



What the heck did I sign up for?



Mellowing out behind a charcoal mask.



I look like I'm heading for the boxing ring, but nope...a nail buff!



A dye job! My kids are gonna have a field day with this.



THE MALE MAKEOVER

a firsthand account

Venturing out of his comfort zone, *New Jersey Monthly's* associate art director takes the plunge at one of our favorite spas. **By Andy Ogilvie**

When I told my wife I had agreed to a spa day as part of the magazine's July cover story, she explained to me, after a long and hearty laugh, exactly what was in store. "You're going to have to wear a robe!" she said, barely containing her mirth. "You'll have to lie on a bed while they massage you," she added, knowing my aversion to such invasions. I assured her that I would do no such thing.

The following day, at Bangz Salon and Wellness in Montclair, as I lay there on a bed getting my face massaged,

white robe hanging on the door, it had become painfully clear that, yet again, my wife was correct. With my nearly naked body covered only by a thin sheet, Debra, my estheti-

cian, completed the facial massage and applied the first of many pleasant-smelling lotions to my face.

As my wife knows, my grooming routine typically is

limited to washing my hair with whatever soap is handy in the shower, pushing an electric razor around my face and towel drying my hair. As I explained to my wife, despite what I might see in the mirror, in my mind I still look 21. Her reply: Look more closely.

So there I was, my face smothered in goo, my eyes covered with what felt like warm teabags, somehow feeling, despite all of my inhibitions, extremely relaxed. Debra explained that nearly 10 percent of her customers are men. I was starting to understand why.

Despite my fear of looking

like a Cher impersonator, I conceded to have my eyebrows waxed. No offense to Cher. As it turned out, the change was subtle, yet somehow it made me look more confident. After the waxing, Debra washed my face with an exfoliant (my new favorite word), and then bathed my face with warm steam, explaining that it would open my pores. Whatever you say, Debra. Indeed, the steam felt good. After another facial massage, Debra instructed me to put on my slippers and white robe.

Debra turned me over to Jessica for a manicure. We had a pleasant chat—the phrase my wife uses for a

good talk—as she clipped and filed my nails and removed my cuticles. Cuticles, she informed me, are a bad thing. Who knew? Jessica, too, gets plenty of male customers. The news gave me pause. Had I been a slob all my life, letting my pores clog and cuticles build up? Jessica buffed and polished my nails to a mirror-like shine. I began to see the merits of a good manicure.

Finally, I was back in my street clothes. But my spa day was far from over. I was escorted to the hair salon. Not a barber pole in sight. The stylist, Jonny, brushed a thick liquid into my hair and told me it would soften my gray. By now, I was game for most

anything. After getting my hair washed—and enjoying another massage, this time on my scalp—I was shocked to see that all my gray had disappeared. In the mirror, for some reason, I saw myself as an aging 1970s newscaster.

Jonny finished my cut, and the results were quite pleasing—except for one issue. He had already dyed my long, graying sideburns before I suggested that they be cut. My mistake. The result was a brown-stained patch on either side of my face formerly occupied by my sideburns. I tried to hide this anomaly on my way back to my car, but I'm sure at least one passerby went home that day with a story about

the guy with the brown racing stripes on his face.

Back home, I went through my wife's drawer of lotions, potions and ointments until I found an exfoliant (I'm catching on) and scrubbed the brown dye off my skin. Then, for the first time in decades, I really looked at my face. I certainly wasn't 21 anymore, but my skin looked fresh, my eyes bright, and somehow it appeared that my hairline had slid forward just a bit. Not a bad result!

The phone rang, and I answered with a newly confident, "Hello!" It was my wife. Would I mind making dinner? "What?" I said, "And ruin these nails?"



BEFORE



AFTER

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARLA COHEN