

# Makeover

For fall, nothing beats the made-to-measure smile  
By Suzanne Boyd

## MOUTH TO MOUTH

Man at work:  
I'm all smiles  
while getting  
my new smile



So don't be offended that I'm asking you the same question." Other problems Dr. Soll notices with my less-than-stellar smile: my teeth—or, I should say, veneers—aren't in proportion to the shape of my face, they are too short for the length of my face and my height (I'm between 6' and 6' 2", depending on my heels) and they are Chiclet-thick and opaque, but sans the Chiclet's winning whiteness. Plus, my gums desperately need a manicure.

Yikes! Talk about adding injury to insult. But in order to achieve the close-up-ready, supermodel-meets-silver-screen-goddess smile that should have been my birthright, I would have to submit to the ministrations of a gum surgeon. "The gums are like the smile's frame, so you have to have a good one or the teeth won't look as good as they could," says Dr. Soll, which reminds me of the time I ruined a perfectly gorgeous painting with a garish gold frame. The problem with *my* frame, aka my top gum line, is that there is excess gum tissue and, instead of curving daintily around each tooth, it slopes down in a ragged line over the tops of my teeth. This not only makes my smile, and therefore my face, more asymmetrical than it actually is but it also takes away the illusion of length that my teeth so desperately need.

So it was that on my next visit to Dr. Soll's office—which I love because they all wear Madonna-like Blond

**A short and not-altogether** attractive history of my teeth: a knocked-out incisor and a broken front tooth at age 9—don't ask. A gold front tooth—very Nelly—and a gaping hole to its right the next morning. Braces at 11, 15 and again at 27. Jaw surgery at 28 to break and reset my TMJ-distorted jawline, followed by a wired-shut mouth for six weeks. And, finally, just in time for my 29th birthday, six porcelain veneers on the front top teeth. Which brings us to the point of this story: 10 years on, there's no more drama, but the veneers are definitely tired—and if they looked tired, then so did I. Let's just say there was some slippage, leaving a gap between the gum line and where the veneers had slid to, that showed my real teeth. As I said, not attractive.

When I realized the extent of the horror after inadvertently smiling into a mirror in broad daylight one afternoon, I naturally rushed down to the

office of *FLARE's* style-solver, Dr. H. She recommended Dr. Jordan Soll. Why? "I am familiar with his work and know that, on a personal level, he is an awesome guy," she said. Dr. Soll has been practising dentistry since 1986 and 60 percent of his business is cosmetic. "But will he give me awesome teeth?" I asked.

"I know you, Suz, and if Jordan's own smile is any indication, you'll be drilled."

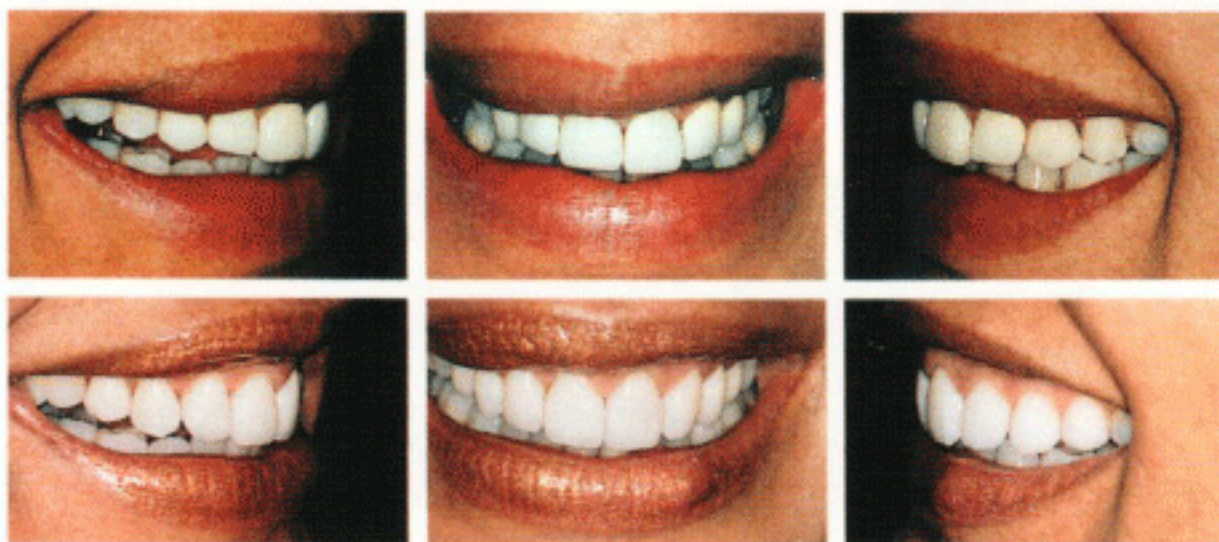
When I finally make the trek to Dr. Soll's Aesthetics in Dentistry practice in Toronto, I am definitely thrilled with his smile but, funny enough, he doesn't return the compliment. "You know, I was surprised my wife gave me a second date," he says, as his trusty Level II dental assistant, Maria Simonetta, looks on in her stylish Simon Chang uniform, "because on our first date, I asked her if she knew that one of her front teeth was longer than the other.



