

THE GREAT WHITE HOPE



The husband-and-wife team of Drs. Glassman are using lasers to forge the future of white teeth: Are you ready for it?

*by Gabe Geltzer
Photography by Andrew Melick
for gym*

How important are your pearly whites to your appearance? It's no secret that a gleaming smile can make or break your looks, while crooked, yellow teeth might just be the straw that breaks your love life's back. We've all been to the dentist (at least I hope so), and we know that not even a regular cleaning can keep our teeth gleaming and healthy all year around. And as our ever-evolving technology would have it, luckily, there's a highly innovative new procedure now available for the dentally damned: Yep, you guessed it—laser surgery.

Dr. Steven Glassman, a New York City based dentist, and his wife Debra, are two of only 60 dentists in the world certified to practice the advancements of laser

surgery. And while lasers are still new to dentistry, the Drs. Glassman believe that it will become the norm soon enough.

The main benefit to laser beam dentistry, says Dr. Glassman, is time. What used to take three, four, even five visits can now be accomplished in 15 minutes. The laser, a super-intense light, is applied to the soft tissue in the gum, tooth or cheek in the event of decay; the process—called Air Abrasion—is relatively painless and novocaine is rarely needed. Lasers, in conjunction with a whitening dye, can also be used to whiten your teeth, and as Dr. Glassman says, "The enamel is not affected or destroyed in any way. Tests have been done for the last ten years and we are positive that lasers are completely safe."

OK, so the laser cuts down on

time spent in a dentist chair. But what else can it do?

For starters, it'll eliminate pain during the healing process. There will be drastically less swelling than with the conventional drill, says Dr. Glassman. And unlike the drill, the laser can easily get to "stubborn areas," small cracks or crevasses in the tooth that are well-hidden yet serious sources of cavities—areas a scalpel will never find. The laser also seals nerve endings, reducing the chance of complications. With whitening, speed is the main plus—it takes just three minutes a tooth, with no risk factors involved. The main problem, of course, is the cost. "It's not cheap," says Dr. Glassman. The price for a full laser whitening is \$1,700—that's your entire mouth, bud—but you can get it done tooth-by-tooth for less. Either way, the enviable results are

amazing. Take recent examples of Dr. Glassman's success stories.

Dr. Glassman recalls the story of a 25-year old model who visited his office—his only flaw being a rather sorry set of choppers. "He had discolored, dark, broken teeth, and he had spaces and gaps in his sides," says Glassman. In addition, the model was going to a casting later that afternoon. Though his mouth needed a lot of work, Dr. Glassman whitened his bottom teeth using the laser in under an hour, placed "veneers," or crowns, on the front of his top teeth and placed a temporary "flipper," or false tooth, in one particularly large gap. "He looked 95 percent better in one session of work," says Dr. Glassman.

Among Dr. Glassman's teeth whitening clients are actors Don Johnson, Mickey Rourke and Dolph Lundgren; singers Grace Jones and Gloria Gaynor and Broadway star Ken Land. Johnson provided a memorable visit when he saw Dr. Glassman right after his role in *Harley Davidson and*



"Don Johnson's teeth were fixed by laser in no time at all."

the Marlboro Man. "His teeth looked permanently stained, but lasers fixed him up in no time at all," says Dr. Glassman.

The Drs. Glassman were married in 1984 and held separate dental practices before joining together and opening their state of the art offices on Manhattan's Upper West Side in 1989. In addition to laser whitening and Air Abrasion, they

have also championed intra-oral cameras to allow patients to see the inside of their mouths as well as imaging which shows the patients how their mouths and smile will look after their surgery and cosmetic work.

"If I can stress one thing," says Glassman, "it's that dentistry is a lifelong need." Don't be cruel your teeth—just brushing isn't good enough. Not even flossing can get to that hard tarter caked onto an impossible-to-reach spot. "A person should see a dentist as often as he needs to, be it twice a year or once every two months," he says.

