



Neimar Sartori

*Neimar Sartori spent a large portion of his childhood in the middle of the Amazon and didn't attend school until age 9. Now, he's an Ostrow faculty member and conducts groundbreaking research on dental restoration and materials.*

BY BETH NEWCOMB MPH '13

As a child, Neimar Sartori could have scarcely imagined he'd one day be living 5,000 miles away in the dense hustle and bustle of Los Angeles.

Sartori, an assistant professor of clinical dentistry at the Ostrow School of Dentistry, was born in São José do Cedro, a tiny town of 10,000 people in the south of Brazil. Two years later, Sartori's father took the opportunity to buy affordable farmland and moved the family north to Altamira.

Altamira is technically the biggest municipality in the world, covering an area of 62,334 square miles. However, the region was largely untouched when the Brazilian government began encouraging people such as Sartori's family to relocate and help develop it.

"We didn't have electricity or running water. We had to get water from the river," Sartori says of his family's home in the Amazon.

The family spent seven years on their farm, during which Sartori had no access to formal education.

"At the time, my parents had only an elementary education," he says. "They wanted me to study and at least finish high school."

At age 9, Sartori and his family moved back to São José do Cedro, where he attended school for the first time, enrolling in second grade.

During middle school and high school, the idea to become a dentist began forming in his mind.

Coincidentally, he had been honing his hand skills for years by drawing and helping his mother with tailoring work.

“I always liked to do very detailed work with my hands, and I thought about a career where I could combine the things I liked,” he says.

He also jokes that having fun while dressed as a dentist for a parade as a child helped a little bit too.

His parents encouraged him to apply to dental school, and he attended the Federal University of Santa Catarina School of Dentistry. During the dental program, he discovered his interest in esthetic dentistry.

“I was interested in how you could restore a tooth and not see the restoration,” Sartori says. “I found a real passion for this area.”

After graduating with his DDS degree, he completed a residency in advanced operative dentistry, a master’s degree and Ph.D. in dentistry focused on biomaterials. He first traveled to the United States to be a visiting scholar at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

It was there he met Sillas Duarte, who would become a mentor and close colleague. In addition to their Brazilian heritage, the two shared a research interest in the strength and longevity of bonded dental restorations and began working together.

In 2011, Duarte arrived at the Ostrow School of Dentistry and became the chair of the Division of Restorative Sciences and director of the Advanced Operative Dentistry Program. He continued to collaborate with Sartori, who was a visiting scholar at Ostrow in 2011.

Afterward, Sartori worked as a faculty member in Brazil before applying for a faculty position at Ostrow. He joined the dentistry faculty at USC in 2013 as an assistant professor in the Division of Restorative Sciences.

Today, Sartori continues to study bonded restorations, using advanced microscopy techniques to closely examine the interfaces between natural tooth structure and restorative materials after artificially aging the restoration. The striking resulting images reveal the tiniest weaknesses in the bonded interface, such as the points where moisture has seeped into the restoration.

“We want the restoration to survive as long as it can,” Sartori says. “We can simulate the restoration’s aging, simulate pulpal pressure and prove the bonding strength of these materials.”

Sartori also takes his lab research to the clinic, following patients who’ve been treated using different restorative techniques for several years and comparing the real-life results to the lab data.

In addition, he is an educator, serving as assistant director of the Advanced Operative Dentistry Program. He works with students and residents in preclinical courses and the clinic as well as the laboratory.

Sartori and his wife Lais Dalmagro Peruchi, whom he met while they were both in dental school, try to visit family in Brazil at least once a year. Here at USC, being a part of the Trojan Dental Family has been great, Sartori says.

“It’s a good environment here. We’re very happy,” he says. “I want to give my best to improve the quality of the university and foster the cutting edge of dentistry at USC.”

---

## Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

925 West 34th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0641  
(213) 740-2800

[Maps & Directions](#)

[Employment](#)

[Join Us](#)

[Follow Us](#)

[Wilson Dental Library](#)

[Intranet](#)

Website by: [USC Web Services](#)