



A supermodel smile like Elite model Cameron Russell's can transform your looks

BECOME THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD { NO SURGERY REQUIRED }

Higher cheekbones without a knife, plumper lips without filler, brighter eyes without incisions, a straighter nose without the scalpel and a smoother forehead without Botox. Sound good? Welcome to the smiley, happy world of facial aesthetic dentistry

Words by LOUISE NICHOL
Photography by JASON LLOYD-EVANS

His gaze fixes on my mouth as soft candlelight flickers against dove grey walls, illuminating the keys to a new Ferrari 458 which lie discarded on the table.

"I've been wanting to do this since I met you," purrs the handsome 33-year-old in a finely-tailored Brioni suit, a smile dancing off perfect teeth as he advances slowly.

Before checking whether you have accidentally strayed into the pages of a Mills & Boon novel, I should explain that the Ferrari is actually parked outside a dentist's office discreetly nestled in the upper east side of Manhattan and the man in the Italian suit has a string of letters after his name denoting him to be a medical professional and not the hero of a romance novel. Unless instruments of pain are your thing, it's unlikely that a trip to the dentist will turn into an amorous adventure. At least that's what I thought before walking into the elegant salon-style reception of the Rosenthal Apa Group in New York. From the champagne-scented amenities in each bathroom to the sound track of throbbing dance beats coming over the Bose sound system, the dental group's Manhattan base has more in common with a sceney cocktail lounge than the destination for drilling and filling that I grew up dreading in England.

I first encountered the Brioni-wearing half of the practice, Dr Michael Apa, at his Dubai surgery in Dr Michael's Dental Clinic in Umm Suqeim just weeks before our rendezvous in New York. Until that meeting I'd resigned myself to okay-ish teeth, the sort were never going to stop Julia Roberts from eating, praying or loving, but weren't so bad as to warrant the kind of invasive action I (wrongly as it turns out) assumed would be required to bring them up to Hollywood standards. It was only after Dr Apa had managed to get me horizontal and deftly started painting over my existing teeth using white filling paste to show me what they could look like, that I realised a supermodel smile was not only possible, it could be relatively painless too (not to mention all kinds of pretty).

Unlike most cosmetic dentistry, Dr Apa doesn't set out to create identikit symmetrical smiles; his focus is on creating teeth that "disappear within your face". Implanting a dental textbook set of gnashers onto features that are anything less than Natasha Poly-perfect will only draw attention to unnaturally even teeth and exaggerate your face's imperfections. Yikes. So, where regular cosmetic dentists rely on a ceramicist to design and create veneers, Dr Apa photographs his patients' faces from every conceivable angle (using an impressive array of cameras and flashes) and then, in true da Vinci style, he takes a pen and divides the face up into idealised proportions, even taking into account variables that occur across ethnic groups. Once the grid is in place he is easily able to identify a droopy left eyelid or a raised right nostril and thus create a set of teeth that rebalances his patient's entire facial structure. "Teeth are like light bulbs on the face," he explains, "I tie symmetry into features using teeth and taking into account colour, position, shape and light. This way I can raise a cheekbone or enhance the proportion of a lip." For instance, adding a 1mm veneer to back molars will plump out the front of your cheeks by 3mm for an instant youth-over. In my case, correcting a single wonky front tooth in my bottom jaw (something that never bothered me as it's not visible in photographs when I'm smiling), would eliminate a dark shadow that draws the eye off-centre when I speak and enhances asymmetry, according to Dr Apa. When he tells me this, the realisation dawns that his isn't the 'tell me what you don't like about yourself' school of cosmetic nips and tucks; it is an exceptionally informed, subtle and artistic approach to completely redesigning your face.

Fast forward to New York and a hastily-arranged appointment just 10 days before I'm due to walk up the aisle back in England. Dr Apa has promised a set of veneers which (I'm hoping) will compensate for the nose job I always vowed to have (but never got around to) before getting married. (Oh, and if he could somehow manage to make my enormous forehead and pudgy cheeks appear less so, I'd be ever so grateful.) ▶

PHOTOGRAPHS OF CAMERON RUSSELL BACKSTAGE AT BALMAIN AW'10 FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY

The Rosenthal Apa Group office, decorated with framed glossy magazines signed by grateful patients including actress Chloë Sevigny and cover girls with mile-wide smiles such as Vicky Andren and May Anderson (Dr Apa is on speed dial for bookers at Elite Model Management), is a stone's throw from chi-chi Manhattan hotels The Carlyle and The Mark and surrounded by the sort of shops (Carolina Herrera, J Mendel) that project you into *Gossip Girl* fantasy land.

