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ANOTHER MOUNTAIN TO CONQUER

'Public speaking is another Everest for me.'

— Mr Edwin Siew, one of the two men who conquered Everest in 1998. The soft-spoken mountaineer is often invited by schools and companies to talk about his feat

BRING IT ON

'As guys, we don't spend our time putting a lot of creams and lotions on our faces, so this is much more convenient.'

— Mr Mark Chim, 37, who paid \$168 for three facials

By ALEXIS HOH

WHO said real men don't have facials?

Four in 10 spa users here are now men, said the president of the Spa Association of Singapore, Mr Peter Sag.

Two years ago, it used to be three in 10.

"Image and looking slim and looking good are becoming very important, and men are now more receptive towards personalised health and skin-care services," added the 59-year-old.

No wonder then that beauty salons and slimming centres offering men-only spas are seeing a boom in business.

Beauty chain Mary Chia opened its first men-only branch, Urban Homme, at The Amara in Tanjong Pagar in February last year.

To draw clients, the 22-year-old slimming centre has signed on SPH MediaWorks celebrity Adrian Pang as its spokesman.

The chain's public relations manager, Miss Sherrine Tan, said the outlet now counts about 1,000 men who visit it regularly for facial and slimming courses.

Among its programmes is a 45-minute one for "love-handle trimming", which promises to whittle away fat around the waist for \$185.

Its closest competitor, Expressions International, has revamped its three men-only spas, including one at UOL Building in Somerset Road, to cash in on the trend. Its first such spa opened in 1992.



STEPHANIE YEON

Facials and slimming courses are just some of what's promised for patrons like Mr Chim at men-only spas.

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?

4 in 10 spa users here are now said to be men

About 3,000 of its clients are men. They can pick from packages such as one to trim the "beer belly".

At \$299 a session, this is \$100 more expensive than similar ones for women.

Expressions chief executive Theresa Chew explained: "Men's skin is different from

women's, so we use specially designed products that are formulated exclusively for them."

Despite these prices, these men-only spas are pulling in customers, like Mr Mark Chim, a 37-year-old marketing manager. He recently paid \$168 for three facials at

Urban Homme, because "I'm in the sun a lot, so my face takes quite a beating".

He added: "As guys, we don't spend our time putting a lot of creams and lotions on our faces, so this is much more convenient."

Skin-care centres for men, such as the Face of Man salon

at Raffles Square in East Coast Road, are enjoying the growing interest.

One of the first of its kind when it opened in 1992, recent business has been so brisk that it has opened three more outlets in the last two years.

Its director, Mr Adam

I'LL PASS

'A face cleanser and moisturiser are pampering enough for real men.'

— Mr Anthony Loo, 36, IT consultant

Chua, who started the business, said there are now about 10,000 men visiting his four outlets regularly.

An average of 20 new customers now walk in daily just to get facials, pointed out the 40-year-old, who used to be a flight steward before he went into the beauty business.

Said the father of two: "Initially, it was pretty hard getting clients because you were seen as vain if you went for these treatments. Once, we gave out 500 flyers and got only one customer from that exercise."

"But guys are more affluent now and realise the importance of having good skin, of how it can be an asset."

According to a survey done by research company Intelligent Spas, Singaporeans and tourists visited spas and salons an estimated 400,000 times during the one-year period ending June 2002.

Of these people — who spent about \$35 million on body scrubs, facials and eye treatments — a third were men.

But not every man is willing to let others smear creams and lotions on his face.

IT consultant Anthony Loo, 36, for one, believes such luxuries should be reserved for women.

"It seems effeminate to be indulging in such activities."

"A face cleanser and moisturiser are pampering enough for real men," he said.

MIND
LIFE & SOUL
BODY

ST PHOTO, JONCE HANG

Men these days realise that their skin is also an important part of their body.

