



Practice Profile

DENTAL PRACTICE
Silver Lake Dental
Wilmington, Mass.

Greg Andre, DDS

OFFICE
Square feet: 3,700
Six operatories

EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

- A-dec Preference ICC Sterilization Center
- A-dec Accessory and Treatment Consoles
- A-dec 12 O'Clock Assistant's Instrumentation
- A-dec Doctor's Stools
- A-dec Assistant's Stools
- A-dec 511 Dental Chairs
- A-dec Assistina 301 Plus
- A-dec/W&H Handpieces
- Air Techniques Compressor AS50/STS6
- PLANMECA Pro Max Digital Pan
- Midmark M11 Autoclave
- Digital Doc IRIS Intraoral Camera
- CEREC AC & MC XL

This practice is a Patterson Advantage® Gold member.



Growth, on Location

Anchored at the last stoplight on a busy Wilmington, Mass., road, peering at Silver Lake, is Greg Andre's dental practice. Andre, DDS, loves the location of his practice, Silver Lake Dental. He loved it when he purchased it from a retiring dentist in January 2002, and he loved it through the years that his practice slowly outgrew the space.

Six years after buying the practice, Andre could no longer ignore the fact that the 1,200-square-foot, three-operatory practice was too small. "We had grown the practice to almost three times the size it was when I bought it, as far as patient flow and activity," he said. "We started to have to add hygiene to the point where I had to give up one of the rooms that I worked out of to the hygienist three days a week. I started to realize I was going to have to do something to expand."

Located on a pie-shaped plot – carved by the bustling Main Street and surrounding creeks and wetlands – his practice had a unique footprint with unique requirements. In

addition to the wetlands, he knew there would be challenges to expanding in his current location – first and foremost, keeping the practice open. "I wanted to be able to continue to work in my present location without ever having to shut my doors," he said. "A shutdown in dentistry can be very expensive. You can lose patients, you can lose income; what do you do with your staff? These are all major concerns and considerations for most dentists who go through this situation. The most important thing was that I limited my shutdown of my existing office. That was tantamount."

Andre's desires to stay in the same location and stay open weren't completely conflicting; nor were they working together. In order to do both, Andre said, it was determined that a phased construction would be necessary. Phasing the construction process raised new concerns: How would he move to the first half of the new building? Would he build operatories first? A waiting area? How would it affect his patients?

Ultimately, he worked with his Patterson Dental team to help him find answers to those questions and more. The team decided on a two-phase construction, in which the first phase would consist of Andre operating out of the current structure while it was expanded upon.

For the second phase, Andre's equipment would be transferred and set up in a separate consult room and business office in the newly completed space. There, the spaces would be outfitted as operatories and he would continue to operate normally, while the building's original structure was renovated and connected to the new structure. It wasn't a simple process, said Patterson Dental Equipment Specialist Blake Kelsey. But it was worthwhile.

"One of the key components we always focus on is 'What is the dentist's vision?'" Kelsey said. "With Silver Lake Dental, we took a look at the lay of the land and looked at how much room we had to create that vision. We looked at what those first few steps will be and it grew from there. We help create that vision, because we really want to show there's long-term loyalty working together. It's not just a job."

With the Patterson team backing the decision to build in Andre's current location, it was time to get to work. Susan Nagel, dental office space designer for Patterson, had her work cut out for her. Not only did she have to design a practice that fit the tightly restricted space, she also had to do it while factoring in temporary plumbing fixtures to accommodate the makeshift operatories in the new space.

By all accounts, Nagel's design was a success. The two phases went off without a hitch – thanks to a vigilant construction team that worked closely with Andre throughout the process. All >>





told, the practice was only shut down for about two weeks, between both the transitional move and the final move. “It took a lot of quarterbacking,” Andre said, “but it worked out amazingly.”

Phased construction aside, Andre had a great idea about how he wanted the exterior of his practice to look when it was finished. A general store just a few miles away, in Andre’s hometown of North Reading, Mass., provided the inspiration. “I wanted to keep with the New England feel,” he said. “When we built a new office, I have a place in my own hometown, where we have a really nicely done old country store. I wanted to keep that feeling reminiscent of the New England area – a front porch breezeway, traditional colors and a tall roof pitch.”

Andre took the vision he had in mind and put it on paper – in the form of a sketch that he said was “almost comical.” Yet, as the drawing turned into official blueprints and then was built, the resemblance to that original sketch was amazing. “It really was just a quick little hand sketch,” he said. “As far as the vision I had, the little country store was my inspiration, but when I drew up the building it really was what I wanted to see – and it turned out so much like that original drawing.”

Due to the space limitations and what Andre wanted out of his practice, he knew a non-clinical second level would be ideal. It fit in with the phased construction and it gave Silver Lake Dental additional square footage without increasing the size of the footprint.

The new practice included 2,400 square feet of space on the

main level – or double the total size of the old practice – while including an additional 1,300 square feet on the second, non-clinical level. That space includes a break room and a massive doctor’s office that Andre admits is oversized. Though, that’s only for the time being, as Andre intends to share it when he brings on an associate down the line – part of his plan in expanding.

Patient comfort has always been a focus for Andre, and that was no exception as he evaluated how he wanted the interior of his practice to turn out. He decided on warm, earth tone and rock walls, but made sure that he didn’t sacrifice the feel of a modern, cutting-edge office. “If you’re a patient, I really want to make sure when you come in, you’re not staring at bright lights, feeling like you’re in a clinic and you’re about to have some dentistry done,” he said. “I also want you to walk in and know that you’re in an up-to-date facility and that everything I do is state of the art.”

In determining how many operatories he’d like to have in the new practice, Andre had to rein in his initial thoughts. He had hoped for nine operatories in which he and his future associate would practice. After looking at the space and listening to his Patterson team, he decided on six. “Patterson came in very helpful on that,” he said. “They helped me understand the normal shape and size of operatories, the normal dimensions that an operator should be – the two modes of entry, for the dentist and the assistant to come in. In reality, the square footage of the building, the cost of the equipment and the cost of building out, I’m very glad I decided on six.” >>



The change was immediately noticed – not just by Andre’s satisfied patients, but also by those who had never previously visited his practice. On top of the practice’s normal new patient referral flow, Andre received 48 new patients from drive-by business in the two years before construction was completed. In the 18 months after construction was completed, that number jumped nearly 1,000 percent, as he gained 476 new patients from drive-by business alone. It justified to him all the additional work in staying in the same location. And it proved what he knew in his heart: it was the right decision.

“There’s a frustration factor with being confined and being squeezed by not enough room to do what you need to do. Feeling that your facility does not meet your quality of dentistry is a frustration shared by many dentists. It’s a big undertaking to take that plunge financially and planning-wise, but to get into the facility....” Andre tailed off, then restarted. “I love coming to work every day. I loved coming to work before I built my new building but I love it a lot more now. I have an almost seamless program in place. It has completely changed my excitement level about showing up for work and doing the dentistry. I loved turning the key in that brand new lock and I have loved opening that same door every day since.” **PT**

To learn more about
Greg Andre, DDS, visit
silverlakedentalpc.com.



From left to right:
Edward Ferrero, Blake Kelsey, Ralph Johnson, Dr. Andre, Rich Lemire and Michael Salerno



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Edward Ferrero, *Branch Manager*
Ralph Johnson, *Sales Representative*
Blake Kelsey, *Equipment Specialist*
Patrick Shea, *Service Technician*
Rich Lemire, *Service Technician*
Mike McPhee, *Service Technician*
Michael Salerno, *Service Technician*
Susan Nagel, *Office Designer*

