natural selection

By devising individualized approaches to treatment, Dr. Lindsey Marshall strives to provide all of her patients with winning, natural-looking smiles

By Jenny Graham

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a beautiful smile in that picture is worth even more. Just ask Lindsey Marshall, D.M.D. By uniting her two loves of art and science, Dr. Marshall helps patients turn their smiles from blank canvases into masterpieces.

Dr. Marshall, who holds an undergraduate degree in biology with a minor in studio arts from Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., and a doctorate and residency from the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, evaluates factors such as the ideal geometric shape and height-to-width ratio for each tooth. She also considers the host of subtly different shades of white and selects the one that will look brightest and most eye-catching, while still appearing natural, for each patient’s smile.

Her practice’s tag lines—“If your smile isn’t becoming to you, you should be coming to me”—speaks volumes about her mission, which is to ensure each patient has not just a gorgeous smile but the most fitting smile for them, as individuals.

It is interesting to think about just how much effort goes into designing a flawlessly natural-looking smile. Taking into account factors such as age, alignment and shape of teeth, Dr. Marshall and her team have refined their ability to craft stunning smiles that appear natural. Also, even though she has years of training, education and experience behind her, she is committed to continually learning and enhancing her skills.

In fact, Dr. Marshall recently became a fellow at the internationally renowned Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies (LVIA). Just this past November, Dr. Marshall earned the fellowship after passing a rigorous course examination on topics ranging from cosmetic to neuromuscular to reconstructive dentistry. Already an advanced practitioner of treatments for various disorders of the temporomandibular joint (TMJ), Dr. Marshall expanded her skill set even further with studies of TMJ disorders.
As a lifelong learner, Dr. Marshall has made technology a vital component of patients’ treatment and diagnoses. One piece of equipment that has helped Dr. Marshall accurately determine the severity of conditions such as TMD (temporomandibular disorders) is the K-7 Evaluation System.

Dr. Marshall learned the ins and outs of the K-7 system at LVL. Using the K-7 to obtain electromyography (EMG) readings, Dr. Marshall can determine important factors such as the position in which the muscles of the face are the most relaxed and where a person’s jaw rests most comfortably. With this information, Dr. Marshall can work to align the patient’s teeth and jaw in such a way that they will have a properly functioning and relaxed bite, as well as an aesthetically pleasing smile.

“Things like airway obstruction and sleep apnea.” Such issues are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the connection between the health of the mouth and the health of the whole body. The body of information on this oral-systemic connection, Dr. Marshall notes, is growing every day. Such issues speak to the fact that healthy smiles are not just desirable for aesthetic reasons but also for reasons relating to overall wellness.

“It has been proven time and time again, from heart disease to diabetes, oral health impacts the health of the whole body,” she says. “The mouth is the window to the body. Bacteria builds up and a patient will [develop] a higher risk of heart disease and heart attacks.”

For this reason, Dr. Marshall emphasizes the preventative technologies available to Dr. Marshall’s patients is Vizilite. This technology allows Dr. Marshall a state-of-the-art means for screening patients for oral cancer.

Dr. Marshall, of course, still utilizes the host of technologies that have been at her disposal in the office for quite some time. One such device is the iTero, a machine that creates digital impressions of the patients’ teeth, thereby allowing for the best possible accuracy in creation of items for repair such as onlays, veneers or crowns (the whole-tooth capping fixture formerly referred to as a “cap”). The iTero’s ultra-precise digital scans also enable Dr. Marshall optimum success with utilizing Invisalign, the highly popular weeks-long system of shifting teeth with translucent, bracket-free aligners in place of traditional metal braces. Perhaps most exciting of all is the fact that iTero impressions allow patients to avoid the olden-days method of sitting with trays overflowing with gloppy, gag-inducing filler material.

Another useful tool used by Dr. Marshall is the LightWalker laser, which takes the place of unpleasant, or downright frightening, old style drills. This hard- and soft-tissue laser, as it does not generate heat, can be used to remove cavities while minimizing discomfort and preserving as much of the tooth as is possible. The laser can even be used to re-contour gums to better suit the natural shape of one’s teeth.

“We can re-contour gums or treat abscess ulcers, lengthen teeth, take away some bone or gum, and we can also treat small cavities with no anesthesia,” she says. “This gives us even more treatments we can do chairside.”

For treatments with the LightWalker, no anesthesia is used. For other procedures, however, Dr. Marshall has a variety of sedation options. For fearful, phobic or particularly sensitive patients, Dr. Marshall’s office offers a number of advanced sedation services, ranging from the relaxing, hypnosis-like state created via the non-narcotic NuCalm system, to full sedation services.

The combination of extensive training, cutting-edge diagnostic and treatment equipment—not to mention the airy and stylishly designed treatment suites and, most importantly, an artist’s eye—has enabled Dr. Marshall to create an ideal environment for patients to obtain the smiles of their dreams.