Mr Chris Chua, the founder of beauty salon, Face of Man, on why more men like Abdul Samad (left) are making facials a regular part of their beauty regimen

He believes in facials

Facials are no longer seen as not macho and more men, like music conductor Abdul Samad, are willing to pay for this skin care treatment. STACEY CHIA reports

Apart from a slight blemish on his right cheek, Mr Abdul Samad has almost flawless skin.

The music conductor has been getting fortnightly facials for the last five years on top of maintaining a good skin care ritual at home. He uses a cleanser, toner and sunblock daily.

Mr Samad, 40, has never had any major skin problems apart from the occasional breakout and blackheads, yet he still forks out \$150 for each facial treatment.

"It's just to ensure that my skin remains in this condition," he said.

Dr Eileen Tan, a dermatologist at Eileen Tan Skin, Laser and Hair

Transplant Clinic, agreed that even men like Mr Samad, with good skin conditions, should be concerned with its care.

Men - who tend to have oilier skin than women - are more prone to acne and tinea versicolor, a superficial fungal infection. Their skin is oilier because they

have more active sebaceous glands.

The oil produced by the glands is released through the pores of the skin. Men have naturally bigger pores and when dirt and oil are trapped in them, blackheads and whiteheads form.

An increasing number of men have turned to facial treatments as part of their beauty ritual.

Last year, Mask, a skin care centre that offers facial treatments for both men and women, saw a 15 per cent increase in its male customers.

"Men these days are more affluent, more influenced by the media and realise that their skin is also an important part of their body. Facials are no longer seen as not macho," said Mr Chris Chua, the founder of beauty salon, Face of Man. Started in 1992, Face of Man was then the only place that provided facials for men.

Dr Tan said that facials provide a thorough cleansing of the face, so she does not stop her patients from going for them, provided the beautician practises good hygiene standards.

However, if a person has problem skin such as acne, he will need more than a facial treatment and should see a doctor, she added.

Chemical peeling is one such treatment for acne provided by dermatologists.

It removes the superficial layer of the skin and, in the process, black and white heads of pimples are removed.

Meanwhile, men are paying more attention to anti-ageing products even

though they generally age more gradually than women.

Global data group Euromonitor International's 2008 report on male grooming products showed that anti-ageing products were the fastest growing segment with a 67 per cent growth from 2002 to 2007.

Dr Cheong Wai Kwong, a dermatologist at Specialist Skin Clinic, said a man's skin is thicker than a woman's. Therefore, it contains more collagen, a protein which helps hold skin together.

Dr Tan, agreeing, said: "A man's skin is about 30 per cent thicker and contains more collagen and elastin, hence he develops less fine lines and wrinkles."

Even as more men's skin care products go on sale, Dr Tan said men need not limit themselves to products for their gender.

"You should choose a product dependent on your type of skin rather than your gender," she said.

However, Dr Tan felt that a bar of soap is not an option for skin care. "Soap removes the natural oils and changes the natural PH level of our skin," she said.

Dr Cheong said that bars of soap which fall under the category of synthetic detergent bars like Cetaphil gentle cleansing bar, can be used on the face.

If you have no idea which products you need, Dr Tan recommended sticking with the basics. "A basic skin care regimen consists of a cleanser, skin toner, oil-free sunblock and moisturiser," she said.

stacey@spb.com.sg

Men's skin is
30%
thicker than women's
and contains
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and elastin

Groom to bloom



If you don't want to go for facials for the sake of your appearance, do it for your job's. If you are well-groomed, chances are you will feel well-received.

Your appearance matters on the job. That's why even men are going for facials these days to boost their confidence. SOLOMON LIM reports.

Egged on constantly by his wife to do something about his "bad skin", Joe Tan, a 36-year-old electrical engineer, decided to go for a facial.

Said the father of two children: "I used to have a very bad complexion and started going to ladies' salons for treatment. These treatments were expensive and I felt a little awkward going to them.

Things changed for the better when he read about Face of Man, a men-only beauty salon, two years ago in an article in The Straits Times.

