

# Dr. Laurie Bloch-Johnson

*By Debbie Hall*

**M**et Dr. Laurie, a dentist who has been practicing for more than 27 years, offering general dentistry with a focus on cosmetic, reconstructive, and TMJ. More than creating a beautiful smile, she has developed her practice using a totally different approach that one might not expect at a dentist's office.

Along with a commitment in presenting comprehensive dental care, accepting complicated restorative cases, creating the best possible solutions to restore or build a smile, Dr. Laurie's first rule is that she only sees one patient at a time.

When a patient walks into Dr. Laurie's office, the first thing they notice is the very spacious, comfortable, quiet reception area. This room was designed to be more like a living room in a home instead of a typical waiting room. Since she sees only one patient at time, all she needs are four very nice chairs creating a calming and relaxed atmosphere. Cookies are baked several times a day for a wonderful aroma and for her patients to enjoy. Several types of coffee and tea are offered along with wine in the afternoon. Her team of three highly trained professionals, along with Dr. Laurie, focuses on the one patient since that patient is the most important person in the world during their treatment.



After being seated in the state-of-the-art examination room, the patient can look out and watch 40 birds in an enclosed aviary to bring that feeling of serenity to the experience. In fact, Dr. Laurie completely remodeled her office last year with her patient's comfort in mind. Televisions are placed in every exam room and during the initial visit; a complete executive physical of the mouth and teeth is conducted. One of the many uses for the television is that a camera takes photos of the examination so the patient can see exactly what the dentist sees with her magnifying glasses. The size of the screen, 47 inches, is critical to make certain the patient can see exactly what is going on during the exam.

The first visit usually takes about 90 minutes of which Dr. Laurie spends about 45 minutes with each patient. "I have found that by investing that much time and detail into the first visit, it saves the patient time," she said. "Often, patients are accustomed to the one tooth at a time approach and sometimes (the visit occurs) when a tooth is broken or they are in pain. By examining them comprehensively, the patient leaves with so much knowledge, many patients comment on how thorough the exam is and that it is the first time in their life they have had their dental health looked at in such detail.

"If the patient can see exactly what is going on in their mouth, they can make an informed choice on how they want to proceed," said Dr. Laurie.

The decision is totally up to the patient and Dr. Laurie strives to make certain each person is empowered with their choices. Dr. Laurie does explain ways to restore health and function along with enhancing esthetics if so desired.

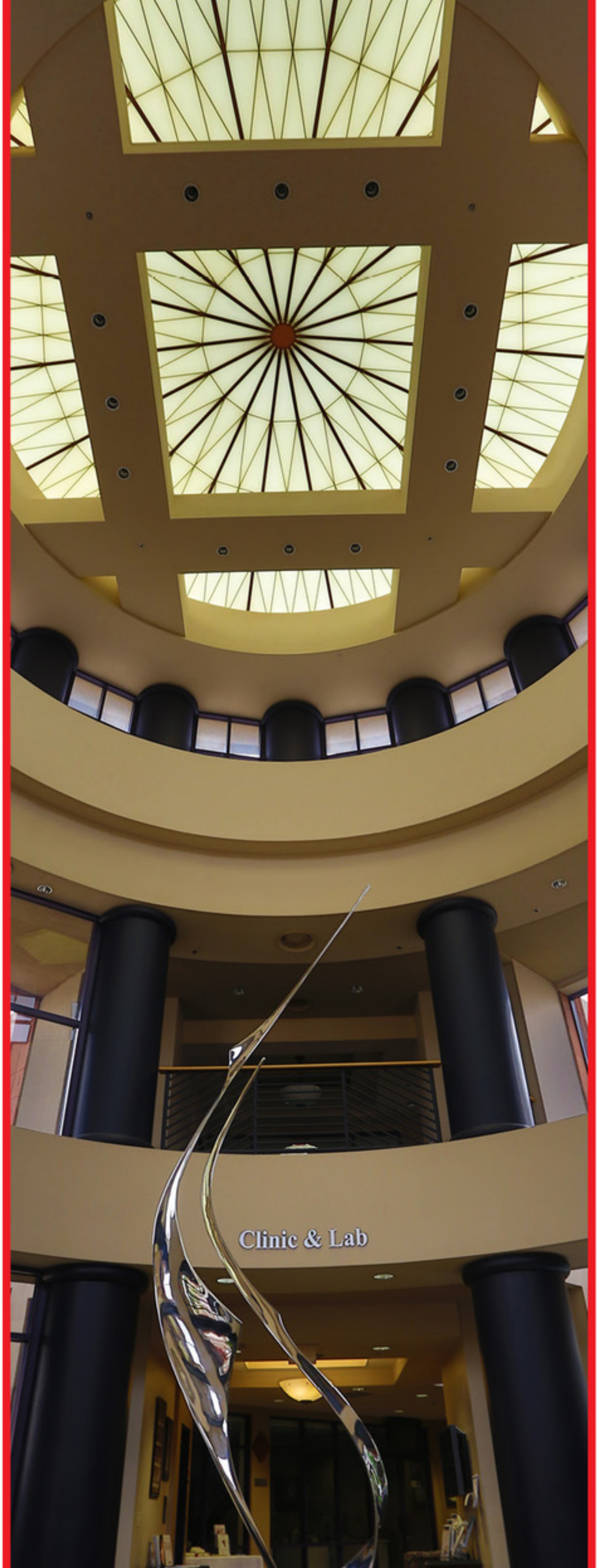
Dr. Laurie offers a variety of services along with general dentistry to include some of the following:

