Success Magazine: Nicholas, you are a fourth generation dentist. How did your family’s influence inspire you to choose this career path?

Nicholas Chauvin: My family never really influenced me to go into dentistry. They basically wanted my brother and me to get involved in something that would make us happy but at the same time challenge us. Their main goal was to support us in whatever career we wanted, while making sure our goals to attain that career were realistic.

SM: What is your earliest memory of a dental office?

NC: My brother and I would have water gun fights with the air and water syringes in our dad’s office. We would also steal the dental prizes that were meant for the patients.

SM: When did you decide this would be your life’s work?

NC: I decided the second semester of my sophomore year in college that dentistry was the field I wanted to pursue. Growing up in a household where the past three generations were in the dental field, I got a close look at the pros and cons of dentistry. It was the time I spent at my dad’s office that convinced me that dentistry would enrich and challenge my life. Seeing the look on kid’s faces when they got their braces off and saw their new smiles for the first time—if that doesn’t inspire you, I don’t know what will.

SM: Where did you obtain your Doctorate of Dental Surgery, and where did you complete your year of post-graduate study?

NC: I obtained my DDS from Creighton University School of Dental Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska and I completed a general practice residency at St. Clare’s Hospital in Schenectady.

After my own experience with orthodontics—it had a huge impact on my self-esteem and self-confidence—I realized that I wanted to do the same for others.

- MaiAn Vu

SM: Where did you meet your partner and wife Dr. MaiAn Vu?

NC: I met my wife our freshman year of dental school. I told myself that I would keep a low profile at school, not making a name for myself or dating anyone in my

SM: You went to Siena College. What did you study there?

NC: I got my BA from Siena, in English. By the second semester of my sophomore year, I had decided that I wanted to go into dentistry. Figuring I would take enough science classes in dental school, and wanting to be a little more well rounded, I chose English Literature—a favorite of mine.
How do you acquire new patients?

SM: The field of dentistry is very competitive. It is where I grew up and a great place to be near family. I have always had an excellent reputation and a practice devoted to high quality dentistry. I purchased it because Dr. Trager had an office at 516 Vischer Ferry Road from Dr. Stephen Trager. I bought the practice at 516 Vischer Ferry Road in Clifton Park. Which practice did you purchase and why Clifton Park?

NC: I am a member of the American Dental Association, the New York State Dental Association, Saratoga County Dental Society, and the Fourth District Dental Society.

SM: Why does dentistry inspire you? What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

NC: Dentistry inspires me because it challenges me every day. Dentistry is constantly evolving and changing. Things that were standard ten years ago are now obsolete. It is interesting to see how far dentistry has come and how far it needs to go. Another thing I love about my job, although it is cliché, is helping people. Since most people don’t enjoy going to the dentist, gaining a patient’s trust is rewarding. Also, helping a patient obtain a smile they are proud of is a magical thing. When you help someone take pride in their smile, they gain a whole new level of confidence. When that happens, all the headaches are worth it.

SM: Your father, Dr. James Chauvin, is a practicing orthodontist in Clifton Park. What is the most important thing he has taught you about your business?

NC: My father has instilled in me the idea that being a professional is a privilege not to be taken for granted. He has taught me to be fair and understanding when it comes to their care they deserve, and we appreciate the confidence they have shown by referring their friends and family to us.

SM: At the end of the day, how do you relax and enjoy life since you and your wife are business partners?

NC: We are fortunate to have family we love to spend time with. I wish my brother and in-laws could be closer, but at the same time we do have a lot of family around us. We are also fortunate to have great friends in the area in our same field. Whether we are having wine tastings, skiing or playing tennis, we are usually on the move. Going out to dinner is always a favorite pastime, and we usually end up at Dine.

SM: Your family’s story is fascinating. Can you share some of your history with us?

NC: My family escaped from Vietnam in January 2010. My grandfather, Thong Vu, was the secretary of state of Vietnam. With the fall of Vietnam, anyone highly educated or of power was put into a re-education camp, which was like a prison. My parents planned to escape the country because they would rather die than live under communist rule. Their plan was to escape by boat in the middle of the night, but the man who promised to meet them never showed up. My parents waited at the dock and then jumped and hid in another man’s boat. When he returned, he threatened to
kick them off, holding them at gunpoint. They begged for their lives and to be taken to safety. The man ended up taking them to the Philippines, where they stayed prior to coming to the United States. My grandparents were too old to risk their lives and stayed behind. When my grandfather was finally released from prison, he and my grandmother were to join us in the states, but he died of surgical complications just prior to his move. Unfortunately, I was never able to meet him.

SM: Was it difficult for your parents, here in the states?

MV: It was difficult at first. They came to America with nothing, but my parents had both been educated at the University of Michigan before going back to Vietnam to get married. Their education enabled my mother to become a teacher while my father became the director of the Refugee and Assistance Program in Washington State.

