

Braun bodycruZer “Hairy” Survey – Executive Summary

Looking back at old TV shows and vintage newsreels from the '60s and '70s, it's striking how neatly dressed and well-groomed men once were. Things started to change in the '80s, when programmes such as North America's "Miami Vice" hit the airwaves and TV's most stylish undercover cop Sonny Crockett (played by a rakish blond 30-something Don Johnson) became the guy every woman wanted to be with and every man wanted to be. While the character did often wear an expensive suit, there was nothing traditional about it. He rejected a traditional 'look' such as button-down shirts, ties, a clean-shaven face and even socks in favor of light linen jackets with pushed-up sleeves, T-shirts and permanent "designer stubble."

More than 20 years on, the casual look rules the sartorial landscape. It's not unusual to see a pack of guys on the street (or even in the office) wearing ratty T-shirts, cargo shorts and flip-flops, proudly sporting five-o'clock shadows or bushy beards. While dishevelment may be a bit more studied for some (a lot of work goes into sexy, rough-and-tumble leading men for action packed films), for millions of ordinary men the uber-casual look is a great excuse to avoid making an effort.

But there's a yin to the stubbly yang. As hit shows such as "Friends", "The West Wing" and "Mad Men" re-popularize the allure of the impeccably tailored and flawlessly groomed mid-century male, this time in high definition. While it is likely not to trigger a wholesale return to such meticulous male grooming, it is a reminder that the appeal of the polished appearance and perfectly pomaded hair still resonates. And why shouldn't men make an effort? After all, women certainly do.

At the heart of the issue for men is one question: What do women respond to?

In a world where women are increasingly powerful and independent, they are also choosier about men. That means men need better direction as to what sort of grooming women find attractive.

Our global (7 countries) survey of 3,500 women ages 18 to 39 set out to help them, and there's some bad news for the unkempt masses: Few women have positive associations with hairy, unpolished men. Just 5% see that type of guy as sexy; only 4% see him as passionate and only 2% associate him with success and power. By contrast, for 37%, the word "ape" comes to mind; 25% see him as sleazy; 25% think he's lazy or poor; and 23% assume he is uncultured. And these perceptions aren't the province of older or married women, whom one might expect to be a little more conservative. In fact it's younger women and singles that respond this way. More under-30s than over-30s have negative associations with messy guys. Likewise, more single women feel that way than married women.

Men might want to pay particular attention to these views, since these are the women most likely to consider them as potential partners.

We've discovered that men can focus their efforts on a few key body areas for maximum effect. A well-groomed chest is rated sexy by 49% of women overall (and 52% of singles). A trimmed backside and hands both garnered 40% overall, although

hands score higher than buttocks with singles (40% vs. 37%). A well-groomed back is rated sexy by 25% overall and even more singles (31%).

It would be misleading to say that the tide has turned against body hair and laissez-faire attitudes toward grooming; there will always be women who are more attracted to rugged, macho males. But today, our study shows that women of various cultures want men to make an effort with their personal appearance.

This isn't to say they all want to date metrosexuals (who can be so vain that they're more interested in themselves than in the women in their life). Rather it's a matter of going to a little trouble to look nice. A man who makes an effort to improve himself is more likely to appreciate a woman who does the same.

Comments from leading trend expert Marian Salzman on the Survey results

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About Marian Salzman

Marian Salzman, partner and CMO at Porter Novelli Worldwide, was named one of the top five trendspotters in the world by global publisher VNU in 2004. Credited with popularizing the “metrosexuality” trend, Salzman has authored or co-authored 15 books, including *Next Now* and *The Future of Men*. She has served as CMO at JWT Worldwide, chief strategy officer at Euro RSCG Worldwide, president of Young & Rubicam’s Intelligence Factory and worldwide director of TBWA’s Department of the Future. Earlier in her career, Salzman was director of consumer insights and emerging media at Chiat\Day and co-founded Cyberdialogue—the world’s first online market research company—in 1992. A graduate of Brown University, Salzman sits on the board of directors of the Woodruff Family Foundation (remind.org), which works to assist soldiers with brain injuries, and is on the faculty of Berlin School of Creative Leadership’s MBA program. She frequently appears in print and broadcast media. Her blog, www.pnintelligentdialogue.com, launched in fall 2008 with a top-downloaded column on cnn.com.