

← The Grooming Rooms' reception and retail area.



Following extensive refurbishment, the business partners opened The Grooming Rooms last Christmas as a male grooming emporium and, in May of this year began to offer treatments to its clientele.

Male bonding

Although men have indulged in relaxation rituals and baths for centuries, traditionally Irish men have shied away from grooming treatments – apart from the short, back and sides at the local barber. However, John and Cian were confident that this was no longer the case, and that more and more Irish men were willing to invest in their appearance and their well-being. “The motivation behind The Grooming Rooms was to fill a gap that existed in the market,” explains John. “We had researched similar facilities catering exclusively to male grooming in London, Paris and New York, but there was nothing like that here. And while there are several unisex salons and spas, we feel that a grooming emporium developed specifically for men does have its place.” The Grooming Rooms offers three main strands to its proposition:

- A barbering service; “We believe that having a good haircut, a neat beard or an excellent shave is pivotal to male grooming,” explains John.
- A range of treatments, from Hot Stone Massage to prescriptive facials to manicures; “It’s all about having choice and the facilities to try something new.”
- The air of a Gentleman’s Club; the interior design of The Grooming Rooms takes on the Gentleman’s Clubs of old and adds a modern twist with its solid wooden floors, minimalist colour scheme and streamlined fittings, all in a Georgian setting. The Grooming Rooms also serves coffee and encourages clients to rest and rejuvenate following a treatment.

All man

Recently opened in Dublin, the male-only day spa and barber, The Grooming Rooms offers grooming services with all the comfort and atmosphere of a Gentleman’s Club. **salon** reports

Career path

With no background in beauty or grooming, John Erraught and Cian McDonald both felt there was a gap in the market to open an exclusively male grooming salon and barber in the heart of Dublin. In 2003, Cian had received a gift voucher for a treatment in a similar

male-only day spa in Melbourne. He really enjoyed the experience and believed it would be a good business opportunity to bring the concept to Ireland. In 2007, both John and Cian began to seriously think about re-creating this concept in Ireland and secured a five-storey Georgian building on St. William Street in Dublin.

High-end service, high-end products

The Grooming Rooms employs six staff at present; three therapists and three barbers with a 50/50 gender divide. "All of our team came to us with considerable expertise," says John. "The barbers, in particular, had built up a loyal client following down through the years which has served us well in this start-up phase." John and Cian selected three main product ranges for The Grooming Rooms:

- Elemis Men's range for treatments and retail.
- Korres, an exclusive, all-natural hair and skincare line for men manufactured in Greece.
- ProRaso, luxury shaving products from Italy.

In addition to the three main product lines, The Grooming Rooms also offer the Zwilling range of manicure sets from Germany and a selection of shaving kits from The Art of Shaving.

The future is man

John feels that the market for male grooming products and services is beginning a new wave of growth, judging by the number of clients that have already become established regulars. "There are a lot of guys who want to take care of themselves," he says. "I think that Irish men are just starting to catch up with their European counterparts who have demanded quality grooming services for a number of years now."

He also adds that there is a combination of factors at play for this growth, including:

- Influence of the media;
- Irish men are more travelled than ever before;
- The increase of partners purchasing gift vouchers for treatments at spas or male skincare products.

"We have clients who initially are sceptical about treatments but, having tried one, are eager to rebook – they want to come back, and they don't have



↑ The Grooming Rooms' barbering service: "We feel that having a good haircut, a neat beard or an excellent shave is pivotal to male grooming," explains John.
→ Elemis and Korres are the main product houses used in treatments.
↓ With its solid wooden floors, minimalist colour scheme and streamlined fittings all in a Georgian setting, The Grooming Rooms gives the gentleman's club a modern twist.



Despite being at the initial stages of operation, both John and Cian are hoping that The Grooming Rooms catches the imagination of the Irish male. "We want to make this unique concept to Ireland a success and we are putting a lot of time and effort to grow the business," says John. "All going well, we hope to add to The Grooming Rooms, with franchises in other locations, perhaps even abroad. We will absolutely explore all options as they arise." **S**

to be pushed," explains John. "And our client base is very broad, from young men in their late teens to gentlemen in their 80s. We are delighted with this response and we are encouraged that this trend will continue."

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