

Behind the steamy scenes of Love, The Sex Expo - Q&A with organiser Linda Guldemand

 By Ruth Cooper

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After a successful launch in Pretoria last year, the Love, The Sex Expo now moves to the Mother City this weekend, debuting at GrandWest Grand Arena in Cape Town from 6 to 9 February 2020. We got in touch with expo organiser Linda Guldemand to discuss what goes into organising an event of this nature, innovative developments in the sex-tech industry, sexual health and combating stigmas.



Linda Guldemand - © EFC Worldwide

What would be your top highlight for the upcoming expo?

It's really difficult to pick just *one* favourite. I think the combination of shopping, crowd participation and entertainment is the key to the success of the show. If I had to choose, I would say the crowd participation shows such as 'So You Think You Can Strip'. It's so wonderful to see people getting involved and putting their inhibitions aside to have a bit of fun!

Also, the beautiful Love Chapel, where loved up guests can share their nuptials in a unique way with marriage officers available to perform legal weddings, vow renewals as well as non-binding commitment ceremonies for any couple of any persuasion. However, with international acts such as Pricasso, the world-famous penile artist, and Von from the UK based pyrotechnic and aerial act, The Fuel Girls (also our official MC for the entire event) as well as local hot favourites, The Pulse Boys, Pole Dance Cape Town, Kitty de la Renza – brought to you by Beefcakes and Burlesque shows – visitors really are spoilt for choice!



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■ ***What are some of the challenges when it comes to putting an event of this nature together?***

While it's always great fun organising a show like this, of course, it doesn't happen overnight and it certainly isn't a one-woman-job. We have an *amazing* team that works both in front and behind the scenes. From coordinating stage schedules to hunting down the amazing international and local talent we are so fortunate to host, putting together floor plans to ensure the best flow of exhibitor stands to make your sexy shopping experience as enticing and enjoyable as possible and much much more.

Lastly, of course, we still face some challenges with regards to stigmas attached to the nature of our event in various ways, however, we pride ourselves on greeting these with a cheeky smile, killing them with our kindness and, most importantly, education!



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■ ***Do you still see stigmas surrounding the event and how do you combat these?***

There definitely are still stigmas surrounding the topic of 'sex' in our society today. While it is certainly a lot more widely accepted and spoken about, we still aren't where we need to be and it is often considered 'taboo' to talk openly about. However, Cape Town, my hometown is known for being the more liberal of the cities and I have been pleasantly surprised thus far with the reaction to our marketing, etc. leading up to the event later this week. I think the best thing about this event is that it is hosted in a tasteful and professional manner, providing a platform where sexy shopping, sensual entertainment and informative talks by various industry experts can come together in a melting pot of fun and flirty experiences. Part of addressing issues such as stigma in our society begins with talking about it – here we have gathered many of the key players across various specialisations and we have provided the space for them to disseminate information in a fun and interesting way as well as making them available to the public to learn from and interact with!



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■ ***Can you tell us more about the workshops and the educational aspect of the event?***

Certainly! While I won't give away all our secrets with regards to what you can expect on stage, we have the following key industry players at the event, to name but a few: ANOVA Health Institute (with a strong focus on LGBTQ), Council for Sexual Health Professions NPC (they will have sexologists at the event), Partners in Sexual Health (NGO), Cape Town Pride, Rel8 (talking all things kinks, BDSM and fetishes on stage) as well as Sweat (Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce).

■ ***What was the response at the event in Pretoria?***

It has been phenomenal! This is our debut show in Cape Town and we are so excited to be in the Mother City. Our inaugural event was hosted at Time Square in Menlyn, Pretoria last year and it was met with such a warm welcome with queues of excited guests lining up outside the door on opening day and throngs more visiting us over the four days! We expect an even bigger and better response from Cape Town – which is known for having some of the most beautiful, fun, eclectic and outgoing people calling this amazing city home.



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■ ***What have been some of the innovative products you have seen come into the sex toy market?***

I've been particularly blown away by the development of the technology aspect. We will have a humanoid doll (robotic sex doll) on display at the event. Companions like her are available for sale in South Africa. She is capable of speaking, turning her head and blinking her eyes as well as her AI capabilities which allow her to learn cues through conversation and build up a knowledge of her partner's interests and personality, not to mention how extremely lifelike she is, even warming to human body temperature!

We also have VR porn for guests to experience – this is a thrilling, immersive experience that transports the wearer of the VR headset to a number of erotic encounters to choose from. In addition to the above, we have a number of top-quality exhibitors who have a range of imported and local sizzling sex toys, lubes, creams, lingerie and accessories for you to feast your eyes on and get your hands on!



Love, The Sex Expo comes to Cape Town in February

23 Jan 2020



■ ***Your top tip for those looking to explore or ignite their sexuality?***

Come and experience the magic and learn something new in a fun and relaxed environment. Come and join me at Love, The Sex Expo, taking place at GrandWest from 6 – 9 February 2020. Doors open 11am – 11pm Thurs – Sat and 11am – 6pm Sun. Tickets are R250 at www.Computicket.com or at the door. Visit www.thesexexpo.com for more info and to get your hands on a half-off voucher (ssshhhh I wasn't supposed to tell you that!). Also, the first few lucky ladies through our doors will receive a saucy little surprise to take home.

Tickets are available through Computicket at R250. Tickets will also be available at the door.

Please note: *Love, The Sex Expo is strictly for those over 18 years of age, and no babies or prams are allowed inside.*

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

Ruth is the production manager at Bizcommunity. ruth@bizcommunity.com

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