

By Donald Charles Richardson

FACING IT



On Him Facial. According to the facility, this is “a customized European-style facial using products formulated especially for men’s skin.” It includes a pre-relaxation massage on the shoulders and neck, a scalp massage, deep cleansing and soft peel, a peel-off mask and an application of hydrating or age-defying active cream to protect the skin. Nice. And you can’t help but like that shoulder, neck and scalp massage.

Perhaps one of the best and most knowledgeable male skin care technicians around is, remarkably, a man! Have you ever had a facial by a guy? Probably not. There aren’t many male skincare technicians around, but Enrique Ramirez not only primarily focuses on men’s skin care, he just happens to be remarkably good at it. Located at Face To Face NYC in New York City, Ramirez knows as much about skin and skin products as any woman in the business, and he’s built quite a business out of taking care of guys. An impressive 95 percent of his clientele is male.

Face To Face is no fluffy, pink “palace de beauté.” This is a simple, straightforward facility that, incidentally, offers a range of services from collagen masks to “South of the

The next time you’re hanging with your buds, drop the f-word and watch them scatter. Naw, not that word. Say “facial” and chances are they’ll turn red . . . or maybe just turn away.

Massages, hairstyling, manicures and even pedicures (which, incidentally, seem to be a favorite treatment for most once they’ve had it done) are no problem for men. But there aren’t a lot of takers when it comes to a facial.

There appear to be several reasons for this. First of all, a lot of guys have just never thought of it. After all, if there’s something that’s not part of your usual life it’s possible it’s never entered your mind. Take skydiving, for example – unless someone suggests it, you may never consider the idea.

Then there’s the whole atmosphere that can surround a facial. No matter how butch the description of a “man’s facial” might sound in a brochure, the reality remains that at many places, you’re still going to wind up waiting your turn in a pink room with a table piled with ladies’ magazines, surrounded by women of all ages wearing bathrobes exchanging information that most men don’t really want to hear. (“Did I tell you about my latest pap smear?”) One brave man who finally decided to go for it later said that while the treatment itself was alright, he couldn’t handle the “hard sell” that went along with the facial. (“Your skin really needs our \$300 scruffing lotion.”) Hell, he didn’t even know what a scruffing lotion was!

It is kind of a shame that men don’t have more facials, though. First of all, frankly, they feel really good. And if it’s done well, the process can help get your face skin in terrific shape. Of course, even though they insist to the contrary, not every technician does a man’s facial well. They are used to working on women and appear to consider a man’s face just a larger version of what they’re used to. Unfortunately, this usually isn’t true. Men’s skin is different from women’s (surprise!) and can need different kinds of treatments.

A man’s skin is generally oilier than a woman’s and can have more clogged pores. Then there are razor burn and redness to consider. And of course, men usually aren’t into the sweet-smelling or fluffy stuff that women appear to love.

That said, there are some places that really understand how to give a man a facial. At the Face Focus Medical Spa in Englewood, N.J., you can get the Focus



Border” waxing. When it comes to facials, there are over 10 choices (Ramirez helps you select what you need). But he points out that the most important thing about treating men is “cleaning the skin and extraction.” He notes that getting a man’s skin really clean is the first and most important task. This idea makes sense, because about 85 percent of men have oily skin, and naturally have a predisposition for ingrown hairs and white or blackheads. No worries, Ramirez gets them out. And – you’re going to love this – while you’re lying there with a mask on your face, he massages your arms,

hands and feet, and waxes the hair out of your ears and nose. Now, you definitely can't beat that.

But Ramirez isn't the only man who can take care of your skin. Working in his very private facility on New York's West Side, Rick Keegan is a licensed aesthetician who does a treatment called DremaSound Plus, which could just be a man's best friend. This three-step process peels, feeds and heals the skin. First, ultrasonic vibration is combined with water to exfoliate dead skin cells. This process is free of crystals, salts or chemicals so it doesn't cause inflammation. Next, ultrasonic frequencies are used to permeate the skin with antioxidants and vitamins to minimize lines and wrinkles. Finally, microamp therapy stimulates healing and brings new skin cells to the surface, leaving you with rejuvenated and hydrated skin.

The cool part of this facial is that it truly deep-cleans and restores the skin without any kind of pain, discomfort or redness. If they didn't notice how good you're looking, nobody would know you'd had anything done.

So guys, relax, look around and check out the treatments for men. If you find the right one, it won't be scary at all. ★

Editor's Note: The Face Focus Medical Spa is located in Englewood, N.J. (201-894-0500; www.face-focus.com). Face To Face NYC is located at 59 West 19th Street, Suite 6C, New York City (917-991-7031; www.facetofacenyc.com). Rick Keegan is located at 255 West 23rd Street, New York City (212-366-6108/917-301-5638).

*Enrique Ramirez
plies his trade at
Face to Face NYC.*

