

TRIED & TESTED

The *Journal* reviews some of the area's newest beauty additions

Beauty for boys

THE PLACE: Genco Male Grooming, Richmond
THE GUINEA-PIG: Henry Hopwood Phillips

With posture like a question mark and having last had a massage that involved contorting my body into positions that would make plasticine blush, I typically look forward to a trip to the spa as much as one might a dash to the dentists. Fortunately my fears are entirely misguided. At Genco, a male grooming outfit just off Richmond's high street, my muscles are manipulated one by one. The treatment highlights the rather Pinocchio-esque nature of my frame; as a thumb plunges into my arm, further down the line my hand dances in celebration of its new found freedom from my brain. It's all stage-managed, of course, and swiftly I'm back in a state of indolent nonchalance as the therapist's hands roam along my body's equivalents of Watkin's ley lines on the landscape. Slowly, the imagination takes a hold. I can see glands being purged of dark gloom, my highways being resurfaced and my copper wires realigned. This is all rubbish of course, but it's how I feel.

There's no typically annoying spa music, rather silence in a subterranean room, which incidentally is as good a background for losing concentration as it is for keeping it. An hour later, I find myself unbent like withered plant stems plunged into a refreshing vase of water. ■

Full body, deep-tissue massage, £59 for 60 minutes. 11 Sheen Road, TW9 1AD, 020 8948 2846 (genco-uk.com)



Taming tricks

THE PLACE: Ellie Hair & Beauty, Putney
THE GUINEA-PIG: Kate Jennion

I'm here to meet owner and hair magician Cristina Simon and to try a new treatment that (hopefully) will provide my lacklustre locks with a bit of refreshment. The Paul Mitchell KeraTriplex professional treatment is a two-step process that promises to leave my hair sleek, shiny and healthier than before. When I consider the dry, frizzy nature of my wannabe curls, this treatment has a mountain of Everest proportions to overcome. Still, I settle in to the comfortable wash station and cross my fingers.

The first thing I notice? The products smell amazing. I can't initially put my finger on the spicy, citrusy scent... Grapefruit? Lemon? I'm soon informed it's actually Hawaiian Awapuhi wild ginger. Well, that would have been my next guess, obviously.

The application process is

soothing and relaxing, especially for someone like me who loves having their hair played with. After a spell under a heat lamp to seal in the gingery goodness, I'm back at the washing station breathing in the sweet scent and enjoying a coma-inducing head massage. Bliss.

Once my tresses have been dried and styled, I can really see the difference this treatment has made. No static or flyaways mar the lovely cut Cristina has given me. My hair is so smooth, I can't stop touching it! This is definitely one for sun-damaged, sea-weathered or windswept summer locks. ■

Treatment £37, can be added to a cut and blowdry. 256 Upper Richmond Road, SW15 6TQ, 020 8780 5444 (ellieuk.co.uk)



Home delivery

THE PLACE: Jen's House (courtesy of CitySwish)
THE GUINEA-PIG: Jennifer Mason

Although I love a trip to the beauty salon to indulge in a spot of pampering, I'll admit there's something rather nice about having the salon come to you; in this case, in the form of a delightful young man carrying a

large massage table. I'm nervous initially, as I've never been treated by a male therapist before, but almost immediately I'm put at ease by his friendly demeanour and chatty conversation as he readies the equipment. Gentle spa music wafts from his iPhone as I ease myself onto the soft, fluffy towels covering the massage table and prepare to relax.



It's not just massages that CitySwish, a new London-wide spa delivery service, provides. Manicures and pedicures, waxing, spray tans and even hairdressing are all on its extensive menu, fulfilled by one of the company's hand-picked therapists. I've opted to try the massage as it's one of the trickier spa treatments to replicate as part of the at-home experience – not that you'd know it today.

One hour later and all my kinks have been fully ironed out – even in my notoriously tense back and shoulder area (spend all your days typing furiously on a deadline and you'll see what I mean).

Once I'm back on my feet, everything is packed away and by the time I've come out of my trance I'm alone in my pristine-again living room, no remaining evidence of my hour-long treatment other than my soothed muscles and a lingering smell of aromatherapy oils. ■

Massage £65 for 60 minutes. Available in zones 1, 2 and 3. To book, call 020 3318 8234 or visit cityswish.com

A new concept

THE PLACE: London Grace, Putney
THE GUINEA-PIG: May Best

Anyone who's ever had a manicure will attest that attempting to eat or drink (or pretty much do anything with your hands) for quite a while post-polish is a risky business – but I'm in Putney to visit the brave team at London Grace who've taken the traditional, beauty-salon idea of a manicure and turned it on its head. At the quirky premises just metres from the river, beauty addicts can enjoy a selection of teas, soft drinks and cocktails as well as cakes and treats – while the talented technicians give them designer digits. And it's not your average liquor, either; Sipsmith gin, Moët and other high-class tipples grace the shelves.

As my nails are getting buffed, filed and painted (with London Grace's own-brand polish, sourced personally by founder Kirsten to be free of nasties and good for your nails), I chat with Kirsten and her team about what makes London Grace so



special. 'I wanted to start a business that was more than just another nail salon,' she tells me. This place certainly is that; upstairs, high tables and stools make it feel more like a cute, independent coffee shop than a salon, although the pedicure sofas at the rear give the game away. Downstairs, there's a special area for groups – hen parties, celebrations, baby showers and the like.

Once my nails are painted a glorious

shade of flamingo (just in time for summer), I'm sold. I'll definitely be returning to London Grace for a shape and a Sex on the Beach, a manicure and a Martini, a polish and a Pina Colada... the list is endless. Roll on Happy Hour! ■

Manicures start from £9 for a quick polish, refreshments extra. 26 Putney High Street, SW15 1SL, 020 8789 1267 (londongrace.co.uk)