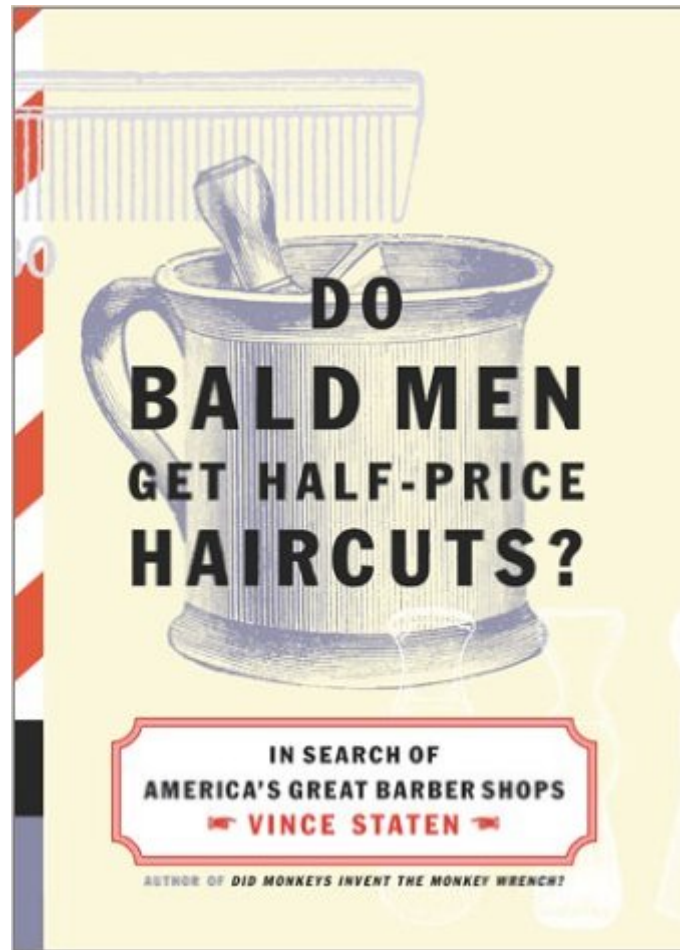


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Do Bald Men Get Half-Price Haircuts?: In Search Of America's Great Barbershops



Synopsis

Who can't remember their first trip to the barbershop? The silvery clip of scissors, the scent of talcum and tonic, the game blaring on the radio, and the lazy rhythms of friendly conversation? If you've been to a great barbershop, you know it. When you walk in, it's like you never left. And when you leave, you can't wait to get back. In his marvelous new volume, "Do Bald Men Get Half-Price Haircuts?," Vince Staten captures the history, the craft, and the humor that have made the barbershop a classic fixture on the American landscape. Come in for a haircut and settle down for a chat -- about the new baseball coach, local politics, the meaning of life. As Staten reminds us, the barbershop's wonders lie above all in the pleasures of talk, and as such it's the social heart of many a small town. Staten visited more than three hundred barbershops -- most of them in small towns, from Chowchilla, California, to Mount Airy, North Carolina. (And that's a lot of time in a barber chair for a man with almost no hair.) The result is a gabfest of barbershop lore, history, and laughs. Grab a chair and listen to the banter in a family-run Italian shop in Louisville, Kentucky, or the relaxed jokes at an African-American barber's in a quiet neighborhood in Nashville. With a great ear for dialogue and the enthusiasm of a barbershop connoisseur, Staten captures a world, both intimate and universal, that nearly every American man grew up with. But "Do Bald Men Get Half-Price Haircuts?" isn't just a charming detour through an almost-forgotten corner of American popular culture. Here the reader will find hard answers to the driving questions of the barbering world, such as: What's in those hair tonics anyway? Why are the stripes on the barber pole red and white? Why not a barbershop "trio?" Offering up a nostalgic and often hilarious account of American manhood at its best, "Do Bald Men Get Half-Price Haircuts?" invites us into the world of the barbershop, where the barber is the maestro, the customers are the band...and the music they make is sweet, sweet, sweet.

Book Information

Hardcover: 176 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster; 1st edition (June 13, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0684867451

ISBN-13: 978-0684867458

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.7 x 7.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #530,782 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Beauty, Grooming, & Style > Hair #57 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Beauty, Grooming, & Style > Men's Grooming & Style #2750 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > General

Customer Reviews

Before reviewing this book, I would like to pay homage to a very special man who has been cutting my hair since 1965, Mr. Michael Cogliandro. As much as I love his hair cuts, I love talking to him even more. He has taught me a great deal. Over the years, I have learned that many Nobel prize winners, politicians, judges, and professors regularly seek out his advice as well, along with their hair cuts. I feel honored to have been in his chair! Mr. Staten understands what a barber shop is all about. It's a place to congregate for good company and good conversation. The book captures that element very nicely. In so doing, it provided a lot of nostalgic memories of good times I have had in barber shops, both before and after Mr. Cogliandro began cutting my hair. To write this book, Mr. Staten did a lot of research. He visited over 300 barber shops (not salons for hair styling). He often got a hair cut (although as a balding person this was potentially dangerous), a shave, or just sat in for the conversation. He also did a lot of historical research into the history of barbering, the barber's pole, and the role of barbers as surgeons and blood-letters. Mr. Staten also taught me more than I ever thought I could ever know about hair tonics and the scents they carry. He does a nice job of capturing special moments like a first hair cut (Mr. Cogliandro gave both of my sons their first haircuts), when you don't need to sit on the board any more, and when the barber first starts joking with you. Alas, the barber shop is in decline. Although many people originally blamed the hippies, the barbers agree that it was really the Beatles who did them in. The numbers of shops and barbers are dropping, and many barbers are now retiring.

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