



## THE GREY FOX COLUMN

David Evans of [greyfoxblog.com](http://greyfoxblog.com) delves into gentlemanly scents before firing up his Land Rover in Scotland

**T**here's nothing like a bit of pampering, is there? Men tend not to go in for a good pamper in the way that the women do. My wife and daughter often disappear for a few hours to be pampered in some establishment that massages, plucks and soothes away their cares, spots, hairs and no doubt many other undesirables, for prices that would maintain many a small state for a week, at least. Nails, hair, skin and indeed the stomach (for these trips always seem to include a slap-up lunch) are catered to by white-coated acolytes and, when my wife and daughter return home, it is usually in a relaxed glow of health and exotic fragrances.

I suspect that many of these establishments will accept male clients as well, but for the ultimate men's grooming experience there's nothing quite like a good hot towel shave and head massage. I recently went to the venerable Geo. F. Trumper, which has establishments in Curzon Street and just off Jermyn Street in London, to experience these

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soothing processes. At Trumplers they know what male pampering is all about, as do most barber's shops of any vintage. Cut-throat razors, delicious colognes, glass cases full of shaving brushes and traditional razors and good old-fashioned service add up to an experience which I cannot recommend highly enough.



As I'm sporting a very short 2mm beard (some unkindly call it stubble) I had a trim and head massage. This involved trimming the beard and shaving around it to tidy it all up. Of course hot towels were needed to soften the hairs, along with fragrant creams and oils which prepared my skin for the razor. Afterwards, cold towels closed the pores and further unguents and colognes finished off the shave. But that wasn't all, for a head massage then soothed away any remaining stresses and strains, leaving me truly pampered, sweet smelling and thoroughly spoiled. It was a very pleasant experience, I can assure you.

Talking of men and fragrances, the kindly editor of this journal sent me a sample of *The Chap's* eau de cologne, *Flâneur*. I always find it quite impossible to describe smells and maybe (here's an idea, Editor) the next issue should be scratch-and-sniff, so that readers can get a true impression of the oils and unguents on sale in the grooming section of The Chap Shop. *Flâneur* claims that on "a masculine base of amber, patchouli, vetiver and vanilla are sprinkled middle notes of violet, iris, geranium and rose, lifting the scent heavenwards to its top notes of bergamot, verbena and pink pepper" Frankly this means abso-

lutely nothing until you've removed the top and stuck your nose into the gorgeous scent oozing from the bottle. It's quite floral at first and, not being a flowery sort of guy, I wasn't sure about it. But the best way to test a cologne is to spray a small amount on your wrist and leave it for a few minutes. The floral notes tend to fade slightly, leaving something more light and citrus yet earthy – I haven't a clue how to describe it more accurately, but *Flâneur* is a gorgeous fragrance which is quite unlike many in the herd, and I suggest you try it.

I've only recently begun to experiment with men's grooming products and have built up a small collection. Men's scents are very personal. When you've exhausted *The Chap* grooming range, you may want to look further afield. Some prefer spicy, some floral, some citrus smells. You'll generally find something you like from Aqua di Parma, Murdock or Jo Malone. I also like to explore those making their products in the UK: e.g. Floris, Grubbe, Shay & Blue and D.R. Harris. D.R. Harris have some wonderful traditional products that remind me of my grandfather's bathroom after he'd finished his morning ablutions; soapy, manly, clean and softly masculine.





Having mentioned Geo. F. Trumper above, I can't leave the subject without mentioning that they too have several ranges of products, from the powerful *Eucris* eau de parfum (much stronger than eau de cologne) to the gorgeous *Paisley*, a good one to start with, as it combines citrus and floral notes very well.

Let's move on from scents to Scotland. Since the last issue of this column I've been on a 2,500 motoring adventure from London, via the Lake District and up and around the northernmost tip of the Scottish mainland on the North Coast 500. Dreamed up a few years ago by The Scottish Tourist Board to attract visitors to the remotest parts of the UK, the NC500 starts from Inverness and goes round the coast on a 500 mile circular route along some of the narrowest roads and through some of the most spectacular scenery. So popular has the route become in a few years that it's best avoided in the height of the summer, as it gets very crowded and the roads can become congested (and the midges can be a nuisance too). We went in April/May and were blessed with glorious weather and empty roads. The western coast is the most spectacular, with steep mountains, miles of emptiness and glorious coastlines. Deer and eagles were a daily sight and some excellent hotels and B&Bs mean that decent food (and even, on occasion, coffee) were never too far away.

We were driving a new Land Rover Discovery which, in the style of a thirties luxury touring car, was perfect for both the long motorway drives to reach Scotland and also for the rougher steeper sections where the roads were more like tracks. If you love driving, you'll enjoy the notorious Bealach na Bà, a long and steep climb and descent over to glorious Applecross in Wester Ross (which I know

sounds like somewhere in *Game of Thrones*). Here is the famous Applecross Inn, which must be one of the remotest and yet best pubs in the UK, with glorious views across to Skye and Raasay. It's a challenging drive, but put it on your bucket list; I promise you won't be disappointed.

In my last column I was promoting the analogue simplicity of early motorcars like my 1967 Land Rover series 2a. The Discovery we drove for our adventure was as far from analogue as it's possible to get without piloting a space ship. Being a man, I didn't look at any instruction manuals etc, but just jumped in and drove off. On the motorway I pressed a button for something that looked like cruise control, to find that I'd stepped into the next generation of driving technology that would have left the Land Rover engineers of the sixties open-mouthed. I found that the car was keeping station with other cars in the same lane, braking and speeding up as needed to keep a safe distance. Sadly I couldn't put my feet up on the dash and have a snooze as it needed steering; but that was all it needed, for the car was effectively otherwise driving itself. Maybe analogue isn't everything I was cracking it up to be in the last issue. ■



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# CHAP



## Helen McCrory

*“In season 5 of Peaky Blinders, we wanted that feeling of Polly still smelling of Gitanes, but now it’s Gitanes with a splash of eau de cologne”*

### THE FLÂNEUR

A celebration of the joys of walking without purpose

### DOWNTON ABBEY

Meet the lady who designed the costumes for the big screen version

### MAUREEN O'HARA

One of the last interviews with the Hollywood legend

