The number one cause for concern is simply "bad bite", in which a person's teeth and jaw are not properly aligned, a problem that tends to intensify over time. "We see patients who have been in a pain management regimen for many years, and that just isn't good enough. We use sonography, electromyography, and a kind of neuromuscular philosophy to address the issues." Dr. Kwong is interested in the science of dentistry, the materials used, new technologies, and new kinds of anaesthetics. He organizes a study club, in which ten dentists meet to discuss issues, and learn from each other.

In a way, what Dr. Kwong does is simplicity itself. "It all starts with the bite. If that doesn't work, it causes the basis of most problems. All the new knowledge out there makes a lot of sense, and it gets patients healthy. I believe in educating the patient as well, to the high-



Dr. Wilson Kwong and technician Seiji Ato analyse a ceramic dental mould.

est degree possible. So we spend a lot of time with each patient, even before any diagnostic work is formally done. We are not trying to achieve a 'false' bright smile, but rather to help people be, and look, as healthy as possible."

Dr. Kwong's laboratory, where moulds are made, and various ceramics are used to create solutions to a wide variety of dental problems, is located near his office. Seiji Ato is the fully dedicated technician who runs the lab, and helps Dr. Kwong find the right solutions for each unique problem. "We are looking for overall health, harmony, actually, based on nature. There is something called 'the Golden Proportions', a kind of ideal look to a human face. We take that into

account, but always the most important thing is what each individual patient requires. We take a mould of their teeth, and work backwards, to what the ideal setting would be for their jaw and teeth. It is a bit like jewellery-making, in some ways. We actually use ceramics to create the right look for the patient, but more importantly, the right function for their teeth, their bite."

In a separate room in the laboratory space is a small photo studio, where each patient is photographed at the end of their process. "That is a very happy room," muses Dr. Kwong, as he heads back to his office to see the next patient of the day.

—Kit Porpentine