

Gold Is Up and In!

Withstanding the Test of Time



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It is such a dilemma for the passionate dentist to choose between strength and beauty with regard to restorative materials. The search goes on for higher bond and flexural strength that satisfies the esthetic requirements of the patient. Some of the new materials boast of strength comparable to gold, yet don't necessarily live up to this expectation with respect to predictable bond strength. The manufacturers who produce cements and luting agents are scrambling to develop newer products to satisfy this market.

One thing we do know is that those gold restorations that have been placed over the years have not lost the ability to function over time. Even with antiquated impression techniques and soluble cements, many of our older patients continue to benefit from the fact that their teeth are restored with gold. This proven material will continue to provide service for several decades and has served as the standard of comparison to all other dental materials.¹ Generally I find that the simplicity of gold's construction adds to its marginal accuracy. Even the most savvy, esthetically minded dentist, who desires the long-term and maintenance-free result provided by gold restorations (Figure 1), often prescribes its use for the most posterior restorations in the arch. Dentists generally still choose nonesthetic options for significant numbers of their restorations.²

Years ago I attended a lecture of a very seasoned prosthodontist. His entire career focused on the treatment of the elderly, many of whom were nursing home residents. His observations were poignant regarding the longevity of the dentition in those patients who were served with gold full coverage onlays on their posterior teeth.



Figure 1—Anatomy and contours of typical gold castings for 2 molar restorations.



Figure 2 and 3—These photos illustrate treatment using esthetic restoration of the anterior segment with full porcelain (Empress crown, Herculite Vivadent), supported by posterior gold crowns.

