Getting by with a little help from a friend:

lab's 30-year partnership with Nobilium/Ticonium still going strong

—By Kim Molinaro, Managing Editor

Jerry Kaizer's passion for his craft is contagious. "I have the best job on the face of the earth because everything I work on smiles at me and, if it doesn't, I *make* it smile," he laughs.

Thirty years ago, the Kaizer family decided to focus its laboratory—Murray Kaizer, Inc.—on what it did best, removables, and they've never regretted their decision. "When we chose not to pursue C&B, we were laughed at," recalls Jerry, who co-owns the laboratory with his siblings, Ron and Marvis. "Many people said we were nothing but dinosaurs and that removables wouldn't be around in 10 years. But, today, just the opposite is true. So many laboratories chose to move away from dentures that our expertise is now at a premium."

Since the 1970s, the laboratory has grown from a seven- to a 30-person operation, and Jerry credits the laboratory's growth to its commitment to quality, cross-trained technicians and top-notch customer service. He also sees the success of implants and consumers' interest in good health and esthetics as driving forces in the market.

But the laboratory has another secret weapon: its 30-year partnership with an industry manufacturer, Nobilium/Ticonium (divisions of CMP Industries), which Jerry talks about as if it's an old friend.

"Nobilium/Ticonium has been there for us since day one," he says. "They support us in every way possible, from technical troubleshooting to next-day equipment repair. They are virtually unparalleled in terms of customer service, and even though the staff has changed over the past 30 years, their commitment to us hasn't."

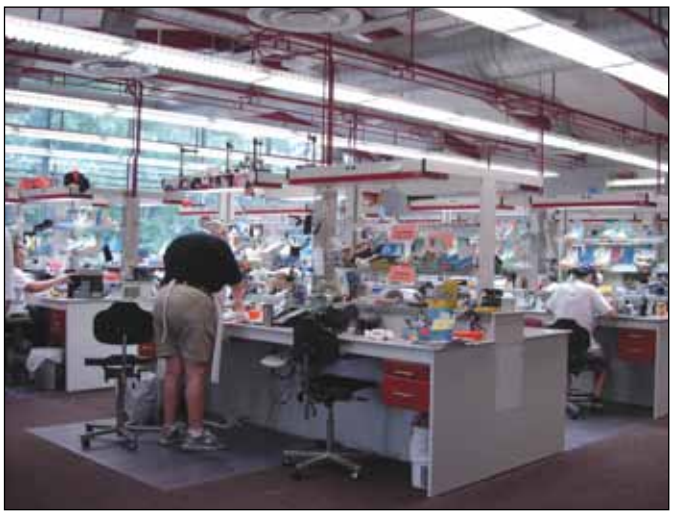
The groundwork for the laboratory's loyalty to the company was laid back in 1982, when Kaizer was having a problem with large upper castings fitting correctly. Nobilium/Ticonium sent Bob Vaught, a technical troubleshooter who spent a week with the laboratory observing its techniques and implementing improvements. "By day two, Bob identified the main problem—we needed to add glycerine to our auto duplicator during the melt cycle to maintain elasticity—and sat down with us to refine our technique," recalls Jerry as if the event just happened yesterday. "That level of personal attention was—and still is—hard to come by."

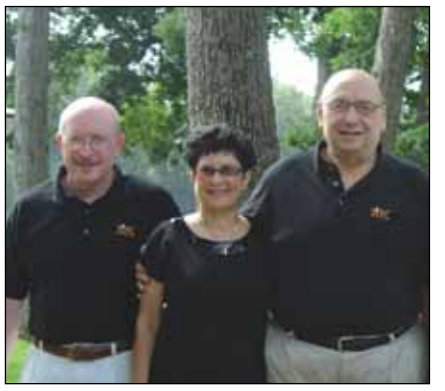
Another situation that further solidified their relationship occurred in 2001 when there were concerns over alloys containing nickel. The laboratory immediately decided to switch from Ticonium metal to its Nobilium (Nobilstar) chrome-cobalt high-heat alloy—an intimidating prospect since switching metals meant implementing new equipment, materials and techniques. "Nobilium/Ticonium was immediately responsive to our concerns and came in and helped us get up and running in just two weeks," recalls Jerry. "Sure, we could have handled the transition on our own, but it would have taken us several weeks if not months longer to get on track. Their help made a huge difference in terms of getting us productive and profitable right away."

As a metal customer, the laboratory also gets to take advantage of a unique service. If the laboratory has a case that fails and it can't identify the problem—no obvious porosity in the metal for example—it can send the case to Nobilium/Ticonium for scientific testing in its in-house laboratory. "When you have a concerned doctor and patient involved and they both want answers, I can't tell you how invaluable that service is," says Jerry. "Regardless of who's at fault, we now can pinpoint the problem and take steps to ensure it won't happen again."

Nobilium/Ticonium's latest venture is also allowing the laboratory to be on the forefront of new technology. In February, the company announced it was named the world's first SensAble Authorized Production Center, providing a service—called FitFrame™—in which labs can receive finished partial metal frameworks, or 3-D resin patterns for partial frameworks and crown and bridge substructures.

"FitFrame is the most exciting product that's happened to the removables industry in 20 years because it automates the partial denture fabrication process for the first time," says Jerry. Since the laboratory doesn't have a scanner, it sends Nobilium/Ticonium the model and the design instructions and, a few days later, receives 3-D resin patterns for casting. The process eliminates blockout, duplicating and waxing, reducing the lab's fabrication time from about five-and-a-half hours to one. "Because Nobilium/Ticonium is on the cutting edge, we're on the cutting edge," says Jerry. "If you want to be antiquated you can make that choice, but you'll be left in the dust." **LMT**





Left: Murray Kaizer's 5,200-sq.-ft. operation in Farmington, CT; *above (from l. to r.):* Co-owners Jerry, Marvis and Ron Kaizer; *below:* The Murray Kaizer staff.

Nobilium/Ticonium also supported LMT from its September 1984 inception and, in recognition of this support, and in celebration of our 25th Anniversary, this is the first installment in our *Leading through Partnership* series featuring profiles of laboratory-manufacturer partnerships.

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