

# THE ART OF CREATING A BEAUTIFUL SMILE

It doesn't just happen. A beautiful smile comes together only with accurate treatment planning, correct smile design, a vision of the future, a well-trained dentist, and a great dental laboratory.

Crooked teeth, old ugly crowns, worn out teeth, large discolored fillings, dull white teeth—every day, thousands of people look in the mirror and desire a beautiful new smile. The public is increasingly aware of improved dental health and technology. At an ever-increasing rate, people are actually demanding elective cosmetic dental procedures to beautify their smiles.

There are two types of dentists—those that are just tooth doctors and those that are comprehensive doctors. Tooth doctors just see and treat those teeth that have obvious problems, like a defective and unaesthetic crown on tooth #8; whereas comprehensive doctors look at the entire mouth and not only

demands for both elective and non-elective procedures. This advanced training also extends to our lab technicians if we want to confidently provide our patients with what they are paying us to do for them. Another way to provide total dentistry to your patients is to find a mentor whose beliefs, clinical skills, and philosophy is of comprehensive patient care. For me, Dr. Dick Barnes, Dr. Rosh Nash, Dr. Larry Addleson, and Dr. Jeff Morley are just a few of the dentists I have extensively learned from over the last 20 years.

There are literally hundreds of different ideas and philosophies concerning smile design. From the principles of Bioesthetics to that of the Golden Proportion, smile design is customized for each person and should be personally designed by the dentist and confirmed by the lab technician. If dentists do not convey to the lab technician what is necessary to bring about a natural and proper smile design, the outcome will not be as ideal as it should. Your patients are paying you for the best possible result. Without your blueprints for your lab technician, the lab technician has no sure way of knowing what will ultimately be best for your patient.

To create an appropriate smile design for you patients, you should at least complete these design essentials:

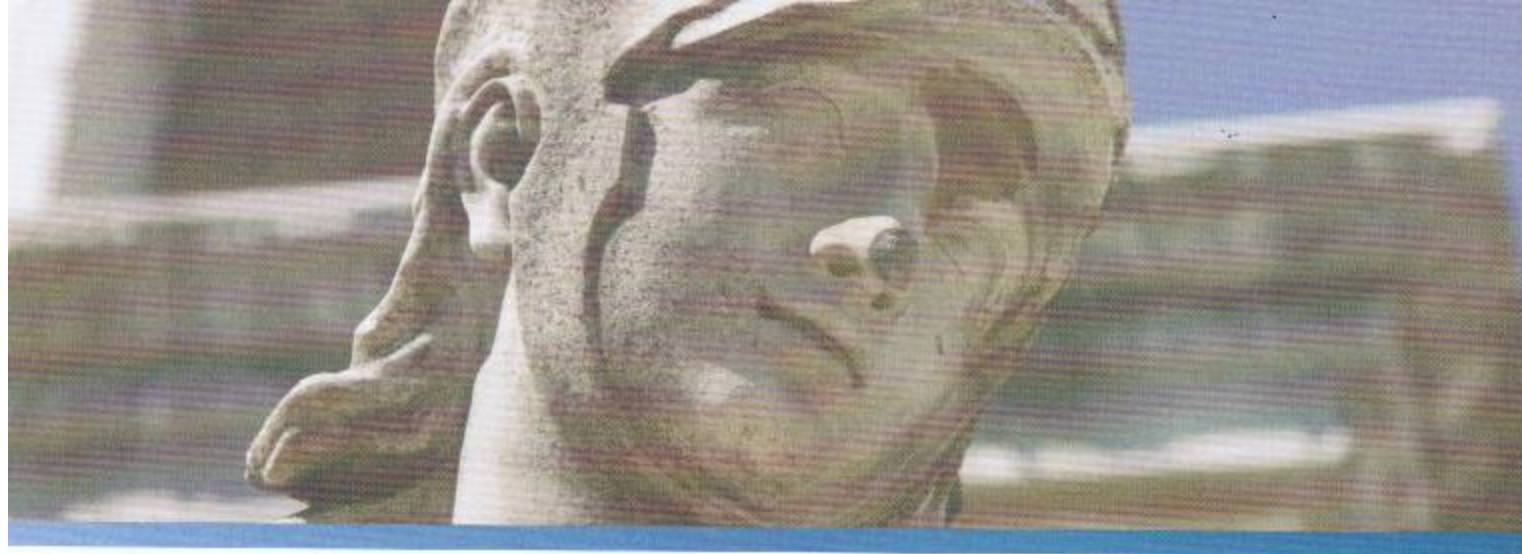
1. A complete dental examination including a TMJ evaluation and full mouth periodontal probings and charting for recession and mobility;
2. A complete set of dental radiographs with a TMJ series included if the patient has a history of TMJ dysfunction;
3. A complete set of dental pre-treatment photographs (the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry Accreditation Series is preferred) encompassing a full face view (1:10), front and side views of the patient's smile (1:2), retracted views of the patient's teeth closed together (1:2); retracted views of the upper and lower (if necessary) anterior teeth (1:1), and upper and lower full arch views (1:2);
4. Mounted study models on a semi-adjustable or fully adjustable articulator to be used for evaluation and diagnostic wax-up purposes;
5. Stick-bite registrations illustrating midline and horizontal positions;
6. A complete understanding of your patient's goals and

