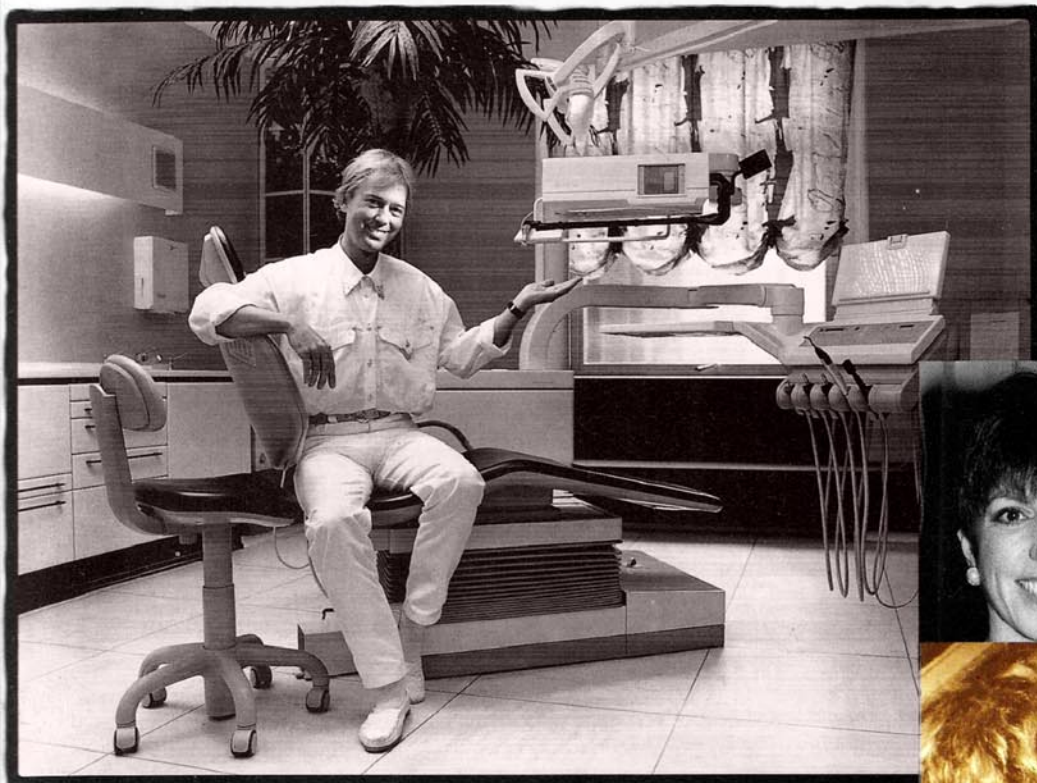


Dentist Peter Meyer rides a Honda NR750, wears Versace and administers his special brand of oral TLC to some of the biggest stars around.

# The Fastest Drill in the West



Talking teeth: Dr Peter Meyer in his surgery (above); Liza Minnelli (top); Tina Turner

black marble cascading fountain inspired by Trump Tower on New York's Fifth Avenue. Open-planned on all three of its floors, the place shines like a Hollywood smile, with wall-to-wall mirrors, designer filing cabinets and exotic plants that one would expect to see in a Los Angeles film production office rather than a surgery in a small town outside Düsseldorf. "When I put this office together, I didn't know L.A.," says Meyer. "I just wanted people to forget their pain and be happy to be here." The walls in his office are painted mint green, inspired by the Crane Beach Hotel in Barbados. Patients recline in a dentist chair of mint green and royal blue. "I have another one which is purple and pink—it's really wild," he says.



"The complaint most people have about going to the dentist is that they are in the chair and they are told to open their mouth and the dentist says 'all we have to do is this and that'. But before they know it, Voomp! The drill is in their mouth and their tooth has gone. I try to be different. I put a mirror in their mouth and explain what is happening."

KLEVE, Germany – He's the Dentist de Luxe, the Couture Capper, the fastest drill in the West. And he really gets around.

"I love speed," confesses 44-year-old Dr Peter Meyer. But even though he's fast, he's easy to spot: he's the one in *tutto Versace*, sometimes wearing print on print – in Los Angeles or New York, on the Concorde, or even at the Haute Couture.

