



PRACTICE PROFILE

DENTAL PRACTICE

Irwin Dental Center
Port Angeles, Wash.

Todd Irwin, DMD
B. Travis Johnson, DDS
Lon Riggs, DDS
Larry Temres, DMD

OFFICE

Square feet: 8,200

OPERATORY EQUIPMENT

- PLANMECA Intra Intraoral X-ray
- EagleSoft Practice Management Software
- CEREC® 3D Acquisition Unit
- CEREC® 3D Milling Unit
- Midmark M11 Sterilizer
- A-dec 511 chairs, stools, trackmount lights, rear delivery units and treatment consoles
- Schick iPan for Soredex Cranex
- Schick Intraoral Camera
- Porter MXR-1 Flushmount Flowmeter
- Air Techniques Air Star 50 compressors and STS-10 dry vacuum

*This practice is a Patterson Advantage™
Diamond member*



Trusting the Experts

Dr. Todd Irwin's goal always has been to practice great dentistry. His patients and the community of Port Angeles, Wash., where his 8,200-square-foot practice is located, will be the first to tell you how much they appreciate his skills. But he knows his limitations, which is why, when Dr. Irwin decided to build a brand-new practice, he turned to the experts at Patterson Dental to help bring it to life.

The result – Irwin Dental Center, which opened in November 2007 – is more than just a new practice; it's the realization of the efforts of an entire team of Dr. Irwin's colleagues, friends and family.



A People Philosophy

When Dr. Irwin was a sophomore in dental school at University of Louisville, Ky., his parents retired to Sequim, 10 minutes outside of Port Angeles. On his first visit to their new home, the Seattle native fell in love with the ocean-side community nearby and decided to practice dentistry there. He returned to Port Angeles when he was a junior, looked up Patterson Dental and was connected with Sales Representative Pat Bottiger. The two went out to lunch and immediately hit it off. "Pat's always been a friend. He hasn't just been someone selling me dental products," Dr. Irwin said. "He's been an advisor, and that's been a very powerful relationship for me."

Dr. Irwin mentioned that he wanted to join an established dental practice in the area, so Bottiger suggested that he look up Dr. Lon Riggs, a customer of his who was well known in Port Angeles. When he met with Dr. Riggs, Dr. Irwin felt like he'd met another of the "right" people in his life. On a handshake, they agreed that Dr. Irwin would join Dr. Riggs when he finished dental school in 1997 and perhaps purchase part or all of the practice from the doctor when he wanted to retire.

Settling In

Dr. Riggs' practice had four well-equipped operatories set up for

right-hand delivery, so Dr. Irwin, who is left handed and prefers the Continental® style delivery system, had to refit several of the operatories. The doctors settled into a comfortable routine and Dr. Irwin's business grew enough so that in 2002 he was able to buy the practice from Dr. Riggs, who continued working there. But even with the refitted operatories, the 2,400-square-foot space was a major operational challenge. "We were running into each other all the time. It was amazing that our production out of there was so great. But we needed more space and elbow room," he said.

They continued working at capacity, adding an operatory every few years until they had seven, but it wasn't until sometime in 2004 that Dr. Irwin even contemplated building a new practice. "I met with another mentor, an area orthodontist whom I admire, and he said, 'There's going to come a point in your practice where you're going to need to expand.' I didn't really know what was possible until someone suggested it. And then when he said that, I thought, 'Why not?'"

Dr. Irwin began looking for property and decided on a location just a few blocks away from his practice. It also was directly across the street from the orthodontist. "I knew [the site] was an investment for the future, maybe five or seven years down the road," he said. "Instead, it turned out to be about two years."



On the Right Track

With the addition in 2006 of Dr. Travis Johnson, a 2001 graduate of the University of California – San Francisco Dental School, as well as the space constraints and a schedule booked months in advance, Dr. Irwin decided to go for the new build and he contacted Bottiger to begin. “I would never assume that I’m going to be able to design an office space for myself the first time,” he said. “One of the best investments I made was to get Patterson involved.”

A good friend of Dr. Irwin’s, James Shouten, owner of Mill Creek Construction, a residential construction company, was eager to get his feet wet with contract building projects. He and the doctor met frequently after playing basketball to brainstorm about the practice and sketch Dr. Irwin’s dream design. He envisioned a two-story practice with 12 operatories, private offices for five doctors and a staff meeting space on the second floor. “I want to relax sometimes after work, and want a place for my team to feel like they can as well,” he said.

To complete the design, Patterson Equipment Specialist Charlie Newman helped Dr. Irwin contract with S. J. Barrett & Associates, a Seattle-based firm with whom he’d worked for more than 20 years. S. J. Barrett was responsible for the building design, and Newman and Bottiger helped with the dental design.

Dr. Irwin was eager to work with the firm after he saw some of their work, including the design for Dr. Frank Spears, a Seattle dentist and educator whom he admires. “One of the group’s associates, Bobbie Chapman, lives in Port Angeles and we worked closely

with her to get her the information she needed to know to successfully set up the design,” Newman said.