*It is important that a dentist find a lab technician and dental laboratory that have the talent to make vision reality.*

see this defective crown on tooth #8 but also see that tooth #9 has a worn down incisal edge, is slightly rotated, and has a lower facial gingival margin, as well as worn down incisal edges on both teeth #6 and #11 which has lead to the attrition on tooth #9. Both doctors' treatment plans will significantly differ based on what they not only see but also their level of clinical knowledge.

Dr. Dick Barnes has always stressed presenting comprehensive dentistry to all his patients. As a "Barnesified" dentist, I have found that this philosophy always works. But in order to become a comprehensive dentist, you have to be able to see conditions that are not always obvious. Continuing education courses and hands-on programs such as those offered and presented by Arrowhead Dental Lab help dentists to become more comprehensive oriented. Through these courses, dentists remarkably improve their skill levels and clinical knowledge, which ultimately benefits their patients. Dental publications such as *Aesthetic Dentistry*, *The Journal of the AACD*, *PFAD*, etc., are excellent additional sources of invaluable knowledge in this area that can further assist dentists (and lab technicians) in seeing the whole picture.

Advanced training is paramount to meet our patients'



what he/she wants to achieve; the challenges, if any, of your patient's current condition that will be changed; what type of restorative material(s) you want to use and the reasons for using that particular material; and the ease or difficulty of the final placement of those materials:

7. Consultation with your lab technician before the patient is scheduled for the prep appointment.

Another important part of creating a beautiful new smile is to have a vision of the end result before you physically touch your patient's teeth. Once you formulate this vision after listening to your patient's desires and goals, the end result is easy to achieve. This vision process, though, does not happen that easily. It takes years of experience to achieve and numerous restorative cases to perfect. This vision is also formulated by your lab technician's vision of what the case should ideally look like according to his or her technical ability and expertise. When both dentist and technician have the same vision, the end result will almost always exceed the patient's desires and goals.

It is important that a dentist find a lab technician and dental laboratory that have the talent to make vision reality. It is also important that dentists do not put saving money before what is best for their patients. When dentists use an inferior dental lab with lower fees to attempt to satisfy a patient's expectations, they are truly not doing what is best for their patients. Using a full-service, non-compromising dental laboratory like Arrowhead Dental Lab, with their highly skilled and highly trained personnel and lab technicians, allows dentists to reliably and predictably deliver outstanding results to their patients. When both the dentist and lab technician communicate during the entire process, the final outcome will surely be exceptional.

With these five aspects: accurate treatment planning, correct smile design, a vision of the future, a well-trained dentist, and a great dental laboratory, the art of creating a beautiful smile happens flawlessly. ■

*Dr. Nelson Y. Howard graduated from the UCLA School of Dentistry in 1986 and in 1987 completed a General Practice Residency Program at the V.A. Medical Center in West Los Angeles, California. He has been involved in the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD) since 1996 and in 1999, became the first dentist in the entire north San Diego*

*area to be awarded accreditation status. He is one of approximately 245 dentists in the world to achieve this recognition. Dr. Howard practices the full scope of cosmetic, functional, and restorative dentistry at the Center for Advanced Cosmetic Dentistry in San Marcos, California where he has specialized in cosmetic and esthetic dentistry since 1988.*

## Harmony of Beautiful Smiles

Examples of beautiful smiles with the aspects of accurate treatment planning, correct smile design, a vision of the future, a well-trained dentist, and a great dental laboratory in complete harmony:

