

Choosing a reliable dental chair a must in a solo dental practice

By Sharon Harrison



focus, and limited space in the third-floor unit meant that dividing it into two surgeries would be too restrictive.

“The surgery room is big, with large glass windows and an outlook to the mountains, giving it a relaxed feel. The practice has a fairly high family-orientation so if, say, mum and the kids come together, there’s enough room for them all in the room.”

Over its 10-year life, Dr Renton says the Fimet chair has required minimal repairs. Being ‘reasonably handy’ means he can fix minor problems himself but he has the technical back-up of a ‘really good local maintenance fellow’. Overnight delivery of spare parts from Fimet Australia’s Perth office also ensures little time is lost.

Using one chair does not hinder the flow of patients either, he says, with downtime from patient change-overs rare.

“One reason for buying the Fimet chair was that the instrument arm can swing across to the dental assistant’s side. I can still talk to the patient about their treatment while the assistant cleans up and the patient is oblivious to it.”

At the time, he says Fimet was the only chair manufacturer to offer this feature. With other units, the assistant must come to the dentist’s side to begin cleaning and would have to wait until the patient leaves. The swing-away arm also allows for easy access in and out of the chair.

The unit also features a continental-style delivery system and Dr Renton discounts a common criticism that the spring-loaded hand pieces will pull back against the dentist’s grip, causing discomfort.

“There’s no drag at all with the Fimet hand pieces. They’re almost weightless and they allow movement backwards and forwards and a little sideways, so it’s very functional. I really like it.”

It also allows for easy cleaning because the hand pieces rest in shallow, easily-wiped depressions on a tray, rather than hanging in bracket-type holders. The chair’s smooth lines, he says, also make equipment hygiene simple to maintain and the upholstery’s lack of grooves or multiple stitch-lines reduce contamination risks.

The Fimet chair still retains a modern look, despite its age, and Dr Renton expects to keep it for at least another two years. At least his decision-making process should be easier next time.

“I’m very happy with this one,” he says. “Before I bought it, I spent lots of time looking at every unit at a dental exhibition – three days sitting in each of them, driving people nuts. Afterwards, I made a spreadsheet with the pros and cons of each and that’s how I came to the conclusion about Fimet. It had more pluses than the others.”

TWO YEARS ago Dr Ian Renton’s dental practice closed for 10 weeks when a fire damaged much of the three-storey building he shares. At the time, if all he had needed to continue practising was his 10-year old Fimet F1 Air dental chair, he would have been open for business that day.

“The only piece of electronic equipment that wasn’t damaged was the dental chair,” he explains. “The x-ray machine, steriliser, air conditioning, computer electronics – they were all affected by the fire, but the Fimet chair wasn’t. It was quite amazing.”

Fimet has always boasted about the reliability of its dental chair units and it is of paramount importance to Dr Renton, who operates a one-chair practice in Brisbane’s city fringe. The dental chair unit is the critical centrepiece of any surgery and when only one is available and patients are seen every day, having complete confidence in its reliability is vital.

Dr Renton has been the sole dentist at his Paddington practice for the last 27 years (24 of those in its current location). He has a strong focus on preventative and aesthetic dentistry, seeing 50 to 65 patients a week. He particularly enjoys doing fixed prosthetic work and endodontics. His wife, Janet is his practice manager and part-time dental assistant, and a receptionist and two dental assistants are also on staff.

His decision to employ only one chair has been part choice and part necessity. It suits his treatment approach, where his patients are the absolute