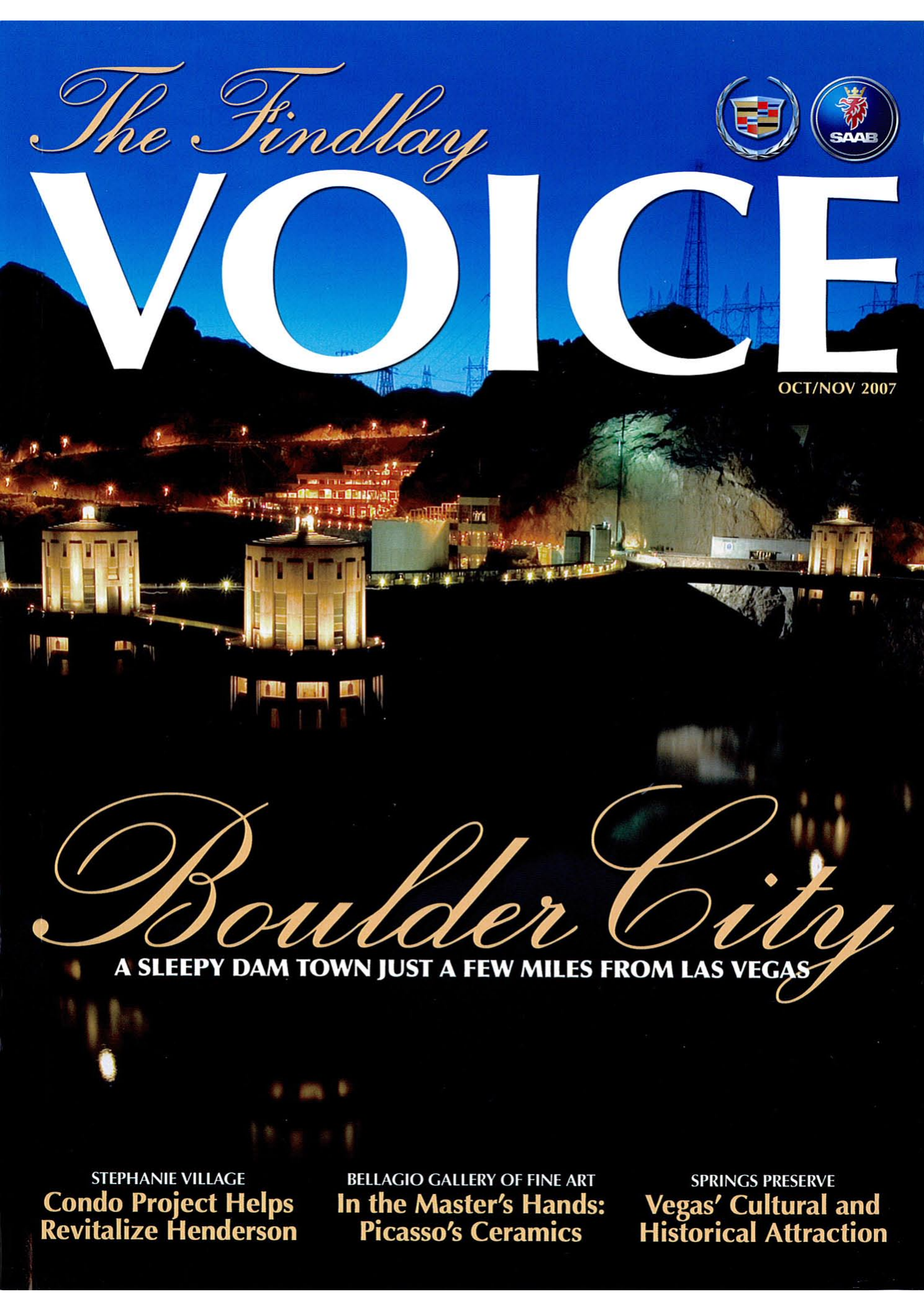


*The Findlay*

# VOICE



OCT/NOV 2007



# *Boulder City*

**A SLEEPY DAM TOWN JUST A FEW MILES FROM LAS VEGAS**

STEPHANIE VILLAGE  
**Condo Project Helps  
Revitalize Henderson**

BELLAGIO GALLERY OF FINE ART  
**In the Master's Hands:  
Picasso's Ceramics**

SPRINGS PRESERVE  
**Vegas' Cultural and  
Historical Attraction**



Dr. Azimi has been recently selected by an exhaustive peer-review survey to appear in the inaugural list of top Dentists, to appear on [www.usatopdentists.com](http://www.usatopdentists.com) and in the October issue of Las Vegas Weekly Magazine.

