

office visit // feature

A Leader Inside and Outside the Practice

by Kyle Patton, Associate Editor, *Orthotown Magazine*



As an orthodontist, you spend most of your time at your practice. It's understandable that you might not get many opportunities to see what it's like in another doctor's office. That's why we bring you an "office visit." It's a chance for you to meet your peers, see their practices and hear their stories. This month we met Dr. Massimo Verduci, a well-established

and much-loved New Jersey doctor who continues his career with unyielding effort and a passion for helping his community. Verduci practices orthodontics in his cozy office, a practice that's been established in the same area in which he grew up. Verduci has won multiple awards and continues to give back to the profession and to patients through teaching, mentoring and lobbying.

OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS

Name: Massimo V. Verduci, DMD, MS

Practice Name: Massimo V. Verduci, DMD, MS, LLC

Graduate From: University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey: New Jersey Dental School (Now the Rutgers School of Dental Medicine)

Practice Location: Hamilton Square, New Jersey

Practice Size: Small to Medium

Staff: 7

Website: Verduciortho.com





What was the path you took to becoming an orthodontist?

Dr. Verduci: My path to becoming an orthodontist was very interesting. I can thank my thumb-sucking habit and its effects on my dentition as being a catalyst that led me to a career in orthodontics. While in seventh grade, I noticed all of my friends getting their braces.

I wondered how these metal pieces were going to straighten their teeth. As a result of my curiosity, I would place a foil gum wrapper along my teeth to mimic braces, then walk up to my parents and ask if I could please undergo orthodontic treatment to correct the alignment of my teeth.

I was fortunate and my parents allowed me to get braces. Children getting

braces was not as ubiquitous then as it is now. I can remember going to my orthodontist's office and, while in the chair, picking up and looking at the pliers wondering how metal wires and small elastic bands could ever give people a wonderful smile. This experience was my true motivation.

At age 13, I decided that I would become an orthodontist. While a junior and senior in high school, I would spend time in dental offices, observing. I wanted to see if I could envision myself as a dentist. These experiences confirmed for me that a career in orthodontics was my calling in life.

I went on to Rider College, in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, and while in college I continued to spend time in dental offices. This further motivated me to pursue a career in dentistry. I applied to dental school and was accepted, and the rest was history.

Walking the halls at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, I remember feeling the excitement of being surrounded by my classmates and dental instructors. I felt like a college quarterback trying to make it to the NFL to play for the Dallas Cowboys. This excitement led me to graduate [at the] top of my class and pursue a career in orthodontics.



**Regarding your practice, how is it laid out?
What's the workflow like?**

Dr. Verduci: Our office is set up with three dental chairs. Two operatories are semi-private and one is completely private. We utilize our private operatory for obtaining diagnostic records and bonding appointments.

Our typical day begins at 8:30 a.m. with new-patient visits, followed by adjustment visits, diagnostic records and bonding appointments. The office is closed for lunch every day between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. The afternoon begins with a de-bond appointment, followed by adjustment visits.

The day normally ends with consultation and treatment plan presentation appointments [where] we strongly encourage the patient, along with both parents to be present, if possible. Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. We are also open one Saturday per month, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

What is your practice philosophy?

Dr. Verduci: My practice philosophy is based on the fact that successful orthodontic treatment is extremely dependent upon patient cooperation.

As a result, orthodontic treatment is a true family experience

[that] is shared with the treating orthodontist and his orthodontic team. The orthodontist should be directly involved with the orthodontic treatment, as well as directly involved in educating the patient and his or her parents so that everyone can actively participate in the patient's treatment success.

To facilitate the latter, optimal patient customer service must be in place in order to establish patient and family trust.

What is your patient philosophy?

Dr. Verduci: As we all know, a team cannot win a championship on the shoulders of one player. My patient philosophy is that, from the first day I meet my patient and his or her family, I want to get them involved in understanding the important concept of team orthodontics.

Team orthodontics [means] that everyone is involved in producing a successful treatment result. This team includes the patient, his or her family, the orthodontist and the practice staff. These days, many families and their children invest a lot of time and effort in athletics and other extracurricular activities. It is our duty as orthodontists to educate them about the long-term benefits of a beautiful smile and a healthy bite relationship.

What is your technique philosophy?

Dr. Verduci: My technique philosophy is focused on trying to make the patient's responsibilities as simple as possible. Our young patients and their families have a lot of different activities that they are managing. As a result, I feel that keeping my treatment mechanics as simple and efficient as possible is a positive way [to obtain] the treatment result that we all desire.

How do you set your practice apart from others?

Dr. Verduci: I always try to give my patients my complete attention, letting them know that our practice truly cares about them. Sincerity goes a long way in all relationships.

How do you get the word out about your practice?

Dr. Verduci: My favorite marketing technique is simply being true to myself. When you are true to yourself and stick to your core values and principles, patients take notice and want to come back to see you again. Do that, and I feel everyone around will understand that

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you are sincere and have their best interest in mind. Specifically, your staff, patients and their families will believe in you and know you are genuinely trying to help them.

With your staff members, you are trying to make them the best versions of themselves. With your patients and their families, you are making them realize the value of your service. That is, you are trying to help the patient obtain the best smile possible. It is important that the orthodontist always lead by example and as a result, the orthodontist's leadership qualities are very important in developing a successful practice.

The latter, to me, is all part of internal marketing. Even in today's world of hyper-technology, internal marketing is the best form, the most sincere form, and the most cost-effective form of marketing for an orthodontic practice.

