In an elegant building near Kew Green in London, Dr. Howard Stean boasts a state-of-the-art facility on-site – a high-class dental practice in welcoming and comfortable surroundings, and, to top it all, a large dental lecture theatre on the specially converted extra floor, where monthly seminars and practical teaching sessions in his special field of expertise of, aesthetic restoration, take place.

On meeting him, I was immediately struck by the level of genuine modesty exhibited by someone with his level of experience and expertise. Howard decided to set up a training school in his practice so he could teach both the theory and practice of dental aesthetics to qualified dental practitioners wishing to extend and update their skills in Aesthetic Restoration.

He has built a whole new floor for the large lecture theatre, which has room for up to 20 dentists, because he wants to give something back to dentistry, which he says has been very good to him.

Sharing his knowledge

He explains: ‘I really enjoy passing my knowledge onto other dentists, whom I see as myself in embryo. I had to find out the hard way. Training then was easier in some ways but harder in others. Things are much more complex nowadays.

However, teaching is the tip of the iceberg, one can only tell if something really works from one’s own experience. So it is vital to be a practising dentist to teach these kinds of courses.

Howard founded the ADAPT (Aesthetic Dentistry and Professional Training) society in 1993 for the study and promotion of excellence in this subject. He says: ‘ADAPT was the first UK society devoted to excellence in aesthetic dentistry. It is a forum for the study and promotion of the newest and best in aesthetic techniques.’

The dental evaluation team at ADAPT – which is available to join by invitation only – has the opportunity to regularly test the quality of dental products on behalf of manufacturers.

‘ADAPT members are in the forefront of using and reporting on new products and clinical techniques. We aim to offer our patients the finest and most modern dentistry in the UK.’

A range of services

Howard, who has practised dentistry for nearly 40 years, offers aesthetic veneers, crown treatment, dental implants, aesthetic restorations and laser dentistry in his practice. He always emphasises the importance of basic dental care, rather than just going for a quick fix.

He has also incorporated the range and methods of dental procedures available nowadays into a new system called Facial Dentistry, which is based on the solid principles of an understanding of Occlusion. This can make permanent improvements without the need for cosmetic surgery. This innovative technique realigns the jaw-line, offering permanent improvements to the teeth, gums, smile, and chin in a way which improves the form of the facial structures.

Howard, who uses four lasers in his dental practice, formalised his wealth of teaching experience through the formation of his company, Dental Education.
His popular Aesthetic Restoration courses run on Wednesdays for five months starting every September, using a step-by-step programme, with each session building on the previous one. The course caters for all dentists wishing to improve their skills in this area. The syllabus includes composites, veneers, crowns and bridges, occlusion, laser dentistry, implants and marketing.

In between, delegates apply what they have learned on the course, in their own practices. Howard says attendances have been increasing steadily. He keeps numbers down to 20 to be able to give individual attention and personal tuition. He makes it his business to be on top of new developments in the dental field, also offering advanced courses on occlusion as well as personal development courses, conducted one-to-one.

Attention to detail

Courses are conducted in a secluded, cozy and intimate setting, including excellent refreshments. Howard says: ‘I wanted to create something different which would be useful for a long time to come.

‘The whole subject of aesthetic dentistry is exploding and I am learning all the time. Mine is not just a one-subject practice, although each is a very big subject on its own. It is an ongoing task to be on top of them all, so one can treat the whole case. Nowadays there is a specialist for each field and a specialist register, but I am proud to be a generalist. It’s good to have specialities, but my concern is that patients need everything treated. There is still a place for a good generalist who can work out all the things that are wrong and be in charge of getting them solved. Many dentists are concentrating on a narrower range of treatments.

‘In the field of Aesthetic Dentistry one has to have a wide range of abilities. I am inspired by the enthusiasm of my students who come from all over the country. Everyone who has a registered qualification from the UK or Europe is welcome. They work very hard and I am there to help them and show them how to learn from mistakes along the way. They come specifically for my knowledge, skills and expertise.’

Howard teaches all the courses himself, aided by technicians who explain the complex technical processes. In his spare time he enjoys music and is a keen jazz pianist.

Author of a book on aesthetic dentistry, Howard is also the first UK visiting professor in restorative dentistry at the University of Havana, Cuba, an honour he takes very seriously.

He loves his work both as a dentist and a teacher. He says:

‘I get great personal satisfaction through helping dentists gain new skills and enabling patients to improve their teeth and therefore the quality of their life.’

Visit Howard Stean’s practice at 105 Mortlake Road, Kew, TW9 4AA; call 020 8876 4542 or email howardstean@ukteeth.com. For more information, log onto www.dentaleducation.org, www.ukteeth.com and www.adaptuk.org.