

Tailor-made health care

MANY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS ARE APPROACHING SYMPTOMS IN A NEW WAY AND NOT REACTING WITH KNEE-JERK PRESCRIPTIONS. NEWPORT ORTHOPEDIC INSTITUTE IS A LOCAL LEADER IN THIS NEW WAVE OF PERSONALIZED CARE FOR PERSISTENT PROBLEMS.

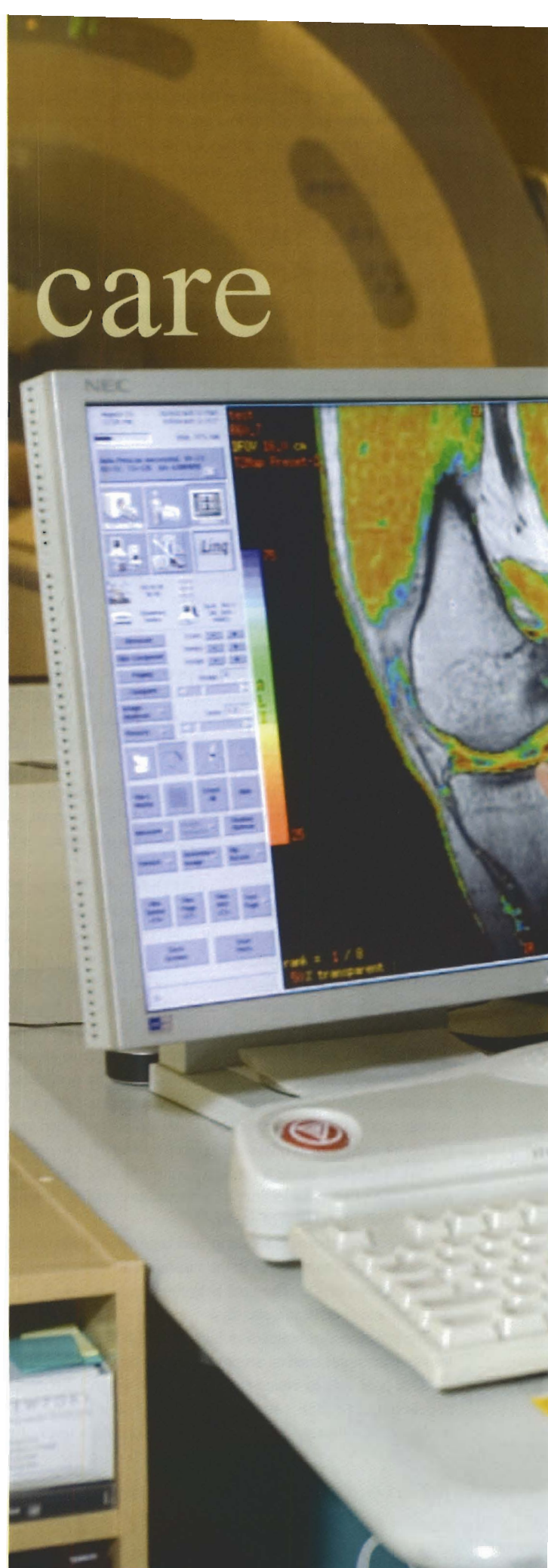
by Tina Borgatta

photography by Jason Wallis

Michael Barba had been an athlete for most of his life—he played sports as a kid, all through high school and college, and then played professional baseball for seven years as a pitcher. He ran marathons, sprinted up and down bleachers. Aches and pains were part of the game, and he never really gave it much thought.

Until he hit 30. That's when the pain in his right hip began to affect his level of activity—even the way he walked.

"I took anti-inflammatories, and Tylenol, and Advil," Barba says. "And then when those weren't working anymore, I went for a shot of cortisone. And then that didn't work."



By the time he hit 40, tasks as simple as driving and getting out of the car had become painful. "It had gotten to the point where I couldn't make it through one revolution on a stationary bike," he says. Sometimes it hurt to move—or even sleep. "Here I was, I'd been a professional athlete, and now my right leg was starting to atrophy, and I'm thinking, 'How did this happen?'"

Eight years later, Barba is a new man. He plays golf, goes to the gym—he even bicycles and says he "can ride forever now." The turning point came last year when a friend who is a neurologist told him about an orthopedic practice that shared the same building. It was called Newport Orthopedic Institute. Barba didn't know it at the time, but the practice had a team of doctors that specialized in every aspect of orthopedics—joint reconstruction, spine disorders, sports medicine, and doctors who specialized in back, foot and ankle, and hand surgery. It was there that Barba learned the cause of his pain and what he had to do to fix the problem.

