

A One-Stop Dental Shop

Patience, planning result in dazzling smile restoration for local decor store owner

BY ROY CUMMINGS
iFoundMyDoctor.com

At Anita's Furniture and Home Decor in downtown DeLand, you can find plenty of one-of-a-kind items. Most are tables, dressers and armoires, and you'll find them all buried beneath the trove of knickknacks that give the shop its charm.

"We sell the work of about 40 artists, many of whom are local, and we are very diversified," says Tom Leslie, who owns Anita's as well as a sibling store steps away called A Plus Linens And Decor.

"In both stores, we sell art, furniture, cards, antiques, even a little bit of handmade jewelry and some odd coins. And at least 75 percent of everything we have in both stores is American made. That's our focus."

Tom, 60, has been focused on selling mostly American-made products for more than a decade. A couple of years ago, he shifted his focus to correcting a dental issue that had been bothering him for far longer than that.

"I had bad front teeth," Tom reveals. "Actually, all of my top teeth were bad. If I didn't smile real big you couldn't tell, but if I smiled big you'd say, *Wow, you've got some problems there.*"

"It's something I should have taken care of when I first went into business for myself, but I got caught up running the businesses and kind of let everything go. The situation just kept getting worse, so I finally decided to do something about it."

Tom's decision prompted a search for a dentist who could restore his smile. That search led him to Jayaj Patel, DMD, of DeLand Implant Dentistry, the only dentist Tom found with reviews void of "complaints."

Safe and Secure

"When Tom first came to us, he had only five teeth left in his upper arch," Dr. Patel reports. "I also found infection and gum disease throughout that arch and some problems with a couple of bottom teeth. But his primary objective was to correct the upper arch."

Indeed, Tom visited Dr. Patel in the hopes of receiving a partial that would restore the aesthetic appeal of his upper arch and allow him to keep the few upper teeth he had left. Tom soon learned that would not be possible.

"None of Tom's upper teeth were salvageable," Dr. Patel notes. "The infection and gum disease were just too great, so those teeth had to be extracted. Tom also had a couple of lower teeth that needed to be extracted, but our initial focus was on his upper arch."

To correct the problems in that arch, Dr. Patel presented Tom with several options. The one Tom chose called for Dr. Patel to extract the remaining upper teeth and replace them with a full prosthetic supported by dental implants.

Dental implants are root-shaped, screw-like bodies that are surgically placed into the jawbone, where new bone naturally grows around them to form the foundation for an abutment and replacement teeth.

The replacement teeth can be a crown that is cemented or screwed onto the abutment, a partial bridge that can be affixed to one or more implants, or a full denture that can be fastened to a series of implants.



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Tom is beaming after receiving an implant-supported full upper prosthetic.



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS COURTESY DELAND IMPLANT DENTISTRY

Prior to placing an implant, some patients require *bone grafting*, which enhances the volume of the jawbone so it can support the implant. This is often the case with patients who have been missing teeth for a long time.

"Without teeth, there is no pressure from chewing to stimulate new bone growth in the jawbone," Dr. Patel educates. "That's why patients who have been missing teeth for a long time often need bone grafts. The bone grafts help rebuild new bone in the jawbone."

Bone grafts are typically done at the time the implants are seated and need three to six months to heal to a point where they can support a prosthetic. During the healing period, patients are usually fit with temporary replacement teeth.

Satisfied Customer

Because he had been missing teeth for several years, Tom required bone grafts. Before taking that step, however, Dr. Patel needed to create a healthy foundation for the implants, so he started by performing a treatment in both arches that cleared the gums of infection and disease.

He also extracted troublesome lower teeth that were not salvageable. The healing of Tom's gums, which the doctor referred to as Phase 1 of the restoration plan, took a couple of months. During Phase 2, Dr. Patel pulled all but two of Tom's five remaining upper teeth, performed bone grafts and seated four of the eight implants that would anchor the permanent upper prosthetic.

"The two teeth we left were the eyeteeth," Dr. Patel informs. "We left those to serve as support for a temporary prosthetic that Tom wore while the first four implants healed. Those first four implants were all placed in the back of the upper arch, two on each side."

During Phase 3, Dr. Patel removed the eyeteeth, performed bone grafts and seated the final four implants, two on each side closer to the front of the arch. Tom was then fit with another temporary denture secured by the posterior implants.

Because of the gum disease, infection and Tom's need to postpone a few appointments, it took more than a year for Dr. Patel to complete the restoration. That project is now complete, however, and Tom says he could not be happier with the outcome.

"I knew it would be more expensive and take more time to get this permanent prosthetic, but that was OK with me," Tom says. "I knew that once this appliance was in place, that would be it, and I wouldn't have to fool with anything."

"What's even better is that these new teeth I have look perfect. They're just like real teeth, and I'll have them until I'm an old man. I just have to take care of them, and I will absolutely do that. I'm happy to do that."

Since receiving his permanent upper prosthetic, Tom has returned to Dr. Patel for routine maintenance for the upper prosthesis and lower teeth.

"A dentist's chair is one of the last places anyone wants to be, but I know when I'm in Dr. Patel's chair, I'm with a good dentist who does things right," Tom enthuses. "Dr. Patel is a real patient, old-school guy, and he really cares about his patients."

"He called me himself on his cellphone to see how I was doing a couple of times, and that really says something about him. There aren't many like him around anymore, so I think very highly of him and gladly recommend him." ■

Meet the DOCTORS

Jayraj Patel, DMD, FAGD



earned his dental degree from the University of Florida College of Dentistry. His goal is to deliver comprehensive and compassionate care to patients in a

comfortable, professional environment. He provides advance, personalized and complete care using the latest technologies and treatment modalities with an aim to build a long-term relationship with patients based on trust, respect and friendship. Driven by a deep passion to help patients, he is constantly pursuing advanced training through continuing education courses. He has extensive training in implant dentistry through the AAID MaxiCourse from Augusta University Dental College of Georgia and Comprehensive Implant Continuum from Implant Educators. He is certified to perform IV sedation in the dental office. He is a diplomate of the American Board of Oral Implantology/Implant Dentistry, a fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry and International Congress of Oral Implantologists, and an associate fellow of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry.

Rajiv Patel, BDS, MDS (Retired)



practiced general dentistry in DeLand for more than 30 years before retiring. He is certified in implant dentistry through his designation

as a diplomate of the American Board of Oral Implantology/Implant Dentistry. Additionally, he is a fellow of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry and International Congress of Oral Implantologists. He is one of the select few general dentists certified to administer IV sedation in a dental office. He is a member of the Florida Dental Association, American Dental Association and Florida Dental Society of Anesthesiology.



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Dr. Jayraj Patel and Dr. Rajiv Patel are known for their exceptional, caring attitude toward their patients and work. They are committed to delivering the most advanced, personalized dental care while offering patients a uniquely satisfying experience. Along with the staff of DeLand Implant Dentistry, they welcome new patients and any questions concerning their range of services, which include cleanings, preventive care, sedation, and cosmetic, restorative, prosthetic and implant dentistry. For an appointment, call or visit the office.

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