

How to Choose a Cosmetic Dentist for a Smile Makeover Near You

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Description:

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Details:

A smile makeover is one of the most personal investments you can make. Unlike a routine check-up or a filling, cosmetic dentistry is about how you look, how you feel, and how confidently you present yourself to the world. The stakes are high — a great result can be genuinely transformative, while a poor result can leave you worse off than when you started.

Choosing the right cosmetic dentist is therefore not just about finding someone who offers veneers or whitening. It is about finding a clinician with the artistic eye, technical skill, and communication ability to deliver a result that looks natural, functions properly, and lasts for years. If you are based in Melbourne's suburbs, this guide will help you make that choice with confidence.

What Does a Smile Makeover Actually Involve?

A smile makeover is not a single treatment — it is a personalised combination of cosmetic procedures designed to transform the appearance of your smile. Depending on your goals and starting point, a makeover might include:

- **Porcelain veneers** — thin shells of porcelain bonded to the front of your teeth to change their shape, size, colour, and alignment - **Composite bonding** — tooth-coloured resin applied and sculpted directly onto teeth to correct chips, gaps, and minor misalignment - **Teeth whitening** — professional-grade bleaching (in-chair or take-home) to brighten your natural tooth colour - **Clear aligners (Invisalign)** — straightening teeth before or as part of cosmetic treatment - **Crowns and bridges** — restoring damaged or missing teeth with natural-looking porcelain - **Gum contouring** — reshaping the gum line to improve proportions and symmetry - **Dental implants** — replacing missing teeth with permanent, natural-looking restorations

The best cosmetic dentists do not just offer these treatments individually — they integrate them into a coordinated plan that considers your facial proportions, lip line, gum symmetry, tooth colour, and overall aesthetic goals.

Six Criteria for Choosing a Cosmetic Dentist

1. Look for a Genuine Cosmetic Focus — Not Just a Service Listing

Almost every dental practice lists cosmetic dentistry on their website. But there is a significant difference between a dentist who occasionally places a veneer and one who has built their clinical practice around cosmetic outcomes.

When evaluating a cosmetic dentist, look for:

- **A portfolio of before-and-after cases** — ideally their own work, not stock images. Ask to see cases similar to what you are hoping to achieve. - **Specific cosmetic training** — postgraduate courses in veneers, bonding, smile design, or aesthetic dentistry beyond the basic dental degree - **An understanding of facial aesthetics** — the best cosmetic dentists consider your entire face, not just your teeth in isolation - **Materials expertise** — knowing when to use porcelain versus composite, and which laboratory to trust with the fabrication

At Core Dental, several clinicians have developed strong cosmetic portfolios. Dr Jacalyn Madden (Southbank) has a particular passion for cosmetic dentistry, with training in Invisalign, CEREC same-day restorations, composite bonding, and porcelain veneers. Her eye for fine detail makes her a natural fit for smile makeover cases.

Dr Anchal Verma (Southbank), also a Clinical Lecturer at the University of Melbourne, brings extensive experience in Invisalign, composite bonding, veneers, crowns, and bridges. Her combination of academic rigour and clinical artistry means patients receive treatment grounded in the latest evidence and aesthetic principles.

Dr Sally Joseph (Southbank) is passionate about cosmetic and preventive dentistry, while Dr Darren Manoharan (Wyndham) has built a practice specialising in cosmetic and orthodontic dentistry, offering a comprehensive approach to smile transformation.

2. Insist on a Detailed Consultation and Treatment Plan

A smile makeover is not something you should decide on in a single appointment. A quality consultation involves:

- **A thorough dental examination** — including digital X-rays, intraoral photographs, and an oral cancer screening — to ensure your teeth and gums are healthy enough for cosmetic work - **A conversation about your goals** — what do you want to change? What does your ideal smile look like? What concerns you about your current smile? - **Digital smile design or mock-ups** — some practices use software to show you a digital preview of your result; others create physical wax-ups or composite mock-ups that you can see and feel in your mouth before committing - **A written treatment plan with itemised costs** — so you know exactly what is involved, how long it will take, and what it will cost before any work begins - **An honest discussion of alternatives** — there is almost always more than one way to achieve a cosmetic goal, and the right dentist will explain the trade-offs

Core Dental's Caroline Springs location offers digital smile preview software, allowing you to visualise your new smile on-screen before treatment begins. All Core Dental practices provide written treatment plans with anticipated costs, ensuring complete transparency from the outset.

3. Check the Laboratory Behind the Work

This is one of the most overlooked factors in cosmetic dentistry. Your dentist designs and prepares your teeth, but the porcelain veneers, crowns, and bridges themselves are crafted by a dental technician in a laboratory. The quality of that laboratory work — the colour matching, translucency, texture, and fit — is at least half of the final result.

Questions to ask:

- **Does the practice use an in-house laboratory or outsource to an external lab?** In-house laboratories allow closer collaboration between dentist and technician. - **Who is the ceramist, and what is their experience?** A master ceramist with decades of experience produces different results from a junior technician. - **Can the ceramist match surrounding natural teeth accurately?** Colour matching is both a science and an art — especially when only a few teeth are being treated.

Core Dental maintains an in-house dental laboratory led by master ceramist Greg Karabasis, who holds a Diploma of Dental Technology from RMIT University. The laboratory team also includes senior dental

technicians Agne Diliartaite and Noemi Miele, ensuring restorations are crafted to precise specifications with direct dentist-technician communication — no outsourcing, no delays, and no compromises on quality.