"When I first heard about Face of Man, I was a little worried. You know, men doing men's faces, but when I got there I found they are professional and most importantly, they are honest - they don't recommend products I don't need."

At the advice of facial therapists at Face of Man, Mr Tan's daily regiment now includes cleansing and toning three times a day. He also uses a face mask twice a week and goes to the salon with a male colleague once a month.

Now, he recommends facials to other male colleagues and friends but is chary that it can be a sensitive subject, not to be handled about. "I don't just go up to my colleagues and say 'hey your skin is bad, go for a facial'. Instead, I tell them to go, just clean the face and relax.

I see it as just taking care of my skin. After all, I want to look good."

Mr Tan is a part of a growing number of men who have no qualms about having facials as part of personal grooming to help them in their careers.

But how vital is this?

When asked about this, Ms Azlina Ariffin, marketing communications executive at Adecco Personnel, told Recruit that more men are becoming aware of the importance of good grooming for job interviews and at the workplace.

She said: "Being well-groomed means being neat and clean - from your hairstyle to shoes and fingernails. Wearing business attire that fits well is important. Your dressing must be tasteful rather than expensive, with appropriate accessories such as a watch, cufflinks and a briefcase you are comfortable with.

"Looking like you care about how your look is a valid concern.

Good grooming gives a positive impression to interviewers and employers. A candidate or employee who dresses sloppily, wears dirty shoes and constantly reeks of cigarettes and alcohol, for example, does not give a good impression." But of course, it would not do to overdo it, she cautioned. "For example, walking into an interview room with a strong aftershave smell can be overpowering and a turn-off. The key word here is 'subtlety', not 'vanity'."

For Mr Prem Nair, 35, who works as a flight attendant, facials help relax and reduce the damage frequent flying does to his skin. He has been a regular at Face of Man for the past six years. He said: "I visited the salon out of curiosity. Men's facials were new to the market then and I felt that my face needed a touch-up. Indeed, facials boosted my confidence.

"The long flights to Europe and the odd hours give me eye-bags and make me look tired. The facials help make me look better."

MEN'S SKIN IS FROM MARS

Men have thicker skins than women, up to three times thicker, in fact. While the thicker skin contains more collagen, which in turn slows the ageing process, it also has more oil glands, which result in oilier skin and clogged pores. Men's skin is also more reactive than women's and is more prone to turn red in the sun or after a couple of drinks.

DOs AND DON'Ts FOR BETTER SKIN

Don't use a bar of body soap to wash your face. It is too dry and will cause facial lines to form prematurely. And don't use your wife's or girlfriend's skin care products.

Men living in the tropical regions don't need much skin maintenance, a basic cleanser and toner is sufficient, and some treatment cream for specific problem areas. For those aged above 30, a water-based moisturizer or sun-block would be useful too.

To maintain a healthy glow, Face of Man's Adam Chua said men should avoid milk, alcohol and coffee. Milk, according to Mr Chua, contains iodine that prevents the elimination of toxins in the skin and can aggravate acne.

Mr Chua also advised taking note of the five things: manage your stress levels, sleep well, avoid excessive sunlight, don't smoke and drink seven glasses of fluid daily.

High levels of stress aggravate existing skin conditions due to hormonal changes; managing your stress levels will reduce the amount and severity of breakouts.

Having enough sleep is needed to allow the skin to recover from the rigors of the day. Avoid the sun or use a good sunscreen if you have to be outdoors for an extended period of time.

Smoking damages skin cells by depriving them of oxygen. Finally, drinking sufficient fluids helps to hydrate skin cells, making them more supple and smooth.

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The New Market

Here&Now

Grand Prix

NTUC union members can now choose to buy passes only to the races they want to watch, instead of the entire three-day event. They can also enjoy the experience of life-size racing simulators during the U1 Grand Prix Party at the Singapore Flyers Greek Theatre on Sept 16 which they can join at \$15. Non-members pay \$50. See performances by local comedian Kumar, a cappella group Budak Pantai and more. Visit www.powerofu.sg for details.