# *It's Like* **Pulling Teeth...**

**Restoring a patient's smile** is the main mission of a cosmetic dentist, and Dr. Afshin Azimi is no exception. He can repair a hockey player's broken front teeth—which he does occasionally as the team dentist for the Las Vegas Wranglers—as well as bring dental esthetics to ordinary people.

Restoring a patient's smile is the main mission of a cosmetic dentist, and Dr. Afshin Azimi is no exception. He can repair a hockey player's broken front teeth—which he does occasionally as the team dentist for the Las Vegas Wranglers—as well as bring dental esthetics to ordinary people.

In practice in Las Vegas since January 2001, Azimi says his greatest professional satisfactions come from the reaction of a patient whose teeth have been repaired and brought back to normal. "Fixing smiles brings a strong emotional response from patients," Azimi says. "After hours of work, and a patient is handed a mirror and flashes a smile of gratitude, it's a rewarding sensation for both parties."

Azimi spends part of his professional career, a couple weekends a month, as an instructor at the Esthetic Professionals Dental Education Center in Tarzana, Calif. "I feel obligated to give back to the dental profession, and this helps me stay on top of my game while providing cosmetic dental instruction to others," Azimi said.

Rather than situating his dental

office in some upscale Las Vegas Valley neighborhood, Azimi chose to build his practice downtown, at Seventh Street and Charleston Boulevard in a former residence. The waiting room and reception area recently underwent renovations which made the space more patient-friendly and aesthetically pleasing.

"I've made a commitment to becoming a part of the long-overdue revitalization of downtown," Azimi says. "There's a shortage of medical and dental professionals downtown and one of my ambitions is to assemble a cluster of dentists and doctors." His plans on the medium to long term call for construction of a building to create a dental center. Such a center, Azimi points out, would help his practice grow as well as attract a flow of patients to keep other specialists busy, too.

A USC graduate, Azimi recently became the first Nevada dentist to offer a DNA test procedure that detects pathogens in a patient and helps fight periodontitis, or gum disease. The test, called DNA-PCR, has two parts. The first, Micro Ident, costs around \$150 and identifies

oral pathogens for the accurate diagnosis of periodontitis, commonly known as gum disease. The second, PST, is administered for about \$130 and evaluates the person's susceptibility to gum disease.

"Using DNA technology, the DNA-PCR test allows us to specifically identify oral bacteria that cause infections much earlier and treat them before they cause severe damage to a person's health," says Azimi, the first general and cosmetic dentist in Nevada certified to administer the DNA-PCR exam.

"To administer the test, we gather saliva samples from the patient's mouth using cotton-tipped swabs," Azimi adds. "The samples are then shipped to a laboratory for analysis. The lab sends us a detailed report identifying the oral bacteria present, allowing us to quickly and precisely diagnose and treat periodontal disease."

More than 600 different types of bacteria are present in the human mouth. Scientists at the Forsyth Institute in Boston have identified 13 strains of pathogenic bacteria which are the most common chronic infection in the U.S. population. Those

strains cause gum disease and can also contribute to heart disease, stroke, preterm birth, pregnancy complications, worsening of diabetes and certain forms of cancer. Early treatment of periodontitis may help prevent these other health problems.

"Knowing that good oral health is an indicator of overall health, and may in fact help prevent systemic disease, should be motivation enough for everyone to regularly visit a dentist," Azimi said. A systemic disease is a disorder that affects the entire body.

Repairing broken teeth for hockey players is another concern for Azimi. As official team dentist for the Wranglers minor league ice hockey players, Azimi sometimes sees cases so bad he has to call in an oral surgeon. "But those instances are rare; the most frequent dental injury is broken front teeth," he says.

Beyond the three mentions Azimi receives at each hockey game at Orleans Arena, why does he treat hockey team members? "It's a matter of feeling community pride," he says. "Hockey players in the minor leagues earn little, so the dental work is done at a discount. But the name recognition spreads to the base of Wranglers fans, and there is some benefit to the practice from that."

Originally from Iran, Azimi was born to a family of physicians. Uprooted in his childhood by the Iran-Iraq war, Azimi went to Vienna where he repeated high school. After visiting an uncle in Los Angeles, Azimi decided to return to the United States. He majored in biochemistry at UCLA and determined to take up dentistry. He went across town to USC where he earned his DDS degree.

In addition to watching Wranglers hockey games, Azimi and his wife Elizabeth enjoy outdoor recreation activities, international travel, and living in the Peccole Ranch community in northwest Las Vegas. •

