

# STYLE

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## Hair today, gone tomorrow

For guys, less body hair is more

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PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

**B**eards may be in. But stomach manes? Out. The same goes for chest tufts and creeping brows. In fact, hair anywhere other than a man's lip, jaw or chin is having a hard time getting respect.

From magazine covers to movie shoots to beaches, it's the hairless guys, the men showing off the smoothest skin, who are getting pop-culture high-fives.

"I don't know many people who don't shave, or at least trim," said JD Markwardt, 26, a Denver tattoo artist.

He's not talking about chins. "My friends, when we talk about stuff like that, say they all shave [body hair]. They don't grow everything out like they used to."

It's not just the young dudes, though. Salon owners say retirees come in for chest waxings. Middle-age hockey coaches get Brazilians, a procedure that removes hair around the groin.

Just as women have for decades, guys across the spectrum are taking inventory of their body hair and saying, "Be gone!"

Studies and interviews suggest guys want "cleanliness," although the evidence for their reasoning is far from conclusive.

Either way, corporate America has responded. Since 2007, nearly 100 new lotions, strips, sprays and devices meant to manage male body hair have come on the market, according to Taya Tomasello, director of beauty innovation at research firm Mintel International.

Nair, a company associated with women's products since 1940, has a depilatory cream and spray for men. Nad's for Men offers hair-removal

strips. Hansen for Men also sells a line of strips and lotions. Remington advertises a new electric body shaver.

Satin Smooth, a company specializing in waxing products, last week began promoting the idea of the "boyzilian."

These companies understand a significant shift in men's attitudes about hair.

"As soon as it started growing, I started shaving," said Markwardt. "I trim my armpits because if I don't it gets very long and waves in the wind like a flag."

Based on what has happened in the female market, Tomasello believes male body grooming has legs.

Women in the US began shaving armpits and legs in the 1920s as closer-cut and revealing fashions put more emphasis on body shape. The hair kept coming off. Fast-forward to the 1990s, when Brazilians became marginally popular; now they are commonplace.

And men are primed for the change. Last year, they accounted for nearly 30 percent of all spa business, according to the International Spa Association. They are drivers for a growing segment of the industry's boom niche: hair-removal salons.

"Fashion trends come and go," said Tomasello, "but grooming habits are here to stay."

Salon owners hope Tomasello is right. Waxing the City, a chain of salons, opened its first place in Lower Downtown Denver in 2003. Now, owner Alex Jimenez and her partners have another salon in Denver, one in Boulder, Colorado, one in Dallas and a "waxing university" at the original flagship location. And men are key to the growth.

With fellows, "It's full body," she said.



Cerologist Summer Harshorn waxes Scott Peters' chest hair at Waxing the City salon in downtown Denver. Harshorn said it is becoming more and more popular for men to get waxed.

PHOTO: NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE

"From blue-collar guys to executives. And once that hair is gone, you get used to it. When you see the results on one body part, you say, 'Ooh. How about there. And there. And there.'"

About 25 percent of her customers are men. Brazilian treatments, at US\$60 and US\$70, are one of the more popular male services, she said, just behind backs and eyebrows.

Brazilians are so popular at Acomoclitic Salon in Lakewood that owner Grace Power has given them names: the Tarzan, the Stud Muffin, the Hot Shot. "It's getting addictive with them," she said. "It feels so soft and smooth."

Many of the guys — about 40 percent of her business — first visit the salon at the urging of the women in their lives.

But once they get treated, she said, they usually don't need prodding.

And what do women think of hairless men?

"Trimming is good. It just depends," said Lori Gray, 25, a corporate operations specialist in Denver. "I don't think they should be smooth everywhere. It is a masculine trait to have hair. But I don't think hair should come wild out of their shirt."

Brazilians? "I could see that," she said. "Whatever floats your boat."

The trimmed look is "cleaner and nice," although complete hairlessness isn't desirable, said Tory Muller, 20, a Denver barista. Many of her friends, though, like guys completely hairless. "I know a lot of girls who think it is great."



For big companies like Gillette, the potential is huge.

"We spend a lot of time talking to guys and learning about their shaving habits, and that's one thing guys were talking about, shaving areas other than their face," said spokesman Mike Norton. "We are looking at a long-term commitment to educate guys who are really into body shaving."

In April, the company introduced its first device aimed exclusively at body hair, the Braun bodycruZer electric shaver. The corporate Web site features prominently a series of videos showing how to properly shave heads, chests, backs, armpits and groins.

The target audience? Guys 20 to 35 years old.

Michael Boroughs, a University of South Florida scholar, has conducted several studies illustrating how widespread body-hair removal is among 20-somethings. A 2005 study found that 63.6 percent of campus men surveyed engaged in some form of body-hair removal. Another of his studies, now out for professional review, increases that number to 80 percent.

The No. 1 reason given for body shaving? Cleanliness, followed by sex appeal and muscle definition (some bodybuilders shave everything).

Waxing is one of the more eye-watering methods of removing unwanted hair. Since 2007, nearly 100 new lotions, strips, sprays and devices intended to manage male body hair have come on to the market in the US.

PHOTO: NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Boroughs, though, thinks the reason is more complicated. Media influences, for one, could be significant. When celebrities wax their chests, when every shirtless guy in every magazine exhibits gleaming skin, the practice rubs off.

Hairless guys are the norm in the pages of *Men's Health* magazine and on its cover, where the last time a guy with a furry chest appeared was March 2006, said Brian Boye, the magazine's fashion and grooming director.

"I do most of the cover shoots, and I dress these guys for the cover, and I'd say nine out of 10 guys we photograph, whether it's David Beckham or The Rock, they all are clean-shaven. Maybe not their faces, but their chests," he said.

Meanwhile, in another corner of popular culture, Jon Hamm, who plays he-man Don Draper on the hit AMC TV show *Mad Men*, flaunts a Sean Connery-esque chest of dark hair. The character lives in the early 1960s, back when a rug across the pecs was a mark of masculinity.

Any chance the Draper look could make a return?

Tomasello doesn't think so, but Boye isn't so sure.

"Now, if a marketer wants their underwear or fragrance to stand out, they will put a really hairy guy in there," he said. "We will start to see this whole concept change, five to 10 years from now. Ten years ago, everybody was clean-shaven, and now everybody has a five o'clock shadow or a beard."