

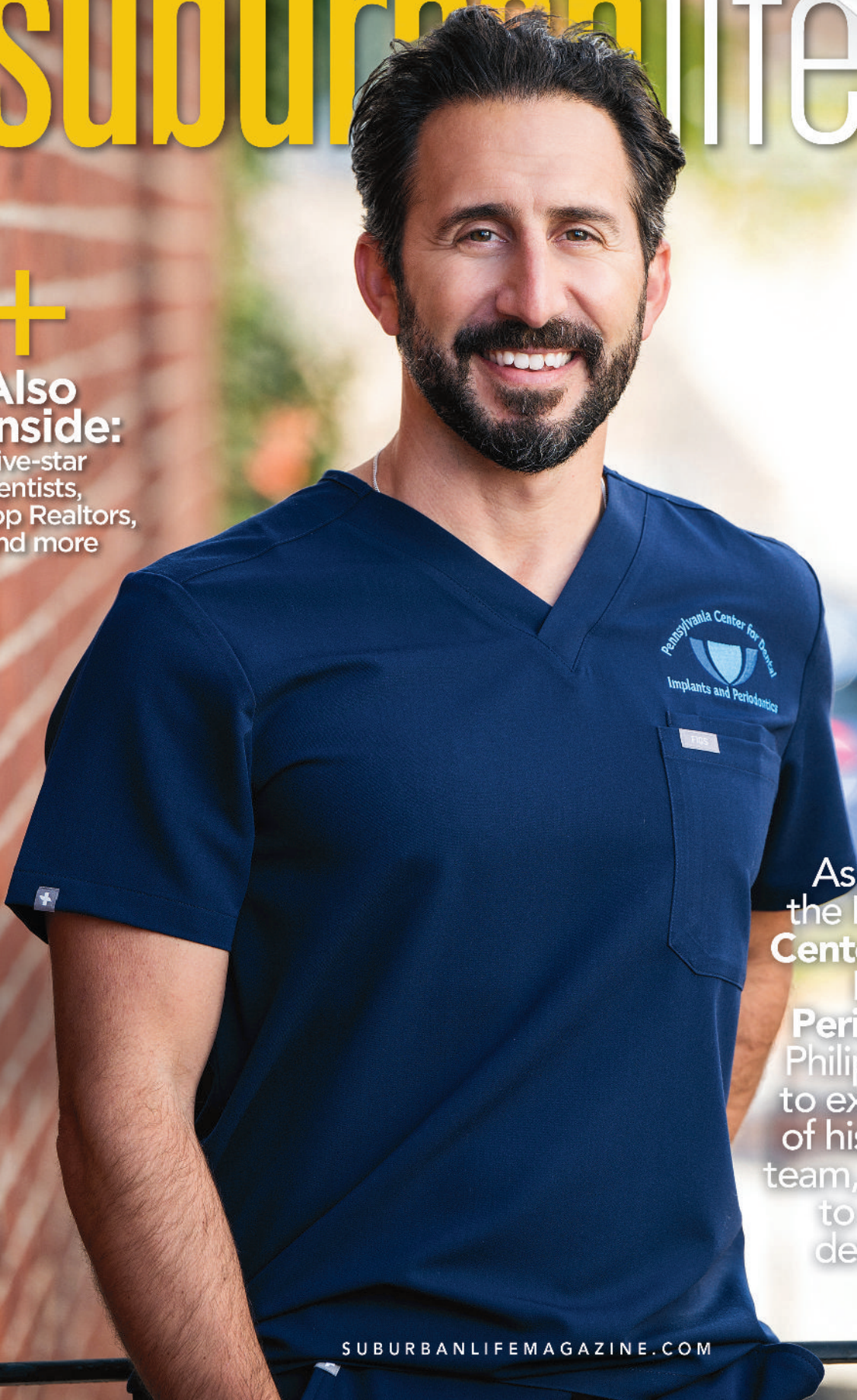
suburban life

Jamie Lee Curtis
pg. 74



Also Inside:

Five-star dentists, top Realtors, and more



As the leader of the Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics, Dr. Philip Fava strives to excel on behalf of his patients, his team, and the field to which he has devoted his life.

page 60

In Pursuit of Excellence

by **BILL DONAHUE**
photos by **JEFF ANDERSON**

As the leader of the **Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics**, Dr. Philip Fava strives to excel on behalf of his patients, his team, and the field to which he has devoted his life.

“It’s a personal point of pride that referring dentists entrust our team with their toughest cases. They know we will do everything in our power to treat their patients as if they were our own family members. We take our practice personally.”

Philip L. Fava II, D.M.D., a periodontist and head of the Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics, is clear about what motivates him in his endless pursuit of excellence.

“To understand a patient’s needs, you have to understand who they are as a whole person,” he says. “Every case is unique, and you have put in the time and energy to get it right. Even if the case becomes extraordinarily difficult, you have to see it through. That’s what makes it a hard business and what I love about it. Each day is an opportunity to be in service to people who need help and put all we have forward for them.”

