



# A CLOSE SHAVE

*Declan Leavy* reports on the hot towel shave experience and explains why sometimes a regular shave just doesn't cut it.

**W**ith so many guys rocking the designer stubble look, it begs the question: to shave or not to shave? Sometimes you just can't beat a nice close shave and, of course, there are certain situations when only a clean-shaven look will do.

With an impending interview drawing ever closer, I decided that the best approach was for a stubble-free face. So with this in mind, and because I quite fancied a spot of pampering, I booked myself in to The Grooming Rooms on Dublin's South William Street for what is considered by many to be the best hot towel shave in town.

I was placed in the very capable hands of award-winning grooming expert Leon, who sat me down and explained the hot towel shave process.

The relaxing ritual begins with a deep cleanse of the skin before a hot towel is placed on the face to open the pores and soften the stubble. The more open the pores, the closer and more effective the shave. A pre-shave oil is then applied to create a

lubricating barrier between skin and razor, thus preventing any irritation. The hot towel is then placed back on the skin for a further five minutes.

Next, the all-important shaving cream is applied to the face and neck. Leon believes that a cream is better for the skin than a foam as it limits any irritation. I concur on that view and would always recommend a shaving cream or gel over a direct foam, which can dry out the skin.

For the actual shave, out comes the cut-throat razor for a double shave; first shaving with the grain, then against it. This double shave process is essential, believes Leon, for the closest possible shave.

My pampering session concluded with a cold towel to close the pores, a post-shave moisturiser to soften the skin and prevent shaving rash and irritation, and, finally, a relaxing face massage to calm and plump out the skin.

As experiences go, a hot towel shave is highly recommended. Sometimes you just need something more than your regular DIY

home shave. If nothing else, the relaxation involved is heaven and will have you feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. My skin was super-soft afterwards and the shaving rash I was dreading never materialised, thanks to Leon and his expert technique.

It's worth pointing out at this stage that in order to keep shaving rash at bay, you must regularly apply a post-shave balm or lashings of skin-soothing moisturiser. **TM**