Or, you might catch him on the autobahn between his home in Amsterdam and his clinic in this little town outside Düsseldorf, commuting to work on his red Honda NR750 in custom leathers. And if you're one of Meyer's star patients, like Liza Minnelli or Tina Turner, who fly in for his special brand of oral TLC, you'll see him at the Düsseldorf airport, flashing his pearly whites as he picks you up for your appointment in his Ferrari.

"People have a set idea of dentists – and they don't like them," Meyer admits. "To many, we are a figure of pain and we have a reputation for being unapproachable. I wanted to break this." There's a look of sincerity in his baby blues that could melt even

the haughtiest of folk.

"I did the teeth of a former Miss World and my practice took off," he explains. He is also close to the top Dutch model agency Corine's and to TV producer Joop van den Ende. "He sent me people from TV. Once I did one actress, they all came. I made them realise that if your teeth are not right, you can put on the most expensive fur coat in the world and your bad teeth can ruin the look."

It was the ruinous Dutch income tax rates that brought Meyer to Kleve in 1983. "The Germans have the highest dental insurance in the world, which perhaps explains why there are 55,000 of us here," he says. Feeling very much the outsider amongst his German colleagues, he insists, "They hate me here. They refer to this building as 'the marble office with the Dutch dentist inside'. Someone suggested to me that they are terrified by the quality I deliver, because they won't be able to catch up."

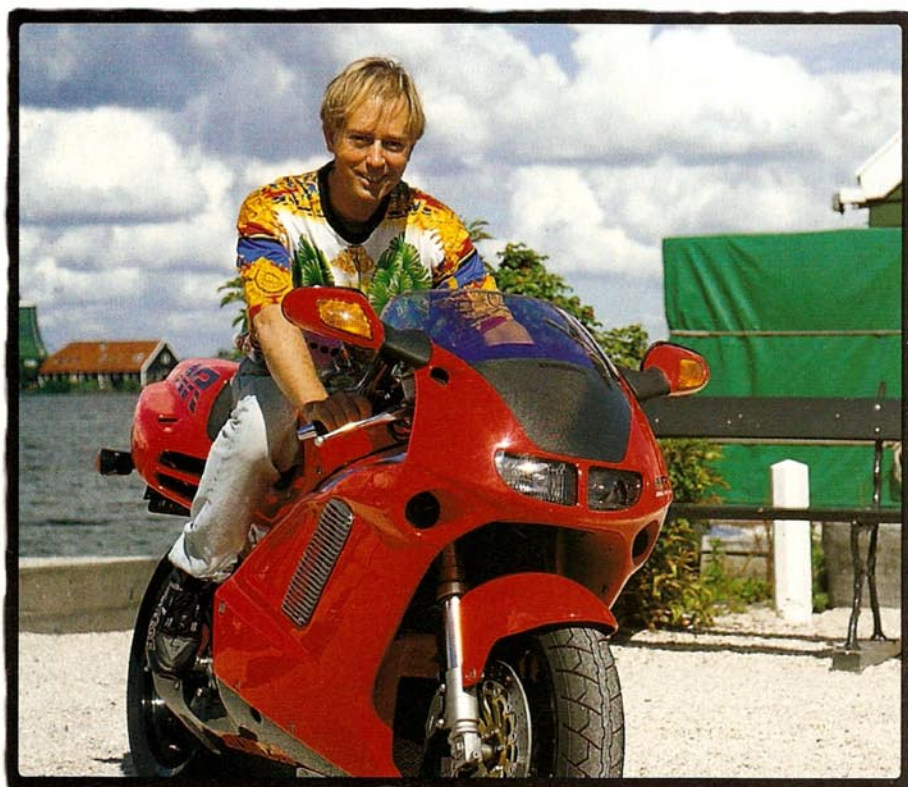
They might also be terrified at the prospect of catching up with the decor of Meyer's clinic. By the reception desk is a 6-metre

For drilling teeth, he uses his KaVo KEY-laser, a high-tech machine manufactured in Germany, which only 15 of Meyer's colleagues in the country are equipped with. Using the laser, Meyer says, "I can drill teeth and it doesn't harm the nerves or other tissues. It enables me to preserve a maximum amount of natural material compared to normal drilling, keeping fillings much smaller and totally invisible." Displaying a pulled tooth as a specimen, he burns a neat little hole in seconds, a demonstration that could give a Hollywood producer ideas about an updated remake of "Marathon Man".

