

Family Business Thrives in Our Community

Family business is alive and well in our industry. It's not uncommon to talk to second-, third- or even fourth-generation technicians or father-and-son, brother-and-sister or husband-and-wife teams. In fact, almost half of dental laboratory owners work with members of their families and agree that, despite the various challenges, there are advantages they just wouldn't trade—like working with someone they know and trust, who is also personally committed to the success of the business.

One example is BonaDent Dental Laboratories, based in Seneca Falls, New York, a third-generation operation currently run by President Bruce Bonafiglia. Bruce's grandfather Henry Bonafiglia introduced his son, Angelo, to dental lab work at a young age and Angelo founded BonaDent 60 years ago. Angelo's son Bruce—involved in the lab since age five—bought the business from his father in 1986. Today, Bruce's daughters Daniele Bonafiglia-Wirth and Erin Bonafiglia are also part of the operation.



Three generations of the Bonafiglia family are currently part of BonaDent Dental Laboratories (back row, from l. to r.): President Bruce Bonafiglia; his father and Laboratory Founder, Angelo Bonafiglia; and Bruce's daughters (front row, l. to r.): Daniele Bonafiglia, Vice President of BonaDent, and Erin Bonafiglia, Vice President of Danaren, its

sister lab. Also pictured: Daniele's daughter, Ella, sure to be part of the fourth generation.

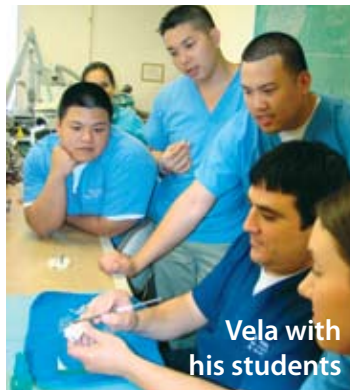
CL-G 97 Combilabor Casting Machine

"My favorite piece of machinery that I use daily in my laboratory is my CL-G 97 Combilabor casting machine made by Heraeus Kulzer," says Flemming Behrend, CDT, Owner, Flemming's Dental, Olympia, Washington. "It's an electromelt/vacuum pressure system that's ideal for casting all precious metals. I stopped using torch casting 14 years ago and it's the best move I've ever made. Since I started with this method, my mis-castings can be counted on one hand—the method is fail safe and has saved me hours of remake time."



Not sold in the U.S. since 2003, the CL-G 97 is a resistance-heated casting unit for precious alloys up to 1,450°C. Today, Heraeus offers a successor unit, the Heracast RC-S (small), that offers a similar method of operation, casting and application.

David Vela, BS, CDT



Vela with his students

When David Vela, BS, CDT, graduated from Louisiana State University's Dental Laboratory Technology program, he returned right away—this time as an Associate Professor in the program's Prosthodontics department. During his 21-year career, Vela has won the program's Teacher of the Year Award eight times.

Vela was one of Tim Lynde's favorite instructors when he attended the LSU laboratory program from 2005 to 2008. "David always took the time to explain things in detail, answered my questions thoroughly and went the extra mile to make sure his students understood the concept and techniques he was covering," says Lynde, CEO, Prestige Dental Prosthetics, Bismarck, North Dakota. "After I graduated, we kept in touch and when I opened my own laboratory he helped me tremendously. I often call him for guidance and advice when it comes to certain materials or processes and he's even helped with pricing my restorations."

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Providing an alternative to metal clasps, Myerson/CDM's Hotshot Elite allows you to add clear tooth- or tissue-colored clasps to removable appliances quickly and easily. Rich Edgehille, CDT, Owner, Norfolk Dental Lab, Hanson, Massachusetts, says it's helping him meet patients' growing cosmetic demands. "The response I'm getting from my clients is that patients just love the esthetic results," says Edgehille. "It's a good product and worth the investment. It's not the kind of thing that will be stuck in the corner of your lab—you'll use it and profit from it."