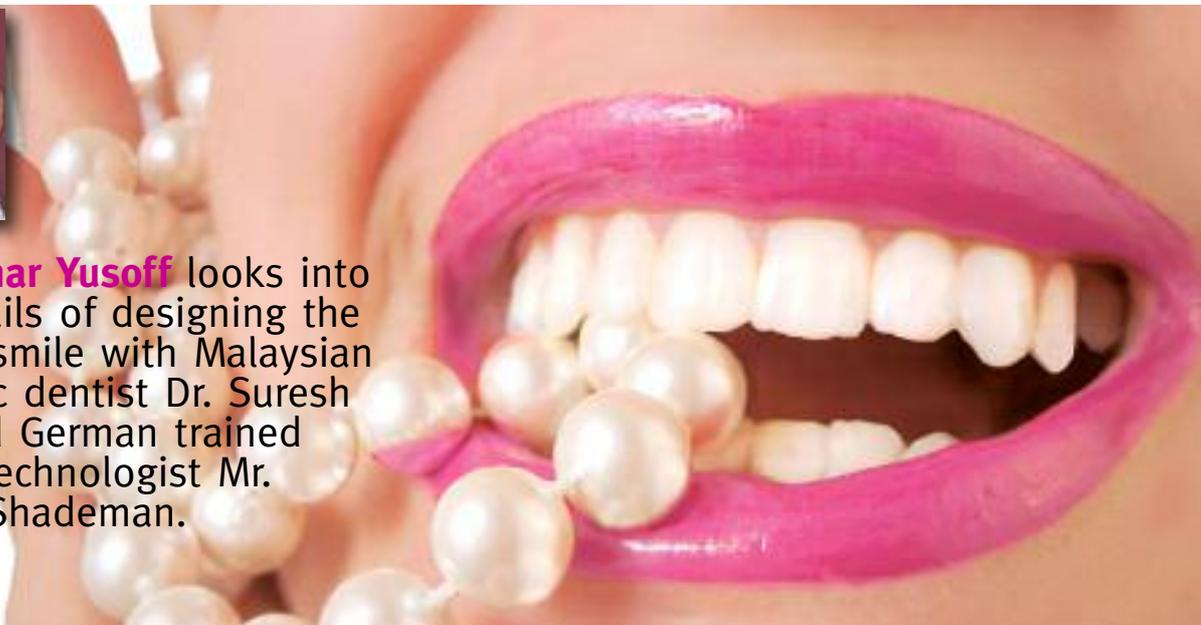


A DESIGNER SMILE



Nur Akmar Yusoff looks into the details of designing the perfect smile with Malaysian cosmetic dentist Dr. Suresh Nair and German trained dental technologist Mr. Nasser Shademan.



W advancements in cosmetic dentistry, it is now possible to have custom-made teeth designed to suit not only your face, age and gender, but your lifestyle and profession too.

This is possible through the Oral Museum, a unique concept with great emphasis on orofacial (relating to the mouth and face) smile design and fine art restorative dentistry. The concept provides greater technical possibilities for aesthetic dentists worldwide to achieve three dimensional smile designs in harmony with individual facial forms, skin colour, gender characteristics, as well as individual desirable smile characteristics.

“We customise the smile according to patients’ own features and character needs. If a patient shows us a photo of a smile that they desire, we note the factors that attracted the patient to that smile, dissect its essence and reproduce the same effect on him or her,” says Malaysian cosmetic dentist Dr. Suresh Nair, who specialises in placing veneers (thin layer of restorative materials that cover the teeth’s front surface) and crowns (tooth-shaped caps which completely cover the teeth).

“While the effect would please the patient when she compares the two smiles, they would definitely differ in dimension and position. The most important part in a situation like this is to provide the patient with a good ‘trial smile’ that they take back with them to ‘test drive’.”

German trained dental technologist Mr. Nasser Shademan, who is the founder of Oral Museum and works closely with Dr. Suresh, adds, “The most important feature of the concept is that the dentist and dental technologist work side by side through every stage of the process, something that is rarely found in most practices. This ensures that we give the best results to the patients.”

