

Your Guide to a Vibrant Lifestyle

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# Living

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## Practicing Family Dentistry

In The Home My Grandfather Built.

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## Camellia Creek Dental Center

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By Meredith Knight

## Practicing Family Dentistry

### In The Home My Grandfather Built.

## Camellia Creek Dental Center

For Dr. Lisa Scalia Landesman the opening of Camellia Creek Dental Center in Mandeville is the realization of a childhood dream. For local area residents it is the arrival of a new dental office with a sharp focus on delivering the highest quality dental care in an environment designed to respect and nurture the person as well.

One of Dr. Landesman's earliest memories is of her father. "My parents collected antiques and when I was about three, my



dad brought impression material and plaster home from his dental office to repair a frame they had purchased. I remember watching him and thinking, 'Wow, my dad's an artist. I want to be just like him.' That was the beginning of Dr. Landesman's interest in her dad's vocation. By the time she was in high school, she was working as an assistant in his dental practice in New Orleans.

"The thing that impressed me the most about my dad's work was watching patients grow up under his care. They'd come to him as children, continue seeing him through high school and college, and then bring their own kids back to him after they married. He had a relationship not only with his patients but often with entire families. It made me want to open a family practice of my own."

"Much of my philosophy comes from my dad," Dr. Landesman said. "He taught me that dentistry is a privilege. When you work on someone's teeth, they invite you into a space that's usually reserved for close friends and family. In health care we have to cross that line and we can't do that without the patient's permission. It takes trust on their part to let us in and it's a great privilege when they do."

*"I have wonderful memories of coming here as a child back when all of this was woods."*

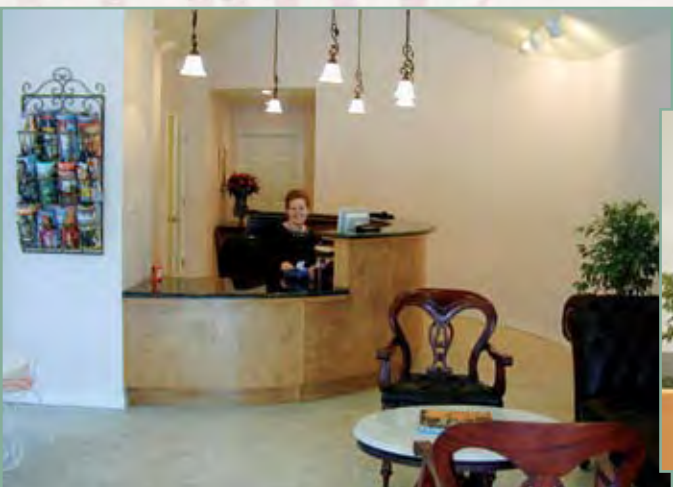
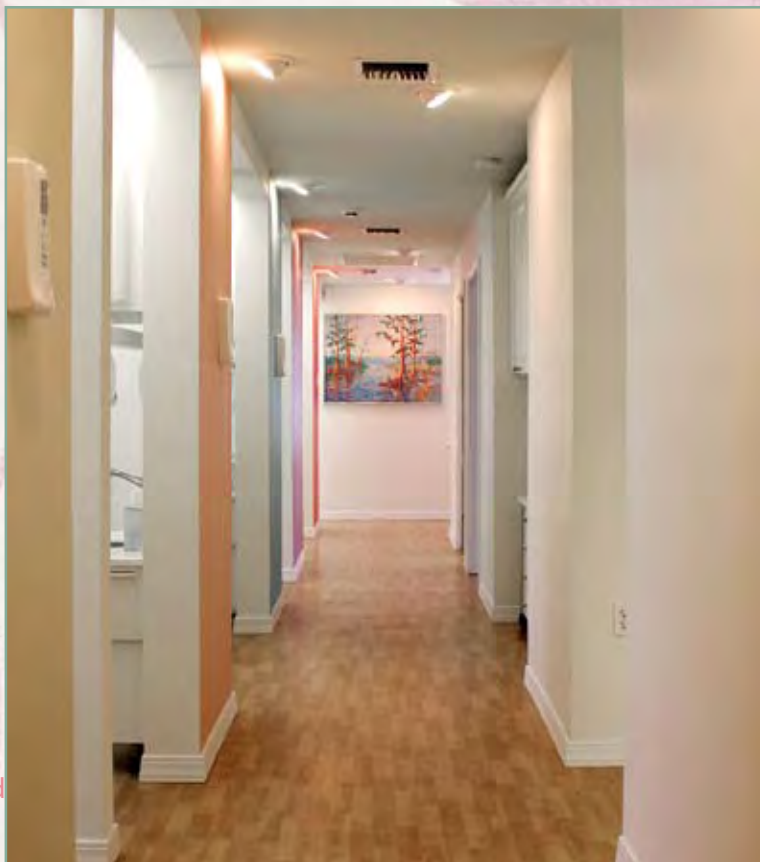
While teaching at LSU Dental School in New Orleans, Dr. Landesman worked to impart to her students more than the science of Dentistry. She knew it was the value placed on respecting and comforting those under their care that would allow her students to excel in their chosen field. As Dr. Landesman strived to pass on the lessons learned from her father, she knew that what she wanted most was to apply them in a private practice of her own.

