

## Live patient programs: a stepping stone for Westlund Dental Studio

In 1996, Dr. William Dickerson made David and Robert Hancock an offer that forever changed their careers. He invited the brothers, co-owners of Westlund Dental Studio, Eden Prairie, Minnesota, to fabricate the cases for one of the first live-patient, hands-on programs at Baylor Dental School in Dallas, Texas. "We were in the right place at the right time and it was the most monumental change for us. Here we were—wanting to take our skills to the highest level but not sure how. After building a new, state-of-the-art facility in 1991, this was the opportunity we had been waiting for," says David.

Although the Hancocks had been taking Dr. Peter Dawson's courses for several years, it was the exposure to the Baylor program's live patient seminars conducted by well-known clinicians

such as Dickerson and Dr. David Hornbrook, that was a key turning point for their business. At the Baylor program, the dentist-attendees brought their own patients with the goal of completing anywhere from eight to 16 anterior porcelain restorations over the course of two weekends. After the first weekend, during which attendees planned and prepped the case, the cases were handed over to Westlund Dental Studio for fabrication. Three weeks later, attendees seated, bonded and adjusted the cases in the patients' mouths. "Imagine the education we received in esthetics as we watched hundreds of patients' smiles being transformed from acceptable to outstanding, as each of the instructors put their signature touches on each case," says David.

Their participation also led to invita-

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—David Hancock,  
co-owner

David and Robert Hancock work with Dr. David Hornbrook and Dr. Michael Koczarski at a hands-on course.



Westlund Dental fabricated a veneer case for a model, Shayla, that was featured on the cover of the AACD journal.

tions to be a fabricating laboratory for other prestigious programs including PAC-live, Las Vegas Institute and the Hornbook Group, all of which have been invaluable educational experiences for the laboratory. “We learned from the best and a huge part of our training was seeing our work in the mouth, which is the missing link in dentistry. When something about a case doesn’t look good, individually the labs and dentists may not know how to fix it, but if they can look at it collectively and *in the mouth*, they do. That’s the beauty of these courses,” says David.

Through the dentists they met, the Hancocks also got the rare opportunity to work on some high-profile cases. For instance, in 2002, Chicago-based dentist Dr. Jennifer Moran was asked to do a smile makeover for a patient who would be featured on the *Oprah* show entitled, *If you could change one thing in your life, what would it be?* Moran chose Westlund to fabricate 10 Empress veneers and asked them to be present in the office for the prepping. A few weeks later, David and his son, Lance, flew back for the seating as well as the live taping of the show; the laboratory wasn’t mentioned on *Oprah*, but it was listed as the fabricating laboratory in the credits. “It was a lot of fun and very beneficial for the public to see what’s possible when it comes to cosmetic dentistry and specifically porcelain veneers,” says David.

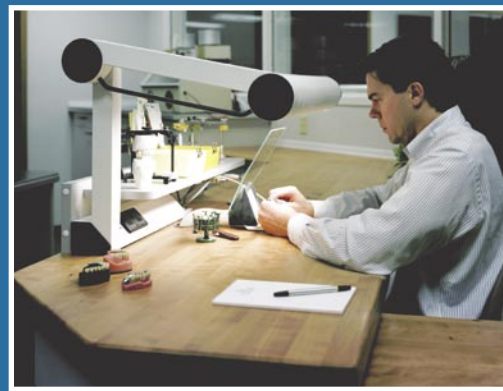
Westlund had another brush with Hollywood last year, thanks to Dr. Sheldon Seid-

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man who asked the Hancocks to work with him on a special case: a complete smile makeover for Bill Rancic—the 2004 winner of NBC’s *The Apprentice*. They fabricated eight Empress veneers to replace five-year-old bulky, opaque veneers.

Their involvement in educational programs has helped Westlund gain the respect—and business—of some of the biggest names in dentistry. “I know of very few laboratories in the country that have made the commitment to quality and building relationships that Westlund has,” says Dr. Frank Spear, DDS, MSD, in an endorsement on the laboratory’s website.

It’s also been a boom to business: the laboratory has gained several of the dentist-attendees as regular clients, including Moran and Seidman. David says, “It’s never just one thing that helps us gain new clients—it’s a conglomerate of the different opportunities we’ve capitalized on. These programs force us to be good, but we’re always trying to make ourselves better.”



Co-owner David Hancock hard at work at his bench.

The contour and finishing department was designed for technician comfort and allows an efficient workflow.



The state-of-the-art ceramics department was fully completed in 1993, two years after the lab was built.



**WESTLUND**  
DENTAL STUDIO

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