



**ALEXANDER ASH**

AGE: 35 STUDIO CITY, CALIFORNIA

SPECIALTY: General and cosmetic dentistry

NAME OF PRACTICE: Studio Dental by Alexander Ash

EDUCATION: DDS, University of Maryland School of Dentistry

WHY HE WAS NOMINATED: Dr. Ash, whose comprehensive practice offers endodontics, periodontics and oral surgery, is one of the most prominent dentists in Southern California. After graduating from dental school, he completed two residencies. "Learning shouldn't stop," he says. "It should happen daily."

INSPIRATION: A violinist for 13 years, Dr. Ash enjoys both "the handwork and the artwork" of cosmetic dentistry. He takes pride in being a meticulous artisan and working with top-notch ceramic materials. "I love the before and after," he says.

FAVORITE ASPECT OF DENTISTRY: Creating and being innovative. "Every cosmetic case is a little bit different," he notes. "I can't just do cookie-cutter work or follow protocol. I have to play MacGyver in my dental care."

PRACTICE PHILOSOPHY: Perfection. "If it's not perfect, it's not good."



**CHRISTOPHER BAER**

AGE: 33 AURORA, COLORADO

SPECIALTY: General and cosmetic dentistry

NAME OF PRACTICE: Baer Dental Designs

EDUCATION: DDM, Oregon Health Sciences University School of Dentistry

WHY HE WAS NOMINATED: In addition to running a thriving practice, Dr. Baer is committed to community education. He gives lectures to fellow dentists and works with dental manufacturers to develop new products. He also volunteers his time to local high-school students with a budding interest in dentistry.

INSPIRATION: Dentistry runs in Dr. Baer's blood. His grandfather and second cousin were dentists, and he entertained himself as a child with Play-Doh's Doctor Drill 'n Fill. "I knew from the moment I started drilling teeth that it was for me," he says. "Giving patients their smile back is the most rewarding thing I do."

PRACTICE PHILOSOPHY: Treat people, not teeth. "My patients are an extension of my family," he says. "Some of them come from the mountains outside of Denver; they drive an hour and a half or two hours to see me."

SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T KNOW: "I love to cook. If I hadn't become a dentist, I would have become a chef. At home, there's always something on the smoker. Cooking is my passion, second to dentistry and family."

**JEFFREY BARLOW**

AGE: 37 MERRITT ISLAND, FLORIDA

SPECIALTY: Orthodontics

NAME OF PRACTICE: Jeffrey M. Barlow DDS

EDUCATION: DDS and Certificate in Orthodontics, University of Missouri-Kansas City

WHY HE WAS NOMINATED: His willingness to tackle daunting surgeries. As the only orthodontist on the cleft-palate team in his community and a past president of the Dental Society, he's a beacon of leadership in a small town.

INSPIRATION: His father, a physician, has long been a benchmark for ethical standards in medicine for Dr. Barlow.

EXCITING NEW TREND: Orthodontics going digital. "With digital scanning for fabricating orthodontics appliances — retainers, Invisalign, custom brackets and wires — it's a whole new world," he says.

SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T KNOW: "I have an incredible sweet tooth. Cake, yes. Candy, yes. Chocolate, yes. Anything sweet."

**KRISTINA BIGGS**

AGE: 38 LORTON, VIRGINIA

SPECIALTY: Pediatric dentistry

NAME OF PRACTICE: Destination Smile

EDUCATION: DDS, University of Maryland Dental School

WHY SHE WAS NOMINATED: Dr. Biggs and her practice partner, Flavia Tingling (see page 74), lived down the hall from each other in college. Years later, they met again during pediatric dental residencies in New York City and decided to open a practice together. Both doctors are firm believers in parent-and-child education. Dr. Biggs is also a faculty member at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

INSPIRATION: Children. "The kids keep me going," she says. "I can be myself with them. I get to be funny, listen to music and dance in the middle of the workday. They keep me young."

TOOL SHE CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT: The hand mirror. "It's so important to educate kids," she says. "We use a hand mirror to show them how to brush better, what they're doing wrong and what's going on inside their mouth."

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING DENTISTS: "Chocolate is better

than Gummi Bears. You can't just tell kids to eat only fruits and vegetables. If they're going to have a treat, they should have chocolate. Gummi Bears are sticky."



**DANIEL COHEN**

AGE: 39 FRANKLIN LAKES, NEW JERSEY

SPECIALTY: Pediatric dentistry

NAMES OF PRACTICES: Dental Care 4 Kids in Englewood, New Jersey; Pediatric Dental Arts in Middletown, New York

EDUCATION: DDS, University of Maryland; residency, Monmouth Medical Center for General Practice and Lutheran Medical Center for Pediatric Dentistry

WHY HE WAS NOMINATED: A Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, Dr. Cohen has extensive experience treating patients with special needs. "I would like to believe that my warmth and compassion are the things people notice about me," he says.

TOOL HE CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT: Patience — because without it, all the technical gadgets in the world would be utterly useless.

FAVORITE PART OF DENTISTRY: Using lighthearted humor to build relationships with children and their parents.

ADVICE TO ASPIRING DENTISTS: Focus above all on your patients and your staff, and you'll have a fruitful career. Says Dr. Cohen: "I consider my needs last on the list."



**ADAM DeCOTA**

AGE: 36 FENTON, MISSOURI

SPECIALTY: General dentistry

NAME OF PRACTICE: DeCo-Dental Family and Cosmetic Dentistry

EDUCATION: DDS and B.A., University of Missouri-Kansas City. Graduate of the McGarry Implant Institute, Schuster Center and F.O.R.C.E. Orthodontic Program

WHY HE WAS NOMINATED: In recognition of his commitment to education and his affiliation with the Kois Center, which aims to advance the techniques of restorative dentistry through cutting-edge science.

PRACTICE PHILOSOPHY: Dual management. "Our practice has two parts," Dr. DeCota says. "The adult side, focused on rehabilitative treatment, and the pediatric side, which my wife runs."

EXCITING NEW TREND: Risk assessment and



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