

The bathroom cabinet is an unlikely setting for a revolution but for British men it's the Bastille. The *ancien régime* of soap and water has been overthrown by mudpacks, eye gels and concealers designed for men who put glowing skin before *égalité*.

In the 1970s men's interplay with toiletries consisted of baptism by Brut. Last year British men splashed out more than £830 million on grooming products – economic proof that their bathroom ethos has undergone radical change. Seventies man would rather die than moisturise; modern man exfoliates with pride. Urban anthropologists even talk of a new species of man, a computer-age dandy dubbed 'the metrosexual'.

For Michael Flocker, author of *The Metrosexual Guide to Style*, the breed's genesis comes down to social change and marketing. The mid-20th century was a time of 'conservatism and grey flannel suits', when men married young and fulfilled their role as breadwinner – 'signs of male vanity were frowned on'.

Today, men have more lifestyle options and 'realise they can be the object of desire as opposed to always the pursuer'. Moreover, in our image-obsessed, youth-oriented culture, appearance is key and to deny it matters in the bedroom or boardroom is naive. One survey found that 73 per cent of women put male good looks before wealth.

This aesthetic imperative means a beauty regime is no longer deemed emasculating. 'There's nothing masculine about bad hair,' says Flocker, a fact illustrated by modern man's role models. Leather-faced Marlboro men have been usurped by the likes of footballers David Beckham (painted nails, sarong) and Freddie Ljungberg (bleached crop, Calvin Klein ads), whose prowess on the pitch nullifies any suggestions of effeminacy their peacock antics attract. But

Skincare is no longer a woman-only domain. Male grooming has become big business and real men now use moisturiser, writes Matthew Temple

GOOD GROOMING



Luxury Shave Oil, £1.50, by Carial

Total Revitalizer, £39, and Hydrating Lotion, £20, both by Shiseido



Tonus B12, £26, by Karin Herzog



Scruffing Lotion, £13.50, Soap, £11, and M Lotion, £14, all by Clinique for Men

perhaps the most important influence, says Flocker, is the beauty industry marketers who, having identified 'men who groom' as a valuable demographic, seek to persuade them good grooming promises masculine fulfilment.

Carter and Bond is an online emporium for upmarket men's grooming products. A typical customer, says company director Joe Cotton, is a 'discerning man aged between 30 and 50 who is happy to spend that little bit extra for the best things in life'. Fortunately, there's plenty for them to choose. The website features around 850 individual products from more than 65 brands, including Gillette, Clinique, Washington-based Maxwell's Apothecary (popular with Newt Gingrich), Korres (from Athens), Baxter of California and old stalwart DR Harris (Prince Charles's pharmacy).

Aside from the mass of unguents, the most striking thing is seeing the doyenne of female skincare, Clinique, cosying up to Gillette. Once synonymous with postmodern womanhood, Clinique now straddles both gender camps thanks to a pioneering strategy in the late 70s. Back then, the dearth of male-specific products meant that although men were using moisturiser few dared buy it, preferring to pilfer from sisters and girlfriends than be caught actually buying a moisturiser.

The launch in 1978 of Clinique for Men changed that. While the women's line was all pastel shades and soothing lotions, the new men's collection featured graphite boxes and no-nonsense, macho-sounding products: scruffing lotion, moisture surge gel, shave primer. Even moisturiser became the James Bond-sounding M Lotion. And on-pack copy raided the extreme sports argot, turning the beauty regime into a polar expedition. Message: real men groom.

A more recent example of this type of rebranding is Old Spice. Once the preserve of naff relatives, the 65-year-old brand was bought in 1990 by Procter & Gamble, which rebranded it (Red Zone deodorant; Whitewater cologne etc) for the youth market with the help of extreme sport images and the ultimate product sell: getting the girl. Today it enjoys worldwide retail sales of \$200 million. It's the top fragrance among teen boys and the second best-selling deodorant in the States.

However, with men's increased grooming confidence such testosterone-fuelled sales ploys may become moribund. Karin Herzog is a stellar name in women's skincare with a range

devised by a Nobel-honoured scientist. Recently, Herzog launched a men's line whose fans include Brad Pitt and Justin Timberlake.

'Noughties man is getting better at grooming,' says Julie Cichocki, UK Managing Director of Karin Herzog, 'and also more demanding.' Products have to deliver on promise, she adds,

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not just packaging. Hence the company's marketing 'deals only in fact. We don't subscribe to gimmicks'.

Herzog's only concessions to men concern their skin and impatience. Men have thicker skins, says Cichocki, and want more from a brand but aren't prepared

to put in the hours. So Herzog's products do multiple jobs, from rejuvenating to soothing razor burn.

Functionality is vital but some men expect something deeper, says Glenda Taylor, founder of Carial, whose aromatherapy-based products offer a holistic approach to grooming. Made from 100 per cent natural essential oils, the range targets the growing body of health-aware men who don't want 'caustic and aggressive' synthetic ingredients on their skin and, moreover, want products like energising shave oils that actually affect their mood.

In between practical Herzog and holistic Carial comes Daniele de Winter, skincare guru and author of US bestseller *Eat Yourself Beautiful*, whose men's range, deW Homme, is less about spiritualism and more about 'increasing the availability of gorgeous men'. Launched in playboy-central, Monaco, the line combines natural ingredients with sporty names – Sprint, Smash, Pentathlon – for men who want the Hefner lifestyle and perfect skin. Her advice for would-be playboys is threefold: use natural antioxidant-rich sunscreen for the rays; substitute water and fruit and veg (pineapple and spinach) for the champagne; and rather than trips to the casino, 'cut up your credit card and get some sleep'.

While Herzog, Carial and de Winter attract the grooming elite, the mass market is dominated by Gillette and Unilever's Lever Fabergé, makers of Lynx, the UK's top male grooming brand. Product-wise, deodorants are number one followed by bodysprays, shower products, skincare, haircare and talc, though