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Summer 2005



The Smile Designer

true dentistry

An Interview with

Joseph G. Willardsen, DDS

The Smile Designer



Calm washes over me as I step out of the noisy buzz of Las Vegas and into the office of Dr. Joseph G. Willardsen. The light, earth-toned colors offer an immediate sense of relaxation making me forget that I just walked into a dental office. I wait comfortably on the clean lined furniture and take in the cool ambiance of the reception area, taking my first deep, relaxed breath in a week of stressful events. Dr. Willardsen enters, offering the warm, friendly smile that so many have come to know in Las Vegas through his regular appearance as the invited dentist on UPN Channel 14's, "The Wellness Hour." Dressed semi-casually in his stylishly loose fit blue jeans, dress shirt and blazer, I feel at ease as we discuss what drew him into dentistry, his philosophy of care, and the true art of smile design.

EM: I understand you come from a family of dentists. How have you seen the field of dentistry change over the years?

JW: I think that my brothers and I saw my father work very, very hard as a general dentist. He was forced to see many people each day, jumping from room to room to do single fillings and crowns. I focus on the realms of dentistry I enjoy most and it enables me to spend more time with my patients.

EM: Will you explain how you came up with the practice name, "True Dentistry"?

JW: When I first got out of dental school, I worked with my dad in Palm Springs as well as in an office in Las Vegas. The office here held a philosophy that differed from mine. So, in my own practice, I wanted to offer comprehensive, hard-core dentistry. It is true dentistry. It is something that people will find in about 1% of the offices in the country. It is something that people should expect, but they don't know that when they first come to me. That is what is so great about the advertising and television shows in which I have appeared. They help raise the bar in the industry. In the meantime, I work hard to exceed patient expectations and continue to offer true dentistry.

EM: It seems the phrase, "cosmetic dentist" is used incessantly these days. What separates a cosmetic dentist from a general dentist?

JW: The difference is that there are a lot of dentists who take a course or two at the Las Vegas Institute, (and other similar programs in the U.S.), and cite that as their credibility to be called a cosmetic dentist. In truth, less than 1% of dentists who attend LVI actually complete the program and then go on to purchase the equipment necessary to utilize the training they receive there.

Real Smiles. True Dentistry.

An Interview with **Joseph G. Willardsen, DDS**

by Kimberly E. Childs

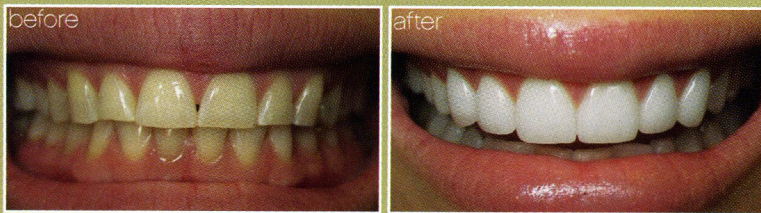
EM: What should people in search of a cosmetic dentist look for when selecting their doctor?

JW: They should do their homework and really study the before and after photos provided by the dentist. Also, make sure the pictures seen showing are really their own – not purchased to show, “what can be done.” Once the field is narrowed, then the next questions to ask are, “Who are you most comfortable with? Do you like the staff members? How will you be treated once payment is received and your treatment is complete?” If you find there is one dentist who most adequately answers all those questions, then you have probably found your doctor.

EM: You attended LVI. Are you among the small percentage that completed the program and purchased the equipment you spoke of before?

JW: Yes. In fact I spent an additional two years studying Neuromuscular Dentistry, which is a focal point in my practice. It is a small niche of dentistry, but is extremely important in smile restoration.

EM: What do you mean by Neuromuscular Dentistry?



JW: Neuromuscular Dentistry evaluates the relationship between teeth, temporomandibular joints, (the jaw) and the masticatory, (chewing) muscles. The goal is to achieve the optimal relationship between the jaw and the skull, giving patients the most favorable end result.

EM: Do all patients need a neuromuscular assessment?

