

## — OFFICE OF THE MONTH —

# Start spreading the news...

**One Manhattan dentist has transformed a famous building's empty space in the middle of the busiest city on Earth into a quiet retreat for his patients.**

**story by Kevin Henry  
photos by Brian Beard**

**D**r. Jan Linhart is a practicing dentist who enjoys playing competitive hockey. At first glance, that statement may seem to be an oxymoron. What is a man committed to the preservation of oral health doing on an ice rink playing a sport where lost teeth are as common as hard checks against the sideboards? But Linhart doesn't always take the typical path, and that's part of the reason why he and his practice are this issue's "Office of the Month."

Linhart practices dentistry in the Helmsley Building, positioned on Park Avenue at 46th Street in New York City. While other dentists in other parts of the country may dream of what they can do with wide pieces of property, Linhart and his staff have focused on what they could do with what was a desolate office space in the middle of the busiest city in the world.



"We had another office on a different floor of this building," Linhart said. "But we wanted more space. When we walked into this space, there were no doors, no walls, and no ceiling."

Now when most dentists dream of building a new office, they look to hire specialists in the dental construction industry. Linhart took a different approach.

"In New York, there are a lot of different layouts done by specialists. I wanted to go a different way," Linhart said. "I hired an architect who was a patient of mine. He had designed restaurants and boutiques, but never a dental office. I discussed with him what I wanted and we started working. In the treatment rooms, we worked along with a designer from a dental company. We hired a

general contractor, because we felt high-quality construction would be the same quality no matter what was being built. None of them had ever worked on a dental office before. I guess you could say that I violated all of the rules but, in eight weeks, my new office space was completed."

Of course, that's not to say that there were



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not roadblocks along the way.

"This is New York City, so everything will have a higher cost. When you pay rent by the foot, you have to make sure that everything is designed. That's just part of doing business in this city," Linhart sighed. "This is also a Union building which has been designated as a historic landmark, meaning that there were some things that just can't be touched."

But, at the end of the eight-week period, Linhart's 2,700-square-foot, nine-operatory office was completed. The office is a sharp contrast to the halls of the

Helmsley Building (which is undergoing a massive renovation in an effort to preserve and update the historic building). To get to Linhart's office, patients must navigate through somewhat dark, older-looking hallways. But, once they open the door to the 11th-floor office, parquet flooring, mahogany, and a glass-block reception area give the instant illusion of being transported to a ski lodge in Vermont (a place near and dear to Linhart, his wife Ellen, and their 15- and 14-year-old sons Alex and Zach). Soft music plays in the background, and a television shows patients before-and-after pictures promoting the benefits of cosmetic dentistry.

Much of the office interior reflects Linhart's heritage, a feature he is proud to explain.

"I was born in Prague. My father was a physician. We emigrated to this country when I was 13. I spoke no English," said Linhart, whose family hurriedly escaped the oppression of Communist-ruled Czechoslovakia and left everything behind. "I knew that I wanted to go into medicine, but I also knew that it would be a big struggle and that my parents could provide no backing for me. I guess you could say I was self-made. I have a picture of my dad in all of the operatories. That's one of the most important pictures in the world to me, and it's also the one that I get the most compliments on from my patients. Family heritage plays a very important role for me. I am a very traditional individual."

Linhart not only wants the photos of his father to reflect his feelings to his patients, he also hopes the entire set-up of his office and his procedures give an insight into his philosophy.

"I strongly feel the office should reflect the personality of the dentist," Linhart explained. "A lot of offices seem to have a 'dental' look to them. I want to have a friendly environment and a professional environment. Patients come to my office to get an esthetically pleasing smile and teeth. That kind of a



## Fast Facts

### Jan Linhart, D.D.S.

**Address:** 230 Park Avenue, Suite 1164, New York, NY 10169

**Phone:** (212) 682-5180

**Online:** [www.drlinhart.com](http://www.drlinhart.com)

**Staff:** 13 employees (one dentist, five assistants, one hygienist, two front-desk assistants, one business office manager, and three part-time associate dentists).