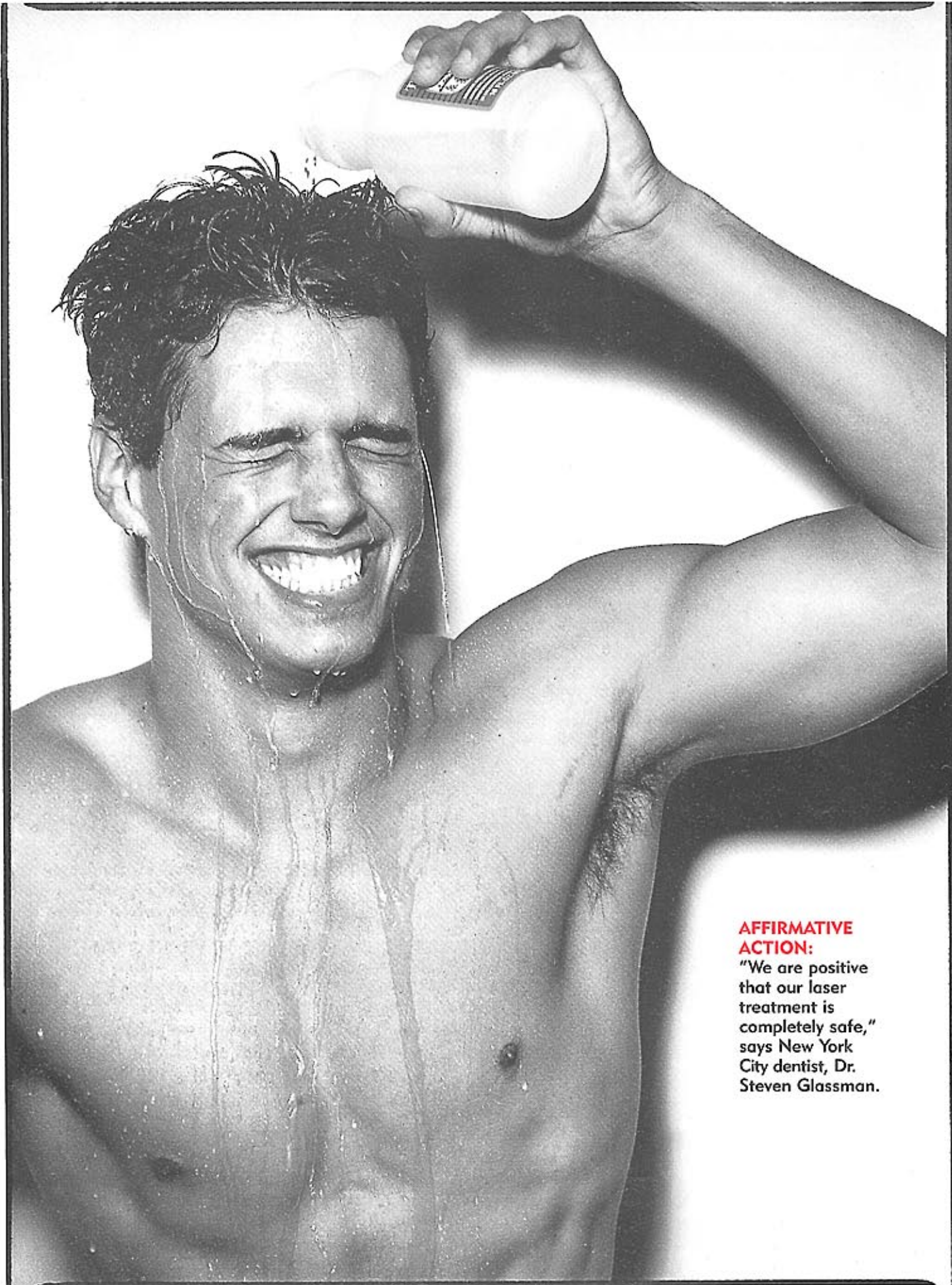
One can prevent tooth decay, gingivitis (a bleeding of the gums), halitosis (when you're in serious need of some tic-tacs) and other problems only by seeing a dentist.

But if your bright whites have become a hazy yellow—hey, it can happen, right?—you might want to check out the laser whitening process. It's as quick and painless as any life-changing procedure can be. OK, now—blind me with that killer smile, guy.

ARE THESE OVER-THE-COUNTER SOLUTIONS?

Dr. Steven Glassman recommends seeing a dentist for any problem you might have with your teeth, including the desire for whiter teeth or a crisper gleam. Whitening through lasers has already become very fashionable—a bevy of celebs and models have used this procedure. But what do you do if you just want a quick fix? Read on, as Dr. Glassman rates a few over-the-counter products available at most supermarkets for their overall effectiveness.

Pearl Drops	"Abrasive. Marketed as a teeth whitener but actually abraids the enamel." C-
Mentadent	"Tastes good and includes baking soda to help your gums." B+
Colgate Platinum	"In terms of whiteness, the best over-the-counter product out there." A
Enamelon	"I've heard good things. It's a new product that combats tooth decay, but it's not a whitener." A-
Plus+ White	"Junk." D
Rembrandt Ultra-Brite	"The whitening is negligible." C
Topol	"A tooth polish. Only to be used for stubborn stains." C



**AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION:**

"We are positive
that our laser
treatment is
completely safe,"
says New York
City dentist, Dr.
Steven Glassman.