JW: People experiencing pain in their head, jaws, neck and even their arms may have TMJ problems necessitating an evaluation. I use the advanced technology of K7 Myotronics Evaluation System, to pinpoint the location of where the bite and occlusion come together, disrupting the harmony of the jaw. Once found, I can diagnose treatment and provide orthodic devices which can put patients in their ideal occlusion and correct the condition.

Dr. Willardsen shared a video testimonial of a patient who spent over ten years in consistent pain. She experienced countless hours in the emergency room on morphine drips and many other pain prescriptions due to severe TMJ, causing massive pain in her head, jaw, neck and arms. After the K7 evaluation with Dr. Willardsen and a temporary orthodic device, she called two days later in tears – but this time not because she was hurting. For the first time in years, she was pain-free. “Proper training and equipment along with adequate time with the patient is the formula for diagnosing and treating this condition. The reward comes when the patient is out of pain,” Willardsen said.

Dr. Willardsen routinely uses the K-7 technology in the reconstructive process to ensure the bite is stable and optimal for the patient. “If a patient has an unstable bite and the jaw is not in harmony with the occlusion, new porcelain crowns or veneers will fail due to fracture,” Willardsen explained. Using his training and experience in Neuromuscular Dentistry gives patients a stable bite* and long-term, anticipated result.

EM: What is your practice philosophy?

JW: I take every aspect of the patient's experience into account from the moment they walk in the door and continue to do so throughout their treatment in my office. Everything from office décor, doctor and staff attitude, atmosphere, training, and scheduling is evaluated to ensure we exceed the expectations of every patient in our office.

EM: How is your work different from other cosmetic dentists?

JW: I take a very natural, clean and bright approach to my veneer process. The

smile should fit the patient's facial type. I do not want to be associated with big, square and bulky veneers that people commonly refer to as, "chicklets." I enjoy showing the before and after photos of the patients I have designed smiles for in the past. I am proud of the smiles people leave with from my office.

EM: Why not do cosmetic imaging on all patients?

JW: I believe that imaging can provide a false impression of the end result. These programs are used to give people, "an idea" of what an improvement can be – but it is by no means the exact blue print of the final outcome.

EM: So, how would patients know what to expect in terms of their final outcome?

JW: At the first visit, I prefer to show a before photo of a previous case that is similar in condition to the patient considering treatment. Then, I show the after photo. If the person in the chair is happy with that result, then we can proceed to the next step. If not, we look at other treatment options. I also use diagnostic waxups to show patients an actual model of what their final restorations will look like. Adjustments can always be made before the work begins.

EM: What happens if a patient is not satisfied with the final result?

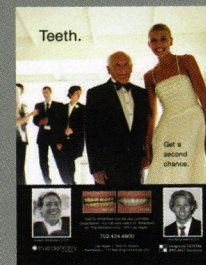
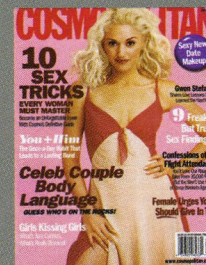
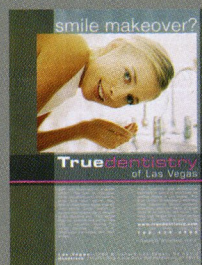
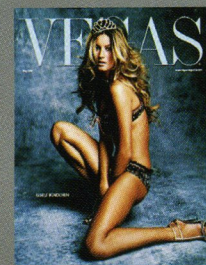
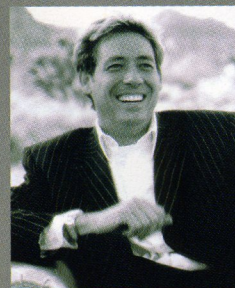
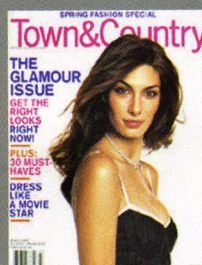
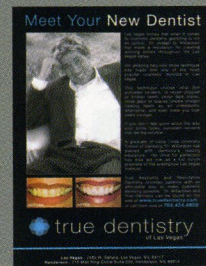
JW: Typically this can be avoided through the diagnostic waxup and temporization process because patients already know what they can expect. However, I recently had a patient who approved the waxup, loved his temporaries, but then really disliked his final work once it was placed. He wanted the veneers redone and I said, "okay". We redid it and he looks great. Most importantly, he is happy.

