

I WAS BORN with the smallest teeth—pebble-like, yellowish, and spaced so far apart there was no need to floss. I was always self-conscious, and as a result, I rarely smiled in photographs. One day, I was watching an American TV show that featured veneers (or bonding, as it was called on the program) and I swore that once the procedure hit Manila, I would be the first in line to get it done. True enough, I had my first bonding done in the mid-'80s. The dentist was a young guy and pretty good at what he did; he succeeded in making my teeth look even, and I was so happy to be released from the Land of the Funny Teeth.

During the late '90s I met **Dr. Pio Tripón**. I came across a commercial model who had the most fantastic smile, and she enthusiastically endorsed Dr. Tripón. Aesthetic dermatology is an art as much as it is a science. Dr. Tripón took measurements of my face from various angles, and spoke to me about my beauty ideals. He involved me in the creation process by asking me to cut out photos of women whose teeth and smiles I admired. He also brought out a range of teeth shades, and went through them with me in order to decide what hue would be best. I felt so comfortable with him that the dentist's clinic soon became a place of calm.

It took Dr. Tripón four hours (two hours a day for two days) to get my smile looking naturally perfect. I smile in all my photos now, as my teeth have become a major asset. Any regrets? Only that the technology didn't come any sooner!

Veneers are not cheap, but Dr. Tripón's clinic gave me such flexible payment terms that I didn't feel the cost at all. For those who wish to have their teeth "bonded," I would give the following advice: first, research carefully on your aesthetic dentist—not everyone is qualified to create veneers. Cheaper is not always better—remember, you get what you pay for. Your face is not an area you want to scrimp on.

Finally, if you are not happy with the outcome, say so. Some patients get intimidated by dentists, so much that they don't complain when they're not happy with the finished work. You are the client, and the dentist would benefit from your feedback. If he is a thorough professional, he would want his client to be happy. Fabulous teeth are just a few steps away—and that's truly something to smile about. ☺

For more information on porcelain veneers, you may contact Tripón Dental Center at tel. no. 892-3249

The smile high club

A brave woman lets us in on the world of porcelain veneers **As told to Cat Juan**



Beautiful, perfect teeth can actually yours with porcelain veneers.

Photograph **Sara Black**
Makeup **Lourd Ramos** for Smashbox
Model **Camille Santiago**