STAND BY YOUR MAN

Now that men are no longer strangers to spas, discover how they are adapting and changing the industry. **BY HEATHER MIKESELL**

UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES MALE SPA-GOERS TICK HAS LONG BEEN AN objective of spa owners, directors, marketers, product manufacturers, and more. As men have come to enjoy and embrace spa products and treatments—much like their female counterparts—the industry has discovered new ways to curry favor with this growing demographic. According to Statista, an online statistics, market research, and business intelligence portal, the male grooming market is estimated to be worth approximately $21.65 billion this year and grow to $29.14 billion by 2024. “The male spa-goer has evolved both in quantity and in treatment requirements,” says Lynne McNees, president of the International Spa Association (ISPA). “One of the biggest changes we’ve witnessed is the increase in male customers; our recent research shows that 49 percent of spa customers are men, up from 29 percent in 2005. As more and more spas have begun customizing services for men, we’re seeing that not only are more men visiting spas, they’re also becoming repeat clients.” Want to know how to attract and keep their attention? Here, we get the scoop on how the male spa-goer is evolving and what works for male-only spas.

NO GIRLS ALLOWED

While male-only spas aren’t new to the industry, they are becoming more commonplace with the emergence of franchises like **Hammer and Nails** (multiple locations), a grooming shop for guys. **Sir Spa** (Chicago), which debuted in 2006, is thriving thanks to its ability to make men feel at home. It does that by providing a more masculine atmosphere with clean lines, dark hardwood floors in common areas, exposed brick in the treatment rooms, and heated tile floors in the locker room. According to spa director Markus Zbinden, two of the biggest misconceptions people have about male spa-goers are that they don’t like to be pampered or care about their appearance. “Most of our clients are businessmen and men who care about how they look,” says Zbinden. “We recognize that and are here to help.” And if that isn’t enough to convince you, the statistics on male grooming trends speak for themselves.

“Our main goal here at Sir Spa is to relax, refuel, and renew,” says Zbinden. “This has been our motto since day one.” According to him, the biggest change he has witnessed over the years is the need for relaxation and downtime. Fortunately, self-care is a popular wellness concept that crosses gender lines. “Be it massage, skincare, or just a steam, as our other motto states, ‘We are where men get their go,’” says Zbinden. “Being in a large city like Chicago—to have a space like Sir Spa—

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Even if a spa doesn’t cater only to men, there are many that now offer dedicated spaces to their male clientele with a host of amenities that appeal to men. The Spa at Harrah’s at Harrah’s Resort Southern California (Funner, CA), for example, features a state-of-the-art barbershop that offers straight-edge hot lather shaves, beard trims, foot buffs, manicures, and facial masks, all with a side of whiskey. “We have a high-end super-comfortable barber chair, where our guests can be fully reclined while receiving a facial or a shave,” says spa manager Gina Layland. “In addition, they can choose to watch television or listen to music of their choosing while enjoying an Old Forrester Bourbon.” At the Independent Hotel Show this past October in London, a panel titled “Relax, Guys: Spas for Men” revealed the importance of featuring various food and beverage options. Beer, in particular, is a popular choice when it comes to encouraging relaxation. Men also tend to favor thermal facilities.

MEMBERS ONLY
After fielding numerous requests for after-hour and weekend appointments from his male clientele, plastic surgeon Norman M. Rowe, M.D., F.A.C.S., recently opened The Club House (New York City), a one-stop shop for men interested in anti-aging treatments and minimally invasive procedures, such as Botox (or Bro-tox, as it’s often called in male circles), fillers, laser hair removal, PRP hair rejuvenation, and even penis augmentation, which is especially popular among all ages. Wanting to fill a niche for men who feel self-conscious discussing such procedures among the opposite sex, Rowe created The Club House to be a safe space staffed with male nurses and receptionists.
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Our experts share some of the changes they’ve noted in male spa-goers over the years.

“Requests for anti-aging treatments have grown as well as different modalities of bodywork. We have also added a few services, such as microdermabrasion, LED light therapy, Thai massage, and reflexology, over the years to accommodate the wants and needs of our client base.”—Markus Zbinden, spa director, Sir Spa (Chicago)

“Today’s male spa-goer has a better understanding of the many health benefits of visiting a spa. Spa services are not just seen as a nice thing to send the ladies in their lives to for a holiday or anniversary. Gentlemen deserve a day of rest and relaxation, too. I have many couples who come in together to experience the spa and quite a few gentlemen who come in alone for a day of rejuvenation.”—Gina Layland, spa manager, The Spa at Harrah’s (Funnier, CA)

“We’re seeing that as the number of men using spa services increases, the notion of male spa-goers being effeminate is being debunked. The desire to reduce or relieve stress remains the number one reason both men and women visit spas. Men are going to spas more often seeking tools to improve stress reduction not just during their sessions, but also for use in their day-to-day lives, as well.”—Lynne McNees, president, ISPA

“Men want more than deep-muscle massage today. They want head-to-toe rejuvenation. They want to go to a spa, but what they are really looking for is a comfortable doctor’s office where they can get Botox, hair-loss treatment, and skincare, in addition to a deep-tissue massage”—Norman M. Rowe, M.D., F.A.C.S., owner, Rowe Plastic Surgery (multiple locations) and The Club House (New York City)