EM: Did you agree with him?

JW: I did. I could see where he was coming from. Regardless, I stand behind what I

Dr. Willardsen has been featured in television specials, magazines such as Cosmo and Marie Claire, and has performed dental work on everyone from locals to celebrities and extreme athletes, making him one of Las Vegas' most sought after dentists.

Dr. Willardsen can be seen on The Wellness Hour weekday mornings and Sundays at 10:30 pm.



do. Patient satisfaction is what is most important.

EM: Do you find your clients are anxious to begin their work in your office?

JW: (laughs)- Yes! Once they have made the commitment, they want it done yesterday.

EM: Is cosmetic dentistry affordable to everyone?

JW: There are several ways to make this work affordable. We work with financing companies for monthly payment options. If financing is not an option, I create a phased treatment plan. Even if it takes five years to complete, the function and aesthetic result is ultimately achieved.

EM: What services do you offer for patients with dental phobias?

JW: I have a general anesthesiologist for patients with severe anxiety. Otherwise, I use oral sedatives such as Halcion or Valium to relax the patient.

EM: Do you have patients requesting services you do not believe are ideal for them?

JW: Yes. A good example of that is a girl I saw who wanted veneers but really needed to be in Invisalign to correct her crooked teeth prior to veneer placement. She refused orthodontic treatment and insisted on the, "quick fix." We placed veneers and although her smile was remarkably improved, in my opinion, it was not ideal.

EM: **Did she like the result?**

JW: Yes. It was what she wanted and because she did not have the severely crooked teeth anymore, she was very happy.

EM: **Do you use that case as an example to others considering the "quick fix?"**

JW: Yes, all the time. I show people the before and after photos of an ideal candidate for veneers. Then, I show the photos of the case I just mentioned. They can see the difference between the outcomes and can make an informed decision of whether to move forward or go through Invisalign prior to veneer placement.

EM: **Is everyone with crooked teeth a candidate for Invisalign?**

JW: No. Some cases require traditional orthodontics. Teenagers and adults who had braces but stopped wearing their retainers are typically good candidates.

EM: **What are your favorite cases?**

JW: Veneer cases. Veneers change a person's life really fast. It is the number one request from people who come to our office. It is extremely rewarding to me and my staff and typically a very emotional experience for the patient.

As a result of Dr. Willardsen's training and outstanding results, he was asked to be the invited dentist on, "The Wellness Hour,"

a television show focusing on cosmetic surgery with the nation's top doctors. You can watch Dr. Willardsen on UPN Las Vegas, Channel 14 on Sunday evenings at 10:30 P.M.

His natural ability to create beautiful smiles in as little as two visits has made him very popular with professional athletes, television hosts, news casters and beauty pageant winners. His work has been seen and featured in magazines such as Cosmopolitan, Harpers Bazaar, Town & Country, Marie Claire, Redbook, Country Living and many others.



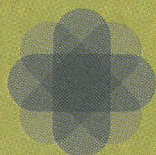
www.truedentistry.com

"I feel that your smile is your silent voice. It says a lot about you." – Joseph G. Willardsen, DDS

If Dr. Willardsen's down to earth style and warm personality are not enough to draw you to his door, then it is his genuine and kind office team that will. As he spoke of his staff, I could sense his true loyalty to them and the high regard in which he places each person with whom he works. "The staff is who the patient falls in love with. Patients can like me 'okay,' but my staff is really who keeps them coming in visit after visit." My observation was they return his sentiments. "The people here have been with me a long time. We not only genuinely like each other, but we count on each other as well. I think patients can sense that," Willardsen said.

Dr. Joseph G. Willardsen graduated from Loma Linda University School of Dentistry in Southern California. He

then continued his cosmetic dental training at the prestigious Las Vegas Institute. His comprehensive training in advanced neuromuscular dentistry makes him part of an elite group of dentists. Less than 1 percent of the total dentists in the United States have had this advanced training.



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