

NATURE AND AESTHETIC DENTISTRY

GUEST EDITOR

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As we perform appearance-related dental procedures, we must pause and consider the role of nature in diagnosis and treatment planning. Nature is the role model for all clinical and laboratory procedures, dictating the patterns and characteristics to be emulated regarding strength, beauty, economy and function. We are continuously striving to reproduce the natural strength and the intricate variations in form and color to replicate its beauty. The physiologic integration and serene coexistence between the stomatognathic system and minimally invasive dental techniques delineate nature's economy by imparting a harmonious and enduring relationship with minimal tooth reduction and enhanced stability.

Clinical implementation of improved materials and techniques strives to reproduce nature. However, duplicating nature is a fallacious undertaking. We may convince ourselves that we can achieve naturally perfect restorations, but perfection is found in nature alone; we are, and will ever remain, mere apprentices of dental craftsmanship, mirroring the wonders of nature. There are times when a patient demands improvement of an already completed restoration or we, ourselves, are unsatisfied with the laboratory or our own work. Therefore, a balance must be established between reality (what can be actually accomplished) and expectations (the desired ideal) on the part of clinicians, laboratory technicians, and patients.

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Regardless of human limitations, it is our honorable duty to pursue a path of excellence in aesthetic dentistry. In the words of Dr. Harold Shavell: "Excellence and creativity are arts won by motivation, training, and habituation." In my own interpretation, motivation is the trigger of all achievements in life. Envisioning the ultimate objectives as if they had already become reality is the key point. Training encompasses incorporation of the right philosophic attitudes and technical aptitudes through quality seminars, presented by unselfish teachers. Habituation is the repeated effort to learn from one's previous results. Repeatedly practicing new concepts, while remaining observant of nature's marvels, sharpens our perception, enhances our skills, and ultimately rewards us with a higher level of professional achievement. However, we must always retain the thought and attitude that performing excellent dental work must not be an end in itself. The relevance of the knowledge and skills we have acquired is none other than mastering daily challenges to see the patients through their physical and emotional needs.

It is with this focus on the interrelation between nature and aesthetic dentistry that the September 1997 issue is introduced. Drs. Konrad H. Meyenberg and Marco J. Imoberdorf, of Switzerland, pay a genuine tribute to nature's triad in their elucidating article. Nature's economy, strength, and beauty are rightfully profited by



Iguaçu Falls, Paraná State, Brazil – the world's greatest waterfall.

the numerous conservative, adhesive, and highly aesthetic treatment modalities, presented with well-defined therapeutic indications. Drs. Nitzan Bichacho and Cobi J. Landsberg, of Israel, delineate a pathway for achieving an enhanced aesthetic implant/soft tissue configuration that more closely resembles those found in natural gingival contours. Dr. William H. Liebenberg, of Canada, reinstates the natural features by economically rebonding the tooth fragment while preserving the remaining sound structure. Representing Italy, Drs. Vanini, De Simone, and Tammaro introduce an elaborate protocol for economic restoration of fractured anterior dentition where fragment reattachment is not practical.

Finally, as the Guest Editor, I present an article which acknowledges nature's economy by the noninvasiveness of the surgical procedure. As a common motif with other articles in this issue, adhesion sets the stage for strength as well as for economy. Implementation of the composite layering technique, according to nature's own patterns, brings forth ultimate beauty.