

the return of the gentleman

Men's interest in grooming now stretches a good deal beyond a sharp razor and a squirt of his partner's deodorant, says Eddie Shanahan

It's a funny old world – no sooner had 'dress down' Friday raised its unkempt head than pin-striped suits came back into fashion. The look may be softer and the shirt fabric slightly eccentric, but the statement is undeniable – the gentleman is back. Not just in style but in substance too.

Men's interest in grooming products, the protocols of dressing and good – I almost said old-fashioned – manners have all been firmly re-established. Imagine James Bond if you are aged under 16, though I was thinking more of Sir Walter Raleigh or Sir Alec Guinness in one of his courtly roles. Chivalry is firmly in the ascendant and the nagging or nit-picking demands of political correctness now raise a wry smile rather than an eyebrow.

It may be hard to credit that any fervour for sartorial elegance or refined conduct could follow on so quickly after the era of dot com excesses that saw so much good burgundy spilt over so much over-priced denim and second-rate tailoring. But here we are on the flip side of a decade where once style and wealth were anathema to each other – worrying about how much cuff a lady will see as we extend an eager hand



IT'S A MAN'S WORLD

Left: The hot shave and face massage are proving to be among the most popular of services offered by the Grafton Barbershop at Arnotts.

Below: Givenchy Pour Homme, one of the new lines of masculine fragrances that typifies the qualities of the modern gentleman.



to open a door, light a cigarette or proffer an umbrella.

In celebration of this mood Givenchy has produced a new fragrance for men called Givenchy Pour Homme, painting a portrait of modern man as someone who has a moral elegance about him, who recognises the value of things by their authenticity and appreciates luxury but not ostentation. The Givenchy man is a gentleman. If you don't believe me look out for its TV commercial depicting a truly modern-day version of the gallant Walter Raleigh.

Even the bottle they put this gentlemanly fragrance in has a special quality – practical not trivial, modern yet timeless – just right for an attractively masculine fragrance. The actual scent combines woody base notes with the mellow essence of a subtly exotic Indian plant called davana and the light freshness of citrus.

While a good moisturiser – try Clinique's M Lotion – can prevent razor burn and leave you with a better chance of a second date, nobody is suggesting that a few splashes of cologne is likely to halt the decline of civilisation. But there are other signs.

The new personal tailoring service at Arnotts manshop lists properly functioning button holes on jacket sleeves, lightweight

fabrics in traditional patterns and qualities, as well as the correct attention to the protocols of proportion, as the main reasons why this service is so popular. Even the readymade labels like Baumler, Roy Robson, Strellson and Tommy Hilfiger produce suit collections and co-ordinating shirts and accessories that revive the hallmarks of good tailoring and specialise in distinctive attention to detail.

The return to popularity of brogues, the pocket handkerchief, double cuffs and the

excellent Skin Supplies For Men include shaving cream or gel, a choice of toning and moisture lotions, a face scrub and eye serum. Lab Series offers an eagerly sought-after derma scan analysis during promotional periods and includes a visibly effective Age Rescue Skin Care Therapy in its product range. The Aramis Surface collection goes a step further including a healthy look gel that has a 'no streak' formula giving you a subtly refreshed look that won't rub off.

While at the newly arrived Grafton

The modern gentleman is someone who has an aura of moral elegance – he recognises the value of things but isn't remotely ostentatious

four-in-hand tie knot amply demonstrate that gentlemanly good taste has survived.

Men's interest in grooming now stretches beyond a sharp razor and a squirt of his partner's deodorant to a much more knowledgeable and healthy grasp of skin care and hygiene. As well as hair and body washes, he is now routinely offered products to counter the effects of sun, pollution and ageing and services that enhance his sense of wellbeing. Clinique's

Barber shop at Arnotts, the hot shave and face massage tops the list of popular services that also include colouring and cutting.

With such a plethora of paraphernalia, products and services it should be easy for any man to adopt the traits of a gentleman, leaving him to pass the final test – how to handle a woman. Perhaps it's time for a Cosmopolitan moment here – in his heart a true gentleman sees a woman as equal and in his manners he treats her as special. ■