



In Perfect Harmony

DR. YUKO TORIGOE STRESSES FORM, FUNCTION, GREAT DESIGN AND EVEN BETTER VIBES AT HER YEAR-OLD HOLISTIC DENTAL PRACTICE IN BOSTON.

BY KRISTIE CERUTI PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEITARO YOSHIOKA

SHELL YES: "I wanted the office to reflect nature, with a modern design aesthetic," says Boston dentist Dr. Yuko Torigoe.





ENTRY POINTS: Barn doors with frosted-glass fronts on each operatory offer patient privacy and permit the entry of ambient light.

GOLDEN GLOW: Antique lamps, with bulbs in the style of the early twentieth century, add a vintage ambience to the reception area.



OUTDOOR LIFE: Wall decor, a subtle accent throughout the practice, underscores Harmony's one-with-nature ethos.

THE VIRTUES OF great dental practices are all in the thoughtful details. "In most dental clinics, patients have their back to the doorway, which is bad operatory-layout feng shui," says Dr. Yuko Torigoe. When she began building her new practice in October 2015, by contrast, "I developed a keen sense of how I wanted my operatories set up."

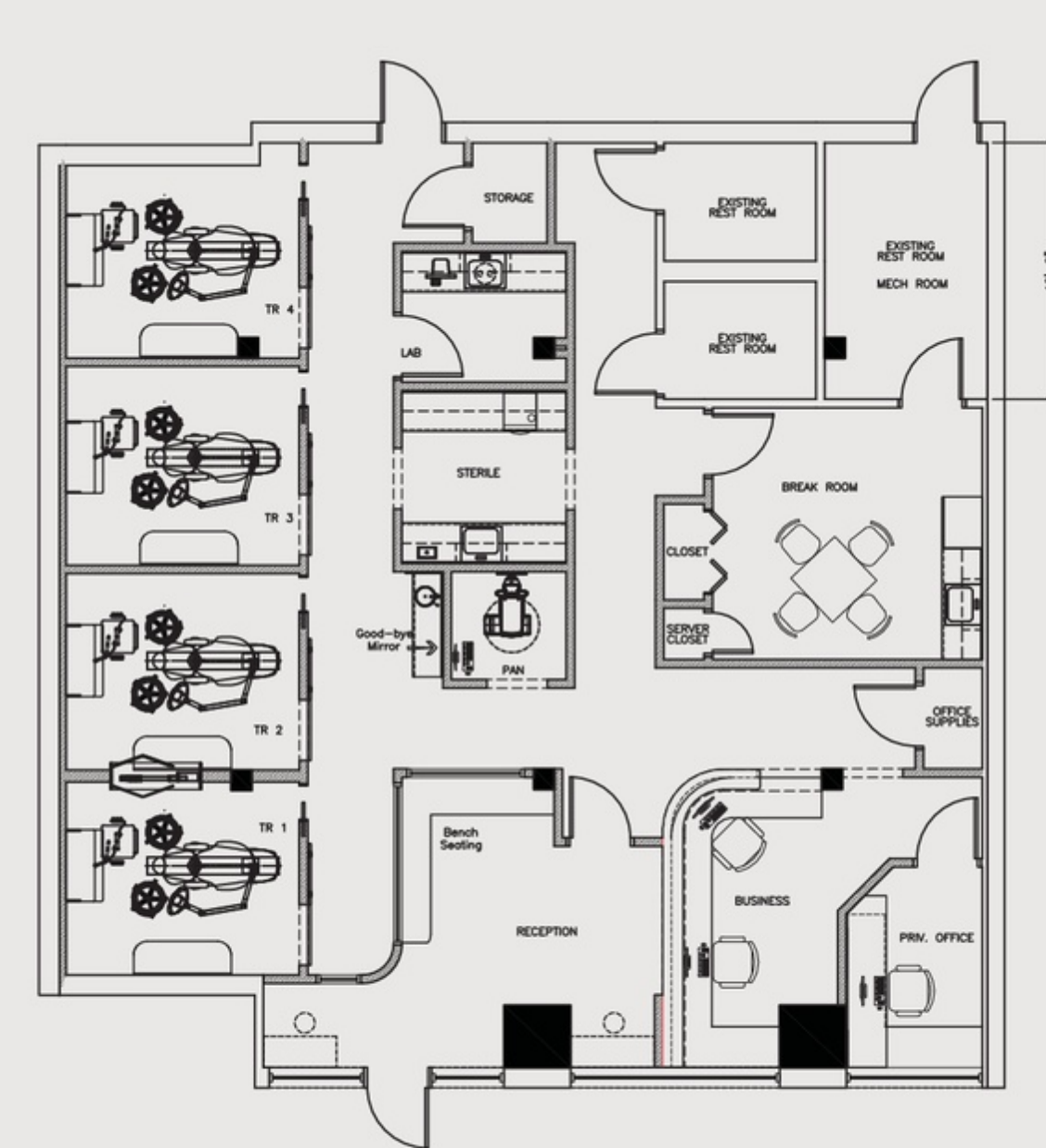
That meant putting two doors in each one, giving Dr. Torigoe the ability always to enter facing the person in the chair, not coming in from behind. "It's highly functional," she says, "and provides flexible privacy that our patients appreciate."

