

# Smart Buys by Louis Malcmacher, DDS, MAGD

Every quarter, Dr. Louis Malcmacher scours the dental equipment landscape for the latest innovations that will have the greatest impact on dentists and their patients. Dr. Malcmacher studies the trends, responds to peer recommendations and in some cases puts these products to use in his own practice to test their mettle. This month, Dr. Malcmacher turns his focus on CareCredit, Mobile CT Imaging, Milestone Scientific, Inc., and Midwest Dental Corp.



## Patient Financing by CareCredit



While we think that CareCredit is just the same old thing because it has been around for a long time, its programs have continually evolved and improved. That is why it is the undisputed leader in the patient financing category. I began using CareCredit in my practice in 2001, and its no-interest plans are especially popular with patients who prefer financing options in order to accept my complete treatment recommendation.

CareCredit is celebrating an important milestone: Dr. Charles Mattison's Inglewood, California practice became the 100,000th practice in North America to begin offering the program as a convenient payment option. Did you know that patients who are approved by CareCredit at veterinary, audiology, ophthalmology and cosmetic surgery offices often later utilize their revolving line of credit for the dental care they need and want? There are a lot of patients out there who have CareCredit.

Recently, CareCredit announced several enhancements to its program:

CareCredit has upgraded the doctor locator on its Web site, [www.carecredit.com](http://www.carecredit.com), with new and enhanced features. Up to 350,000 patients visit the site each month to find a doctor in their community who offers CareCredit's no interest and low interest payment plans. Because CareCredit is a revolving credit line, many of these patients are already approved and ready to begin care. CareCredit has initiated ongoing, proactive communication to its 7,000,000 cardholders and to the general public to encourage optimal dental health, connecting them with the doctors listed on [www.carecredit.com](http://www.carecredit.com). I personally have had patients referred to my own practice who were looking for a CareCredit dentist and it doesn't cost our office a penny in marketing expenses.

CareCredit has also launched a 2.0 Web site, featuring video of doctor peers and office managers, designed to give doctors real-world experiences to determine if adding the program is the right choice for their practice. Interactive information and tools include the incremental production calculator, patient video, payment calculators and more.

CareCredit now offers up to 18 months of interest-free financing for patients and patients can apply by phone, fax, or on the Internet. Oftentimes, in my practice, we will give patients a treatment plan and have them apply right in the office. The incredible thing is we get the answer back in seconds. By the way, when the patient has a good credit history, we might apply for \$5,000 worth of credit and might get back \$8,000, which means their four-veneer case can become a six-veneer case if they would like.

When I speak to dentists every week in my lectures, and ask how many in the audience have CareCredit in their offices, almost all of them raise their hands. It really means something when dentists can embrace a company like that.

**Smart Buys Summary: CareCredit helps your patients get the dentistry they need and want. CareCredit has developed capabilities that every practice can use to raise your production. Learn what CareCredit can do for your practice today by going to [www.carecredit.com](http://www.carecredit.com) or calling 800-300-3046. ■**

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## The West Coast's First Mobile Dental CT Scanning Service



Mobile CT Imaging

I don't know about you, but I drool when I see new technology. Of course, I would love to have the newest and greatest gear, and 3D cone beam imaging is at the top of my list. Now, imagine the convenience of having a cone beam CT (CBCT) scanner right outside in your parking lot. Imagine how relieved your patients will feel that they won't have to drive to an unfamiliar radiology lab to have a scan taken. Thanks to Mobile CT Imaging (MCTI), this convenience is now available to patients of dentists, ENTs, and other medical specialists in the San Francisco Bay Area. Using a customized van straight out of *Monster Garage*, MCTI, a Bay Area company founded by four local dentists, has introduced the West Coast's first mobile dental CBCT scanning service and is, according to its motto, "Bringing 3D Technology to You."

The company's van is equipped with a NewTom VG Flex CBCT scanner. This machine uses an 18-second scan with a radiation dose that is a fraction of conventional medical CT scans and lower than even a traditional film panoramic X-ray to generate 3D images of the subject. These images can then be manipulated with software to create an infinite number of views from different angles at different depths, and that are selective for different tissues. It is absolutely fantastic to see these images and the tremendous amount of anatomical information that you now have at your disposal. It makes every single case you do much easier to plan and reconstruct. These scans are particularly useful for dental implant planning, tooth impaction studies, orthodontic surveys, TMJ studies, and evaluation of lesions for pathology.