SM: You come from a very successful, hardworking, and determined family. How have their experiences helped form your values and ethics?

MV: My parents led a very prominent life back in Vietnam. It took such courage for them to leave everything behind, including their family, to start a better life in America. They came to this country with nothing and have instilled in me the strong work ethic they needed to survive. Everything can be taken from you at any time. I have learned to never take anything for granted and to realize that anything is possible with hard work and perseverance.

SM: You have established a beautiful professional office in Saratoga Springs. Who is your target market?

MV: Nick and I have worked very hard to establish our practice in Saratoga. Our office was designed so that patients feel extremely comfortable from the minute they walk through the front door and throughout their treatment. We have state-of-the-art equipment—digital x-rays, intraoral cameras—and we are fully computerized in every operatory. We are a family practice and strive to provide the most excellent care and service to all of our patients.

SM: How have the child dental initiatives helped to educate parents, children, and families on the importance of dental health?

MV: It is never too early to instill good dental habits in young children or for parents to schedule a dental visit to learn proper oral hygiene for their children. Routine cleanings and exams allow the dentist to assess decay and other oral conditions that may affect a child’s overall health and well-being.

SM: What are your goals for your career at this point?

MV: I am always striving to become a better clinician. I am continually learning something new every day because every case and every patient is so unique. Both Nick and I take great pride in our work and our relationships with our patients, and we hope to continue to grow and excel in our careers.

SM: Where do you see your business in the next five years?

MV: I am confident that in five years we will be a thriving, well established practice with a great patient base. I know that we will have a strong reputation in the community as an office that treats patients with the care and respect they deserve. I am pleased that the wonderful patients we have continue to refer their friends and family to an office they know they can trust.

SM: How do you stay up-to-date with all the latest advancements in your field?

MV: Nick and I make it a priority to attend hours of continuing education every year to stay on the cutting edge of dentistry. We keep abreast of all current innovations in dentistry and stay up-to-date on all the latest procedures, products, and materials.

SM: How long have you been working in the dental field?

James Chauvin: I have been a practicing orthodontist for thirty-five years.

SM: Who influenced you to enter the dental field?

JC: My great uncle (my grandfather’s brother) was among the first dentists practicing orthodontics in New York State. I found orthodontics to be a very gratifying profession because of the positive physical and psychological changes you can make to an individual.

SM: You attended Siena for your undergraduate studies. Where did you study for your graduate work towards your doctorate?
JC: I attended the State University of New York School of Dentistry at Buffalo and continued my post doctorate work in the Department of Orthodontics.

SM: What made you decide to become an orthodontist?

JC: I saw and appreciated the changes an orthodontist could make to form and function. By improving esthetics, a person's self image and personal perception improves to the point of becoming more self-confident and positive about themselves.

SM: How much has the dental practice of today changed from when you first started?

JC: Technological advancements in brackets (braces) have significantly changed over the years. Braces can now be directly bonded to the teeth as opposed to being form fitted and hammered into place. Also, archwires alloyed with nickel, titanium, molybdenum, copper, etc... have replaced traditional stainless steel wires and significantly reduce friction and pressure, thereby reducing treatment times while increasing comfort.

SM: Has it always been your hope that your son Nicholas would follow in your footsteps?

JC: I am happy and gratified that Nicholas chose dentistry. I had always encouraged him to choose a profession that would fulfill him personally and professionally. His route to dentistry was somewhat circuitous. Nick, as I, has a BA in English from Siena College and his grandfather was a journalism major at Notre Dame before attending dental school at the University of Michigan. Though I did not pressure Nick to enter dentistry, once he made that choice he had my complete support and encouragement.

SM: Your family has been involved in dentistry for close to one-hundred years. What does that mean to you?

JC: I have a sense of pride and accomplishment that our family has served the community in a respected profession for so many years.

SM: Was your father able to see your son become a dentist and follow in the family tradition?

JC: Yes, my father attended Nick and MaiAn's graduation from Creighton University School of Dentistry. It was a proud moment in his life.

SM: What attributes have you seen in your son that proved he would be successful?

JC: Nick’s perseverance and determination. He pursues every endeavor vigorously and diligently.

SM: What does success mean to you?

JC: Treating people to the best of your ability to improve their quality of life. When parents send pictures of their children grown up at their graduations and weddings with perfect gleaming smiles—it is a wonderful thing.

SM: Corinne how have you and your husband raised such successful children? How have your different strengths contributed to their success?

Corinne Chauvin: My husband, Jim, always stressed the importance of academics whereas I always made sure the children were well rounded and cultivated. I’ve traveled with them and I have opened up new worlds for them. I have developed the other side of their lives that may have otherwise been left untapped. I think that using our different skill-sets, we have been able to provide an enriching and rewarding upbringing for our children.
SM: Corinne, why did you decide to go into the restaurant business?