The same could be said for the rest of Harmony, Dr. Torigoe's practice in Boston's fashionable South End. Construction took just six months; it opened in April 2016 as an oasis of serenity for patients and staff alike. "I wanted the office to reflect nature, with a modern design aesthetic," says Dr. Torigoe, 42. "A blend of these two influences provides patients with a calm space."

Her LEED-certified building's bona fides are augmented by the subtle, soothing design touches throughout the space: warm gray carpeting, interlaced wooden panels and a "tree wall" that advises, among other things, "A little more laughter, a little less worry." Practice artwork sends a positive message, too: One of the most striking pieces is a stark black-and-white close-up photograph, on a metal sheet, of the hands of Dr. Torigoe's grandmother, who lived to age 101. The image is symbolic of Dr. Torigoe's own professional commitment, she says — a metaphorical reminder that she practices dentistry with dexterity, delicacy, experience and thoughtfulness, all traits for which her grandmother was celebrated.

Works by Dr. Torigoe's husband, artist and photographer Eddy Torigoe Pellot, proliferate as well. (Pellot is a key player in Harmony's operations, handling its branding, marketing, Web design and social media.)

As an accredited member of the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology, meanwhile, Dr. Torigoe naturally ensures that her practice is mercury-safe and mercury-free. The effect on her clientele is profound, she says: "Our patients have a high regard for our holistic approach." Gazing around the elegant environs, it's no secret why. ■



GREET THE MORN: A gentle admonition reminds patients and staff alike that the little things can make the biggest difference.

Interior Design:
Amanda Griffith, CenterPoint Design,
Benco Dental; and Heather Skapyak