When the day came to realize that dream, Dr. Landesman could find no better place to do so than the Mandeville home of her maternal grandfather where she'd felt the reassuring comfort and respect of family around her. "My grandfather was a general contractor. He built the home where my practice is located. I have wonderful memories of coming here as a child, back when all this was woods. My grandfather grew up in Mandeville, moved to New Orleans when he married my grandmother, then built this home around 1960 for the two of them to retire. He dreamed of opening a nursery in the back yard where he'd specialize in camellias. I remember coming here as a little girl and seeing coffee cans full of his camellias out back."

Unfortunately his health failed so he wasn't able to realize that dream. After he died, the house remained in the family as a vacation home. "We couldn't think of parting with it since it was the only house we had that my grandfather built." As the neighborhood grew up around it and went from residential to commercial, the family held on to the house in spite of numerous offers to purchase it.

"We had to remodel to turn a private home into an office but were vigilant about honoring my grandfather's work when we did.

Our contractors were Williams and Brown out of Bush. They were the perfect choice for our project. They understood that this was to be a tribute to my grandfather. When it came time to choose between a method of construction



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that is typically accepted today or spending a little longer doing things the way my grandfather would have, it was right in step with their standards to spend the extra time."

Dr. Landesman named her practice Camellia Creek Dental Center in honor of her grandfather's dream, and commissioned paintings of camellias on water for the front lobby. When changes had to be made, as much of the original home was preserved as possible. Bricks were salvaged and re-used. Windows were kept but relocated. "When my mom pulls up to my office, it still looks like her parents' home," Dr. Landesman said.

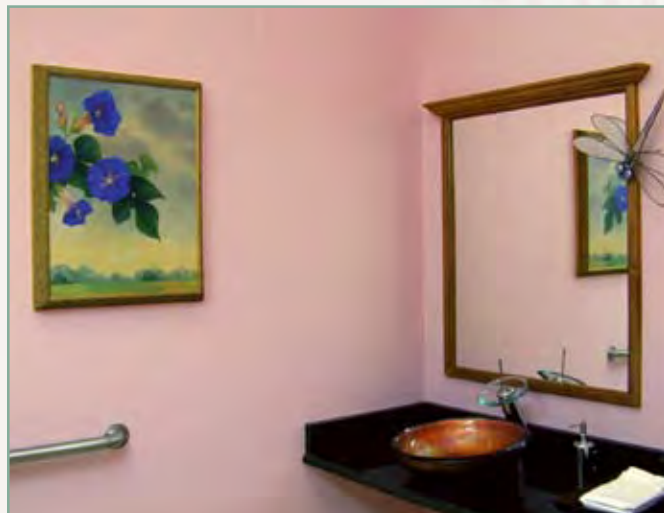
Pains were taken to preserve the original landscaping as well, "We had to move some of my grandfather's camellia bushes to add parking and a more accessible driveway but we carefully transplanted each camellia." During landscaping some of Dr. Landesman's grandmother's amaryllis bulbs were unearthed. "That was a delightful surprise," she said. "We've planted them alongside my grandfather's camellias."

Basically the goal during construction was to preserve as much of the original structure and property as possible while creating a stress-free

dental environment. "I'm at home here. I want my patients to be too," Dr. Landesman said. "Going to the dentist can be a stressful experience. We did as much as we could to change that. We lightened up the rooms by adding vaulted ceilings and lots of windows and employed tranquil colors throughout. Each treatment room includes a TV and a selection of movies patients can use to relax while they rest in a customized chair with remote control heat and massage. Comfort, relaxation and low anxiety were our goals."

As one of the many small touches which help to convey the familiar sense of comfort and reassurance she knew here as a child, Dr. Landesman has decorated her office with artwork almost exclusively from Louisiana artists. Of course, her favorite piece may be the one exception to the rule, a print she remembers hanging in her father's office. "It's called 'The First Tooth.' It hung in my dad's practice for as long as I can remember; my whole life I suppose. I couldn't decorate my own office without it."

Now there's another generation following in the family footsteps. Dr. Landesman's son, Ian, is currently doing his studies in pre-dentistry at LSU. "The other day he brought his fiancé by the office. He walked her through the rooms saying, 'This was my play area. My grandmother's piano sat over here.' Ian tells me he's watching my practice the way I watched my Dad's. I like to think that another generation will be calling him their dentist, maybe even right here in his great grandfather's home."



If you'd like to come by for a visit to Camellia Creek Dental Center, Dr. Landesman would be delighted to see you. The office is conveniently located at 735 Asbury Drive and is open Monday through Thursday 8 to 5, or Friday 8 to 1. For directions or any other information, you may call 985-624-2334 or visit [www.camelliacreek.com](http://www.camelliacreek.com) .

