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During Awards Season, A Dazzling Smile On The Red Carpet Is Pretty Equal To Wearing The Perfect Dress

By Alice Short | December 18, 2016



In the coming weeks, many of us will immerse ourselves in one of the most important rituals of Western culture — the parade of beauty, luxury and name-dropping that fuels Hollywood’s red carpet season.

We will sit, mesmerized, as red carpet co-hosts at the [Golden Globe Awards](#), the Grammys, the [Screen Actors Guild Awards](#) and the Oscars interrogate some of the world’s most famous people in the hope of gaining crucial insight on style and glamour. We will hear mention of venerable designers and up-and-comers, vintage couture and investment-worthy accessories.

However, it’s unlikely that anyone will be prepared to ask — or answer — questions about one of the most noteworthy requirements of the celebrity age — having a dazzling smile.

Too intimate? Too mundane? TMI? Perhaps. But the art of cosmetic dentistry is key to looking good on the red carpet. This awards season, the most important accessory may very well be a beautifully crafted set of porcelain veneers.

Dr. Kevin Sands says he is “slammed” during awards season. His list of celebrity clients includes [Robert Downey Jr.](#), members of the extended Kardashian clan (earlier this

year, Kim Snapchatted a video of an emergency trip to Sands' office for a chipped tooth), Charlie Sheen, [Miley Cyrus](#), Justin Bieber and members of the Clippers.

“It’s bananas,” says the Beverly Hills-based dentist. There are chips and cracks to repair. In addition, he says, “Everyone wants to at least have their teeth whitened before the big event. They’re doing all their Botox and everything else, and the teeth are the most important thing because the smile is the first thing you look at.”

Awards show swag bags provide more evidence of a growing smile obsession. Bags distributed at this year’s Emmy Awards included \$600 worth of free teeth cleaning and root canal work, while the 2015 Grammy bags included \$200 worth of “porcelain veneer toothpaste.” In 2015, Oscar nominees were given bags with a rechargeable toothbrush and \$250 worth of toothpaste and, in 2014, the ESPY Awards swag bag included a home whitening kit.

The cost of those items, of course, pales in comparison to the possibility of shelling out tens of thousands of dollars for a new set of veneers, but it’s an indication that teeth matter — even if they aren’t trending on social media.

And more important, they really matter on the red carpet.

“Being red carpet ready? Yeah, that’s important for working actors and people in the public spotlight,” says [Dr. Bill Dorfman](#), the Century City-based dentist who is a household name thanks to his appearances on ABC’s “Extreme Makeover” and the syndicated talk show “The Doctors.” “Their photos go all over the world. ... Look at Donald Trump. He had a veneer on every tooth.”

In America, if you don’t have a nice smile, people think there is something wrong with you.— Dr. Bill Dorfman,
celebrity dentist

And it’s not only celebrities who sit in the chair for extensive dental repair. Dorfman, who has worked with Katy Perry (he created the diamond-studded grill she sported in her “Dark Horse” video), Anthony Hopkins, Kelly Osbourne, Usher and Hugh Jackman, puts it this way: “In America, if you don’t have a nice smile, people think there is something wrong with you.”



According to L.A.-area dentists, bonding, veneers and whitening are some of the top requested dental procedures that patients are inquiring about.

Dr. Jack Ringer, a past president (and an accredited fellow) of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, references academic research on the importance of the smile.

“Several years ago, psychologists did a study on the physical attractiveness phenomenon,” says Ringer, who has a dental practice in Anaheim Hills. “They analyzed humans all over the world, irrespective of race, creed and sex, to determine what humans deemed most important when determining physical attractiveness. It was broken down that the head was No.1. ... When they broke the head down, the mouth had a slight edge on the eyes.”

And, Ringer adds, cosmetic dentistry is a little more dependable than, well, other procedures. “You can modify the teeth very predictably compared to a nose job or face-lifts,” he says.

What’s more, the desire for a sensational smile has taken hold in the culture at large. Last year, cosmetic dentistry generated an estimated \$16 billion in revenue in the U.S. The most common procedures? Bonding, veneers and whitening.

And a trip to the dentist can get pricey. Although Ringer estimates that the average price nationwide for veneers is between \$1,000 and \$2,000 per tooth, Sands says a client can spend up to \$100,000 on a full set of veneers. “People,” he adds, “want to look right.”

Some dentists, including Sands, have their own labs and employ ceramicists with whom they work, side by side, to ensure that each veneer — each tooth — is natural and beautiful. Porcelain veneers, Sands says, are “like couture, like making a fine handbag or a Rolls-Royce.”

All the dental experts interviewed for this story emphasized planning, blueprints and modeling for patients who hope to remake their mouths.

Says Dorfman, “I have my own lab and my own technician in my office. She’s been with me for 20 years.” The process, he explains, is complex and time-consuming if done properly. “You have to paint the teeth and add in all the little characterizations,” Dorfman says. “One of the other goals is to have the right amount of transparency. Teeth that are very opaque are not very natural.”

Perfect teeth, sometimes referred to as Chiclets, stand out — and not in a good way. “The problem with some of the Hollywood smiles is that too many people think bright white makes your teeth look good,” says Ringer. “White is the last thing. It’s shape, and then, translucency.”

That’s all well and good when the work is done in a manner that allows for planning and modeling and refining. But what about those dental emergencies that could derail a red carpet appearance?

“They will call me at 3 a.m.,” says Dorfman. “There is no celebrity in the world who would walk the red carpet with a broken tooth.”

<http://www.latimes.com/fashion/la-ig-dental-glam-20161212-story.html>