

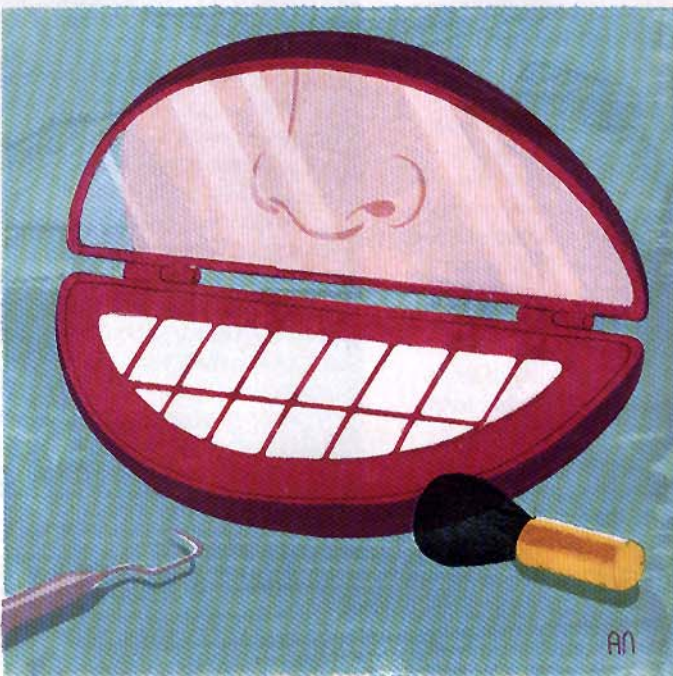
MILLION DOLLAR SMILE

BY KAREN SPRINGEN

KENDALL RAMIREZ, 34, always felt self-conscious about her teeth, which she thought were too wide and masculine-looking. So before her wedding five years ago, the Dallas marketing consultant splurged on MAC veneers, paying about \$15,000 to cover her 10 top front teeth with porcelain. She was so happy with the results that, last year, she went back and had her bottom set bleached. The result: a bright, rounded, more feminine smile. "It was worth every penny," she says.

Ramirez is part of a new era in dentistry that goes far beyond fighting cavities. With the vast majority of celebrities sporting blinding-white smiles, and shows like "Extreme Make-over" bringing da Vinci veneers to Everyman, Americans have grown tooth-obsessed. As a result, dentists are performing about twice as many cosmetic procedures as they were just three years ago, estimates Cleveland dentist Matthew Messina, the American Dental Association's consumer adviser. And companies have sprung up to offer special financing for those who'd like to remodel their mouths. Tempted? Here's a primer on the most popular procedures:

Veneers. At \$1,000 to \$2,000 per tooth, it's the most expensive option but the best way to improve the shape of your teeth. (One downside: veneers may need to be replaced every 10 years or so.) A dentist typically grinds down your tooth enamel, then glues on a custom-made



GETTING THAT TOM CRUISE GRIN

Tempted by cosmetic dentistry? Here are some tips to chew over before opening your big mouth.

- **Ask for photos.** Make sure your dentist shows you pictures of his own work.
- **Speak your mind.** If you don't want big teeth, say so.
- **Test-drive.** Ask for a set of temporaries so you can preview your future.

porcelain shell. To save money, you can buy veneers for just the top six to 10 "smile zone" teeth and bond or bleach the rest. Don't go too white or you'll end up looking like Wayne Newton, who had a special color made so his audience could see his mouth from the back of the concert hall. To avoid the horse look, tell your dentist explicitly

that you don't want big teeth, and ask for "temporaries"—resin mock-ups that mimic the smile you'll end up with.

Bonding. This technique involves a plasticlike resin instead of porcelain, and dentists perform it "freehand" in the mouth. It's excellent for smaller work, such as fixing a chip. But, unlike veneers, it can't be used to reshape or whiten a broad surface. It also costs a comparatively low \$300 to \$700 per tooth.

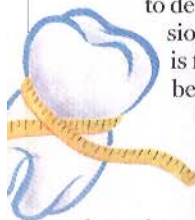
Bleaching. A good option for people who don't need to straighten or reshape their teeth. Peroxide bubbles out some—but not all—stains that collect within tooth enamel. (Ask your dentist ahead of time if bleaching will fix a particular blemish you're concerned about.) Typically, custom-molded bleaching trays—worn at home for an



TipSheet

hour a day for two weeks—cost \$300 to \$500 and can get your teeth five to eight shades whiter.

Those in need of instant gratification can turn to “power whitening,” which takes only one hour in the dentist’s office and uses a light-activated peroxide gel. The treatment—under brand names like Brite-Smile, Zoom! and Rembrandt—typically costs \$600 to \$1,000 and can get patients 10 to 12 shades lighter, says Messina. Over-the-counter products like Crest Whitestrips Premium (seven-day treatment course for \$34.99) are a good place to start when you’re trying



to decide if professional bleaching is for you. But be wary of store-bought bleaching trays, which can make it tricky to

keep the gel spread evenly.

Before you jump into the dentist’s chair, do your homework. Not all practitioners are equally trained in esthetic techniques, so check their credentials, which may include membership in an association like the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (aacd.org). Ask to see before-and-after photos of their patients—not generic ones of another dentist’s work. And think about payment. Companies like Enhance Patient Financing (enhancefinance.com) offer loans for cosmetic dentistry similar to car loans, except that interest rates are higher because there’s no collateral. (You can’t repossess dental work.) And remember, a little bit can go a long way. “Not everyone needs an extreme makeover,” says Messina. “Small changes may make a big difference.”



ROAD TEST | LAND ROVER LR3 SE

WORTH THE CLAMS

Land Rover describes its new LR3 as “architectural.” It’s also fun, with a tailgate that closes like a clamshell. Inside, the cabin is so vertically spacious, even those over six feet will have room to spare, and its signature stadium-style second row allows back-seat passengers two extra inches of headroom. I also like the three glass sunroofs that illuminate the interior front and back. On the road, the LR3 handles well, with four-wheel drive and standard six-speed automatic transmission.

Good power comes from a 4.4-liter V-8 engine that bangs out 300 horses. Taking a cue from its design, this all-terrain cruiser, with traction settings for mud, grass and sand, is made just for that beach clambake.

—TARA WEINGARTEN

Tip: The HSE model bumps up the perks, like DVD navigation, for \$5,000 more.

Land Rover LR3

18-inch wheels;
dual-zone climate controls;
14mpg city/18 hwy

\$44,995

landrover.com

To watch a video review, log on to Newsweek.com on MSNBC and click on TIP SHEET.

MEDICINE

IT CUTS BOTH WAYS

AS IF YOU DON’T HAVE enough to worry about when you’re going under the knife, hospitals are getting a failing grade in infection control. According to a new study in the Archives of Surgery, nearly 44 percent of some 34,000 surgical patients across the country did not receive antibiotics within 60 minutes of surgery. That one-hour target is considered a gold standard in the prevention of surgical-site infections, or SSIs, which affect 300,000 of the estimated 2 million Americans who pick up hospital-acquired infections each year. Though most

patients received antibiotics, the drugs were given “too late or too early,” says lead author Dr. Dale Bratzler of the Oklahoma Foundation for Medical Quality. Such errors can lead to staph infections, which then result in pro-