I also feel that an orthodontic practice can play a pivotal role in a community in motivating young people to become the best versions of themselves. For example, I established a career day at my son's school. I was able to bring in parents and people from around the community to come and speak about their given careers and what motivated them to take on that specific career.

Being an orthodontist and working with many young people, I enjoy helping them to find their way in life. In addition, I truly

enjoy sports and have coached local soccer and basketball teams. Again, we can use our leadership skills to help children to become the best versions of themselves in many different aspects of their lives. Amazingly, being involved in the community and helping others outside of the practice can have a tremendously positive impact [inside of] the orthodontic practice.

What is the biggest problem orthodontists face today?

Dr. Verduci: The biggest problem that orthodontists face today, I feel, is being able to maintain pace with all the technological advances that are occurring in our profession, and being able to decipher which ones can help their practices to become more efficient and successful.

What is the greatest advancement you've seen?

Dr. Verduci: In my tenure as an orthodontist over the last 16 years, the greatest advancement that I have seen and personally experienced is in the area of imaging.

Better imaging techniques have allowed us to better communicate with our patients and their families. Having the ability to capture a detailed digital image, and then being able to review these images at the consultation appointment with the patients and their family members on our high-definition monitors, allows our patients to better understand their malocclusion. This understanding leads to patient cooperation and more successful treatment results.

What would you like to see happen in the orthodontic profession over the next 10 years?

Dr. Verduci: Looking ahead, I would like our profession to continue to take a leading role in educating our dental colleagues, as well as our patients, on the true benefits of orthodontic treatment.

Orthodontic treatment, when treated either in a multi-disciplinary form or in its purest form, can be extremely beneficial to preserving the dentition of our patients. I feel this would allow us to continue to provide quality health care.

What is your favorite procedure or part of treatment?

Dr. Verduci: My favorite part of treatment is the debonding procedure. This is the day when our patients complete the active phase of their orthodontic treatment and enter into the retention phase. This day brings a lot of emotion with it. Our patients and their families spend a lot of time thinking about this day, and definitely mark it on their calendars. It makes me very happy to see the smile on my patient's face as well as the tears of joy expressed by the patient's parents at this appointment.

It makes all the appointments, hard work, and anticipation well worth it. As orthodontists, we are very fortunate to be able to have such a positive impact on our young patients' lives, and to share in this special moment. This is definitely my favorite procedure.

TOP PRODUCTS

Tip-Edge brackets: I have been using this bracket since I graduated from my orthodontic residency in 1998. I like its small size, the comfort that it provides my patients intraorally because of its smooth rounded surfaces, as well as the flexibility the bracket provides with its vertical slot.

ClearBow retainer: This retainer allows me to utilize a Wrap-Around Hawley retainer with a clear premolar-to-premolar adapted labial bow which conforms to the facial/buccal anatomy of the dentition. I believe the teeth should be able to physically contact each other during the retention phase. In addition, as you could imagine, my patients really enjoy wearing this retainer.

Carestream Dental CS 9000: This imaging system has transformed my practice. It allows me to obtain quality orthodontic images in a very efficient and timely manner. I am able to view these images at all of my computer work stations. My referring dentists and specialists, as well as my patients and their parents are truly impressed by the quality of the images.

Tip-Edge aesthetic brackets with aesthetic wires: My patients are really impressed by aesthetics expressed by this bracket, especially when utilized with the aesthetic wires.

When it comes to your career, what aspect can you not live without?

Dr. Verduci: What I cannot live without is my enthusiastic staff who make my patients feel that they are an integral part of our orthodontic team and family. I enjoy working with my staff, interacting with them, listening to them, teaching them and mentoring them.

I was fortunate enough to initiate my practice from its inception and as a result, I was able to develop my staff through the years [in a similar way] to how a general manager and head coach develop a winning football team.

What has been your most rewarding experience?

Dr. Verduci: Learning that I was accepted to my orthodontic residency program. Since my discovery of my interest in becoming an orthodontist while still an orthodontic patient, I feel this has been my life's calling.

Because this profession has had such a positive impact on my life, I also enjoy mentoring young students and patients who aspire to become orthodontists. One of them is a sophomore in dental school and two others are in college. I find this to be truly rewarding.

How has Orthotown.com and the magazine helped you in your profession?

Dr. Verduci: Orthotown allows me to feel connected to my profession and my colleagues. Believe it or not, my favorite feature is "the office visit" as it allows me to see how different practices are uniquely set up throughout the country.

What do you like to do outside of work?

Dr. Verduci: When I am not working, I enjoy spending quality time with my beautiful family which consists of my wonderful wife, Janine, and my two handsome sons, Massimiliano, 10, and Luciano, 8. I am truly blessed to be able to share my profession with my family. ■

OTHER PRODUCTS

- **Bonding agents:** 3M Unitek's Transbond
- **Brackets:** TP Orthodontics: Tip-Edge bracket, Tip-Edge clear aesthetic bracket (along with clear aesthetic wires)
- **Cements:** Ketac Cement
- **Class II appliances:** Tip-Edge Class II mechanics, headgear appliance (when applicable)
- **Class III appliances:** Rapid palatal expander with reversible headgear (facemask)
- **Hygiene:** Colgate tooth brushes, Oral B proxy bushes, Gum: thin wax-coated floss, Aurelle travel tooth brushes (with built-in tube of toothpaste)
- **Patient financing:** In-house financing