He also has a new computer system called Bioconcept Cad-Cam which can engineer porcelain crowns on the spot. "It means that we don't have to send away for anything because we can do the colouring and manufacturing of crowns here," he explains.

Meyer, who has 19 people on his staff (including a junior partner, a specialist for implants and nine in his orthodontics

“When I tell people what I do, they immediately put a hand over their mouths. I always start with compliments, then tell them the problem and how they can fix it.”



**A man in his elements: self-portrait by Peter Meyer on his exclusive, handmade Honda NR750**

department), insists that his greatest pleasure is “allowing people to smile again”. When he goes out, he often has to stop himself from zeroing in on people’s teeth. “When I tell people what I do, afterwards they immediately put a hand over their mouths,” he laughs. But if someone in a social situation asks, he will offer his advice. “I always

start with compliments,” he says tactfully, “then tell them the problem and how they can fix it.”

For his first meeting with Liza Minnelli, however, Meyer was more up-front, more “Let’s talk teeth”: “My plane from L.A. was delayed, so I was late for my dinner at the Café Tabac with Donna Karan and Liza

Minnelli. I remember arriving and saying, ‘Well, the stars are here and the audience is late tonight’. Then, as soon as I could, I took Minnelli aside and told her that I had to talk to her professionally, and explained what I felt I could do for her.

“It was nothing spectacular,” Meyer continues. “Although she has very good teeth, she was afraid of the pain factor of dentists. The deal is that I always have to pick her up in my Ferrari. You see, she doesn’t have a driver’s licence because, since childhood, she has always been driven around.”

Driving is essential to Meyer. “I commute every day from my house in Amsterdam to my office – which takes one hour on my bike,” he explains. “I chose Kleve because it’s so near Amsterdam.” It was the 72 per cent income tax rates in Holland that forced him to work in Germany – though he has no intention of physically living here. “Germans aren’t very laid-back,” he says.

Meyer is always closed on Fridays, when he heads with his girlfriend to Paris, where the restaurant La Maison Blanche and N.i.e.l.’s nightclub are his preferred hang-outs. Or he races his motorcycles around the tracks in France and Italy (“but not professionally; it’s too dangerous”). He’s particularly proud of his Honda NR750. “They made about 80 of these; it’s all handmade, a collector’s item, and I’m one of the few people in the world who is actually driving it.” Meyer has had his share of accidents: “When there’s oil on the road, you have a tendency to slip,” he admits. But he feels protected in his Dainesse leather suits from Italy. “I wouldn’t mind a Versace one with a Medusa on the back,” he muses.

The Italian designer is also a friend, if not a patient. “When I first met him, he was intrigued that I had worn him for 17 years,” Meyer says. In fact, Meyer is such a fashion fan that he recently flew home from New York via Paris, on the same Concorde as the hard-core Fashion Pack, just to catch Gianni’s couture show in July. In his luggage, he confessed to plane-mates, were a dozen of Versace’s signature silk print shirts.

Meyer, who’s in the middle of writing a book about dentistry, says he’d like to take his technique to the U.S., and open an office in Los Angeles. There’s only one problem: with his lasers and computers, he’s a little too fast for the American authorities, who haven’t yet recognised all his tricks for high-tech teeth.

Natasha Fraser

### **Up-to-Date**

**A dentist who explains what he’s doing as he works on teeth**

**Digital computer X-raying with 90 per cent less radiation**

**Invisible porcelain fillings**

**Painless drilling aided by the KaVo KEY-laser**

**The rotation method of brushing teeth called modified BASS-technique**

**Bleaching with Opalescence which contains a 10 per cent carbamide peroxide solution, to remove stains from coffee, tea, chocolate, red wine and cigarettes**

**Professional laser gum-cleaning**

### **Out-of-Date**

**The “open-wide”-and-drill technique**

**Regular X-rays with adverse environmental effects**

**Gold fillings which can pass electrical currents, and amalgam fillings which can cause headaches or lead to mercury poisoning**

**Noisy old-fashioned drills and Novocaine**

**The old-fashioned up-and-down method of brushing teeth**

**Brushing with baking soda – too aggressive for the gums**

**Gum diseases and bad breath**