Equipment selection for operatories was the first step, so Bottiger and Newman took Dr. Irwin to the A-dec facility in Newburg, Ore. He and Dr. Riggs brought along their staff so they could test out a variety of equipment and come to a group consensus about the best selection. “Dr. Riggs and Dr. Irwin already had A-dec – it’s highly recommended by our service technicians. The doctors didn’t even look at anything else,” Bottiger said.

For all 12 operatories, the team chose A-dec rear delivery systems, which easily switch from right-handed to left-handed delivery; several of the operatories are set up with Dr. Irwin’s preferred delivery system. He selected the latest in digital technologies for the operatories, including Schick intraoral cameras and PLANMECA Intra intraoral X-ray. “Anybody who’s considering going digital, don’t hesitate. Patterson will help you through it and patients love it,” Dr. Irwin said. “I love it too, especially the time savings of digital radiography.”



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– Dr. Todd Irwin





The Look and Feel

From the outset, Dr. Irwin knew he wanted a practice that captured the look and feel of the Northwest. "I fell in love with the community and wanted to give everyone who lives here, patients of mine or not, something to be proud of," he said. Exposed timbers and layered rock on the exterior of the building are echoed throughout the interior as well. The building features tall, peaked ceilings with recessed lighting and natural light flows throughout the practice. The eye is drawn toward the building's highlights, like the stone fireplace in the reception area and custom flooring in the foyer.

Dr. Irwin's interior design preferences were

slightly more difficult for him to articulate. "I like an Asian-Zen feel mixed with a Northwoods flair. But I don't know what that looks like!" Dr. Irwin's wife, Mary Irwin, and Chapman were able to bring to life a design that met his approval, however. Vivid artwork, jewel-tone highlights on the walls and artistic lighting and bath fixtures are just some of the many touches they incorporated throughout the practice.

"It is a beautiful building," Bottiger said. "It's probably the most spectacular building in Port Angeles."

The New Stuff

Dr. Irwin had specific ideas for upgraded equipment and technology because of the

challenges associated with the growth of his practice. Before the new facility was to open, he brought on Dr. Temres, a friend of Dr. Riggs, and his patient load. (Dr. Irwin thought it would be great for Dr. Riggs and Dr. Temres to work together before they retire.) Dr. Temres brought his associate, Dr. Paul Mowery, with him as well. "We built 12 operatories thinking that we would grow into them over time. Instead, we opened the doors of our new building at near full capacity," Dr. Irwin said.

Eric Meldrum, a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer, and a lifelong friend of Dr. Irwin's, was hired in 2004 to run the day-to-day operations of the practice. Meldrum handled most of the technology challenges related to the new building, one of which was combining software databases from the merging practices. Fortunately, Dr. Temres and Dr. Mowery also were using EagleSoft Practice Management Software. "We provided

Patterson with back-up copies from two separate EagleSoft databases, and the Patterson technology team merged it all successfully into one database,” Meldrum said. “One of my greatest fears in this transition process was the merging of the software. Thanks to Patterson, it all went more smoothly than I could have hoped.”

This also was a perfect time for Irwin Dental Center to finally go completely paperless. All of their patient records are now stored digitally in EagleSoft, with no need for paper charts. “I’m dedicated to technology and being on the forefront with technology in the practice,” Dr. Irwin said.



From left to right:
Charlie Newman, Bill Neal, Jessie Petty, Dr. Todd Irwin, Pat Bottiger
Not Shown: Alex Burlachenko

Lessons Learned

While Dr. Mowery has retired since the opening of the new practice, the practice still has four dentists, which Dr. Johnson feels is a real asset. “Everyone has their strengths. Having a group practice is nice because we all have a different skill set that we bring to the table,” he said.

For the patients, the state-of-the-art facility is a beautiful new space where they receive the expert dental care that they’ve come to expect from their preferred dentist. “They say, ‘It’s so nice and relaxing. It feels like I’m at a spa,’” Dr. Irwin said.

While patient kudos and increased business are compelling reasons to build new, Dr. Irwin also wanted to design his own space because, he said, in dentistry, “You get to do things the way they work best for you and your personality.” For him, that meant a brand-new facility with multiple doctors and a large staff. “I’m a ‘more the merrier’ kind of guy. To me, having four doctors here is a party waiting to happen. For some people, that seems like chaos and they wouldn’t want that – I can respect that. Dentistry offers us all a great opportunity to set things up the way they work best for us.”

The key to success for this project was Dr. Irwin’s vision for what he wanted and his belief in others’ expertise and knowledge to build that dream. “Trust the experts,” he said. “Spend the money. It’s going to cost you a bit up front to have people who really know what they’re doing. But you cannot achieve anything great by accident.” **PT**

PATTERSON TEAM

- Bill Neal, *Branch Manager*
- Charlie Newman, *Equipment Specialist*
- Pat Bottiger, *Sales Representative*
- Jessy Petty, *Service Technician*
- Alex Burlachenko, *Service Technician*

