

## Manly moisturizers and other grooming products

Aaron Britt

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Gone are the days of Barbasol and Brylcreem. The past decade has seen an explosion of men's grooming products, and it seems that more of us are moisturizing than before. Your local apothecary probably offers the same matrix of essential oils, botanical extracts and organic ingredients found in women's cosmetics, meant to tighten, plump and beautify your mug.

Though men's prestige grooming accounts for just \$100 million of the \$2.5 billion global beauty industry encompassing men and women, it turns out that men purchase very specific products.

"It starts with moisturizer and shave treatments, both of which account for 50 percent of total sales," says Karen Grant, vice president of beauty at the market research firm NPD. Once you're smooth and moist, it's just a stone's throw to exfoliants and eye creams.

Since the metrosexual trend took off around 2003, demand for increasingly elaborate products has increased, Grant says. With the mounting interest has come a surge of products made from natural ingredients. "Men want something simple, easy to understand and that they feel comes from a pharmacy but is still natural, effective and safe," she says.

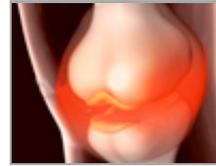
The Osmium for Men line from London, which offers plant-based skin care, exemplifies the trend with its Osmium Real Skincare's Cellular Renew anti-aging cream. A blend of vitamins A, C and E is meant to reduce fine lines and keep the skin firm and plump.

I took a spin through a handful of recent grooming products, particularly those with organic ingredients.

Let's start at the beginning: underarm deodorant. Following a hot tip from a Twitter follower, I headed down to the local Whole Foods and ponied up \$8.99 for **Organic Grooming's Herban Cowboy deodorant**. Its herbal, masculine scent (it's got notes of sage, rosemary and parsley), called Dusk, is generically appealing. Dusk is not an antiperspirant, though it also boasts a slew of organic ingredients and none of those underarm beasts like aluminum, alcohol or parabens. After several days of sporting the stuff I was slightly less smelly, though no less sweaty.



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Next up were two shaving creams, and though each did the trick, the edge goes to **Ursa Major's Stellar Shave Cream** (\$21 for a 5.1-ounce tube at Union Made in San Francisco). I was able to work up a good lather, and it provided excellent protection from the razor. It also has a subtle smell of aloe, birch wood and sunflower seed oil, plus my face never felt dried out after use.

**Cleanse & Shave by Evolutionman** afforded less of a pre-shave lather. However, the company's **Moisture Protect** SPF 20 moisturizer worked like a charm on a recent beach excursion. Both are available at the San Francisco grooming site **Luxury 4 Him**, at \$20 and \$19 respectively.

Rounding out the shaving set is a fine aftershave balm by **Task Essentials**, a Swiss brand of manly cosmetics sold at Bloomingdale's. A 2.5-ounce tube is \$28, though the milky, botanical cream is wonderfully soothing and a little goes a long way.

My best find, however, was not for the face but for the hair: **Grant's Golden Brand Pomade** has a gentle almond scent, splendid hold and can be worked and reworked over the course of the day. I found it easier to style with my hands than with a comb. For a good amount of hold that doesn't calcify into a brittle shell, try **Bumble & Bumble's Texture Hair (Un)dressing Cream**. It stands up to the comb and the whipping winds of the Financial District.

You can pick up a 4.5-ounce tin of Grant's pomade at the Common in San Francisco for \$22, or if you'd rather not have your hair goop confiscated from your carry-on, a 2-ounce tube of the (Un)dressing Cream will cost you \$12 and is available at many hair salons.

E-mail Aaron Britt at [style@sfnchronicle.com](mailto:style@sfnchronicle.com), or follow him on Twitter @thepocketsquare.

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