He was told he had a displaced hip. It wasn't caused by an injury, though. Rather, it was something he was born with. "And all those years of playing sports and pushing off my hip wore down all the cartilage," he says.

He needed a total hip replacement.

It sounded drastic, but his orthopedist at the institute, Dr. James Caillouette, explained that the procedure could be done through a 4- to 6-inch incision on his backside, and that he should be able to go home within a few days of the operation. "I went from a walker to a cane relatively quickly," he says.

And now, a year later, he's pain-free. "I was on the beach the other day, and it hit me—I'm playing paddle ball, and walking normal, and doing things like I used to," he says. "My leg is muscular again—it's kind of like a little miracle."

But for the medical team at Newport Orthopedic Institute, it's simply good practice. And that means more than just herding people in and out of examinations and surgeries, focusing only on a knee, a hip or a hand, and never taking the time to really get to know the patient. Here, the team believes in caring for the whole person, not just the problem.

That's clear the moment you step into the group's new two-floor, 42,000-square-foot facility near Fashion Island in Newport Beach.

On a typical day, the practice sees about 500 patients and accommodates about 20 surgeries—many of which can be conducted on the premises, in the institute's four-room surgical center. But you won't see waiting rooms full of anxious clients. The institute is divided into specialty centers, each with its own waiting room and set of exam rooms.

"We wanted to create a medical facility that is calm and peaceful," says Victoria Lister, the institute's chief executive officer. "We wanted patients to walk in and kind of go, 'ah.'"

So the color scheme is soothing, and large windows in all the waiting areas and exam rooms invite in the sunshine and allow patients to enjoy the landscape outside. The goal is to lower anxiety, which in turn will help promote good health, she says.

The practice also believes in blending traditional medicine with alternative therapies such as acupuncture, massage and chiropractic care.

"Our goal was to create an institute that would be comprehensive and holistic, in that it would incorporate care beyond traditional medicine," Caillouette says. "We wanted to create a level of care that

didn't really exist for patients."

Roxanne Bailey underwent acupuncture, acupuncture and massage treatments through the institute before and after her knee replacement surgery in February.

"It really helped with a lot of the swelling issues and the pain management," she says.

Like Barba, Bailey had led an active lifestyle since childhood. She was an avid tennis player, and loved to run and ski. And little by little, the cartilage in her knee wore away, leaving nothing but bone and plenty of pain. By the time she sought care from Newport Orthopedic Institute, she was barely able to stand.

Now she can walk and stand any length of time and has returned to her active lifestyle. "I can be on my feet for hours," she says.

She also liked the fact that she didn't have to remind her doctor what her name was during each visit.

"They know your name, they recognize you when you come in," she says. "They smile, and acknowledge you, and know you've had knee surgery or whatever—whether it's the receptionist, the physician's assistants or the doctors. It's a very different feeling from other medical offices."

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It's that approach of treating the whole person, not just the problem, that sets the institute apart.

That, and the state of the art technology.

The institute has the latest in digital X-ray systems, which capture images in less than 10 seconds. The information is then transmitted to computer workstations in the institute's exam rooms.

There's also a high-speed, high-definition digital MRI on the premises that's faster and quieter than older models.

"We are a GE show site, so we have all the latest technology, and they look to us to educate doctors throughout the country on the use of that technology," Lister says. "So if they come out with something new, we are the first to get it."

Newport Orthopedic's team of specialists (there are currently 12 physicians and three master's degreed physician's assistants) moved into their new location in Corporate Plaza on Newport Center Drive in April of this year.

"We wanted a facility where everything is under one roof," Caillouette says. "We're still not there—we're close, but we see many things that we can still do to elevate our level of care."

For example, the practice is in the process of integrating its computer and digital archive systems with Hoag Hospital's, where the team conducts some of their more complicated surgeries. That way, the institute will be able to access X-rays and patient files that are at Hoag.

The institute is also putting the finishing touches on a physical therapy room that will feature Pilates and other equipment, and a shop where patients can purchase medical supplies such as knee and back braces, or walkers and canes. There's even a conference center with seating for 100 that will be used for video conferencing, physician training and community education.

And there's plenty of room to grow, which is exactly what the medical team intends to do. "We want to improve," Caillouette says, "year over year."

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—Tina Borgatta is the executive editor for *Orange Coast*.