

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue ribbed tank top, is smiling and standing in a dental office. In the background, a dental X-ray machine is visible with its light glowing. The overall lighting is warm and professional.

Manrina Rhode



Standards are always high. There is

Manrina Rhode, the highly motivated and challenge-hungry cosmetic dentistry speaks to Versha Miyanger about her career and aspirations

Chair of the BACD Charity Committee, Dr Manrina Rhode brings an exciting combination of brains and glamour to the dental profession. She has a huge passion for cosmetic dentistry and has worked exclusively in private dentistry for 11 years.

Whilst working in VT, she was selected from a vast number of more experienced dentists to work for high-end luxury practice Lund Osler in Harvey Nichols in Manchester. She presently works with Tim Bradstock Smith at The London Smile Clinic.

‘When I was in school I wanted to be an actress and concentrate on theatre studies. My headmistress told me that I had a flair for science and art and suggested that I go into dentistry, as I was quite a creative student,’ she recalls. ‘I went to Guy’s and decided that I wanted to get into orthodontics. Having braces as a child, I found it had a profound effect on my life. After the treatment, I could then smile confidently and I became a different person. It was only while I was at University that I started learning about cosmetic dentistry. It was very new then and I decided then that it was something that I should be looking into rather than orthodontics.’

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Manrina qualified in 2002 and as there weren’t many options to study cosmetic dentistry here in the UK, she decided to take up some courses in the US. It was while partaking in VT that an opportunity came up which would change her life. It was her application for a job at Harvey Nichols in Manchester with of Lund Osler (cosmetic chain in Knightsbridge).

‘I had been to a lecture by Raj Ratten who was talking about Dr Surinder Hundle, what he had achieved and the whole dental spa concept which was mind-blowing back then. The dental spa model wasn’t very common then even though it is routine now.’

Grabbing the chance with both hands, she printed off her CV on some high quality embossed paper and was called in

for an interview. ‘This was a pretty tough interview – you had to do a patient exam and a written exam on cosmetics. There were lots of highly experienced applicants but I was fortunate and got picked for the job. I think I had the right look and personality for the position. So it was straight from VT to Manchester. I relocated there from London but I didn’t mind, as it was such an amazing opportunity. Surinder didn’t realise I was so inexperienced.’

However, the inexperience turned out to be advantageous for Manrina as Surinder was able to train and mould her into the exceptional cosmetic dentist she is today.

‘It was almost like being back at dental school,’ she recalls. ‘I would prep the teeth for veneers and he would come and check them and maybe make a few modifications and advise me. Surinder was keen on cosmetic education so we got as much teaching as we could – we went on the Rosenthal Aesthetic Advantage course in NYU – up to Masters level. I also did the occlusion course at the Dawson Institute in Florida. I was also booked onto virtually every Independent Seminars (now FMC Professional) course going. And that what it was all about – learning and working and we would be working until midnight most days.’

‘Lots of people frown on the aggressive dentistry offered on the Rosenthal course, but that was all we knew back then. Things have changed a lot since then though and it is all about minimally invasive dentistry now.’

MOVING ON

‘I started missing London and after a year I asked Surinder for a relocation back to the London branch. So I moved and opened a clinic in Harrods. We were known as being the most expensive practice in the country. They are there because they want to be there, not because they have toothache – it is all about the cosmetic aspect. The affluent clients need to have perfection. The standards are extremely high and there is no room for failure or imperfections. They are paying a premium



for service so their whole experience needs to be spot on – from the moment when they walk in the door, to the nurse and the lab work. It all has to be first-class.’

‘It was at Lund Osler we had the 10 Years Younger affiliation and the programme used to air on Thursday nights at 8pm, Channel 4 which was prime time TV. On Friday morning we had 200 new patient requests. It was mental – we were working seven days a week and ridiculous hours. I didn’t have much time to see my friends and family, but we all learnt an awful lot in that time and got a lot of experience under our belts.’

Manrina then joined the BACD as a committee member and focused on PR. She was also a BDA member PR representative. ‘It was whilst I was at a BACD meeting that Tif Qureshi told me about a job that had come up at the London Smile Clinic which was an award winning practice.’

LONDON SMILE CLINIC

‘In 2008 I joined the London Smile Clinic which is a purely cosmetic practice. Here I work with Tim Bradstock Smith, David Jones and James Russell (who has since left).’

Manrina explains the high level of dentistry provided here.

