



The practice:
Smile Creations
Dental Innovations

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photography: Lloyd Goodall

How I did it

Rita Darbar of Smile Creations Dental Innovations explains why she is in the pink with a refurbished surgery and new chair that is a personal statement and celebration

When I qualified as a dentist in 1976, the profession was very male-dominated. Over the years the balance has tipped, and with more women now in dentistry I felt it appropriate to bring a feminine touch to the environment in which I spend most of my time.

The dream was to completely refurbish the practice and keep up with modern times.

We are a laser/aesthetic dentistry and specialist orthodontic practice and have been in Leighton Buzzard for over 25 years, so we thought:

‘What better way to celebrate this milestone than to finally have the dream practice we have always wanted?’ So we did!

Ugly duckling

Before we started work on the refurbishment, it was important first of all to inform our patients and keep them in the loop of what was happening.

We then had to prepare for all the stages of the refurbishment, as we knew at points we would be down to



Left: the newly refurbished reception area and below, the Smile Creations team



a single surgery between my husband, Arun, and myself. We dubbed this the 'ugly duckling' stage and it was perhaps the most difficult and stressful part of the complete re-gutting of the original set-up.

This one room became the heart and soul of the practice with the two of us sharing the week, the work and the team.

It was a three-in-one room, almost like the changing of the guards twice a week, from general to specific practice use and vice versa. It was a difficult and messy time, and we have to thank our great staff and patients for their understanding through this stage.

Colour matching

To combine the feminine touch with one of our corporate colours, I decided to go with a pink surgery with a matching bright pink chair for my patients.

However, we soon encountered a problem, as we couldn't locate the correct colour of chair that I had in mind.

It took about four months to find the match for what I wanted, combining aesthetic looks and a high quality dental chair that was also comfortable for our patients. It was Arun who finally located the ideal chair, all the way from the USA.

We decided to use Clark Dental for its expertise and the company was very helpful in locating the chair upholstery as a special order, and in letting us have samples of the worktops etc. This let us utilise the colour match with the décor and get a feel of the material for the purpose of cleaning.

We visited the company showroom and this helped a lot with decision-making; it seemed that nothing was too much trouble for Clark Dental throughout the whole process.



The user-friendly, central sterilisation room at Smile Creations

The surgery has a contemporary designer look, as well as being clinically clean

An oasis of calm

The main difficulty we experienced was that the building work took a lot longer than anticipated, increasing the length of time the two of us had to share one surgery.

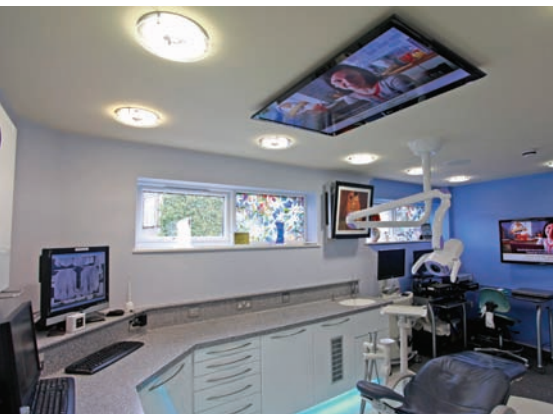
This surgery became an all-in-one room with all the equipment and materials needed for both specialities of dentistry. However, it was cosy and became a little oasis of calm in the middle of a construction site.

Once again, though, we managed to get through it and I have to say that if our patients hadn't been so understanding of the project, this might not have been the case.

Final result

The final result is just how we wanted it, so we are very pleased. The surgery now has a contemporary look, is clinically clean and has a designer style, which is a great combination.

The feature wall has turned out especially well, housing all our awards and gifts from around the world where we have lectured. These were previously littered along windowsills, the reception desk and computer stations. We have Aspects, the building company, to thank for this.



The surgeries have been designed in line with the practice's corporate colours; customised door signs direct patients to the right surgery





'The pink haven' brings a feminine touch to the practice

The central sterilisation room is user-friendly and of a high standard, considering the sheer number of gadgets that we had to fit in to it. We are confident that this was more than needed to comply with the regulations and to future-proof against the eventual digital logging of all instruments.

We have everything in the practice that we ever hoped to but, who knows, sometime in the future that may change and there will be something else we would like to add. However, for now we are very happy with the way the practice has turned out. Most importantly, our patients seem very happy with the new look and environment.

Trust your gut

My advice to anyone planning to undertake a similar project is to go with what you want based on your gut feeling, as this will give you something unique. What's more is that if you like your environment, this will reflect in your attitude towards your patients and they will like it too.

The best way I can relate this, is that if you believe in the treatment you have suggested to your patient you have a better

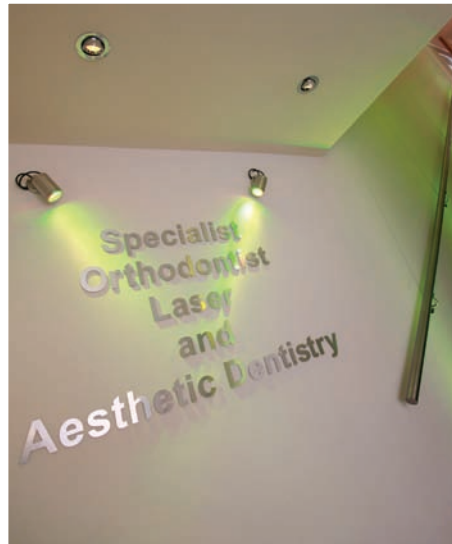
The pink chair is the talk of the town and matches the surgery's design



The entrance to Smile Creations, where the specialities of the practice are made clear



All awards and gifts can be found on the feature wall



chance of good cooperation. It is also important to choose companies that are willing to work with you, rather than asking you to pick from a catalogue.

As orthodontists, we are independent individuals and since this is our investment we are in a position to do this – within the limits of regulations that govern professional obligations to our patients.

Greatest achievements

Personally, this project has been an achievement in orchestrating the refurbishment and keeping calm. It is great to work in this environment and a pleasure to be at work.

Professionally, I think the biggest achievement is that my patients now not only come to a specialist orthodontist but are also made to feel special, as

they feel that the refurbishment was for their comfort as well, which it was!

Visitors to the practice always comment on how fabulous the place looks and how comfortable the pink chair is.

The icing on the cake is that many of the teenage boys come in wearing bright pink T-shirts just to show their approval. Many of the siblings ask their parents if they can come to this dentist too. These are potential patients for the future so it's good if it raises awareness.

I love the new pink chair and I know from the many positive comments and feedback we've had from patients that they do, too. We are known around town as the practice with the pink chair and pink uniforms.

I think we have achieved the 'wow' factor beyond our expectations. **PD**

COMPANIES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

Aspects

(building contractors)

T: 01438 316044

W: www.aspectsbuild.co.uk

Clark Dental

(equipment suppliers)

T: 01268 733 146

W: www.clarkdental.co.uk

Future Signs

(signage)

T: 01525 373733

W: www.fs-signs.co.uk