Until the introduction of MCTI's service, it was necessary for patients to visit a remote X-ray laboratory or radiologist to have their CBCT scan taken. These CT scans are extremely valuable to patients and doctors, and will become the new standard of care for many procedures like implants, complicated extractions, and sleep apnea studies. In speaking with one of the co-founders, Dr. Leo Arellano, a general dentist in San Francisco, California, he and his partners felt that if the CT scans were not convenient, then they would be largely underutilized. By bringing the CT scans to the dentist's office, dental practitioners quickly realize the benefits of the NewTom scans.

As practicing dentists with experience in dental implantology, oral surgery, orthodontics, and endodontics, MCTI's owners can appreciate firsthand the value of a mobile service to a dental practice. We all realize that we would love to have this technology in our offices but the price tag makes it impractical for many of us to own one. It would take 20-25 scans per month to break even and most dental offices simply do not have the sort of volume needed to make it profitable. A mobile unit that essentially allows many dentists to use a single CBCT scanner, and that makes a lot of sense.

MCTI recently brought its mobile unit to the 2008 California Dental Association Convention in San Francisco where it was displayed in the AFP Imaging booth, distributors of the NewTom VG CBCT scanner. I saw it with my own eyes and it is really incredible. Currently serving the San Francisco Bay Area, MCTI's future plans include adding more customized vans to their Bay Area fleet as well as assisting groups across the nation and even internationally with introducing a mobile CBCT service to their locations.

**Smart Buy Summary: CT scans are the wave of the future and the NewTom VG CBCT scanner is as good as it gets. The mobile van concept can work well for enterprising dentists who would like this technology for their own practice and would like to have another stream of income by providing this important service to other practices in their community. ■**

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## Milestone Scientific's STA System



Milestone Scientific's STA System

In 2007, Milestone Scientific, Inc., introduced the STA System, a computer-controlled local anesthetic delivery system designed to improve the injection process for both the dentist and patient. Now, if it sounds like we have been here before, you are right. Some of you are already aware of The Wand by Milestone Scientific, but the STA System is in a whole different category.

“STA” stands for “single tooth anesthesia,” which is what makes the instrument revolutionary. The ability to anesthetize a single tooth precisely and accurately is a tremendous enhancement to any dental practice. Patients who have to return to work can do so without having their lip and tongue numb. It’s something they’ll appreciate, and remember!

I have had an STA System in my office for the better part of a year and it revolutionizes anesthetic injections for you and your patients. Dentists who use the STA System get audio and visual feedback from the dynamic pressure sensing capabilities of the system – enabling dentists to administer a more comfortable, more precise injection for the patient. Once you learn how to use this instrument, it is nearly foolproof. This is what computer-controlled anesthesia really should be and what all of us have been waiting for.

This system allows dentists to administer PDL injections with confidence and comfort as STA confirms proper needle placement and monitors the delivery of anesthesia below the patient’s pain threshold. STA also offers the ability to anesthetize just one tooth. This means no collateral numbing and the ability to work in multiple quadrants during one visit. My good friend Dr. Lou Graham in Chicago, Illinois, told me he has basically eliminated mandibular block injections from his procedures since purchasing his STA System.

Do you take care of kids? I do. The most common postoperative complication with pediatric patients is lip and tongue trauma. I know that pedodontists love the STA because there is no biting of the lip or tongue after the procedure. A dentist can even breakdown the handpiece making it invisible to patients who are extra sensitive during the injection process and absolutely don’t want to see the needle.

I always joke that I am not sure who is more nervous when a dentist has to give a palatal – the patient or the dentist! With the STA System you can offer comfortable palatal injections using the pre-puncture technique – followed by a controlled flow of anesthetic and incredibly, the patients don’t feel it!

