

Nice Girls Do...go to sex toy parties

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Forget Mary Kay. Forget Tastefully Simple. With vibrators and nipple cream up for sale, the latest home shopping soiree is nothing like your mother's good-old-fashioned Tupperware party.

Sex toy parties where shoppers can peruse adult novelties in the comfort of a private home are now finding a new setting – the college dorm.

That's what drew Sasha Davidson, 28, to Roger Williams University's Bayside Apartments early one Friday evening, carrying two suitcases, three large storage containers and an outrageously honest attitude. Junior Theresa Page and her roommate had called upon Davidson's services for a gathering of 30 of their closest girlfriends.

Davidson is a sales "goddess" with Athena's Home Novelties, a Woonsocket company that takes its name from the Greek goddess of wisdom. Davidson lives up to the name, delivering product information and helpful how-to-advice on everything from the best tasting lubricant to how to choose a vibrator. Athena's is among the country's leading in-home, sex toy party retailers with nearly \$6 million in sales last year.

One of 800 goddesses working for Athena's in 23 states, Davidson joined the company last June and in only six months time, earned the distinction of being the top-selling new hire for 2004.

"I used to be the one who came home and told my mom everything," Davidson said. "My mother would cover her ears and tell me, 'Please, no more!'"

Phallic fun

The distribution of Penis Pens kicked off the party, followed by another phallic product, "Tom Brady," as it was so candidly referred to, had been molded from the penis of a porn star and had the ability to stick to walls, ceilings and even refrigerators.

Davidson also passed around Nipple Nibblers, a cooling stimulant cream, and Love Lickers, a tasty treat to enhance oral pleasure. Each party guest was encouraged to try a sample, and sophomore Allison Patrick pronounced the Love Lickers worth the \$6 price.

"They taste *really* good," she said.

To lighten up the crowd, Davidson brought out the bondage material. Soft handcuffs were available for some playful restriction, but nothing stunned the crowd more than the Sex Sling, which she explained allowed for "easy access".

Davidson demonstrated how to use the \$40 apparatus by placing the straps around her ankles and neck and lying back on the floor. With a pull of the strap, her legs snapped up vertically in the air while her neck supported the weight. The Sex Sling allows women to literally sit back and relax.

Along with entertainment value, the party offered some educational tips. Our G-spot, Davidson explained, is located in front of the urethra. Never place a Silver Bullet vibrator near your anus or you risk a trip to the emergency room to have it surgically removed.

Imagine explaining that to your mother.

Athena's offers parties geared for couples and for men only. Company President and "Mother Goddess" Jennifer Jolicoeur, 33, used to arrange annual parties for firefighters to do Christmas shopping for their wives and girlfriends. New "Him and Him" and "Her and Her" lines for gay and lesbian couples were launched last year. ("The 'Her and Her' does much better," Jolicoeur said.)

"We'll be in business forever because women are turning 18 every day," Jolicoeur said.

Most of the sex toys in the company's catalog are manufactured in Asia while the lotions and crèmes come from California. Davidson stands firmly by Athena's products.

"Our products are really high quality and there's a lot of research in the products before they get into the catalog," she said, adding that she and her husband are among those happily enlisted to test new products.

Satisfied customers

With her Dr. Ruth-like smarts and showmanship, Davidson had little difficulty convincing the college girls to buy. A secluded room was arranged for the privacy of each customer, along with brown paper bags to conceal purchases. Some girls didn't mind talking about what they bought. "I've bought the Coochy Shave Crème before," said Michelle, one of the party's hosts who did mind giving her last name. "It works, so I'm getting it again."

Coochy Crème, a sensitive shave cream guaranteed to reduce red bumps and irritation that sells for \$12.75 for an 8-ounce container, proved to be the evening's top seller. Another favorite was Pure Instinct, a body oil and cologne containing pheromones, chemicals produced by most mammals that function as an attractant for the opposite sex. Jolicoeur said she's received e-mails from Athena's customers who wore Pure Instinct out to bars and claimed more people approached them than usual.

Sophomore Stefanie Mazel thought this sex attractant was worth a try. "I want to see if it works on my boyfriend," she said.

It seemed that most were sold before they entered the party. Sophomore Traci Harris knew she was purchasing way ahead of time. "I knew I was buying something," she said. "The problem is I just need to decide what!"

"At first, I was a little taken back at the candidness," said sophomore Ashley Gingerella, admitting she was a little intimidated when the party began. "But then I had a lot of fun and I learned a lot."

Some guests kept their shopping decisions private and admitted a little reluctance in coming to the party.

"They had to drag me here," junior Megan Orciari said. "I don't even say the word dildo".

The party cashed out at more than \$900. Ten percent of the total sales went to the party's two hostesses in the form of a credit toward products.

As a new customer, I have to say that the Coochy Shave Crème worked quite well. So did the pheromone spray. Wink, wink.

Enhance your pleasure for \$25 or less

What do customers buy at a sex toy party? Athena's Home Novelties offers some 300 products. President and "Mother Goddess" Jennifer Jolicoeur reviews the top sellers of 2004.

1. **Coochy Shave Crème**

Rash-free shave crème \$12.75, 8 oz. bottle (Also available in 16oz and 4 oz.)

2004 Sales: 32,000

Prevents unsightly red bumps. It also works as a conditioner on your head and as a softener for pubic hair

What Mother Goddess says: "You get a nice smooth shave and no bumps or razor burns or razor rash."

2. **Tasty Twist**

Oral-gasm enhancer balm \$15, 1 fl. Oz tub

2004 sales: 25,500

Available in orange dreamsicle, mint chocolate chip and buttercream icing

Eucalyptus and menthol are main ingredients of this unisex arousal balm. Apply to clitoris or penis for cool, tingly sensation.

What Mother Goddess says: "Just a little dab applied to the clitoris oh-so-lovingly intensifies everything else going on."

3. **Pure Instinct**

Sex attractant cologne \$25, .5 fl oz.

2004 sales: 17,000

Customers say wearing this pheromone cologne makes them more approachable.

What Mother Goddess says: "It elevates your mood and makes you more attractive and friendly."

4. **Virtuality Sleeve**

Ribbed masturbation sleeve \$21, 6 inches long

2004 sales: 15,000

This super stretchy silicone sleeve is textured inside to give him an intense sensation, the perfect friction for masturbation.

What Mother Goddess says: "Something you can slap on your partner when you want to watch 'American Idol'."

5. **Silver Bullet**

Multi-purpose vibrating silver egg with low, medium and high settings \$10, 3 inches long, 2 inches wide

2004 sales: 13,000

Athena's most popular vibrator can be used for clitoral and testicle stimulation or the bullet can be inserted into a massage mitt for an all-over body massage. Small and non-threatening, it fits nicely in your handbag.

What Mother Goddess says: "Five minutes with the silver bullet and you're smiling....It's the best \$10 you can ever spend."