



# DENTAL HEAVEN

## A UNIQUE PATIENT EXPERIENCE

PAUL HIRSCH

When Drs. Roger Chang and Thomas Wong graduated from UCLA dental school in 1983 they had a dream. Both knew they wanted to liberate patients from the sterile drudgery of the typical dentist's office, but neither quite knew how to do it.

So for two years the two college roommates, now 51, worked in a variety of settings and practices so they could see for themselves what worked and what didn't. Part of their plan was to take ideas from each situation and apply them towards the development of a unique private practice that would be progressive, safe, emphasize patient care, go heavy on customer service, and make a memory for patients and guests.

Their first office in Fremont opened in 1985. That was followed by offices in Pleasanton and Dublin. At each stop they built on what they learned, maintained state-of-the-art standards, put the needs and safety of patients at the forefront, hired a customer focused office and professional staff, and built a practice and an environment for patients and staff that is memorable and fun.

The culmination of Dr. Chang's and Dr. Wong's vision came to life last year with a spectacular set of offices in San Ramon's Gale Ranch Shopping Center near the corner of Bollinger Canyon Road and Dougherty Valley Road adjacent to Windemere Ranch.

The 5,000 square feet of office space features an adult general dentistry practice that looks like a resort day spa with mood lighting, earth-tone wall treatments, flat screen televisions & the sounds of running water and serene music. Next door is a pediatric practice that looks like a Disney set where patients feel more like they're waiting to board a Lilo and Stitch attraction, including non-stop high-definition videos, than climb into the dentist's chair. The third leg is an orthodontic practice where Planet Hollywood meets ESPN Zone. Sports & music memorabilia is on the walls including guitars autographed by the Beatles & the Rolling Stones, Joe Montana's 49er jersey, & an eclectic collection of helmets, bats, & balls.

"Our concept is to offer full-service, one-stop shopping for all our patients' dental care from the time their baby teeth appear, through

orthodontia, gum care, cosmetic dentistry, implants, and anything else they may need," Dr. Chang said.

The founders' approach has been augmented by Dr. Chang's wife Lisa. Lisa Chang has a marketing background and has helped build the practice by thinking of the offices as "an experience rather than just a trip to the dentist." Mrs. Chang has also initiated a program where the practice donates \$500 to the school of each new orthodontic patient. They live in Danville with their three children, and Dr. Wong lives in Pleasanton with his wife, Nancy, & their two children.

A tour of the three office locations also reveals state-of-the-art equipment such as x-ray machines that Dr. Wong says produce "less radiation than you get from the sun," and oral cameras that allow the patient to see their teeth on a flat screen and gives staff the ability to digitally store those pictures in an electronic file. This leads to computerized patient education programs that allow the dentists to teach patients about their conditions and treatment options. "Patients think this is really cool," Dr. Wong said.

Times are rarely slow for the Chang-Wong team. Between their offices in Fremont, Dublin, and San Ramon (the Pleasanton office was sold last year) they see 30,000 patients. Those patients may feel like they're at a day spa or preparing to climb aboard a Disney ride, but behind all that is a serious commitment to their care and a full range of experts ready to tackle any situation. Even better, each office accepts all major dental insurance carriers.

"I never feel like we're done innovating or trying to improve our practice," Dr. Chang said. "Some of my people have been with me for 10 to 20 years or more, and to a large extent we've hit our stride. Nothing we have done would have happened without them. Still, I'm always on the lookout for a better way to serve our patients and provide them with a memorable, safe and healthful experience from the moment they walk through the door." *You can schedule an appointment, tour, or visit to any of the offices by calling: Gale Ranch Family Dental Practice in San Ramon: 925-648-8881. Waterford Dental Group in Dublin: 925-803-5888. Newpark Dental Group in Fremont: 510-796-8888*