TRIAL SMILE

First, patients are evaluated for their oral and general health. Once they are in the clear, the dental technologist (with some assistance from the dentist) draws three to 12 sketches of the possible smiles. From these sketches, patients can choose a few smiles that they like and a ‘trial smile’ based on these will be prepared by using wax on a model to mimic the desired arrangement of teeth. Based on these, temporary veneers or crowns are created; these are made from acrylic or resin, resembling the final teeth design in shape and colour.

Once these trial teeth are fitted into the mouth, the patient can assess their look and request to modify the size, shape or colour of the teeth, giving them the chance to select the best and most pleasing design. This way, the results are predictable and patients are allowed to participate positively in the whole design process. Dr. Suresh says these trial teeth can be done immediately in the dentist’s office, and patients are able to leave on the same day with their ‘trial smiles’.

FINAL LOOK

Once the design of the teeth is accepted, the final, long-term porcelain veneers or crowns are constructed, a process which takes around two weeks to complete. During this waiting period, patients are able to eat, drink and brush as usual with their trial teeth although Dr. Suresh advises them not to bite on hard foods such as nuts to prevent fracture of the trial teeth.

According to Dr. Suresh, the final results of the long-term teeth are much better than the trial smile because the porcelain is finely crafted to reflect natural characteristics like colour, translucencies, surface features and textures.

“It takes a keen artistic ability to craft the porcelain to look

natural instead of looking opaque, flat and featureless. With Oral Museum, the choice of material, the layering technique (which can be up to 25 layers of porcelain) and the balance between design and tooth health allows the creation of beautiful and natural looking smiles,” adds Mr. Nasser.

THE ORAL MUSEUM SMILE

According to Mr. Nasser, there are three major characteristics in an Oral Museum smile.

“The first is ‘elegant’ which gives a more mature and respected appearance, like an “I’m in charge” type of look. The next is ‘youthful’, which provides a younger, more vibrant smile that gives a softer and friendlier appearance. The last characteristic is ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’. This trait can be designed either way depending on the patients’ features or needs. Designs at the extremes can be created — where the look can be very male or female. Or there can be a blend of both to create the desired look. For example, if a man wants a friendlier appearance, the male characteristics are toned down and one or two feminine characteristics can be introduced.”

Dr. Suresh adds that patients can request a combination of all three characteristics and an appropriate design can be made. The following are two classic cases highlighted by Dr. Suresh and Mr. Nasser.



lighter colour was given to bring out a clean and bright look. The teeth’s surface was also given more character with subtle lines and features in contrast to the worn and smooth surface in aged teeth. We designed the teeth’s shape to be finer with softer lines and curves on the surface and edges.

Once the final design was completed, we replaced all the existing crowns with our long-term crowns that mimic all the characteristics mentioned above.

Results:

The patient was happy with her new look and she was more confident to smile fully. She felt that the shape of her smile was very pleasing and attractive and she was pleased that it looked natural. Later, we were told that people around her could not tell that something had been placed on her teeth because it looked very much a part of her.

FEMININE AND YOUTHFUL SMILE

Problem:

This patient felt unhappy with her teeth because she thought they made her look older. She had existing crowns on all of her front teeth, which appeared unnatural and did not suit her. One of the issues we found was that the patient’s teeth were too ‘even’, which gave her an aged appearance. As we age, our teeth get worn down, causing them all to appear to be the same length. The two upper



front teeth (central incisors) should be slightly longer than the adjacent teeth (lateral incisors) – these are the markers of a ‘young smile’.

Furthermore, the rigid arrangement and the teeth’s squarish profile give a more masculine appearance to the patient. The shape of the individual’s teeth is edgy with abrupt lines and the surface appears worn and smooth. Feminine teeth are all about curves and subtlety – the edges are more rounded and less abrupt, and the teeth’s size and surface have finer finishes.

Solution:

Ultimately, the patient wanted teeth that made her look more feminine, youthful, soft and friendly. For the ‘trial smile’, we arranged the temporary teeth to be in harmony with the curvature of the lips, which resulted in a fuller smile. To give a more youthful appearance, the front two teeth were modified in width and a



MASCULINE AND ELEGANT SMILE

Problem:

Due to excessive wear, this patient’s teeth were badly worn out. His teeth simply could not be seen and he also had issues with chewing along with aches in his jaw joints, neck and shoulders.



