



## male spa trends

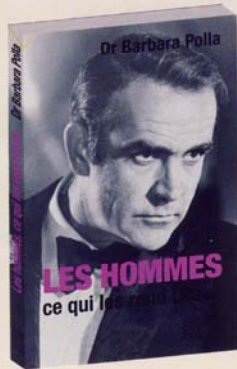
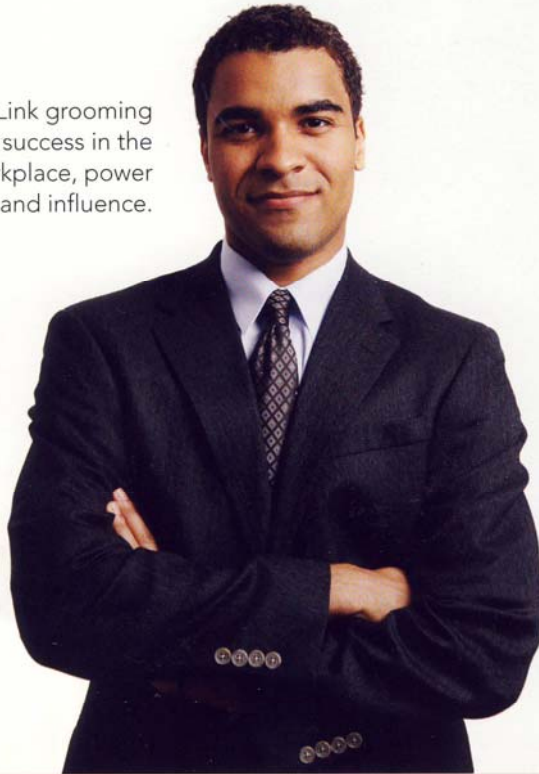
OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, MEN HAVE BECOME increasingly important clients to the beauty industry, both to product manufacturers and spas. In the U.S. and abroad, we have seen the launch of men's skin care lines that go beyond shaving essentials and the development of male specific hair care. We have witnessed the opening of men's grooming spas—such as The Grooming Lounge, Washington, DC, The Quintessential Gentleman, Comptoir de l'Homme—even the emergence of specific vocabulary to analyze the male consumer, the “metrosexual.”

This increased interest in men's personal care has been accompanied by industry studies, trend reports and spa research that identifies market size, growth rate and tips to appeal to a masculine clientele. But what do men really think about their beauty? What is important to them in grooming, beyond replacing terms such as “mani/pedis” with “nail care” and having spa robes that are longer and not pastel colored? ➔

wake up and smell the aftershave: ooh, the male breed of beauty

BY ADA POLLA

Link grooming  
to success in the  
workplace, power  
and influence.



Dr. Polla's  
conclusions offer  
a glimpse into  
strategies to  
generate more  
revenue from  
male clients.

### What do they want?

In her book, *Les Hommes, ce qui les rend beaux* (*Men, What Makes Them Beautiful*), Barbara Polla, M.D., reveals the male perspective on beauty, grooming and appearance. For her book, Dr. Polla spent one year interviewing men—in cabs, in bars, at work, everywhere—speaking with any man who would talk to her about his beauty routine: European men, American men, young men, mature men, friends, fathers, sons, brothers, artists, business men, men involved in the business of beauty, etc.

Among the American men interviewed were several renowned figures involved in the skin care, spa and esthetics industry, including:

- New York City dermatologist Roy G. Geronemus, M.D.
- Cofounder of Washington, DC's premier men's grooming destination, The Grooming Lounge, Pirooz Sarshar
- Former manager of New York City's Mezzanine Spa, Fred Kaminsky
- New York City plastic surgeon specialized in men, George Lefkovitz, M.D.
- Skinstore.com CEO and former COO, Jim Steeb and Cory Pulice, respectively

Translated to English, to follow are some key insights on this particular breed of beauty consumer. Dr. Polla's conclusions, while not statistically significant, offer a unique glimpse into the world of men's grooming that can be transformed into strategies for spa owners and operators to adjust their offerings to generate more revenue from male clients. After all, as the conclusions below indicate, men look at themselves in the mirror just as much as women do—they just close the bathroom door first.

*Insight #1:* Men love to talk about their beauty and their appearance—they are happy that someone is finally asking questions and listening to their answers.

Suggestion for skin care professionals and spas: Do not assume that your male clients are shy and want to be left alone. Interact with them, ask them questions about their beauty habits, their spa experience and recommendations as to how you can further tailor your space and offerings to their needs.

