



# Something to Smile About

The future is bright for those seeking perfect pearly whites. **By Denise Bates Enos**

**IT WASN'T TOO LONG AGO THAT A VISIT TO THE** dentist—aside from cleanings and X-rays—typically meant drilling and filling. Not so these days, says Dr. Adam Diasti of Coast Dental, which has 116 dental practices in Georgia and Florida, including Orlando. Today, “almost 50 percent of the dollars spent are related to cosmetic rather than treat and fix procedures.”

Diasti attributes the increase in cosmetic dentistry to a number of factors, including procedure innovations and an elevated awareness of the options available. He credits the ugly duckling-to-swan television show *Extreme Makeover* with getting the message out to millions of people. “Since that show, a lot of growth happened in that area,” he says. “It brought [cosmetic dentistry] home to a lot of people.”

“That certainly was a catalyst,” agrees Dr. Gary Michaelson, a dentist at the Alafaya Center

for Cosmetic and Family Dentistry. “That got things really rolling.”

That new level of awareness helped trigger the explosion in demand for cosmetic dentistry procedures, according to Dr. Mickey Bernstein, president of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. The AACD reported that cosmetic dentistry grew to a \$2.75 billion industry in 2007, a 15 percent increase over 2005. Bernstein says that teeth whitening is the most popular procedure, with tray whitening at an approximate cost of \$375 to \$600 and in-office “power bleaching” going for \$600 to \$1,000.

Porcelain veneers are another often-requested improvement, and one that yields good results, says Bernstein. “Porcelain veneers, including the newer ‘prepless’ variety, continue to be the best choice for most aesthetic concerns,” he says. Veneers, which cost around \$1,300 to \$3,000

per tooth, cover the existing tooth surface entirely; the thinner “prepless” variety, unlike traditional veneers, doesn’t require the removal of healthy tooth enamel to make room for the veneers.

Cheryl Moran, a patient of Dr. Katie Sheridan in Orlando, opted for prepless veneers to improve the look of her discolored and misaligned teeth. “My teeth were slightly crooked, and I couldn’t use a whitener because my teeth are very sensitive. So when I was in the chair one day I asked if there were other options,” says Moran.

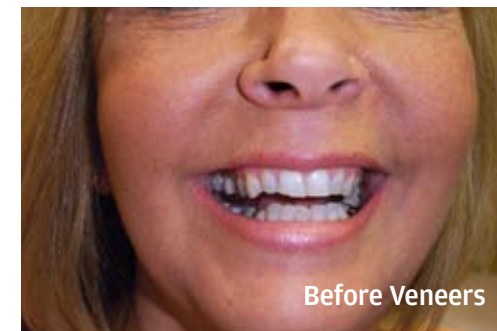
She’s very pleased with the results, which gave her teeth a whiter, straighter look. “They look marvelous.”

Bernstein credits digital technology as the greatest advancement in cosmetic dentistry. “Digital technology that makes restorations in one day is the latest development in cosmetic dentistry,” he says. “Digital impression systems are more accurate and don’t make a mess like the old restorations did.” The new digital

technology also eliminates the discomfort associated with the old molding compound-in-a-tray method. In addition, there isn’t the waiting or expense involved in sending the molds away to a dental lab.

Michaelson says that cosmetic dentistry is a good choice for anyone who wants a brighter, more attractive smile. “If they’re feeling as though they’re not portraying what they want when they smile, or they’re not smiling at all, then they should look into it,” he advises.

Nowadays, “patients have a lot more options,” says Diasti. “We used to only look at cavities and what’s broken. Dentists were educated to treat as doctors. So cosmetic dentistry—the emotional side of dentistry—was never our first priority. The pressure came from outside, and now we consider what we can do to improve the look of the tooth. Patients have decided they have one life to live and that’s the look they’re looking for.”



Before Veneers



After Veneers



Before Whitening



After Whitening

**Above: Veneers** dramatically transform dingy and crooked teeth  
**Below: Professional, in-office tooth bleaching** brightens and whitens

## How to Choose a Cosmetic Dentist

Dr. Mickey Bernstein, president of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, recommends looking for a dentist who holds qualifying credentials, including accreditation by the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. You can find an accredited dentist near you at [www.aacd.com](http://www.aacd.com).

Orlando dentist Dr. Gary Michaelson recommends visiting or calling dentists and asking if they perform the type of procedure you want. “Ask, ‘Have you done a lot of these, and can I see the results?’ Another easy thing to do is check their Web site,” he advises. “That’s critical; there should be pictures of the doctor’s own work, not stock photos.”