**Square footage of office:** 2,700

**Operatories:** Nine, all of which are in use

#### Equipment Checklist

Air Abrasion .....	MicroEtcher (Danville Engineering)
Anesthesia Equipment .....	The Wand (Milestone Science)
Autoclaves/Sterilizers .....	Pelton & Crane
Cabinets .....	Custom made
Cameras .....	Polaroid — Nikon 950 — Digital
Chairs .....	Pelton & Crane/A-dec
Cleaners, ultrasonic .....	Biosonic
Compressors, air .....	Air Techniques
Computer hardware .....	Compaq
Computer software .....	Dentrix
Delivery system .....	Pelton & Crane/A-dec
Digital X-ray .....	Dexis
Handpieces .....	Kavo/Pelton & Crane (electric)
In-office restorative system .....	Heraeus Kulzer/Herculite
Intercom system .....	Monday Industries
Intraoral camera .....	Digital Doc, Insight
Lasers .....	Premier/Excel
Lights, curing .....	Heraeus Kulzer — Optilux
Lights, operating .....	Pelton & Crane/A-dec
Nitrous oxygen units, accessories .....	Ohmeda — MDM
Patient education system .....	Dentrix Office (Before & After)
Polishers, air .....	Dentsply, Danville/Parkell
Scalers, ultrasonic .....	Dentsply
Sharpeners, instrument .....	Hu-Friedy
Stools .....	Pelton & Crane/A-dec
Syringes .....	Mirtex, Monoject
Vacuum units, accessories .....	Dentsply
X-ray processors .....	Air Techniques, Peri-Pro, Rinn
X-ray units .....	Siemens/Panorex

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philosophy has to be in line with esthetically beautiful office. If people can't relate to the environment that they're in, they won't be comfortable."

Part of the environment of Linhart's office includes angled walls ("They give the illusion of the hall being wider than it really is. The walls are also angled so that you can't see into the treatment rooms."), the use of hushed tones ("We play classical music, which is soothing to patient. We also have an internal intercom system which beeps me if something is needed. We do not shout and we do not talk loud in this office."), and an antique sign promoting a local dentist ("I bought it at an antique store in upstate New York and it just seemed to be the perfect fit for the hallway.").

It's all part of the doctor-patient relationship that Linhart tries to perfect with each visit.

"I like to meet every new patient in my office before I ever see them in the operatory. A patient meeting a doctor in the chair is horrible. It's like sitting at a new doctor's office in your robe. I like to see the patient as a person, and I want he or she to see me in the same way. I want to chat with them, get to know them, and



then we can talk about their dental concerns."

Many of the patients that come to see Linhart travel from far away for his services.

"I enjoy what New York City can bring to my practice. A lot of people feel this is the mecca for dentistry," Linhart said. "We truly live in a global society. I have patients that come in from London. We will get a call from overseas saying that someone is coming to New York for the weekend and they want to have some cosmetic work done. Great demands pose great challenges, and I enjoy that. We get calls on cosmetic reconstruction from people in Russia, Turkey, Greece, Saudi Arabia, and all over the United States. A lot of it is by word of mouth."

With such a varied clientele, Linhart knows the importance of keeping up with technology. That's why every operatory is staffed with computers and other technological necessities.

"We use Dentrux software, which allows us to see

what needs to be done while we are working on a patient. We use an intraoral camera, put the information in a computer, and the fee for the service comes up



*Dr. Linhart, on and off the ice.*

instantly. The patient knows then what he or she will be paying for a procedure. They are aware of the technology that is in our office, and they appreciate the fact that we're involved with high technology. That technology allows me to deliver better and faster service to them. Technology like the intraoral camera is an excellent communication tool."

Another bit of technology that Linhart and his patients enjoy is The Wand.

"With The Wand, I am able to tell patients that we have a way to administer local anesthetic that is more comfortable for them," Linhart said. "After the procedure, they generally agree that it was more comfortable. They appreciate that we are trying to make this a pleasant experience for them."

Linhart credits some of his practice's success to his staff. Included amongst his staff members are four assistants who could be classified as dentists in other countries.

"I have four foreign-trained assistants who are dentists, but they are not licensed to practice in the United States," Linhart said. "They make excellent assistants. They are highly skilled and very articulate. Those are the type of staff members I seek to work in this office. They are wonderful for the patients. Eventually they will go through programs to become a dentist in the United States."

New assistants are just one of the many changes that lie ahead for Linhart and his practice. He has looked at purchasing a hard-tissue laser and another upgrades in his technology in the near future.

"I want the laser to be ready for me as much as I am ready for it," Linhart said. "Until I feel comfortable, I just won't be convinced that it's the right thing for me or my patients."

And if it's not the right thing for his patients, it won't be in Linhart's office. It's just another component of Linhart's successful practice philosophy.





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Jan Linhart, D.D.S., P.C.



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