*Insight #2:* The liberation of man is here: his beauty and grooming routine are freely discussed, after centuries of being "taboo."



Suggestion for skin care professionals and spas: Refer to insight #1. Talk, talk, talk. Ask questions and listen.

*Insight #3:* If and when men are asked to speak about their beauty habits, fear of homosexuality is “official” or “genuine.” For example, straight men are not likely to worry that you will perceive them as homosexual if they openly speak about their grooming habits.

Suggestion for skin care professionals and spas: Have I mentioned the need to talk to your male clients? Think about surveying them. If you have none, but wish to develop this segment of your clientele, poll your father, brothers, husbands, boyfriends and sons about their grooming habits. If they are not coming into your spa, ask them why and determine what you could do to entice them to visit.

### Do not tell them otherwise

*Insight #4:* All men consider themselves beautiful, at least until their 50s. Not gorgeous, but definitely attractive.

Suggestions for skin care professionals and spas: Adapt your marketing language. Whereas marketing beauty to women involves creating the feeling that a spa treatment will make them look more attractive, younger, less wrinkled, thinner (all comparative adjectives that play on our feelings of insecurity), attract male consumers by talking about maintenance. They do not need a facial to become more attractive—they are already gorgeous! Rather, they need a facial to maintain their polished look and sex appeal.

*Insight #5:* Whether women find them beautiful or not is not important to men until they hit their 50s (one exception: their mother must always find them attractive). Instead, they are beautiful for themselves and for other men—this seems to be true as much for straight men as it is for gay men.

Suggestion for skin care professionals and spas: Emphasize the importance of looking good at work—in court, on TV or in a business meeting. Link grooming to power, influence and success in the workplace.

*Insight #6:* When they reach their 50s, men finally do become anxious about their physical appearance and worry about weight gain, flabbiness of the flesh and loss of hair. At that point,



In most men-only spas, hair services play a key role. It is often that service that will entice a male consumer to try a grooming space instead of a barbershop.

the opinion of women about their appearance and beauty becomes essential to their confidence and well-being.

Suggestion for skin care professionals and spas: If you wish to attract an older male clientele, offer slimming and tightening treatments that focus on the abdomen. For retail products, make sure your selection includes hair products (even if you are a spa and not a salon).

*Insight #7:* The most important part of a man's beauty is his hair, whether he is young or old. Loss of hair is associated with loss of virility and control. On the other hand, shaving one's head (i.e. deliberate baldness) enables men to take back control over their bodies and their virility.

*continues*

We did realize that hair removal (laser, waxing) is still the number one spa service requested by men (closely followed by massages).



Suggestion for skin care professionals and spas: In most exclusively male spas, hair services play a key role. It is often that service that will entice a male consumer to try a grooming space instead of a barber-shop. If you are opening a male only space, offer hair services. If you are a traditional day spa trying to develop your male clientele, add hair services if possible. Think of hair broadly (haircuts, but also waxing services). Even if you do not offer hair services, make sure you do offer retail hair products for sale.

*Insight #8:* The relationship to a man's father figure is very important in the development of his image of male beauty.

Suggestion for skin care professionals and spas: This one is tough unless you are pursuing a psychology degree. Nevertheless, keep it in mind in case the subject does come up.

*Insight #9:* Beauty is in being. To be beautiful is to be interesting and powerful: to men, beauty is more than skin deep.

Suggestion for spas: Interesting and powerful is great. Interesting and powerful with soft feet and trimmed nose hairs is even better. Since men still do not take grooming as seriously as women do—they are CEOs and find themselves quite attractive to begin with—take a light-hearted and humorous approach to marketing to men (groominglounge.com is a perfect example of how to achieve this).

*Insight #10:* European interviewees consistently—and without cues—find Sean Connery to be the most attractive man alive. He has strength, cynicism, elegance and beauty of character. American interviewees cited Brad Pitt first: strength, self-confidence, youth and plastic beauty.

Suggestion for skin care professionals and spas: Invite Sean Connery and Brad Pitt to your spa!

## Preferences, needs

When developing or adjusting your spa concept to the male market, do read the industry data and trend reports on the matter. But remember to also speak to the men in your world about their grooming needs, preferences and pet peeves. At our own Forever Laser Institut medispa in Switzerland, we conducted a survey of our male clients (approximately 15 percent of our guests). While we didn't find out who they believed was the most attractive man alive, we did realize that hair removal (laser, waxing) is still the number one spa service requested by men, closely followed by massages, and that they would prefer to sit in a waiting room filled with beautiful women rather than beautiful men. ■

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