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## Manly makeover

### Spas, salons catering to growing male clientele

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This past week Jimmie Zimmerman was vacationing in Ventura County. Zimmerman has visited the area on business matters in years past, but on this trip he had his own agenda.

"I went in and got pampered a bit," he said.

Zimmerman, an Austin resident, was looking for a place to get the royal treatment for himself and his wife when he spotted the Michael Kelley Salon & Spa in Ventura.

"Every time we get a vacation we get a massage somewhere," he said. "We saw (the Michael Kelley salon) and thought that might be a good place to do it at."

In an industry where products and services have traditionally been marketed toward women, cosmetic companies and salons are pampering an increasing number of male clients.

"We've seen a huge increase in men, especially in the 20 to 35 (age) range," said Kelley Gaston, owner of the Michael Kelley Salon & Spa. "Even in the spa we see a lot more men getting back waxes and hair removal."

Spurred by the popularity of anti-aging and youth-regenerating products that women have been using for years, men are flocking to day spas and cosmetic retailers looking to preserve their youthful appearances, market analysts say.

This new clientele is playing a key role in an already booming industry.

A 2004 spa industry study found that men accounted for 23 percent of all U.S. spa visits and purchases that year. Sales of men's grooming products worldwide increased 36 percent from 1999 to 2004, according to Euromonitor International.

## Metrosexual takes hold

The trend even has its own popular term in the cultural lexicon: metrosexual, coined by British

journalist Mark Simpson in 1994. The word has come to generally refer to a young, metropolitan man who spends free time and money on his appearance.

Public awareness and usage of the neologism seemed to peak in 2003 with the debut of the television program "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" on the Bravo network. The ratings-success featured aesthetically obtuse heterosexual men receiving makeovers from a team of gay style experts.

Gladis Issaei, senior manager of global product marketing for Jafra Cosmetics, said she believes that men are tired of social stigmas hindering them from looking after their appearance.

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Jafra has been selling cosmetics – including a selection of men's facial cleansers and lotions – for 50 years.

"Every (statistic) that we look at shows a huge trend for men in the last two years," she said. "A lot of companies are developing skin care for men. Prior to the past two years, the market had been stable, but men's skin care has been in big demand due to the whole metrosexual trend."

Although the male-oriented market is still maturing, Issaei said the emerging customer-base is too big to ignore.

"It's very masculine now," she said. "No one is going to say you're feminine for taking care of your skin; they're going to say that you're smart."

Issaei noted that cosmetic producers have not only expanded their product lines, but they also have altered their marketing strategies.

"(Companies are) now marketing to men directly, instead of marketing to women to buy for men," she said.

At the Michael Kelley Salon, Gaston said he sees producers relying on specialization as well as one-size-fits-all versatility.

### **Marketing makeover**

While skin care products are the new addition to men's medicine cabinets, more traditional products are receiving a makeover.

Deodorants and fragrances have tapped into veins of manliness, especially mass-market body spray brands such as the testosterone-drenched Axe line from Unilever. Other brands, like Tag body spray produced by a branch of Global Gillette, have tried to copy the success of the Axe brand by marketing to the same young-male demographic.

While teen boys and young adults are coating themselves with manly scent, their baby boomer parents are more concerned with finding the fountain of youth than finding a date for Friday night.

"Once brands primarily catered to men's shaving needs, but in 2006 and beyond we will see unprecedented offerings in skin care and increased spending at the spa, especially by aging baby boomers who wish to maintain a youthful vitality as long as possible," wrote Kenneth Hirst, president of the Hirst Pacific design firm, in a report last month.

### **Deeper pockets, deeper wrinkles**

An estimated 3.4 million baby boomers will turn 60 this year. According to Franchising.com, U.S. consumers already spend more than \$30 billion on anti-aging products.

Zimmerman said if the passing of time has presented him with motivation for more frequent trips to the spa, it's an increased bank account, not crow's feet.

"I think now that we're making more money we're able to pamper ourselves more," he said.

Vanity goes beyond skin deep – specialized hair services have men leaving the barber for the salon.

"I would definitely say that guys come in more now than they used to," said Rachelle Leoffler, a cosmetologist at A Plus Salon in Ventura. Leoffler said that many of her regular clients are men, and the salon has started carrying male hair products as a result.

Salons and spa's are finding ways to make themselves gender neutral, Hirst said in the report.

"Subtleties in spa service communication, like 'gentleman's manicure' and 'sports massage' are strategic cornerstones revolving around marketers' missions of making the health and beauty categories more engendered than ever. Men are finding spa's to be personal care comfort zones – rather than strictly traditional 'drop off points' for their significant others."

Gender-specificity doesn't seem to bother Zimmerman at all. The lone star resident had no qualms about his visit to the spa and salon, stating the purpose of his visit as pampering, not physical therapy.

"This trip (to Ventura) was all pleasure," he said. "If we would have had more time I think we would've gotten pedicures, too."

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