Gift redemption

Check out Owell's new series of Bio-Ge Titanium healthy accessories and watches. Owell's 11th Anniversary Loyalty Program enables redemption of free gifts such as the BIO-Ge titanium health pendant worth \$199 and Alpha Rhythmi shoulder massager worth \$288 with its limited edition Rewards Card. For enquiries, call 6339-0613.



Men get it too

Beauty care for males is a growing business that makes the grooming centres smile all the way to the bank

BY LAI YI MING

SLIMMING therapies and beauty treatments such as facials and spas, once the domain of women, are now men's territory too. More young males who want to look good are going for these treatments and they are not shy about visiting the beauty salons to make up for it.

The ringing cash registers of such businesses are proof of the new trend.

Mr Adam Chua, managing partner of Face Of Man, says he has seen a 33 per cent increase in revenue this year. Grooming centre Urban Homme And Body Studio has also enjoyed a 20 per cent rise in revenue over a year, according to Mr Foo Jehua, senior marketing executive at Mary Chia Holdings, a grooming and beauty care company.

Both Swenson Hair Centre and Men's Skin Centre disclose that there has been an increase in their revenue but declined to reveal the figures. They are run by Global Beauty International, which also operates Marie France Bodyline and Bella Skin Care. Their clients are aged between 25 and 45 years.

At Face Of Man, the popular services include a purifying treatment for clogged oily skin, Chromolite for clearing of acne, Biostrata Solution for acne scar reduction, FMwave for skin lifting, anti-wrinkling and tummy trim. The price range for each treatment is between \$50 and \$120.

Mr Chua says his clients are

from 12 to 75 years old and about 30 per cent of them are students, National Service men and blue-collar workers. The rest are executives and businessmen. The income levels of his clients range from \$1,200 to \$6,000 a month.

"Men used to be very shy to venture into skincare because of their male ego — they don't want to be deemed as vain," says Mr Chua, who adds that till now, only about 10 per cent of his clients who are below 35 years old are more upfront about going to beauty salons.

He says that men are now better informed about skincare treatments and more receptive to the idea of customised skincare and beauty advice. He notes that primary school boys are also seeking help for problematic skin. His younger clients are willing to spend an average of \$54 for each session.

The one-stop men's grooming hub, Urban Homme And Body Studio, provides facial, body sculpting, weight management and spa services. These include face slimming, double chin reduction, beer belly reduction and abdominal sculpting. Each treatment session costs between \$145 and \$380. The packages range from about



More men are going for beauty treatments that include facials and spa sessions.
PHOTOS: URBAN HOMME AND BODY STUDIO; FACE OF MAN



\$1,000 to \$7,000, depending on clients' needs and budget.

"Men are definitely a lot more savvy about their personal grooming and the upkeep of their appearances. Gone are the days when men were made to feel unmanly or weird just because they went for a facial," says Mr Foo.

He adds that most of the clients are in their 30s to 50s, with annual incomes of \$50,000 onwards.

According to Euromonitor International, which does research for consumer markets, men's grooming is one of the fastest-growing categories in beauty and personal

care, and it expects the revenues to grow by \$4 billion globally by 2014. It says this is a result of the changing attitudes among men about grooming and a shift from manual work to white-collar jobs in the emerging economies.

Assistant Professor Jane Wang Jing of marketing in Lee Kong Chuan School of Business, Singapore Management University, says: "Personally, I think the perception of masculine good looks has undergone an amazing transformation in the past few years worldwide."

She adds that the reasons may include the growing popularity of

male style icons such as football star David Beckham, who embodies the new modern male attitude in physical appearance.

"The rising number of single men and the trend of getting married later in life, which stretches the age band of single men, may also play a role in fueling interest in grooming."

"On a negative note, we might see growing number of men suffering from social and health problems traditionally ascribed to women, such as eating disorders, especially among young men," she adds.