Dental Designer:
Mark Costigan, CenterPoint Design

Contractor:
Edward Coppelman

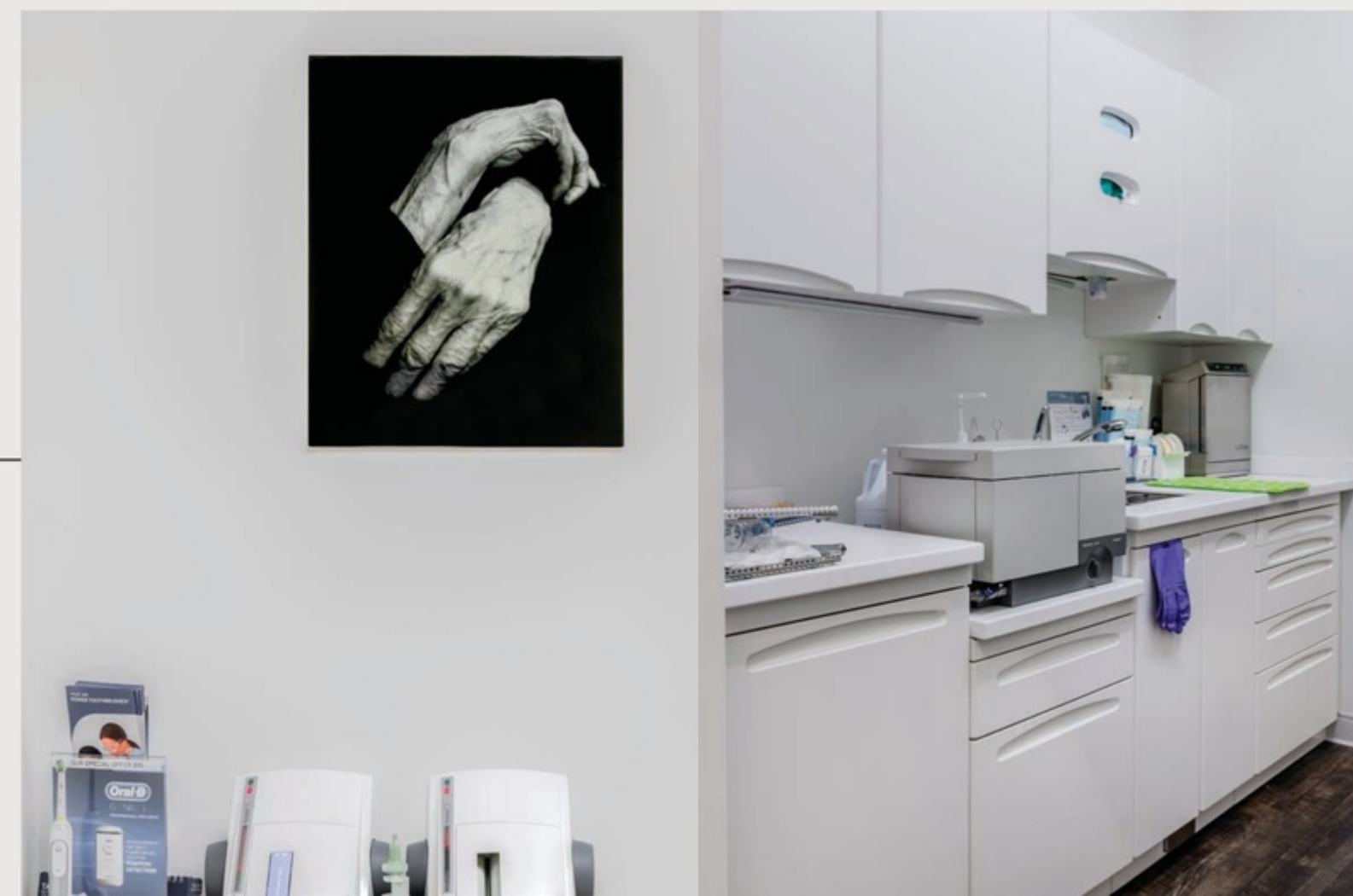
Equipment Specialist:
Derek Lombardi, Benco Dental

Architect:
Benco Dental

Friendly Benco Rep:
Lisa Tiraboschi

TREES LOUNGE: Vinyl floor-to-ceiling birch stickers between the shelves create a playful "mini-forest look," Dr. Torigoe says.

HEALING HANDS: Those of Dr. Torigoe's grandmother, whose example inspires her granddaughter every day



ORANGE-AND-BLUE PERIOD: Soothing floor and wall hues are offset by the bright vibrancy of the operatory furniture.

DESIGN TIP

"Communicate with your contractors as often as you can, even for something minor. Ask them when they expect to finish certain tasks — installing drywall or electrical wiring, say — so you're always up to date on their progress. Visit the construction site when you can, but don't get in the way of the work. Being on-site enabled me to provide input on details that I never would have thought of had I not been there. I also wound up communicating more with the workers since I could provide direct feedback."

—Dr. Yuko Torigoe



NEUTRAL PLAYER: The sterilization center is the only part of the practice that uses no color or accents — "a conscious design choice that enhances the room's cleanliness," Dr. Torigoe says.