It's a sleepy Saturday morning in steamy July but Jacqueline, the practice's uber-elegant yet reassuringly maternal manager, is on hand to allay nerves and answer questions. With a DVD of *The Notebook* under way (I'm getting married in under a fortnight so I figure emotional immersion is the best way to ignore the weird sensation of local anaesthesia that's seizing my gums), Dr Apa – who is slickly suited despite the off-duty hour – and his assistant Cathy get to work cleaning and filing my teeth. Trying to ignore the delicate plumes of smoke that waft upwards as he uses a

“I LOOK YOUNGER, AND THINNER – PRINCESSY”

Dr Apa designs teeth in the context of an entire face

needlepoint-fine laser to shape the tops of my gums into perfect scallops, I am immensely grateful for the physical numbing of said anaesthetic and the mental distraction of Rachel McAdams' romantic plight. But before the movie can reach its teary dénouement, a temporary set of veneers, created from moulds taken in Dubai at our initial meeting, is in place *et voilà!* With strict instructions from Jackie to avoid darkly pigmented, sticky, chewy or crunchy foods and armed with floss, mouthwash by The Natural Dentist, gum gel and a baby-soft toothbrush, I'm released into the world with a near-perfect smile in place. Two days later and it's back for a half-hour appointment where Dr Apa fine-tunes the temporaries, whittling away areas and building up others, using the parameters of my features and constantly referring to the 'before' polaroids, to finalise his design within the framework of my face.

In truth, wearing the temporary veneer, which is actually one solid piece of plastic designed to look like separate teeth, is the least pleasant part of the experience. But it's oh-so-worth it when, just four days after my first New York appointment, during another DVD session (*West Side Story* in case you're interested), the final porcelain veneers are fitted, including one on the bottom to mask that errant wonky tooth.

It's hard to pinpoint exactly how he does it, but from pouring over the before and after shots of his patients and witnessing my own transformation, it's clear that Dr Apa has developed the skill not only to make women look younger, thinner and prettier, but also more elegant and refined. Princessy, even.

Beyond the sports car and the bespoke suits, Dr Apa is a man women fall in love with because he makes them more beautiful. Not even my husband can argue with a romance like that. ■

FASHION'S FAVOURITE SMILE-MAKER

When it comes to your face, ready-to-wear isn't an option. Dentistry just turned couture



Dr Michael Apa is the man making women beautiful (without the need for cosmetic surgery)

Fashion changes, but ideals of beauty remain constant. Which is why, in a post-Chanel cruise show haze, I ask Dr Apa whether he could create a Georgia May Jagger-style pronounced space between my two front teeth. It worked for Brigitte Bardot. “I have never seen a gap that I like,” frowns the doctor disapprovingly. Of course, I know I ain't no Brigitte, or Georgia for that matter. But in the same way I am aware that autumn's high-waisted trousers are only going to enhance my problem tummy, yet am still about to fork out megabucks for a camel Chloé pair, I can't help coveting the delicious Miss Jagger's gorgeous gap-toothed pout, even though all that excess air between my front two teeth will undoubtedly look vile. Fortunately, Dr Apa delivers a line in beauty-making that is even more seductive than Chanel's latest orthodontically-challenged model.

Unlike its anacronym, FAD, Facial Aesthetic Dentistry doesn't kow-tow to fleeting fashion trends. In fact it doesn't submit to any form of standardisation as each patient gets a custom-designed set of teeth, making FAD the dentistry equivalent of a bespoke suit.



Like many haute couture creations, a stunning smile can be priceless, as front-rowers Natalia Vodianova and Jessica Alba showed during the recent July shows (inset below). While Jess and Natalia might not be clients of Dr Apa, their face-complementing dentistry adheres to his principle that one size does not fit all and sometimes flaws (see Natalia's gummy grin) can enhance individual beauty. Dr Apa cites Jessica's teeth as perfection but cautions that it's not an ideal that suits everyone. As with the handcrafted details of couture clothing, the world's best dental veneers will mirror minute variances in colour and texture that occur naturally, making them imperfectly perfect. A gap, though? That's a flaw too far. And so I'm convinced to leave the spacey smiles to Georgia and Brigitte. But as for those Chloé trousers, well that's another story.

Dr Michael Apa is at Dr Michael's Dental Clinic in Umm Suqeim, Dubai from September 23 to October 3. Porcelain veneers from Dhs11,000 each. Email jpastore@rosenthalapagr.p com or call +971 4 394 9433.



REALITY BITES...

THE AUTHOR (LEFT) AFTER HAVING DR APA'S TREATMENT “In my iPhone's photo cache is a single frame of the before and after polaroids lying side-by-side that Dr Apa took of me. It's astounding to see how the addition of porcelain veneers has streamlined my entire face. Whereas my chin used to slant off at an angle to the right, now it appears in line with my nose. Even my fatter right cheek matches the volume in my left, both with mirror-image dimples. I only regret not doing it sooner.”