

As luck would have it, twenty years ago, when I arrived in the United States, I went to work at the dental clinic, Goldstein, Goldstein, and Garber considered by many one of the best dental clinics across North America. At that time GGG was considered the pioneer clinic of cosmetic dentistry.

Before arriving to Atlanta from Italy, I had used the platinum foil technique to fabricate jacket crowns, as it was customary in Europe. At that time, laminate veneers were virtually unknown to me, although it was very popular at Goldstein, Goldstein and Garber.

As I watched Mr. Pinhas Adar work with the laminate veneers I became more curious about this technique. Pinhas, was a wonderful teacher and took the time and patience to teach me the technique. It was amazing how one could quickly fabricate this type of restoration without any sophisticated equipment.

There are several different techniques that can be used to fabricate laminates, including refractory material, pressable ceramic material, and ultimately, using CAD/CAM. Each one of these systems have certain limitations, which I personally find rather annoying. The refractory model technique requires that the refractory material and porcelain have compatible CTE; the pressable ceramic technique is extremely time consuming as it requires one to invest, press in the oven, and divest. CAD/CAM, even though it is promoted to be fast (albeit within 24 hours), requires you to have a scanner—an expensive piece of equipment, and still, in the end, you have to build-up somehow. Ultimately, I feel that these limitations hinder my creativity, particularly on the combination cases, as you will see in part two of this article.

Today, twenty years after my arrival and with so many new advancements and with many newer techniques available, I still rely on the platinum foil technique to complete 90% of my cases.

Case 1 - Technique

As you can see in image #1 one needs only three

The Beauty of Simplicity -Part I

Fausto Catena, CDT

simple and inexpensive tools to use the platinum foil technique: a pair of tweezers, a pair of scissors, and a little orange wood stick. The beauty of this technique is that as a ceramist you can apply any porcelain material that you currently use. And there is no need to change your build-up technique.

Most dental technicians are afraid to tackle laminates because they feel that they need to see the patient in person, to be successful with the case. As a result, they seldom tackle long distance cases. For me this is where technology comes into play. In this long distance case, the results you see were accomplished by the use of a photograph and e-mail availability. By simply using a digital camera and a computer as communication tools I can see the patient's smile, and determine the stump shade and the color of the preparation.

In one of my most recent cases I worked with a dentist in Boston. This case involved the fabrication of four laminate veneers, #7-10. In figure 2a we can see the patient's concerns - the diastema and the fact that the incisors were chipped. The dentist suggested four laminates to restore his smile and the patient agreed. I received the impression of the case and the dentist emailed my laboratory the images.

I poured the model, trimmed the dies, and was ready to begin to apply the platinum foil on the dies in less than half a day (Figs. 3a-c).

You can finish the case in the same day. This is so fast that I have done up to ten units in the same day. One of the many benefits of this technique is that I am able to

Fig. 1





Fig. 2a



Fig. 2b



Fig. 2c

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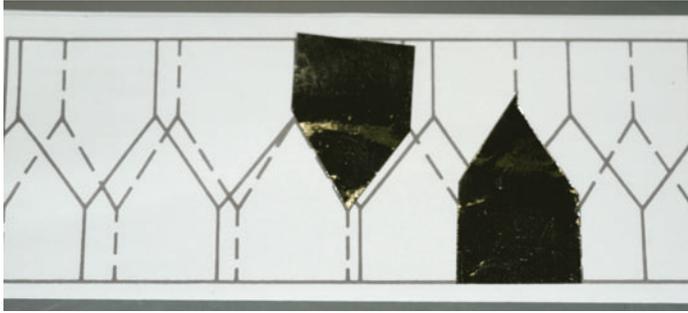


Fig. 3a



Fig. 5



Fig. 3b



Fig. 3c



Fig. 6



Fig. 4a



Fig. 7



Fig. 4b

layer the porcelain material, which in this case was Vita VM13 (Vident). By building with the brush I can layer different powders to create a very natural looking restoration, as you can see in figures 4a-b.

The final image #5 of this case was sent to me by the dentist. As you can see from the photo the end result was extremely positive.

Case 2

On a recent trip to Italy, a close friend of mine asked me if I could do something to improve the overall look of his teeth as he was soon to be married. His teeth had been severely stained in his youth by the use of antibiotics. You can see in figure 6, preop, the damage and then the results in figure 7. By using the platinum foil technique as it is customary in Europe, we were able to obtain natural matching results with efficiency and simplicity.

The main focus of this article is not to say that there is not room for newer techniques in our profession. Not at

all. I also value my new CAD/CAM scanner... but not for laminate veneers I still love the platinum foil technique. We should look at the future but not abandon the past so quickly. It is difficult to abandon this system because when I can achieve the results that you have seen, “the end justifies the mean.”

In part two you will see more complex cases, when we combine crowns and laminates together. When I do combination cases I have an even deeper appreciation of this technique. ❏



About the author

Fausto Catena, CDT, received his professional training in Pesaro, Italy, at the school of Dental Technology and has been a practicing CDT for over 30 years. After owning and operating his own dental laboratory in Ancona, Italy for over 10 years, In 1991 Mr. Catena received an invitation to work at the internationally known dental offices of Goldstein, Goldstein, and Garber in Atlanta, Georgia. Six years later Fausto opened his own laboratory in Atlanta, GA, before relocating his business to Sarasota, Florida in 2001. Mr. Catena is also a senior member of Art & Experience, by Claude Sieber. The philosophy of Fausto Catena and his laboratory, Ceramic Art, Inc. is to pursue excellence in all phases of esthetic dentistry. Mr. Catena continues to advance his skills with ongoing professional development with world renowned Ceramists throughout Europe and the United States while also sharing his advanced skills and experience with others.


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