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# A He-Wax for Him

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Danny Ghitis for The New York Times

Kenny Milstead, an aesthetician at Bliss Spa in SoHo with a client, Ryan Pepper.

By RACHEL FELDER  
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YEARS after [the word “metrosexual” entered the mainstream](#), there’s nothing eyebrow-raising about men getting a manicure or a facial. Lately though, guys’ grooming has gone one step further, deep into territory that was previously reserved solely for women: bikini waxing.

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The below-the-belt treatment — which, just like the women’s version, removes either some or all pubic hair — is becoming increasingly popular, and not just among competitive swimmers or underwear models. “What we’re finding is, it’s everybody,” said Mike

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P.J. Pascual, during a Boyzilian at  
Strip: Ministry of Waxing.

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Aesthetician Katie Marks preparing to  
wax P.J. Pascual.

Indursky, the president of the Bliss chain of spas, which offers a men's Brazilian called the Ultimate He-Wax for \$125. "It's the gay community, it's the straight community, it's very conservative guys, it's very liberal guys. All different age groups are coming in. It's much, much bigger than we ever thought."



Since Bliss introduced men's waxing services in February 2011, Mr. Indursky added, their popularity is on track to double by the end of this year with Brazilians as the most frequently booked service.

Men's bikini waxing accounts for around 70 percent of the weekly business at Face to Face, a discreet salon in the Flatiron district of Manhattan with a predominantly male clientele founded eight years ago by Enrique Ramirez.

"When I started, I was like, 'Nobody's going to come in and get this done,' and it's just kept growing and growing," Mr. Ramirez said. "In the past two years, it's been crazy."

The salon offers a full Brazilian called South of the Border for \$70, along with partial treatments. Also on its menu is something called "pejazzling," in which crystals in patterns like stars and dolphins are affixed on newly defuzzed skin.

Evan Scott, 32, a music producer who lives in Murray Hill, has been getting a more-basic bikini wax for about two years. "I like to represent myself in a certain way, from no clothes to fully buttoned up, and I think that this is an extension of my overall presentation," he said. Noting the prevalence of bikini waxes among women, Mr. Scott also suggested that what's good for the goose is good for the gander. "If I have that expectation of someone else, I probably would want to return the favor," he said.

His comfort might also be explained by the number of visibly depilated men, like David Beckham and the Situation, increasingly evident in mass media. "It's not emulating something you've seen in some X-rated film," said Jason Chen, an associate style editor at Details. "It's about maintaining yourself and keeping things clean."

Some men think there's an added perk of getting a Brazilian: an enlarging effect for the main attraction. "It accentuates it, because there's nothing to obscure the, you know, implement down there," said Ramon Padilla, the director of Strip: Ministry of Waxing, a salon in SoHo, which charges \$85 for a so-called Boyzilian.

But as women well know, bikini waxes can hurt a lot (though results last four to six weeks, without the stubble that shaving leaves). To deal with the pain, some men take an Advil beforehand (aspirin is not advised because of its blood-thinning properties) or have a glass of wine to relax. At Strip, a Crayola-colored stress ball is left in each treatment room for clients to squeeze as necessary.

Moreover, not every man is comfortable dropping his trousers in a salon treatment room, which can be stressful whether the aesthetician is male or female.

To appeal to those men, certain at-home trimmers are specially designed for hair in the nether regions. The Braun cruZer body (\$69.99), for example, was introduced in November and promises to “trim and shave everywhere.” The Philips Norelco Bodygroom Pro (\$69.99) and the Gillette Fusion ProGlide Styler (\$19.99) target similar needs, as does the Mangroomer Essential Private Body Shaver (\$39.99), an extension of a line of electronic hair-removers that was conceived by an inventor eager to eliminate his own back hair.

“It’s not a niche,” said Kristi Crump, Philips Norelco’s North American marketing director for personal care products. “Lots of men out there are doing it. We were surprised, but now we know it’s a big trend.” Last year, sales of the company’s at-home body groomers were up 22 percent, Ms. Crump said, with the highest usage in the bikini area, according to a customer survey.

Pirooz Sarshar, a men’s grooming expert and founder of the men’s advice Web site [PRZman](#), has been giving himself Brazilians with trimmers and shavers for 12 years. “It’s routine for me now,” he said. “I do the whole thing myself. I feel better, it looks better. I feel like I’m cleaner, and it’s more sanitary.”

As with women’s bikini waxing, aftercare is important, since the risk of ingrown hairs, which can get infected, is higher where the hair is especially thick and curly. For the first 24 hours after defuzzing, most aestheticians advise avoiding anything that will get the area overheated, including steam rooms, workouts and (alas) sex.

Keeping the area clean is also important. A unisex calming product, like Malin and Goetz’s newly-introduced ingrown hair cream (\$34) and FixMySkin healing body balm (\$12), which comes in a tube that looks like a child’s glue stick, can help soothe any irritation or redness.

Despite the hassles of maintenance, salon owners said, men keep coming back. “Guys try it and look and go, ‘It’s better than the mess I had down there,’” said Mr. Indursky of Bliss. “And it is. You feel more confident. It actually makes you feel more masculine, instead of less masculine, to get waxed. It sounds like an oxymoron, but it’s not.”

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Be that as it may, Mr. Padilla of Strip said that many of his male clients are submitting to pressure from their partners. "The vast majority say they're doing it because their wife or their girlfriend told them to do it," he said. "The wives bring them," saying "If I'm going to do it, you better do it as well."



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