



A Shave Rant & Rave

The Quattro *Trim-Style* Razor from Schick is more than just a razor. It's the "Gardener of Eden," and the spots for this new razor deliver this message in a mix of sexy yet tasteful images.

» For as long as I can remember, and apparently well before that, the personal grooming category has been crooning the same, tired advertising jingle. With each generation the melody changes but the lyrics remain the same. The words go something like *"Men and women, boys and girls, our razor guarantees you a closer, smoother shave, safe from those unsightly (and painful) nicks and cuts, and will instantly transform you from the knuckle dragger that you are into an Adonis or, more recently, a Venus."*

The drone began over one hundred years ago when the Safety Razor, patented in 1904, was first unleashed on an unsuspecting public. Available at first only in a gritty, carbon steel model for cave men, it only took a scant 20 years before the powers-that-be at Gillette had an epiphany: Gee! Women too might well benefit from this revolution in technology. Lo and behold, a sleek, thin style shaver was introduced for ladies. What ya'll did before that, I can't even imagine. Ol' Cut Throat, as its name tenderly suggests, would hardly have seemed like a very feminine or plausible option. But back then there were no sponsors, no jingles, and no 30-second spots. Why not?

No TV. Lucky us.

Fast-forward nearly half a century. We'd long since forgotten *"Mr., How are ya fixed for blades?"* when the

MadMen of Madison Avenue set out to convince us all that if one blade was good, two had to be better, and we bit. Seemingly overnight the fixed-blade shave went the way of the candlesnuffer and 50 years after the birth of its predecessor, the contour adhering, pivoting, double-blade shave system became all the rage.

I remember the advertising like it was yesterday. The chiseled profile of a man's face or woman's knee set the stage as the cartridge glided without impediment across every nook and cranny. It was truly the best a man, or woman, could get. A cleaner, closer, sexier, more comfortable shave guaranteed to make the opposite sex all woozy. Sound familiar. Yawn.

THREE BLADES ARE NOT ENOUGH

It didn't take long before two blades were deemed inferior to three and again we took the bait. Remember? For men and women alike, the first blade pulls the hair out from beneath the skin-line. The second blade sheers the little bugger off, almost at the root, and in that nano-second before the poor defenseless follicle can snap back to



safety, it's gets whacked again. A different assortment of faces, knees, thighs, calves and pits, reshot, re-cut, re-scored, and repackaged. Big, fat, (un)hairy, deal!

Today three blades are for those who still have cords on their phones. I don't know how it's possible, but the Schick Quattro promises an even closer (than three) four-blade shave for all of those body parts that ABC, NBC and CBS will allow you to show on TV. But for the life of me, I can't tell you what the ads look or sound like. It's just a stew of half-foggy mir-

rors and wet skin. The good news is that as a nation – though we may not be all that bright – we are much, much smoother.

Where will the madness end?

Right here. High science has finally provided an answer allowing Schick to break the mold. Enter the battery-operated Quattro *Trim-Style* Razor. An interesting name, if ever there was one, given the product's functionality. After almost five decades of satiny legs, smooth underarms, short spaghetti strap dresses and heels, something finally breaks through the clutter and gets women (and men) to sit up and take notice. Not just a razor but the Gardener of Eden.

The TV begins innocently enough, with a young woman preparing to go out. Decked out in trendy threads, she sashays through a double doorway. In the foreground there's a messy, clearly neglected, potted shrub that bears a not so striking resemblance to Harpo Marx. The unkempt little...uh...bush, conveniently positioned at crotch height, transforms magically into a neatly groomed topiary as she passes behind it.

Did I just see what I tawt I taw?

Okay, you've got my attention. Cut to another young woman loping through a park. She runs behind three similarly overgrown shrubs spaced out evenly across the scene. As she passes behind them, each one also positioned just below the waist, in sequence, they too magically morph into something that would make the Disney's grounds crew blush.

I did. I did see what I tawt I taw!

WHAT THE CAMERA CAN'T REVEAL

But pay careful attention, there's a subtlety here that should not go unnoticed. From scene to scene the shape of the groomed shrub differs slightly. First oval, then round, then rectangle....hmmmm? What exactly does *that* mean? In the next vignette, two women meet in front of a chic, urban clothing store. They enter scene from opposite sides and each pass in front of a shrub that could benefit from a little pruning. You needn't be Fellini to suss this out; the magical hedge trimming reveals what the camera obviously can't. The message? For those of you who'd sooner blow your brains out than succumb to a bikini wax, the Schick Quattro *Trim-Style* provides you with the tools necessary to express your artistic freedom and shave your parts into whatever shape your little heart desires.

I got it. And in just one viewing, ARS can just pack up and go home. What's better is that I couldn't wait to see it again. If not for YouTube, I'd still be sitting in front of my TV waiting for an encore. Sexy yet tasteful enough to get past the network buzz killers, everything about the spot is well thought out. A mere 10 seconds worth of copy set upon a great piece of music (available for downloading) tells the whole story because a picture *is* worth a thousand words. The dream of every copywriter (and art director). To say that the idea only has legs wouldn't be fair or accurate.

The print breaks the book with all of the sexiness and wit of the TV intact. A statue of a woman, Michelangelo-esque in its detail

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stands naked as a Jay Bird amid a Versailles style garden. It's the perfect "look at me" pose. Three well-trimmed potted shrubs occupy the foreground, each meticulously sculpted into a different shape: a square, a circle, and a triangle. The latter of which is perfectly positioned to fall just where right and left leg meet. No glistening skin. No shaving cream. No women in towels. It's perfect.

Not since Clairol's Totally Organic Experience has there been something so evocative in prime time or print.

Bikini Waxers beware. <<

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