Dentists shouldn’t limit their use of STA. You can use the STA System to deliver every type of injection. If you’ve been missing your block injections, STA is the solution to achieving more accurate blocks. The STA needle doesn’t deflect the way a traditional dental syringe does, therefore you’ll deliver more precise block injections and get to start the procedure immediately. How’s that for a paradigm shift in dental anesthesia?

Research has shown that if you administer an uncomfortable injection for the patient, yet conduct a flawless procedure – that the patient will remember the injection and the rest of the procedure unfavorably. If you administer a very comfortable injection, no matter what happens with the procedure, patients remember a painless procedure and that results in patient referrals. When was the last time your dental syringe earned you a patient referral?

To learn more about the STA System visit [www.stais4u.com](http://www.stais4u.com) or call 800-862-1125.

**Smart Buys Summary: We love and hate dental anesthesia and your patients are the same way. This is the 21st century – the technology is here with the STA system to make every procedure a painless one. It is time to implement whatever we can to make dentistry more comfortable for our patients. ■**

## Midwest Stylus ATC – Adaptive Torque Control



Midwest Stylus ATC

There are definite advantages to air-driven high-speed handpieces – they are small and slim in your hands, they are fairly effective, and you certainly know the disadvantages – less torque and a lot of noise. Electric handpieces overcome some of the objections of air-driven handpieces – they are precise, much quieter and the torque is excellent, but most electric handpieces have been too large for some dentists' hands and many patients' mouths.

For the first time in dental history, air and electric handpieces have fused into a single handpiece system. Adaptive Torque Control (ATC) technology, exclusively available from Midwest Dental Corp., overcomes the limitations of current air and electric technology to deliver the performance benefits of both. Midwest Stylus ATC high-speed handpiece systems provide the power and efficiency of electric handpieces without sacrificing the superior access, lighter weight and familiar comfort of an air handpiece. This is exciting stuff since this is an instrument that every dentist uses multiple times a day in their offices and can't operate without.

The innovative ATC technology utilizes cutting-edge sensors to continually monitor bur speed. It automatically adjusts performance to maintain peak power and a constant speed...even under load. How does it work? Stylus ATC actually adapts to the force applied. This intelligent technology delivers very powerful cutting, while ensuring fast, efficient crown removal and tooth reduction. Even decay removal and margin refinement are no match to its smooth precision and control. By instantly adjusting performance while you are cutting, the Midwest Stylus ATC complements your technique, allowing you to transition from gross reduction to margin refinement in less than a second.

This is part of what I love about my Stylus ATC. Weighing in at significantly less than the lightest electric handpiece, the Stylus ATC delivers ergonomic comfort throughout the day. It works in conjunction with a rigid bur suspension system to improve tactile control and accuracy for precise margins and core preparations. The Stylus ATC system is equipped with an integrated fiber optic supply for brilliant illumination and improved visibility in the oral cavity. That means I can see better than ever before when I am working in the dark recesses of the mouth. What's more, the Stylus ATC is equipped with a robust air turbine to avoid the overheating problem common with electric handpieces. And the low-pitch operation offers a more relaxed working environment.

With both mini and mid-sized head options, Stylus ATC handpieces offer exceptional visibility, access and maneuverability. I absolutely love the mini head Stylus ATC 990 handpiece, which accepts standard and short shank burs for enhanced access to posterior regions on pediatric, geriatric and TMJ patients. Stylus ATC handpieces require no additional maintenance or sterilization steps so our team members did not have to be retrained on what to do with a new piece of equipment.

Most dentists know Midwest and the Stylus ATC system is engineered and manufactured with the quality and reliability standards dentists expect from Midwest. It's backed by a comprehensive, three-year warranty on the control unit and integrated coupler and tubing, a two-year warranty on handpieces (including turbines) and a five-year warranty on fiber optics. What does this mean to you? Midwest really stands behind this handpiece as it does with everything it makes.

**Smart Buys Summary:** I have been using the Stylus ATC in my office for a few months now and it has completely changed the way I use a handpiece. I thought I was efficient beforehand but I have, like every dentist, had my frustrations with high-speed handpieces. Our hands are our lives and my hands feel much better at the end of day because it is lightweight and cuts so smoothly. This handpiece is truly different and has made me much more efficient in the delivery of dentistry to my patients. ■