

Smiles all round with Edelweiss prefabricated veneers

By Peter Watt



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A new type of preformed veneer with high aesthetic qualities, which is easy to use and affordable, offers dentists a fresh and potentially lucrative service for patients.

The Ultradent Edelweiss Composite Veneer System was presented at hands-on lectures recently in Australia and New Zealand, heralding a new option for cosmetic dentistry here. The system comprises laser-sintered and vitrified, pressure- and heat-formed composite veneers made at the Edelweiss factory in Austria, as well as etching, bonding and cementing products made by Ultradent Inc. in the United States.

The Edelweiss veneer concept was developed by Dr Stephan Lampl – a clinician and technician – and his major collaborator and mentor, Dr Didier Dietschi, a leading dental practitioner, university lecturer and researcher in Geneva, Switzerland.

The pair were well aware of the artistic and technical challenges of free-hand layering to create high-quality direct composite veneers. They wanted to simplify the procedure and produce a precise result without compromising on the materials used, and just as importantly provide a quality treatment option for patients on a tight budget. They believed prefabricated composite veneers were the solution thanks to their biomechanical similarity to enamel compared with ceramics, but first they had to overcome key weaknesses found in other composite veneers: inferior finish and low strength.

Edelweiss developed a manufacturing process that involved moulding super-thin composite shells before heating them and then finishing with a two-stage sintering process to create flexible, translucent and highly polished veneers. The process produces two parts – an inorganic ceramic outer layer and a composite inner layer. Edelweiss now also produces posterior occlusions. These act as the anatomical foundation for single or complete reconstructions, and for increasing the vertical dimension in the posterior region.

The concept bypasses the laboratory and minimises the equipment cost associated with fabricating veneers in the practice, plus it uses minimally invasive techniques in what is usually a quick, one-visit procedure. The veneer shells are very hard but adjustable using a bur and, because they are made from composite, they are repairable, although fractures are extremely rare. Ideal shade matching is achieved mostly thanks to the highly filled composite used to customise the veneer to the preparation.



Dr Stephan Lampl demonstrates the Edelweiss technique.

Dr Lampl says Edelweiss veneers stand up to the toughest scrutiny, showing no signs of wear years after being placed. The benefit to the dentist is obvious, he says: a quicker, predictable, more cost-effective veneer system without compromising on quality, and a system where you don't need to be an artist to produce highly aesthetic results. At the same time it is significantly less expensive for the patient than traditional ceramic alternatives.

Easily within the scope of the general dentist, Edelweiss unlocks the opportunity for a long-lasting functional and aesthetic smile in just one appointment and, as Dr Lampl says, a happy smile is the biggest compliment you can get in the profession.

Edelweiss's partner, Ultradent, led by charismatic innovator Dr Dan Fischer, has grown from a one-man family business in Utah to be a major global player. The company built its name pioneering tissue management products but is now synonymous with quality across the board, from tips to bonding systems, endo to etching. Its tooth-whitening product, Opalescence, is also the leader in the highly competitive US market.

Ultradent is well established in Australasia but a distribution agreement forged with Henry Schein in late 2012 signalled a desire to make the company's products more readily available, increase product knowledge and exposure in the field, and enhance customer care. The recent Edelweiss roadshow, which visited five cities in six days, was undertaken in association with Henry Schein. Ultradent also continues to sell here through its long-term dealer, Gunz. Charged with managing this increased focus is new Ultradent Country Manager Ashleigh Speer.

In 2014 Ultradent and its distributors will start a quarterly programme designed to help the sales professionals feel confident with each of the products. From a marketing and education standpoint, there will be a strong focus on Edelweiss and prevention. Ms Speer says the 2014 update to the Child Dental Benefits schedule will create an opportunity for Ultradent to educate consumers directly. "If we can get people talking about dental and visiting the dentist, it's a win-win situation." ♦



Edelweiss veneer ready for placement.

Before and after.

