

Male spas on the rise



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It's no secret that the male grooming market is growing worldwide. Data from Euro Monitor International reveals that the global male grooming market grew by 6 per cent between 2006 and 2011 to reach £22 billion in 2011. As per my study and survey of the Indian market, I found that for the first time, men today are spending a longer time on personal grooming than women.

A growing market

Spas, salons and brands are not only aware of the potential of this market, but are actively tapping into it as well by introducing treatments and product ranges specifically for men like Vitaman. Clare Matthews, Co-founder, Vitaman, says, "This is such a big growing market worldwide. There has been a noticeably increased demand for products for men. We launched the brand to meet the demand from the general consumer, because everyone was asking for a male-only brand." Vitaman, an Australian natural grooming range for men, established in 1999, was one of the first skin care brands in the world to cater exclusively to men. Matthews further adds, "Over the past 14 years, there has been a drastic rise in the market."

In India, in the coming years, the male spa-goer will grow and the demand for men having facials will also increase. The international market comprises of 54 per cent of women guests as compared to 46 per cent men, whereas today in India, there are 60 per cent men and 40 per cent women. Several spas are offering men product lines like Vitaman to help gain special revenue and attract more of them. In India, too, the number of men-centric spas is on the rise. Over the past eight years, we have seen tremendous growth in the number of services offered to men.

Social changes

It is generally agreed that the boom in the male grooming market, manifested both in a global rise in product sales and spa visits, is a consequence of shifting social attitudes and a greater acceptance of men taking pride in their appearance. The influence of the media too is responsible. The celebrity factor is important, too, as when they see celebrities promoting products, they are motivated to buy the same. Another reason men are now more willing to sign up for facials is that earlier the treatment was previously viewed as a preserve of women. Today, they are more in tune with the concept.

Once they are familiar with the spa treatments, they would be willing to experiment. We have seen an increase in the demand for men to have not only body massages or facial treatments, but also body waxing, especially for chest, manicure, pedicure and eyebrows.

Male fetishes

Men have different priorities and requirements as they shave and have a different skin texture. Shaving is known to be quite damaging to the skin, particularly for those who have sensitive skin. It's important for men to keep their skin in good condition and keep it hydrated. Looking at the Indian culture, men spend 65 per cent more time outside than women, hence their skin is exposed to the elements much more which results in dehydrated, aged and wrinkled skin. The nature of men's skin means the treatment process could take slightly longer. Therapists need to be aware that with men, a higher number of treatments might be required, because there is more hair to work with and the testosterone level is quite strong. Also, men prefer stronger pressure during massages, while women prefer body wraps or gentle massages. I can safely say that India has plenty of room for only-male grooming centres and spa lounges. **S**



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