

Making that smile a little brighter

By Christopher Muther
GLOBE STAFF

Like rhinoplasty and liposuction, a pricey, \$1,600-a-tooth veneer is becoming de rigueur among the high-profile residents of New York and Los Angeles. The flat white veneers of the past have been replaced by porcelain teeth that are constructed in layers to reflect light in the same way that human teeth do, only more attractively. The veneers are also popular among Boston's power players. The difference is that Bostonians, it seems, don't like talking about their cosmetic procedures.

"In Boston, we have some well-known names," says Dr. Thomas Connelly, a cosmetic dentist who practices in a well-appointed office in the Back Bay. "But the people in Boston really don't want anyone to know their names. The majority of the high-profile clients we have in Boston are CEOs, and they're men. Maybe that's taboo for men to talk about having a cosmetic procedure."

Whether people in Boston are talking about it or not, Connelly's cosmetic dentistry practice is booming. He recently announced a partnership with New York celebrity dentists Marc Lowenberg and Gregg Lituchy, and shortly after his appointment calendar was swamped with patients booking consultations.

Lowenberg and Lituchy are best known for their work on "Extreme Makeover" and have appeared on "Oprah" and "The View." Their patients include Heidi Klum, Chris Rock, and Naomi Campbell. The New York dentists will travel to Boston about once a month to consult with Connelly on cases beginning next week.

Connelly hopes to bring the Bostonians who travel to New York for stealth cosmetic dentistry back to Boston with his new partnership. But the union is also a clever way to create some buzz around a subject that many conservative Bostonians would prefer to sweep under the carpet.

"Quite frankly, it's easier getting recognition in New York," says Lowenberg. "Because it's something that's

more out in the open [in New York]. People talk about it, and we've gotten a lot of publicity here because we work with so many celebrities. It's much more low-key in Boston and I think people don't talk about cosmetic procedures there the same way they do in New York and LA."

Connelly, who wears French cuff shirts and races cars in his spare time, has designed a space to appeal to people who have the means to splurge on high-end veneers. The reception area resembles a pricey Back Bay study with a plasma television. He has teamed with a spa to offer services such as massage and acupuncture while patients are going through the lengthy process of getting their new veneers.

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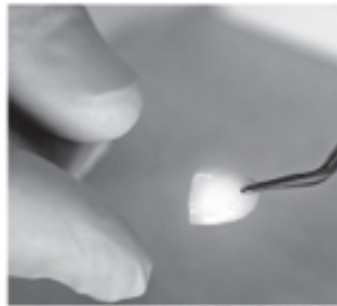
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While most of Connelly's patients are hesitant to chat about the work they've had done, Dr. Brian Wascavage can't seem to say enough. The 40-year-old podiatrist was friends with Connelly just six months when the dentist suggested that he should have his teeth worked on. Wascavage says he seldom smiled because his teeth were very small, and his gumline was very prominent. He even had a girlfriend in college who called him "Chiclet teeth" because his teeth resembled the small gum.

"We were at Wachusett Mountain snowboarding, and Tom said 'I have to tell you Brian, your teeth are a mess.' I think he used the words train wreck," Wascavage says. "But he was right. I never smiled, even in my wedding pictures I'm not smiling."

Wascavage had 10 veneers placed over the Chiclet teeth and he smiles broadly. Connelly thinks his friend now resembles a soap opera star.

"I realize people are less willing to talk about cosmetic procedures here," says Wascavage. "But I have no problem with it. It's just like any procedure, but in this case I ended up gaining a great deal of confidence."



PHOTOS BY DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

Dr. Thomas Connelly (top), a cosmetic dentist in the Back Bay, has seen a rise in demand for high-end tooth veneers. The procedure (above) costs \$1,600 per tooth. The porcelain veneers (above right) reflect light like human teeth do.