### **Non-Surgical Facelift**

A dentist offering a facelift? One of the most visible signs of aging is a changing smile. Front and back teeth break down or suffer from wear and tear as the years pass. It's not just a smile; it's the facial appearance as well. Most people don't realize that the front teeth support the lips and the back teeth support the face and jaw joint. The lips are the only muscle in the body not supported by a bone. According to Dr. Laurie, what happens is that the distance from a person's nose to their chin collapses. While this might be four to five millimeters, it does make a difference in what their face looks like. It's like the lower third of the face "squishes up." If the teeth become shorter due to wear and grinding; the lips can become thinner and the profile can become flatter. By restoring the length of the teeth to their original size, the lips and profile will become fuller and more youthful. By building up the back teeth, this creates less wrinkles, tighter necks and stronger chins for a more youthful appearance and better dental health.

### **Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ)**

Many Americans suffer from headaches, migraines, unexplained pain in the face, jaw or teeth. Others suffer from a pain in the neck or back, tingling in the fingers or ringing in their ears. Some have earaches, recurring or constant jaw pain, or tooth pain. While many search for answers (and relief); in good faith doctors misdiagnose the problem and the symptoms remain. Dr. Laurie has discovered in her practice that many times the





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medical condition is Temporomandibular Joint Disorder. The most common cause of TMD is Malocclusion, otherwise more commonly referred to as a bad bite. In this case, the upper and lower teeth are misaligned and do not close in the correct way, whether functioning or at rest.

The Temporomandibular Joints are small joints in front of each of the ears that keep the lower jaw connected to the skull. This complex network of teeth, bones, muscles, tendons and nerves are normally associated with manipulating the jaw and mouth to speak and chew, but when there is a dysfunction, it can also cause problems in other areas of the body. Dr. Laurie can isolate the problem and fix it so that the pain is gone.

#### **Smile Makeover versus Full Mouth Reconstruction**

Speaking of dental health, Dr. Laurie advocates good internal health as well as a beautiful smile. The best analogy to explain this concept is that of a home. While one can decorate and make their home beautiful, if the foundation is cracked and shifting, there will be problems and the home can eventually collapse despite the pretty façade.

It is the same with teeth. While so much can be done to create a beautiful smile, it is essential that any functional problems with teeth, mouth and gums are addressed and treated. A smile makeover is just cosmetic while a full mouth reconstruction combines both aesthetics and function.

#### **Master Ceramist**

When it comes to smiles, Dr. Laurie has a master ceramist on site that can create custom veneers, colors and shapes.

Working closely together; Dr. Laurie, the ceramist and the patient can create a mock up, also known as the “trial smile” that can be tested. Together they can determine if subtle changes need to be made before the final restorations are created. With this procedure, there are no surprises and everyone knows that they will be satisfied with the end results. Dr. Laurie and her ceramist have worked as a team for over 15 years and the personal touch is evident in creating natural looking smiles that fit the patient’s face, not just their mouth.

#### **Implants**

A dental implant is a permanent tooth replacement option that is directly inserted into the jawbone that is formed and colored to match natural teeth. Dental implants create a stronger replacement tooth because the tooth and the tooth’s root are replaced. With proper care, the implant can last a very long time and are more durable than other tooth replacement options. This is an option for one or several missing teeth and they can be placed in the upper or lower jaws to strengthen the smile.

Dr. Laurie graduated from the Oregon Health Sciences University and practiced in Oregon before relocating to Las Vegas to purchase the private practice of the founder of the Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies.

In fact, Dr. Laurie has continued to be a senior instructor at The Institute, located in the same building as her practice, which is a post graduate level program that attracts dentists from around the world. The Institute is a live patient treatment facility with two clinics, each having ten operatories. Dr. Laurie’s practice is a model dental practice created and designed to show the students how new technology is used in dentistry.

Dr. Laurie has continued her advanced education including dental implant training, soft tissue laser for cosmetic re-contouring and periodontics, cosmetic dental photography, occlusion, comprehensive aesthetic reconstruction, full mouth reconstruction, computerized jaw movement and muscle tracking training, and laser certification. She is a member of the American Dental Association, the Nevada Dental Association, the International Association of Comprehensive Aesthetics, and the International College of Craniomandibular Orthopedics. She is an author and speaks nationally and internationally on advanced dental procedures.

Dr. Laurie’s father was a dentist and that is what inspired her to enter the field of dentistry. “I love watching the transformation that happens when a patient is given back the smile and jaw support that they had in their youth,” Dr. Laurie explained. “It is very gratifying to be able to give my patients the ability to smile with confidence but also not to have to worry about having a dental emergency and in some cases, relieving a life time of pain.”

She has done volunteer work at the Huntridge Teen Clinic and in the month of October, in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Dr. Laurie will offer free teeth bleaching for a donation to the Breast Cancer Society.

Dr. Laurie recently got married and shares her passion for dentistry with her husband who consults with dental practices all over the world. “I have the practice of my dreams. I love what I do and I have the best patients who have supported me for so many years. I have never been happier.” This is evident in her attitude and her practice where she helps her patients with a new smile that is healthy both internally and attractive externally that can enhance appearance, boost confidence and renew a sense of self-esteem while promoting the best dental health possible.

*Hair: Hair by Andeen; Makeup: Makeup by Didi; Styling and Attire by Billie Wilson of Eccoci; Photography by Shane O’Neal shaneone.com*

## **Doctors of the Desert**

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**Dental Specialty: General Dentistry with a focus  
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