



New location proves third time lucky

Choosing the right location for your practice is increasingly important in dentistry and savvy practitioners often relocate a number of times before finding the key ingredients for success. For Dr Duc Pham, his third move after leaving dental school proved to be the right one.

“I graduated from Melbourne Dental School in 2004 and worked for two years in Tasmania before my wife, Christie, and I decided to open our first practice. ‘DC Smile’ was located adjacent to my father’s Medical Clinic in Footscray, Melbourne,” he said.

“Whilst operating in Footscray, we recognised that there was limited upside in the area. The issues included a saturated dental market and a lower socio economic demographic that was limiting the type of dentistry I could practice.

“Being ambitious and wishing to grow DC Smile, we commenced investigating opportunities around Australia where there was a shortage of practitioners. Fortunately we found a place in Gungahlin, ACT, a rapidly growing town reasonably close to Melbourne and only 45 minutes north by Virgin Blue. The premises we found were conveniently located in a healthcare precinct which acts as a feeder into our new practice.”

The next step in Dr Pham’s journey involved sourcing a design and construction company who understood dentistry and had the ability to build anywhere in Australia.

“Medifit’s name came up a few times with high levels of recommendation for their knowledge and ‘can do’ attitude which was a similar ethos to my own,” he said. “I rang Medifit and spoke to Sam Koranis, the Managing Director. Instanta-

ntly I felt a connection and that Sam cared about my business as much as I did. He proved to be a great mentor, especially in the area of business development. Christie and I had a meeting with both Mark Evangelisti, their National Projects Director and Sam in Melbourne and we were impressed with their knowledge and the great designs in their extensive portfolio.”

Dr Pham’s new practice is located on Hinder Street in the new Gunghalin Square development in Canberra. The street frontage of the tenancy was an ideal location for the new practice in the up-and-coming development.

After initial consultations with Medifit, the next stage was to discuss their exact design requirements with their appointed Medifit designer to create a tailored design brief.



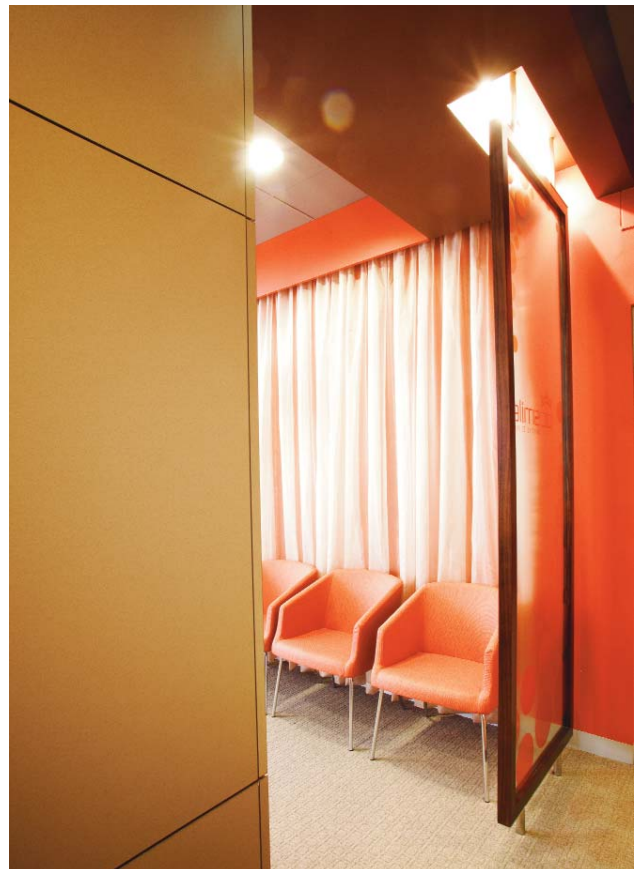
The general design philosophy was to create an understated opulent hotel lobby-style interior that would give patients a feeling of comfort and specialised service.

Dr Pham specified two treatment rooms with space for a third in the future; a sterilisation room; consult room; practice manager's office; reception and waiting areas; disabled toilet; staff kitchen; and an OPG room.

Upon entry, clients are greeted by a friendly staff member at the specially designed timber veneer Corian reception desk. The reception/waiting area plays on a combination of soft finishes and rich earthy colours to create a feeling of opulence. A sheer, shimmering fabric extends along the length of one wall which draws attention to a glass and timber-framed screen displaying the DC Smile logo.

Feature panelling in a gold lustre behind the reception counter contrasts with the lightly coloured and textured wallpaper and the darkly painted ceiling. Together, these elements work well to absorb the abundance of natural light and provide a point of visual interest to passers by.

Ceiling detail is provided with an illuminated bulkhead that floods a gentle wash of light onto the gold lustre panelling and glass framed screen. This bulkhead continues into the corridor to create a warm lighting effect.





Beyond reception is the central corridor with the gold panneling from the reception area continuing to wrap around, terminating at the refresh area. Here, a deep brown painted wall and gold framed mirror sits above a floating bench top and white minimalistic basin.

Staff amenities include a functional kitchen. The staff area is located at the rear of the practice to allow staff to feel as though they are away from work and it can be closed off for privacy. The disabled and staff toilet already existed in the tenancy and while

not ideally positioned, Dr Pham decided to retain them rather than go to the expense of relocation.

The treatment rooms are a comfortable size, with a neutral coloured palette, accentuated with timber-look cabinets which in turn helps to create a classic and comfortable feel for both the patients and staff.

“As part of our design brief, we requested a hotel lobby feel to be created and this was achieved,” Dr Pham said. “The 3D images Medifit initially produced allowed us to make quick decisions



Summary

The Practice

Principal	Dr Duc Pham
Type of Practice	General
Location	Gungahlin, Canberra, ACT
Size	105 square metres
No of chairs	2 + 1

The Team

Design	Medifit
Construction & Joinery	Medifit

Equipment

Dental Units	Anthos A5 Continental
X-Ray	Anthos Rx DC x-rays with Anthos WDS BlueTooth Digital Sensors
Compressor	Cattani K200
Suction	Cattani TurboSmart A

and move forward into documentation. During the whole process it was evident that Medifit clearly understood the business of dentistry and the compliances in each state and territory.

“It was important to me that they looked after the construction process as I was practising both in Melbourne and Launceston and was not available to attend the site. Medifit, through their NSW project management team, controlled the whole construction process and it was a pleasure to attend the handover to see the project was completed to a high quality, on time and on budget. Their efficiency and professionalism was second to none. Medifit did not abuse the total trust I put in them which is a big thing in today’s business environment.

“We have now commenced trading and the response we have had to date has been great. The staff, patients and fellow healthcare professionals love what we have achieved and we look forward to adding our services to dental health in the ACT.

“Australia is highly ranked among OECD countries and enjoys an enviable dental health system. However our position is under threat from under funding and under servicing. As dentistry begins consolidation, both government tiers are under increased public pressure. This provides a rare opportunity for the Private Sector to step in and really lead the

way. At DC Smile, we hope to contribute towards leading the pack in the private sector.

“We wish to thank the whole Medifit team on both sides of the continent in helping us realise our dreams. They truly proved they are the ‘one stop shop’ and I would highly recommend them to anyone anywhere in Australia. We will certainly be using their services again in the not too distant future.”