CC: Dine was my favorite restaurant and when the previous owner expressed interest in selling, I became very interested. It was an easy transition since everyone stayed in place—manager, chef, waiters, and bartender. I always loved entertaining and now I could entertain five days a week.

SM: How would you describe the menu at Dine Restaurant?

CC: Interesting, innovative, and pleasing to the palate. Our menu is diversified and an experience for everyone. In addition to the menu, our chef offers many features each evening.

SM: Your cuisine has been called “global comfort food.” How would you explain this term?

CC: It is food that makes the soul feel good—dishes from around the world; old favorites brought to the 21st century.

SM: What is your mission for the restaurant?

CC: Our mission for the restaurant is to be the best we can at all times. Consistency is the most important thing in this business.

SM: What can a patron expect from their experience at Dine?

CC: Our guests can expect a restaurant with good energy, wonderful food, marvelous drinks and most importantly, friendly and professional service.

SM: You have introduced a new flair with an Italian Sunday feast. What will this experience entail?

CC: Our new Sunday menu is called Mulberry Street at Dine. We offer this menu every Sunday from 3-8 pm. The dishes prepared are wonderful Italian favorites from my kitchen. The meal is designed to bring special memories to our patrons with good old Italian home cooking.

SM: What makes your restaurant stand apart from others in the area?

CC: From the moment you walk in, you are made to feel comfortable and alive. We like every patron to leave with a desire to come back. We use a line from The Ritz Carlton—“We will make it happen.” No requests are ever given a negative. The one word we never use is “no.”

SM: What plans do you have for the future of Dine?

CC: To continue to bring the best ambience, food and drinks to our patrons, and to always go the extra mile for excellence.

SM: What new ventures are in the cards for the Chauvins?

CC: Grandchildren.

SM: As the matriarch of this successful family, what does success mean to you?

CC: The most important thing is family. As long as they are healthy and happy, I know I have been successful. The rest means nothing.
Dine Restaurant imbues all the best that is Saratoga Springs. From the superior cuisine, upscale décor and exemplary service, Saratoga gets no better than this. An evening at Dine is one of fine dining at its very best.

Refined with a sophisticated flair, Dine’s ambience is both upscale and comfortable. The restaurant is intimate, with soft taupe walls and oil paintings depicting Saratoga’s legendary horse racing fame. A hand blown glass objet d’art suspended from the center of the ceiling is the finishing touch to Dine’s understated elegant dining room.

Dine’s menu boasts American, Asian, French, and Italian dishes— a cuisine described as international comfort food. Chefs Keith Landry, Johnny Kosek, and Nelson Belanger have elevated comfort food to an entirely new level. Their menu includes such mouth-watering entrees as grilled pork chop with bourbon maple glaze, grilled filet mignon au poivre, baked cod filet with Asian sauce, and seafood fra diavolo, to name just a few.

As my companion and I perused the menu pondering the wonderful evening specials, we delighted in Dine’s spicy house-made breadsticks. To begin our evening of exceptional dining, I ordered the Dine salad and butternut squash bisque, while my companion chose the lump crabmeat cocktail. The verdant salad—baby greens, candied nuts, apricots, cranberries and aged gouda cheese, tossed with vinaigrette—danced in my mouth. The pairing of sweet candied nuts and apricots, tart cranberries, and pungent gouda was delightful.

Our feast at Dine would not have been complete without dessert. There were many sinful things to tempt my sweet tooth, but I opted for their crème brulee. After my first bite, I regretted telling my companion that I would share this luscious dessert. Creamy and rich, with the contrasting caramel topping served on a warm plate, this was crème brulee at its best. My decaffeinated coffee was as smooth as silk, and topped off my evening flawlessly.

We are fortunate to have some stand out restaurants in the Capital District, and I am lucky enough to have eaten in many of them. Dine is definitely a meal to write home about.

My butternut squash bisque—perfect on a chilly evening—was absolutely divine. Rich and velvety in texture, with a perfect hint of sweetness, this bisque was sublime. My companion’s jumbo lump crab cocktail was as fresh as can be. The intense sauce was an ideal complement to the sweet and succulent crab. A fabulous start to the meal—the anticipation for our entrees began to mount.

I selected the Chilean sea bass with fennel, apple and prosciutto. The flavors played off one another beautifully, and I relished in every bite. My companion chose cioppino, a special of the evening. This Italian fish stew was chock-full of shrimp, scallops, salmon, sea bass, and lobster. The saffron and tomato broth offset the seafood perfectly and served as the ideal dipping sauce for the accompanying crusty bread. This was definitely a meal to write home about.

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We are fortunate to have some stand out restaurants in the Capital District, and I am lucky enough to have eaten in many of them. Dine is consistently outstanding, and a definite favorite of mine. If you want to indulge in an evening of fine dining at its best, Dine is for you!
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Saratoga Office
403 Lake Avenue
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Clifton Park Office
516 Vischer Ferry Rd
Clifton Park, NY 12065
PH: (518) 371-2500

www.chauvindental.com