

HUMOR

# Gays in Toyland

This is not your mother's Tupperware party

BY FLOYD SKLAVER

The e-mail from T. was brief. "I want to throw a sex toys party and I want you guys to come." (Before or after we used the toys, I wondered.) "Please join me for an evening of Pure Romance." (Pure romance?)



Portland actress Julie Jeske, now appearing in CoHo Productions' riveting stalker drama *Boy Gets Girl*, sells products like the Silverado (inset) at Pure Romance parties.

What about the sex toys?)

It turns out that Pure Romance is an Ohio-based company that distributes a line of sex aids marketed to women through in-home presentations. (Think Tupperware for the sexually active—shtupperware?) With 6,200 consultants nationwide and a motto that leaves little to the imagination ("We put the O in Romance"), Pure Romance claims to be the fastest-growing women-to-women business in the world. It even garnered nationwide attention when Jessica Simpson hosted a party.

Queer-friendly Portland actress Julie Jeske (*Debbie Does Dallas*) is one of a handful of area representatives. She signed up five months ago and demonstrates Pure Romance products at parties every week.

"I was at C.C. Slaughters one night with T.," Julie says, "and when he heard what I was selling, he asked me to do something for the boys, because some guys feel uncomfortable going into a sex store."

When I arrived on the appointed night, my friend had prepared a buffet of sensuous delights including strawberries dipped in chocolate and penis-shaped cookies. Alcohol

abounded (as it always does when my friends gather) and *Hang on Little Tomato* played softly in the background. (I don't know about others, but Pink Martini's latest album has an aphrodisiac effect on me.)

The first item Julie presented was Basic Instinct, a natural pheromone that "attracts people to you...and makes [them] feel good about being around you," she said.

Someone piped in, "My friend R. uses that when she waitresses, and she swears she gets hit on more and gets bigger tips when she does." Hmm. I notice a number of pens with rubber-tipped penises putting check marks next to Basic Instinct.

Next up was an assortment of lubes, body creams and massage oils, all of which had indistinguishable but titillating names such as Booty Eaze, Nympho Niagra and Lickity Stiff. My favorite was Pure Pleasure, a silicon-based gel that Julie demonstrated by having us make a tight fist and then try to push a dry finger through it. No way. Then she put a dab of Pure Pleasure on our fingers and whoa! Talk about ease of penetration. There's a flurry of page turning as half a dozen bottoms search the catalog for the item.

Many of the lotions are available in edible flavors (including strawberry, cinnamon stick and "orgasmic orange"), which, of course, brought out the inevitable gay men's concern: How many carbs are in this?

There were lotions for getting erect and creams for staying there. There was a balm for stimulating nipples and lips and another for stimulating what Julie calls "the twins." Naturally, as a journalist I had to sample everything, and pretty soon I felt woozy from all of the competing scents and sensations.

Other items that were available included "bedroom accessory" penises of various sizes, colors and shapes. (I couldn't resist wrapping an enormous 24-inch double-headed dildo around my neck like a choker—I guess it is in more ways than one.) Most curious were the dildos with small figures toward the base for clitoral stimulation. There was a dolphin, a rabbit, a beaver (this is Oregon, after all) and even one with a sarcophagus-shaped head called King Tut.

According to Pure Romance, one of the most popular selling items is a skin cream called Like a Virgin. Five minutes after application, the company claims, the vagina will tighten and stay that way for 24 hours. Julie says it also helps with wrinkles, so I discretely placed a little check mark next to the product on my own order sheet.

One surprisingly popular item was the Super Stretch Vagina Lips, an anthropomorphic blob of silicone with an anatomically correct opening used for masturbating. "That doesn't look wide enough," one friend mused. Then Julie stretched the lips to Kong-like proportions and said, "Obviously you gay boys haven't been around too many vaginas." ■

PURE ROMANCE parties can be scheduled by contacting Julie Jeske at [juliejeske@pureromance.com](mailto:juliejeske@pureromance.com).

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