4. Understand the Range of Cosmetic Options Available

A dentist who only offers one solution — veneers for everything, for example — may not be the right fit. The best cosmetic outcomes often come from combining multiple techniques:

- **Composite bonding** may be more appropriate than veneers for minor imperfections, and is less invasive and more affordable - **Invisalign before veneers** can straighten teeth first, reducing the number of veneers needed and preserving more natural tooth structure - **Whitening before bonding or veneers** establishes your ideal tooth colour so that restorations can be matched precisely - **Gum contouring** can dramatically improve symmetry even before any tooth work is done - **Crowns** may be more durable than veneers for teeth that are heavily restored or structurally compromised

A dentist who takes the time to explain these options — and why they recommend one approach over another — is a dentist who puts your interests first.

Core Dental's network model means that patients can access a full spectrum of cosmetic treatments. If a smile makeover requires orthodontics as a foundation, the same network provides Invisalign-trained dentists and specialist orthodontist Dr David Austin. If gum contouring or implant work is needed, specialist periodontist Dr Nupur Kataria is available at Wyndham. Everything is coordinated under one clinical governance framework.

5. Consider Location, Convenience, and Multiple Appointments

A smile makeover is not a one-visit treatment. Depending on the complexity, you may need:

- An initial consultation and assessment - Diagnostic records (scans, X-rays, photographs, impressions)
- A design and planning appointment (digital design, wax-ups, mock-ups) - Preparation appointments (tooth preparation for veneers or crowns) - Try-in and fitting appointments - Follow-up and adjustment appointments

This means multiple visits over several weeks or months. Choosing a practice that is convenient to your home or work — with flexible hours and easy parking — makes a meaningful difference to your experience.

Core Dental's seven suburban locations across Melbourne — Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, and Berwick — each offer free or convenient parking, weekday appointments from 8:00 am, and Saturday availability. The Berwick practice is particularly popular for cosmetic cases among the 50+ demographic, offering extended appointment slots so patients never feel rushed, and even wedding smile packages for brides and grooms preparing for their big day.

6. Payment Transparency and Financing

Smile makeovers can be a significant financial commitment. Depending on the number of teeth treated and the techniques used, costs can range from a few hundred dollars for whitening and bonding to several thousand for a full set of porcelain veneers.

Before committing, make sure you understand:

- **The total cost** — including all appointments, laboratory fees, and any pre-treatment work - **What your health fund covers** — some cosmetic treatments attract partial health fund rebates; HICAPS on-site makes claiming simple - **Payment plan options** — interest-free instalment plans can make larger treatments accessible without financial stress - **What happens if adjustments are needed** — are follow-up appointments included in the quoted price?

Core Dental provides written treatment plans with full cost breakdowns at every location. Interest-free payment plans through Payright are available from \$1,000 to \$20,000, spread over 3 to 30 months. HICAPS is on-site at every practice for instant health fund claims.

Red Flags in Cosmetic Dentistry

Be cautious of any provider who:

- ****Recommends veneers without exploring less invasive alternatives first**** — composite bonding or orthodontics may achieve the same result with less tooth removal
- ****Shows only stock images or another dentist's work**** as before-and-after examples
- ****Promises a perfect result**** — cosmetic dentistry involves artistry and biology; no outcome can be guaranteed with absolute certainty
- ****Pressures you to commit at the first appointment**** — a smile makeover is a considered decision, not an impulse purchase
- ****Does not discuss the longevity and maintenance of restorations**** — veneers and bonding need care and may need replacement over time; honest providers explain this upfront
- ****Uses unknown or overseas laboratories**** for porcelain work — quality control is harder to maintain across distance and unfamiliar supply chains
- ****Cannot show you a preview or mock-up before starting irreversible work**** — once tooth structure is removed for veneers, it cannot be replaced

The Smile Solutions Group Advantage

Core Dental is part of the Smile Solutions Group — Melbourne's largest private dental practice. This connection provides a quality assurance layer that standalone suburban practices typically cannot match.

The group's founding dentist, Dr Kia Pajouhesh, has instilled a philosophy across the entire network: patients should be presented with options, given clear information, and empowered to make informed choices. This philosophy is particularly important in cosmetic dentistry, where patients can feel vulnerable and may be tempted to accept whatever the dentist recommends without understanding alternatives.

Clinical Director Dr Philippa Robinson provides group-wide clinical oversight, ensuring consistent standards across all seven locations. And for cases that require the most advanced cosmetic or reconstructive work, Core Dental patients can be referred within the Smile Solutions Group network — seamlessly accessing some of Australia's most experienced cosmetic dental clinicians.

Your Smile Makeover Checklist

Before you book a cosmetic consultation, run through this list:

- ☐ Does the dentist have specific cosmetic training and a portfolio of their own work?
- ☐ Will I receive a thorough consultation with digital design or mock-ups before committing?
- ☐ Does the practice use an in-house laboratory with experienced ceramists?
- ☐ Has the dentist explained alternatives to my preferred treatment?
- ☐ Will I receive a written treatment plan with itemised costs?
- ☐ Are interest-free payment plans available?
- ☐ Is the practice conveniently located with flexible appointment times?
- ☐ Is every clinician AHPRA-registered and an ADA member?

If you can tick every box, you are in good hands.

****Ready to explore your smile makeover options?**** Book a consultation online at coredental.com.au or call ****13 13 16**** to speak with a team member at your nearest Core Dental location.