

Restoring Smiles, Changing Lives

By creating brilliant and confident smiles, **Dr. Nicole M. Armour** helps patients realize the best possible versions of themselves. *by* PHIL GIANFICARO

Actual Patient*

Despite having attained the pinnacle of his career, a strong relationship with his loving family, and a healthy active lifestyle, one gentleman remarked, “After 60 years, strangers are suddenly looking at me, smiling, and making eye contact.”

Since his smile makeover with Dr. Nicole M. Armour, he is experiencing how much a healthy smile and confidence projects and is perceived by others.

When Dr. Armour started assisting for her own dentist more than 20 years ago, she envisioned offering uniquely tailored and artistic services to change lives in a tangible way. Dr. Armour pursued rigorous studies at Bryn Mawr College, University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine, and Harvard Dental School Residency. She then served as clinical faculty at Harvard while practicing in Boston. She returned to Pennsylvania to be closer to her extended family and raise her children in Bucks County. She now practices general and cosmetic dentistry in Newtown. We sat down with her to learn more about the aesthetic aspect of her practice.

Can you walk me through the process of getting to the final smile makeover result?

It starts with an initial consult. I've observed that everyone wants a healthy or attractive smile: men, women, younger, older, everyone. They deserve to have someone listen, free of

judgment. Let's start from scratch and move forward. A standard treatment course proceeds as follows:

Consult No. 1: The first step is a consultation where I listen to your goals. I provide some options for treatment, estimated treatment investment, and share my completed cases that most resemble yours.

Consult No. 2: We continue planning with data collection—impression for 3D teeth models, digital photographs, review of radiographs and oral health—refining the treatment plan, and answering your questions. After studying this data and the individual contours of your facial proportions, I create a wax design of the proposed teeth.

Treatment No. 1: This is the longest appointment and, for larger cases, can take hours. Teeth are prepared for the new restorations, molds taken, and temporary provisional teeth based upon proposed design of final teeth are placed. You will have the opportunity to comment on the initial teeth design and request changes. Preparatory treatment like orthodontics, gum lift, or implant placement with one of my trusted specialist referrals may be indicated before this step. Gum tissue

health may dictate the need for a second appointment for the molds.

Treatment No. 2: Try-in dental restorations for your approval. Any requested changes are communicated with the ceramist.

Treatment No. 3: Deliver restorations. From start to finish, a smile makeover may be complete within just two months, but some can take longer depending on the need for additional steps.

Dr. Nicole M. Armour





No two smile makeovers ever look alike.

How do you make a crown or veneer blend in with your surrounding teeth or create a full smile of veneers that look like natural teeth?

This is absolutely dependent on partnering with a master ceramist to hand-make custom porcelain crowns or veneers following a more labor-intensive, sensitive process than a typical crown or veneer fabrication. I provide my ceramist with a series of detailed digital photographs documenting the shade, texture, translu-



Custom porcelain blending with surrounding teeth

ency, and subtle characteristics of the teeth. We often "try in" the restorations before final steps of lab completion to verify details. This kind of treatment really can't be rushed as there are no corners that can be cut.

What is a normal investment in a smile makeover?

Almost anything is possible in dentistry with the right time, money, and effort. Finances are an important consideration in treatment planning. Cosmetic treatment investment ranges from conservative changes under \$1,000 (whitening, minor teeth reshaping, or bonding) to \$5,000 to \$15,000 (a smile makeover with veneers and crowns) to \$15,000 to \$25,000 plus (full arch cases, extensive implant reconstructive cases, cases treating both top and bottom teeth).

My practice model is designed to deliver on your investment. I work hard to grow a practice based upon reputation that does not have to sell. This means that I am able to do what is best for each patient, and many times my honest recommendation will be more conservative than the patient's requested treatment.

How do you stay up to date in your field of dentistry?

When I started working in dentistry, dentists had to wait for a monthly journal publication, attend occasional study club or continuing education meetings, or we were limited by our local network of dentists to learn. As of just five years ago, technology has advanced dentistry at an unprecedented pace. While still maintaining a solid network of local trusted professionals and traditional learning methods, I now belong to several networks of more than 50,000 dentists from around the country who are sharing tips, techniques, and evidence-based studies. Chances are, even if I haven't seen something in my own office, I've seen it somewhere else or can research how to manage it more extensively than ever before. By expanding my network, my practice and techniques have progressed

at a lightning pace, which ultimately benefits my patients.



Revision case

What advice do you give someone looking for a smile makeover?

Do your research. Find out who did your friend's beautiful case. Look through photographs of a dentist's completed cases. Go for an opinion and even a second opinion. When I do revision cases, I cringe when I have to cut off recently completed dental work or even remove teeth that were mistreated beyond repair. It happens. It's hard to go through that twice. Careful communication and planning with the right clinician will get you the result you are looking for.

Dr. Armour's practice offers most aspects of general dentistry from tooth-colored fillings, bonding, crowns, and periodontal deep cleaning to cosmetic and reconstructive treatment including veneers and implant restorations. ■

Dr. Armour head shot by Juraga Photography; all other photography by Dr. Armour

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