

LAB SHOWCASE

Many laboratories create esthetic restorations, but some owners and their teams are lucky enough to work in facilities that are as beautiful as the work they create.

NEW PLAYERS ON THE BLOCK:

European Vision Shapes Lab Design

MARIBETH MARSICO / SENIOR EDITOR

After studying in Europe and earning a Master's degree in dental ceramics from the UCLA Center for Esthetic Dentistry, Joshua Polansky knew exactly what kind of laboratory he wanted to open. "In Europe, technicians have more contact with patients and working directly with patients is also the core of UCLA's program," says Polansky. "So I wanted to set up a lab that was an extension of how I was trained to work."

The perfect location, then, was some extra space in his dentist-father's Cherry Hill, New Jersey dental clinic. There, Polansky would have ample opportunities for patient contact and consultation. So in 275 square feet of space, Niche Dental Studio was opened in 2009, with Joshua and two other technicians working on homemade benches without suction, ventilation or good lighting sources. "It was all very makeshift and uncomfortable," he says. "After only a month or two we knew we had to invest in a renovation."

Since patients were coming into

the lab for shade selection—and a few of his clients outside of the clinic liked bringing patients in for cementation of large cases—Polansky wanted to create a space that was a testament to his passion for the profession. "I wanted to show the beauty of dental technology and step away from the stereotype that labs are just dirty work spaces," he says.

The small space presented a challenge, but Polansky worked with Massimo Sasso at Dental Arte, who created a few different sketches that incorporated Polansky's vision while best utilizing the available space. Once the designs were approved, the laboratory was outfitted with Dental Arte's benches equipped with granite and wood tops, bagless suction, optimum bench lighting and a comprehensive ventilation system.

"When you're renovating such a small space, it's important to have a very clear vision of the final outcome before you even get started," says Polansky. "We're thrilled with the results; it's a huge improvement in overall comfort and quality of work life." **LMT**



The entrance to the 275-sq-ft lab: the porcelain area is to the left and the metal/waxing area is to the right.



A shot from above the metal/waxing area shows how space is maximized to allow waxing, metal finishing, casting, burnout, pressing, manual milling and even a work area and computer all in this small space. Note that the burnout oven and vacuum casting machines are enclosed in cabinets to eliminate fumes.



The ceramic area makes use of the space's available natural light. Since Polansky wants to eventually accommodate four technicians, it's designed with as much counter space as possible and storage in overhead cabinets for a cleaner, more modern look. The corner piece shown here is a separate unit so that the benches can easily be accommodated in another space if the lab ever expands or moves.

Niche Dental Studio is a joint venture between Joshua Polansky (left) and his father, Dr. Barry Polansky, who is available to consult with the laboratory's dentist-clients. Two other technicians are also on staff: Joshua's wife, Emma Bjuhr, and Sooji Lee, one of Joshua's UCLA classmates. Visit the lab's website at www.nichedentalstudio.com.