Loss of teeth or worn teeth at the back can cause this overclosure, giving rise to chewing problems as well as making a person appear older. Since he works as a business executive, his job entails meeting a lot of people, so appearance is very important to him. It is a challenge to give a nice smile to him without any visual aid but,

fortunately, the Oral Museum technique gives us the advantage of designing a trial smile, which can be immediately tried on.

Solution:

The patient wanted to give the impression of seriousness and a mature, responsible look while still retaining a friendly appearance, so he opted for a masculine and elegant smile. In this case, the masculine characteristics of bold surface features, less curves and more edges to the teeth are employed. The sharper, more prominent canines contribute to this as well. A bright colour was chosen and natural characteristics like lines, colour and translucencies are used on the surface to give a more mature appearance.



The shape, size and designs on his teeth also took into account his facial features, general body shape and limbs because there is a certain individual formula in each person that is in harmony with his general appearance. To restore his teeth, we constructed a combination of crowns and porcelain veneers for the patient.



Results:

The lips are now supported by the new teeth, which contribute to a nicer, fuller smile.

The length of his face is pleasingly restored because of work done on the back teeth to restore his bite. When comparing the before and after photos, it is easy to see the position of the chin and the harmony between the upper and lower part of the face.

The patient was delighted because it had been a while since he could smile and show his teeth. He felt that the smile made him look good and more approachable – he is more confident in meeting people now. He is also chewing and biting much better now and the aches and pains have disappeared as a result of the improvement in his bite.

POST-OPERATIVE CARE

After the procedure, patients may feel some heat and cold sensitivity which can last from between a day to a week, but Dr. Suresh assures that this rarely occurs. The patient then has to replace the veneers or crowns every 10 to 15 years, depending on the amount of "wear and tear" they are exposed to, personal mouth-related habits (like biting the fingernails) and how well patients follow good oral hygiene practices. To maintain the long-term lifespan of

THE MAN BEHIND THE (FABRICATED) SMILE

Mr. Nasser Shademan is a German-trained dental technologist and founder of the Oral Museum concept. He talks about his role as a dental technologist.



A dental technologist fabricates dental prosthetics, including bridges, crowns and veneers to ultimately fix a smile. This is a collaboration with the dentist – we work together and design smiles that not only appear natural but also function in a safe, natural way. It is important that the dentist and dental technologist sit side by side with the patient. It allows me to really listen to the patient's problems and understand what he or she wants. When the dentist promises a specific type of smile for the patient, I will give my input on which technique or material is more suitable to serve the beauty of that smile because I will be the one making the fabrication. I am involved in every single step of the process – I am there during the initial consultation until the fabrications are placed in the patients.

This way, we avoid miscommunication and the blame-game. In most places, the dental technologist is not by the dentist and patient's side, so he cannot see and evaluate the patient for himself. This can lead to trouble – if the fabrication doesn't fit, the dentist and dental technologist will blame each other. Many dental technologists and dentists don't apply this chair-side assistance because they feel threatened; they're afraid that patients think they don't know how to do their jobs. This mentality has to change. In order for a dental technologist to be successful, you need to attend international courses and be up to date with the technology and continue studying. Most importantly, you need to work with a dentist that allows you to be part of the team.

the veneers and crowns, Dr. Suresh advises to follow these steps:

"Firstly, patients must brush, rinse and floss their teeth three times a day. For those who frequently grind their teeth at night, they must wear night guards to prevent the mouldings from getting damaged. I also provide patients with certain toothpastes to reduce tooth decay. Finally, patients must remember that they have porcelain in their mouths, so they need to avoid eating brittle food like hard biscuits."

Patients are also recommended to come every six months for maintenance, which involves bite evaluation and cleaning the teeth.

COST

High aesthetic crowns and veneers made by a master dental technician may vary in cost but are about RM4,000 per tooth.

"Eight to 10 teeth are usually involved in a smile makeover, especially if the colour needs to be changed dramatically. It all really depends on who is crafting it because creating beauty and artistic talent go hand in hand," adds Dr. Suresh. 🌐