

Truefitt & Hill Traditional Hot Towel Wet Shave

I have visited London for the first time in the period 22-25th of August 2011, where the trip was focused around a visit to the traditional shops within shaving equipment and accessories for men.

I have visited the following shops:

- L'Occitane in Covent Garden
- Crabtree & Evelyn in Covent Garden
- Penhaligon's in Wellington Street
- Geo. F. Trumper in Duke of York Street (side street to Jermyn Street)
- Taylor of Old Bond Street in Jermyn Street
- Czech & Speake in Jermyn Street
- I had planned to visit Floris in Jermyn Street, but I overlooked the shop the first time, and when I had the opportunity to smell some of their products elsewhere, and found out I didn't really care for them, I decided it wasn't worth my time to return.
- D.R. Harris in St. James Street
- Truefitt & Hill in St. James Street

At Truefitt & Hill I had scheduled an appointment for a traditional hot towel wet shave, and I would like to elaborate on that, since it was a really nice experience and one I definitely will recommend all men who would like to spoil themselves with a little out-of-the-ordinary experience.

Per August 2011 the price for such a shave was £39, which I find quite reasonable.

But let us get started; I am an inveterate motorist/motorcyclist and normally regards public transportation to be expensive, slow and the time schedules often fits poorly to whatever your plans are. However I must bow in the dust for the London Underground, which is brilliant. A car is doomed in that city compared to "the tube".

With a Travelcard in my hand I took the tube to the nearest underground station, Green Park, from where there where only a 5-7 minutes walk to Truefitt & Hill. Out of the station, pass Hotel Ritz and the building next to it; turn right down St. James Street and after 700-800 metres Truefitt & Hill's shop pops up, the worlds oldest barber shop according to Guinness World of Records.

I arrived 10 minutes before my booked time, and was very friendly received by an older (than me) gentleman and after the confirmation of the booking I was told that my barber would be Julie, where after I was shown into the barber shop and helped off my rucksack (obviously Nordic tourist) and jacket and shown a rather nice armchair where I could wait while the shaving area was prepared.

Despite I was early, they apologised the waiting time, while they cleaned up from the previous customer and towels were prepared for me, a clear sign to me that they do put their customers in the high seat, so to speak, even though I had never visited the shop before.

Julie is a rather pretty redheaded woman, who with her winning smile and calm appearance makes you feel welcome and comfortable, which by the way apply to the other employees as well; very friendly and accommodating.

Well, now placed in the barbers chair we got a quick talk of how I normally shave, if there were special problem-spots, if the skin was sensitive and in the case; where.

After this I had a pre-shave massaged into the skin (I forgot to ask what kind of product it was) and the face was wrapped in a nice warm towel. Sitting leaned back, almost lying down, with a nice warm towel around the face, was enough to get a little heavy eyes, even though it was only 5-7 minutes, it was really nice and relaxing.

Then it was time to be lathered up with a nice creamy lather, applied with a brush which must have been a Silvertip, because the tips were so incredible soft and I couldn't do anything other than enjoy it.

When a redheaded woman puts a straight to your throat, you don't just listen, you do exactly as you are told 😊

No, kidding aside; Julie is a very capable and skilled barber and after only a couple of strokes, she was checking if I thought it felt alright and if the pressure on the skin was OK, which I only could confirm. Hereafter the shaving went along in a calm tempo and all that was necessary from my side was to tilt my head in the right direction once in a while, and answer if I was alright and everything was good.

After this first pass the whole procedure was repeated; hot towel around the face, followed by lather and shaving, where the problem-spots were given more attention this time. I am so "lucky" that I have what can best be described as a vortex at the end of both my jawbones, an area where the hair literally grows in all directions, and those two spots can be quite difficult to get completely closely shaven, and Julie had to work at it, but she did a good job and managed to give me a BBS, something I have to work concentrated at myself and something I don't normally pursue.

I, or rather my beard, managed to surprise not just Julie but also myself. It turned out that the hairs in my beard is rather thick and stiff, which is in contrast to the hairs on my head, which are fair and rather thin, so she had to work a bit harder for the close shave than she had anticipated.

The remaining lather was whipped off, and I now got a cold towel wrapped around the face, which was something of a contrast to the hot towels, but in no way uncomfortable, on the contrary it felt really good for skin. After some minutes the towel was removed, the face whipped down and then I got an after shave balm massaged into the skin (Sandalwood), and Julie where kind enough to remove a couple of stray neck-hairs as well.

This was the end of my shave, and I could leave the shop with a couple of products in my rucksack, a big smile on my lips and an experience richer, which I found to be worth all the money.

This was my first visit to London, and my first barbers shave, but none of them will be my last. I will definitely try to schedule an appointment for a shave when I visit London again at some time, this is one of those experiences you can't have too many of.