Meet my **Swiss friend**

By Danny Chan

Dr Robert Thong, on the far left is our Senior Nurse Kaylee Stanger and on the right our Associate Dentist Dr Laura Yang.

As a dentist, you devote significant amounts of time and energy towards developing a highly efficient and comfortable practice environment. To your patient, your dental chair is perhaps the most direct embodiment of such efficiency and comfort. Choosing the right dental chair, therefore, involves finding a delicate balance between design, comfort and technology. Not only must the chair complement the physical requirements of your patients, it must also meet the exacting clinical demands of your practice. Besides ticking all the regular boxes like cost-effectiveness and ergonomic features, the dental chair must also appeal at a visceral level, says Dr Robert Thong.

"The dental chair is to a dentist what a piano is to a pianist," he avers. "The choice is a very personal one."

For Dr Thong, the choice is the Swident Friend-Up, a European chair that caught his attention during the Australian Dental Association 2012 Exhibition held in Melbourne.

Dr Thong and wife Bernadene Carr are co-owners of Gentle Dental, a suburban clinic located in the City of Gold Coast. Just prior to setting up the clinic, they attended the Melbourne exhibition to scout for suitable equipment, and ended up at the Ampac Dental stand, the Australasian distributor of Swident dental units. The NSW-based company is an international distributor of large and small European dental supplies as well as equipment, including: dental chairs, dental units, digital x-rays, alginate mixers, ultrasonic cleaners, curing lights, suction motors, compressors, handpieces, surgical instruments and autoclaves.

Upon closer inspection, Robert and Bernadene, who is also the practice manager, found the Swident Friend-Up ideal for their soon-to-open surgery: clean lines, great features and favorable pricing. Their purpose built (by previous owner) 150-sqm clinic is housed within a 500-sqm residential block, with its own off-street parking lot for eight cars. The compact size and footprint of the Friend-Up unit provided a neat configuration that was big on features but small on space consumption, perfect for what Dr Thong and Bernadene had in mind for their two-chair practice – comprising two dentists, two nurses and a practice manager.

To Dr Thong, the intuitive design and functionality – the feel – of the control pedal – helped define the choice.

"It's not so much the individual parts but the sum of all the parts – including mechanical configuration, drill speed, torque controllability, start-stop response and even the leg and foot placement position – that together, make the control pedal such a winning feature for me."

"Choosing the right control pedal alone can impact on the quality of work that I do," Robert continues, "It also has long-term benefits such as promoting joint health and RSI (repetitive strain injury) prevention."

Boasting Swiss precision with an Italian flair, the Swident Friend Up is designed with an emphasis on ergonomics, aesthetics and simplicity to provide a comfortable and pleasant operating experience for the entire dental team. The patient chair features a double articulated headrest as well as soft seamless ergonomic upholstery available in 23 contemporary colours. For the doctor, the instrument table – available in either swing arm or hanging tubes comes equipped with: Luzzani triplex syringe; fibre optic high speed line; low speed line (including one Bien Air micromotor fibre optic MC3LK); as well as a touch panel for the operation of cup fill, bowl flush, patient chair, instrument functions and 4 separate chair positions. An ergonomically designed doctor stool, the Syncro T5 allows effortless seat height and backrest adjustments for optimum comfort and support. Among other unique features, the unit also includes a 180-degree rotatable ceramic spittoon that is easy removable and autoclavable for easy cleaning.

The choice is clear.

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Asked for his feedback after using the Swident Friend-Up unit for more than two years, the dentist's response suggests he couldn't have made a more judicious purchase. Using words like "reliable", "modern" and "great", Dr Thong says that even patients are commenting on the comfort factor.

Meanwhile, the chair ergonomics continue to make an impression: "The size of the chair's shoulder is just the right size – so as not to get in the way for operability access but yet supports patients adequately; the (double articulated) headrest is fully adjustable; the chair's seamless upholstery allows for effective and regular cleaning; the suction arm is well positioned; and the filters are readily accessible."

In addition, Dr Thong says the light and balanced delivery unit not only allows for quick and easy positioning – with instrument delivery chords of ample length – it also enables him and his assistant to achieve a good working position.

So pleased was the Gold Coast dentist with his European make, that a year later, when he was ready to set up his second surgery, he went back to the same supplier and ordered the exact same chair. If indeed a happy customer is the best advertisement, then a returning customer must surely be a reliable testimony of the quality of either the product or the service.

In the case of Gentle Dental's repeat purchase of the Swident Friend-Up chair, it was both.

"The units performed reliably and flawlessly, enabling me, in turn, to consistently deliver quality treatments to my patients," Dr Thong enthused.

To make it an even sweeter deal, Dr Thong says the installation team and after-sales support he received gave "great peace of mind."

"They were very accommodating, punctual, efficient, competent and knowledgeable. Basically, the team at Ampac Dental perfectly complemented the Swident chairs in that they all contributed to an overall great equipment purchase for us." ◆

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