‘I really look up to Tim. He has won a lot of awards and is just on another level,’ she says. ‘Everything he does is so well thought out. There is a great system in place whereby there is an email consultation first where the patient sends in a series of specific photos of their teeth. It is a model that Tim has set up. It is all about managing

no room for failure or imperfections

expectations. We let them know what we can do for them – we give them a clear picture of what we can do for them, how much it would cost and how long it will take. The patient then comes in and has a consultation with our treatment plan coordinator. Here they discuss their options – whether they are having a fixed brace, Inman aligner etc. So when they finally see the dentist, they have all the options and information they need. In the chair, I examine them and carry out some cosmetic imaging for them. We look at everything tooth by tooth – what we can lengthen, shorten, whiten and so on. The patient can then assess the image themselves. We then come up with a final treatment plan. It is rare that we don't meet expectations as everything is laid out very clearly to them from the beginning – what can be achieved and what it takes to achieve that.'

'Things have changed massively from when I started doing cosmetic dentistry 11 years ago,' Manrina points out. 'Everything is minimally invasive. I don't want to prep a tooth. There are so many options for rotation teeth now. The London Smile Clinic is also a teaching academy for the Inman aligner.'

CHARITY WORK

In amongst her hectic schedule, Manrina still finds time to give back. She swapped treating her rich and famous clients and went on a self-funded trip to Cambodia. 'I went about four years ago with two of my nurses for three weeks. We worked in a dental practice and we were seeing 50 patients a day! I don't normally do my own extractions so it was a challenge because the whole mindset there is so different. They were not even dentists. The practitioners are just people trained by dentists. There were no x-ray machines, no concept of cross infection and barely no suction. They didn't even know about using mirrors for the upper arch. It was a huge challenge and a struggle,' she recalls.

'There was a high level of HIV and no concept of cross-contamination. We took lots of toothbrushes and toothpaste with us for the children but found that staff were reluctant to take the time out to teach the kids. It was so frustrating – if they brushed their teeth, you wouldn't have to keep taking teeth out!'

I would encourage anyone interested in charity work to visit the clinic in Cambodia. You learn so much and the children really

appreciated all the work we did for them.'

JOB SATISFACTION

So, what is most satisfying about your work? 'I appreciate every single patient I treat. I form a relationship with every one of them and get to know them on a personal level. After their first consultation, they already seem happier. The confidence boost is amazing – the way they smile is different. There is a huge job satisfaction for me every single day. I love my job.'

'My motivation is that I really enjoy what I do and I feel confident in what I do. You need to keep learning otherwise you get bored. I always go on courses and also lecture myself. The new thing for me at the moment is learning from Dental XP, which is a learning software online. If you join the BACD, you get an automatic subscription to this. I have downloaded the app and click onto that while I am on the tube - so I can listen to a lecture on mandibular splints on the way to work!'

Manrina is on the board of directors for the BACD and is chair of the charity committee. 'We bought social events to the BACD. A lot of learning is done at these events. When you mingle you seem to learn a lot. So every few months I organise an event. We recently had a Koroga night in a beer garden. We also had a night out in a table tennis club called Bounce in London.'

Does Manrina have any regrets? 'I have thought about doing a master's in cosmetic dentistry or an MBA. I don't really regret anything in my career and I am really happy where I am. One day it would be nice to open my own practice – I have lots of ideas. I have learnt so many things from the practices I have worked in and I have a clear idea of what it should be. It is not something I want to do right now.'

SHOWBIZ LIFESTYLE

Manrina is a newlywed – she recently married music producer Rishi Rich, so the couple are very often in the limelight. 'It has been a massive change since getting married. Both of us really had to adjust. He has been a music producer since the age of 15. For him there is no concept of day or night. He wakes up when he wants, sleeps when he wants and eats when he wants. Creative people have no concept of nine to five, unlike us dentists. So it was a shock to the system for me. There were so



many events to attend and I was exhausted. Rishi has now slowly started to change his lifestyle and we have adapted and adjusted to each other. We now have a nice balance. I go to the music events with him and he comes to my dental events. We are both creative people so it really is a meeting of the minds.'

She is also a keen exerciser, working out six times a week. 'I am a bit of a fitness freak. I also do boxing and pilates and I have encouraged Rishi to do the same. Consequently we have more energy and we make sure we eat well. The rockstar lifestyle has well and truly been moderated.'

Manrina has recently revisited her acting ambitions. 'Last summer we went to Mumbai as Rishi has management out there. We met some friends who worked in the movie industry and they were making a Punjabi film and asked me to act in their film. That was my first Bollywood film. I am in the middle of making a movie at the moment.'

'Amar Akbar Tony' is a film inspired by the 1970s Bollywood classic 'Amar, Akbar and Anthony'. The project is a comedy drama and stars actress Karen David as Meera, alongside Rez Kempton, Sam Vincenti, Nina Wadia, Meera Syal and Martin Delaney. It is the brainchild of first-time film director Atul Malhotra and is set in UK. It is scheduled for release later this year.

'It is a juggle having so many things on the go' says Manrina, 'and it certainly is a challenge being so busy, however, as long as there is a balance, the challenge works.'

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