

FEBRUARY 2009

FEELGOOD FACTOR

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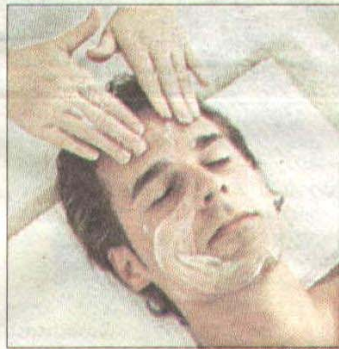
A pop-up West End salon is offering free facials for men who want that valentine's glow. **Guy Eaton** checked in

KYOKU FACIAL

What is it? A free — yes, you heard — 45-minute facial for men ahead of Valentine's Day. So even if you've already paid homage at Agent Provocateur, why not embrace the romantic buzz for yourself? The recession-busting session is at a "pop-up" salon off Regent Street and involves potions formulated by those technological wizards, the Japanese. The only catch, if you can call it that, is that you have from today until close of play on Friday to take advantage.

Any science to it? Let's dispense with the PR bit. The Volcanic Minerals Facial Experience is part of the UK launch of Kyoku For Men, a skincare range with products costing from £19 to £43. The makers claim to "combine cutting-edge grooming technology with natural ingredients such as ginseng, green tea leaf, bamboo, camomile and avocado oil".

Practically, the facial consists of a cleanser and deep steam to open the pores, an exfoliating scrub



Face value: Japanese brand Kyoku is launching its skincare range in the UK

containing volcanic ash to remove dead skin cells, a neck and shoulder massage, again with exfoliating scrub, a craniofacial massage with a moisturiser to rehydrate the skin and smooth out lines, a lotion to combat the oiliness found in male skin and a moisturiser for the lips.

What's it like? Relaxing yet

invigorating. Your therapist will be Grace — who is going to have a very busy next four days. Having an MoI for your skin is one thing but the neck, shoulder and facial massages turn your 45 minutes into a full-on "me" sesh. You lie on a couch in a darkened room and submit to Grace's expert hands. A gizmo directs hot steam onto your face while the first of the potions is applied. Gradually, the ravages of daily shaving and male negligence are reversed, at least for the time being. Each stage is inherently soothing. At the end of a working day it can be a fast track to 40 winks.

Verdict: Great stress-buster with the added benefit, for me, of freeing my nose from the clutches of a four-week-old cold.

Where: Bloww salon, 4 Regent Place W1.

Cost: Free until Friday. Tues-Thurs noon-7pm; Friday 10am-7pm. Bookings on a first come, first served basis, to www.kyokuforlove.com.