



White Out

Have a smile only a mother could love? Zap your way to more vivid veneers with professional whitening.

IT PAINS US TO ADMIT at lately we've noticed some unsightly yellow stripes on our (formerly) pearly whites.

Perhaps we're being overly sensitive, but how can we compete with Julia Roberts if our teeth are, well, less than? We can't—unless we bleach them. No longer just for hirsute upper lips, bleaching is the best way to wash that gray right outta your teeth. Yes, those whiteners-in-a-box are all well and good, if one doesn't mind losing one's enamel down the road (that's a risk, a nice adjunct to the losing of one's mind).

A professional bleaching, on the other hand, will whiten your teeth with a real live bleaching

solution that's placed on the enamel to remove deep stains, says Dr. Elisa Mello of **NYC Smile Design**, way up on East 84th Street. Granted, nothing's permanent; neither yeast infections nor brightened incisors last forever. A touch-up two years down the road is likely to be needed.

Still, the whole experience is relatively painless: You visit the good doctor, and together you pick out the proper hue of tooth, just as you would a curtain or chair sleeve. Mello then adjusts a purple laser beam, which casts its potent rays against your mouth (*very Revenge of the Sith*). You lie back and enjoy a DVD—but be sure to pick something short, as the entire procedure lasts only about an hour. Your teeth can be up to

eight times whiter, provided you don't ruin the effect by whipping open that packet of American Spirits the minute you get out. You might experience some minor sensitivity, but not enough to bring real tears to your eyes.

A session runs about \$850, plus another few hundred for at-home maintenance tray and gels. Caveats: Bleaching works only if food, drinks, or cigarettes are the cause of your stains. It won't change the color of crowns, caps, or fillings, or any discoloration that's actually embedded in the tooth. If that's the case, forget the teeth and take your 500 bucks over to Bergdorf's, where you can forget your troubles in the shoe department. **NYC Smile Design, 8 East 84th Street, 212-452-3344. [G]**

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