This isn’t something that he learned in dental school. When reflecting on his love of learning and dedicated pursuit of self-improvement, Dr. Fava traces it to his early upbringing. He developed a strong work ethic while growing up in his family’s scrap-metal business on Long Island, New York. He jokes, “my mother was meticulous, the house was so clean

you could eat ice cream off the floor.” His parents taught him the importance of self-discipline and the need to put others before himself. Such lessons have served him well in his practice.

“I’m driven by the need to continually develop” he says. “When I’m not with patients, I’m thinking about our cases and watching dental lectures and surgical videos so I can learn new techniques from people I admire in this field who are doing next-level work. I’m always asking myself, ‘What else is possible?’ And I pay attention to every detail.”

Dr. Fava’s approach to preparing sites for dental implants is a fine example. While much of the industry has come to advertise dental implants with lightning-quick speed—as quickly as a day, in some cases—he is interested only in providing a result that will last. Despite being on the forefront of immediate implant placement, he is in no rush. He has seen the cost of improper planning and preparation, having fixed more than his share of other clinicians’ work when implants have failed.

To that end, he has adopted techniques he believes most clinicians may shy away from because of the level of difficulty involved. He refers specifically to autogenous graft procedures, using the patient's own hard and soft tissue to create ideal conditions in which an implant can thrive. This is the most predictable way to recreate the biology and anatomy as would be found in the ideal natural state when the teeth were still present.

"As much as hard tissue (bone) is important to the success of an implant, soft (gum) tissue is even more so," Dr. Fava says. "Both are very difficult to replicate, but soft tissue is augmentation in the highest form. Most people think it's all about bone, but that's because there are so many companies that sell bone substitutes and biomaterials; there is no corporate sponsor for autogenous soft tissue, so there's really no one to sing its praises."

In some cases, using autogenous tissue to prepare the implant site will take longer than, say, having new teeth in a day. That said, Dr. Fava believes providing a patient with the architecture their mouths need to support one or more implants will provide a predictably reliable long-term result that blends aesthetics, function, and overall health.

"We all *want* treatment to be completed as quickly as possible, but what we *need* is to have the best and lasting result," he says. "Our focus is the best possible result in the shortest time."

"Not a day goes by without me doing soft-tissue augmentation," he continues. "I have gotten very good at hard-tissue augmentation, but I have discovered ways to use soft tissue to compensate that are less invasive, shorter in time, and more predictable. I treat way too many ailing implants in which the shortcoming is the soft tissue. Time is the ultimate judge, and soft tissue is the factor that ties all necessary components of success to the implant in the long term."

In regard to the pursuit of excellence, Dr. Fava invokes the names of some of the world's most elite athletes.

"Michael Jordan, the No. 1 player in the world, never became complacent," he says. "He could find a different gear to keep getting better and better. It was the same with athletes like Kobe Bryant and Kyle Dake [a world-champion wrestler]. It's almost like they have a religious devotion to perfecting what they do."

While Dr. Fava doesn't compare himself to Jordan and the others, he feels the "same obligation to be the best" at what he is doing.



In addition to Dr. Fava, the Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics clinical team includes two fellow periodontists, Drs. Eric F. Schoenebeck and Dmitry Klass.

"If I were a painter or plumber," he adds, "I would be doing the same things I'm doing now—finding ways to continually improve, relentlessly committed to doing the right thing by others, and trying to be a guiding light for my group."

He wants others to understand his desire to stay true to himself, and to excel on behalf of his patients, his team, and the field to which he has devoted his life.

While recognized as expert in his field, Dr. Fava believes he still has plenty to learn—and he continues to expand his knowledge base by collaborating with two European clinicians he considers the best in the world. He uses his expertise to "raise the bar" for clinicians near and far, running study clubs to share the latest research, treatment protocols, and practice-management guidelines with other practitioners locally and across the country. He also provides in-depth lectures to peers at events hosted by prestigious organizations such as the American Academy of Periodontology, the governing body of the field of periodontics.

Most of Dr. Fava's energy is devoted to ensuring the highest-level care to patients at his practice's two offices, which provide dental implant surgery, cosmetic services, and reconstructive or regenerative periodontal therapies. This includes teaming closely with two fellow periodontists, Eric F. Schoenebeck, D.M.D., and Dmitry Klass, D.D.S.

"Eric, Dmitry, and I have a strong relationship," Dr. Fava says. "We are all behind one another and don't practice in a vacuum. We share cases which play to one another's

strengths and review cases together. It's important that our patients and referring doctors have confidence in the practice as a whole. Our practice is a demanding one, and it is my responsibility to be sure our doctors are aligned as much as possible. Committing to our time together with technique and case review is how we raise the bar for everyone.

"I'm doing work that I can be proud of, and I think everyone in our practice would say the same," he continues. "We treat people as people, not patients, so our driving factor is the knowledge that the mouth we're working on is connected to a whole person. Our patients know that we've got their backs, and we are going to do right by them and make sure they come away from the experience with the best possible result." ■

Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics

www.padentalimplants.com

Einstein Center One, Suite 211-212

9880 Bustleton Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19115
(215) 677-8686

140 E. Butler Ave.
Ambler, PA 19002
(215) 643-4393