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5 upscale barbershops that range from old school to cutting edge

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BY JASON SHEELER / The Dallas Morning News

These five upscale barbershops offer unique styles and settings in the Dallas area:

THE GENT'S PLACE



Barber Von
Johnson

Back story: An insurance job brought San Antonio-raised Ben Davis to Dallas. Last December, the 25-year-old made a bid to ensure his own future by opening The Gent's Place. With a dark-wood- and-leather steakhouse vibe and country-club mentality (annual memberships include unlimited treatments), the full-service men's salon at the Shops at Starwood offers hot shaves, haircuts, facials, waxing and "hand repair." (That would be manicures.)

Need to know: Though walk-ins are welcome, book in advance for Fridays or Saturdays. With both barbers and cosmetologists on staff (ask for barber Von Jackson or cosmetologist Robin Murphy), clients can stack treatments with different specialists. The menu of services includes both price and length of each procedure.



The Gent's Place in Frisco has a dark-wood-and-leather steakhouse vibe.

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Nice to know: Free bourbon and nine flat-screen televisions. "We're the only men's salon in Dallas giving away Maker's Mark," Davis says proudly of the complimentary beverage service, which also includes beer and soft drinks.

Shave and haircut: \$100

Off the shelf: Baxter of California shampoo and conditioner, \$27, and The Gentlemens Refinery pre-shave oil, \$25

FLOYD'S 99 BARBERSHOP

3636 McKinney Ave., West Village 214-219-4500 floydsbarbershop.com

Back story: Brothers Paul, Rob and Bill O'Brien opened the first Floyd's in Denver in 2001. When they decided to expand into Texas, they turned to good friend Jay Clark, who owns the three Dallas franchises. Check any Mayberry expectations at the door. The vibe here is more main stage than Main Street, with walls papered with rock posters and barbers who seemingly traded mikes for razors. The stereo repertoire, ranging from Black Sabbath to Britney Spears, is played at ear-bleeding volumes. "Well that wasn't 'Zen,' " one closely shorn gentleman was overheard muttering as he left. Don't bother asking them to notch it down, even at 9 a.m. "The owner wouldn't like that," manager Gayle McNiel says sweetly.



The vibe at Floyd's 99 Barbershop in the West Village is more main stage than Main Street.

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Need to know: Appointments aren't taken, but call 30 minutes ahead to hold your space in line. Busy times vary by location (there are 30-plus nationwide), though plan on a wait if you show up at lunchtime or after work. McNeil warns, "Saturdays are insane." Best strategy is to be the first one through the door at 9 a.m.

Nice to know: Every shop has its stars. Ask for Marie Charity or Shane Stovall at the West Village location, Milad Ziyai in Addison, and Monica Shumaker on Mockingbird.

Shave and haircut: \$38

Off the shelf: American Crew Fiber Texture Cream, \$16.75, and Paul Mitchell Tea Tree collection Shaping Cream, \$15.50, Special Shampoo, \$16.50, and Exfoliating Body Bar, \$6.50. McNeil swears "the ladies love the way it smells."

UPTOWN BARBERS

2416 Allen St. 214-969-1088

Back story: It may say Uptown Barbers on the window, but inside is just *a* barber – owner Cindi Wilson. Wilson started cutting hair at 17, learning from "old-time barbers," who taught her that every haircut comes with a neck shave and back rub. She moved to the State-Thomas location in 1999, bringing with her a Rolodex of faithful clients from her former Oak Lawn spot, Cindi Wilson's Barber Shop.



At Uptown Barbers on Allen Street,

owner Cindi Wilson knows that every haircut comes with a neck shave and backrub.

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Need to know: At Wilson's one-woman show, appointments are required. Lunchtime is filled with regulars, as are Wednesday and Thursday nights, when "everyone seems to get all cleaned up for Friday night."

Nice to know: If you're going in for a hot shave, don't be in a hurry. Wilson's straight-razor shaves last upwards of 45 minutes, "because you have to put all the hot packs on," she says.

Shave and haircut: \$45

Off the shelf: "I don't sell any products," says Wilson. "Most of the stuff I use is old-fashioned."

THE BOARDROOM

5550 W. Lovers Lane, Inwood Village 214-358-7565 theboardroomsalon.com

Back story: "We wanted to create a place where guys can go and feel comfortable – like *Cheers*," says Bruce Schultz, who started the chain of upscale barber shops with his wife, Heather, in 2004. No Sam here, but customers certainly do appear comfortable in the salon's black quilted-leather chairs, set around a Harvard Club-worthy pool table. And there's beer. No wonder some guys come in with both their fathers and their sons.



Clients get comfortable in leather chairs around a pool table at The Boardroom in Inwood Village.

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Need to know: Weekends are the busy time for the Boardroom, which now has four North Texas locations (Inwood Village, Allen, Highland Village and Southlake) as well as a franchise in Winston-Salem, N.C. Call ahead to avoid a wait. For true regulars, yearly memberships offer savings of 20 percent or more.

Nice to know: Head barber Sonya McMillan rotates among the Dallas-area salons. If she's booked, try Lilly Benitez in Inwood Village or Claudia Rodriguez in Southlake. While you're waiting, keep an eye out for Wade Phillips, Terry Bradshaw and Jason Witten.

Shave and haircut: \$90

Off the shelf: Bumble and Bumble Sumo Wax, \$24, and Dermalogica Active Moist moisturizer, \$35

THE VILLAGE BARBER SHOP

25 Highland Park Village 214-528-2497

Back story: "I'm in the people business," says Dale Sinclair, amidst a flurry of Friday afternoon activity – every chair filled, two manicurists at work and a pair of wing-tips getting their shine on. "It's always like this," adds Sinclair, who took the reins of the legendary salon (Stanley Marcus was a client) in 1981. Tucked neatly above Patrizio, the shop offers few frills – a Coke machine instead of free Maker's Mark – but makes up for it in conversation. "We just visit all day," he says.



The Village Barbershop in Highland Park Village offers few frills but makes up for it in conversation.

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Need to know: Village Barber's six old-school barbers, four manicurists and one shoe shiner are all busy most of the time. Bide your time with a stroll around Highland Park Village, or drop a few coins and sit back with a soda. The people-watching can't be beat.

Nice to know: No need for recommendations, says Sinclair. "Everybody does the same thing."

Shave and haircut: \$34