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American Male: In The Company Of Men

By Justin Feeney

Ask your local barber for a pedicure or a paraffin hand dip, and you're liable to get laughed at. Ask him for a bikini wax and he'll tell you to take a hike. But it's no joke that proper grooming is important in the professional world and we do live in an era when A-list actors are looking as well-groomed as their female counterparts. So it's unsurprising that increasing numbers of men are seeking out a wide variety of salon services traditionally associated with women. But you'd still be hard-pressed to find a guy who wouldn't tremble at the prospect of taking in a pedicure in the presence of three or four of his female peers.

Tom McCormack, proprietor of full-service men's salon franchise American Male, understands all of this. His unique new enterprise, which opened its doors September 26, serves as an attempt to bridge the gap between the corner barbershop and the trendy urban salon. Clipper-cuts are served up along side facials; cold beers are enjoyed while eyebrows are shaped. "We've tried to create a space where men can enjoy the full complement of salon services in an environment where they feel comfortable and secure," says McCormack, adding with a chuckle that men can "check their egos at the door."

Comfort is the key word here, evident in everything from the plush leather styling chairs to the adjustable shampoo stations. The cream-colored walls, which will feature the work of artists from the Banana Factory, exude warmth, and the natural wood floors confer a sense of organic. Cleanly lit, clutter free, and sparsely but elegantly furnished, the atmosphere is both minimalist and masculine.

Also in the name of comfort, you won't see or be seen, for that matter – receiving a pedicure at American Male. In fact, you won't even hear anyone ask for one. Pedicures, blemish reduction treatments and waxing services – the eyebrows, neck, chest and back – are all offered in the back of the salon, and the terms "manicure" and "pedicure" are scrapped in favor of the decisively more masculine sounding "Hand Detailing" and "Foot Detailing."

The more skeptical among us might still be wondering why a man, whose feet are presumably covered for the better part of the day, would need a pedicure. According to McCormack, it's sometimes for the benefit of a significant other, "We get a lot of

customers who come in and say, 'My wife insists my feet look good.' We can help them out."

But it also turns out that pedicures aren't only about the toenails. Sure, they're taken care of, but the process' major selling point is the foot massage. "There are a lot of never endings in the bottom of your feet, each corresponding to a different area of the body," explains McCormack. "A good foot massage can contribute to the overall well-being of your body."

Many of American Male's services are offered either individually or in-time sensitive, economizing packages that compound the therapeutic and aesthetic value. A customer on a lunch break can get a quick shampoo and clipper-cut; those with even less time to spare can pop in for a 10-minute massage. Whatever their circumstance, customers should expect to leave the salon feeling relaxed, renewed and looking good.



a full service salon for guys

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