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Vive la difference: (Left to right) Bad—the before; better—during, after gum surgery and in the temporary veneers; best—after, the stellar final results



(Top) The teeth I came in with; (bottom) perfection is mine—the final visit

Ambition headsets—I found myself listening to Elton John, my mouth a piñata with needles full of freezing, its numbing level controlled by computer, no less, as the artist, Dr. Livia Silvestri, formerly known as the gum surgeon, reshapes my gums into shapely submission with a scalpel. The experience wasn't as horrible as it sounds. Even after the drugs wore off, the pain was negligible and the stitches were barely noticeable, falling away within days. And the two-month healing period was also worked into the reno—I was packed off with a whitening kit, all the better to get my bottom teeth ready to match the blinding glory of my top-ones-to-be.

"Livia did a beautiful job," Dr. Soll murmurs approvingly on my next visit, about eight weeks later. I'm extremely happy that I took his advice and opted for the gum surgery. Even though more of my teeth's real enamel under the veneers was exposed during this time and, from what I can see of my teeth,

they're even less of a pretty sight than I thought (more on that later), my gums look neat, contained and, if at all possible, younger. I guess contouring isn't just for cheekbones.

But this is a semi-big day. At my first visit, when I shared the humiliating fantasy that I would, one day, wake up with Christy Turlington's smile, Dr. Soll gently broke the news that I could not be a smile doppelgänger, as even manmade smiles are supremely individual. They do, after all, have to be based on one's own facial structure. But, I was very much cheered up when, on my following visit, Dr. Soll presented me with my very own Model Teeth—a diagnostic wax-up based on impressions of what my smile could look like in the end—and I forgot about Christy Turlington forever. Today, the ideal would be halfway to reality, as the old veneers would come off and be replaced with temporary ones. This is a necessary step: although the lab technician could create better-looking temps based on the wax-up,

creating the finals without any telltale bulkiness required that the old covered ones be measured. After my old veneers are replaced by the temps, we also pick the colour for my final veneers. I apply the lip gloss that I wear every day as Maria holds up faux teeth mounted on a wire one by one against my smile. The goal is to avoid what Dr. Soll hilariously terms "American Standard porcelain toilet-bowl white." We compare yellow whites to grey whites and, as it dawns on me why the Inuit have numerous words for snow, we finally settle on one that flatters my skin tone and brightens my face. Meanwhile, I've fallen in love with the temps. I keep smiling into the mirror and really can't envision the finals looking any better. "Make sure you come back," Dr. Soll jokes.

I return the following week for the grand finale. My virginal veneers lay chastely in wait. Dr. Soll removes the temps. Halfway through, I ask for the mirror. The horror, the horror, as I am confronted by the snagged, gapped slivers that are my actual teeth. I shriek at Paul Alexander, the photographer documenting the proceedings, to stop taking pictures. He continues anyway. My new porcelain veneers are mercifully placed. Dr. H and makeup artist extraordinaire Shelley Lashley have a look—Dr. Soll suggested that people I know well and trust on aesthetics should join us for a last yea or nay before everything is cemented down. And it's a big yea for the new-and-improved version of me. We go outside into the light. I smile. I hold up the mirror and am amazed. Not only do my new teeth nestle perfectly into my gums but they are also translucent and ridged—more natural than I could have imagined. They are longer than my previous Chiclets without being horsey. They are even elegant. This is a heightened reality that I can live with. I haven't stopped smiling since. ■

*For more information, contact Aesthetics in Dentistry at (416) 789-1372. For a cosmetic dentist in your area, ask your regular dentist for a referral.*