

Wax on wax off

Foreign funnies

I had been living in Germany all of about two months when I realized I needed a good bikini wax. Too much time training the growth to throw it all away... (men now cringe, woman nod their heads in empathy... is that sexist?) Now really this didn't seem like much of a challenge. Right? People do it everywhere. So I started keeping my eye out as I walked and drove through different areas.

We live about 20 minutes west of downtown and I finally decided I wanted to find a place close to home. Why? Because I wanted to see this person on the street when I went to the grocery store? I honestly hadn't thought that through. I had seen an Aveda salon. Good. Aveda is world wide and reliable. No?

Now, I'm doing my best to learn German, but I have found many people speak English here in Hamburg. I made my appointment in English and assumed the beautician would speak English. Uh, wrong. I showed up for my appointment and was offered an espresso. Lovely. Lead to the back room, she followed in behind me, shut the door and fired off some rapid German. I stared blankly telling her in German that I don't speak very good German yet. By the time we finished communicating through gestures, that I needed to strip from the waist down and get on the table, I was nervous to say the least.

So there I was trying to smile and point to what I want. Ja, ja. Alles klar. (yes yes, all good). I'm lying on the table, my eyes darting from the dimpled ceiling to the window, hoping the people I'm seeing through the venetian blinds walking by can't see me, when I feel hot wax completely everywhere. I mean everywhere. I shot up and shouted "NO! That's not what I wanted. Just a little straightening up on the edges... not a clear cut!" My beautician, I say tongue in cheek, as we were far from a close relationship, jumped back, gloved hands waving in the air. She stared at me shocked and dismayed, not having understood a word I had said but clearly understood my needs were not being met, more through further hand gestures than my gobbled German. I communicated the fact that I wanted to leave a little reminder that I'm a grown woman and we proceeded to try to remove the hot wax. Well, sort of. Both of us flushed, I imagined from embarrassment not the heat. We maintained awkward smiles and made the best of a sticky situation. Pun intended. We tried not to let this bump in the road keep us from the goal of the hour. I lay back down. My eyes firmly focused on her every move. She continued slowly, cautiously. We smiled. I nodded. "Ja, das geht?" she asked.

"Yes, that's good. Just the edges here." I pointed.

I crossed my fingers at my sides. I squeezed my eyes shut. I held my breath. Eight minutes passed and the mission was complete. I dabbed my moist eyes and realized she wasn't leaving the room while I dressed. Ok good. I mean we are kind of buddies now.

We smiled more. We nodded more. I dressed. I smiled. I said danke and walked out never to return. But today, even with her hair cut short and mine grown out, we do pass each other on the street and smile.