

# Tricks of the Trade for a Great Smile

**Even husbands and wives can have differing ideas about the perfect smile. Whether the issue is function or fabulous, or both, the right dentist can make it happen.**

When a patient's bite is misaligned, teeth can become worn down, resulting in a decrease in function and cosmetic integrity. Fortunately, for many patients like Frank and Dot Bombaci, teeth can be restored long-term.

The Bombacis first relocated to Florida from Long Island in 2004. At the time, confides Frank, he realized he needed to find a good dentist: "I had a lot of fillings and my gums were bleeding."

So, after reading an article about Stephen G. Blank, DDS, who practices cosmetic and functional dentistry in Port St. Lucie, the retiree scheduled an appointment.

He says that Dr. Blank and his staff were fantastic: "They are all very pleasant, and Dr. Blank is so informative, particularly in comparison to other



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## Stephen Blank, DDS

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### The results

"Good treatment planning sets up the sound tooth structure necessary for a healthy mouth," notes Dr. Blank, "which is critical to feeling good and to long-lasting dental work."

"Dental cases can be either functionally or cosmetically driven. In Frank's case, it was functionally driven. He wanted to prevent food from getting pressed between his teeth and irritating his gums, and he didn't want his teeth to be subjected to any more cracking or breaking."

"Our treatment was to remove all of Frank's huge, old fillings, any cavities under them, and replace the old fillings with bonded, tooth-colored materials," reviews Dr. Blank. "Then, over the top of that, we restored his teeth with all-ceramic, individual crowns. We treated all of his teeth in order to restore their shape and build up their height to the point they had been before the wear pattern began."

Using Tekscan's digital T-Scan III, which reveals both the timing of the teeth's contacts and their intensity, Dr. Blank notes that he was able to adjust Frank's bite until it was balanced and even: "This computerized analysis system

digitally displays a patient's bite on a computer screen. Once the patient bites on a sensor, we are able to see the bite on the screen so that I can work with my patient to achieve a more comfortable bite."

In this case, Dr. Blank was able to change Frank's bite by restoring all of his teeth. The T-Scan verifies the results and allows the patient to participate in the final results. Once Dr. Blank had Frank's mouth functioning properly, he was then able to complete the dentistry.



**Both Dot and Frank are happy with their dynamic smile makeovers.**

"My teeth look perfect," marvels Frank. "Everybody rants and raves about them. They look fantastic, and they function much better. Plus, it's been several years now, and they've really stood up well with time. I've had no problems at all."

### In the meantime...

"Back in 2005, when I first met the Bombacis, Dot's mouth was in better condition than Frank's was, although some wear patterns were present on her teeth," remembers Dr. Blank. "Her front teeth were showing square corners forming because of the enamel wearing down,

which exposed some of her dentin."

As enamel is worn off, the dentin layer, which is the yellow-brown substance that lies under the enamel and protects the innermost part of the tooth, is revealed, explains Dr. Blank: "This is like an M&M where the candy coating is gone, exposing the softer chocolate center. Once the dentin is exposed, the wear continues faster and faster. Dentin wears down between five and eight times more rapidly than enamel. Without the protective layer of enamel, teeth continue to darken and age faster than the patient."

In spite of her excellent dental maintenance, Dot's teeth continued to grow more fragile over the next six years, she says: "I decided to have Dr. Blank take care of them before it became worse."

Dot's treatment began with a smile design visit on June 22, 2011. As he does with all of his patients, he took impressions, photographs, and measurements of her teeth.

Using resin, he shaped her teeth and created an ideal new occlusion for better harmony in the bite. He mounted study models on his articulator, which is a chewing simulator. He evaluated her bite in the laboratory, where he doesn't have the patient's tongue, cheeks, or lips in the way, and using the T-scan, he digitally tuned it.

"Dot's goal was to have a very natural smile," recalls Dr. Blank. "She wasn't going after a *Hollywood* smile, so in designing her crowns we only lengthened her teeth back to where they had been originally, and improved their color with a light, natural touch."

Dr. Blank restored Dot's teeth using all-porcelain crowns made out of e-Max, a type of porcelain that is extremely durable, but also very translucent, which allows a lot of color and light to come through.

"Traditionally, in order to get the strength required, especially for back teeth, crowns were made of porcelain

fused to metal, or all-gold crowns," reflects Dr. Blank. "Unfortunately, they do not allow light transmission through the tooth, so the crowns have a rather chalky, opaque look."

"However, today's e-Max porcelain crowns are both strong and good-looking."

Dot admits she is very pleased with her results: "My bite had a little bit of shifting before, but it's very comfortable now. I didn't want to have what would have amounted to a neon sign that said, *Look, I had dental work done*, and these crowns don't. They look very natural, which is just what I wanted."

Dot says she appreciates how very thorough Dr. Blank is, both in his general dentistry and in his cosmetic work: "We've been seeing him consistently throughout the last six years for our checkups, and I've always been impressed with him. He explains everything. He takes his time, and he answers any questions either of us might have."

"He also seems to keep up with all the new technology," adds Frank.

Dr. Blank confides that he is pleased to be able to offer his patients such high-tech, specialized equipment: "It enables us to diminish the pattern of wear from misalignment by establishing, and then maintaining, a bite position that is more harmonious for my patients." **FHCN—Kris Kline**



**Stephen G. Blank, DDS**, is a 1982 graduate of Northwestern University Dental School in Chicago. He has since completed intensive continuing education studies. Dr. Blank has studied TMJ under Mark Piper, MD, DMD, at the Piper Education and Research Center. He has completed the course continuum at the Dawson Center for Advanced Dental Studies. Dr. Blank was a clinical instructor with the Hornbrook Group, teaching dentists from all parts of the country in live, hands-on courses on the various aspects of smile design, occlusion, full mouth reconstruction, and complete patient care. He is a facilitator/mentor with the Dental Boot Camp program. Dr. Blank enjoys teaching dental teams around the country.

### Gold Medal Winner

Dr. Blank was awarded gold medals by the Florida Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (FACD) Scientific Session competition, which is designed to reward excellence in clinical cosmetic dentistry. The FACD is an organization devoted to seeking improvements in the science and art of cosmetic dentistry.

### SNAP Instant Dental Imaging

Dr. Blank and his staff look forward to meeting the readers of *Florida Health Care News*. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call (772) 878-7348. His office is located at 184 NW Central Park Plaza in Port St. Lucie. Call today for a complimentary cosmetic consultation, including SNAP instant dental imaging, so you can see your new smile before you make any decisions.



**Scan the QR code for Dr. Blank's contact information.**

Dr. Blank invites you to visit his website at [www.PSLDENTIST.com](http://www.PSLDENTIST.com).