

la petite coquette talks

New York-based La Petite Coquette, has been in business as a lingerie retailer for nearly thirty years. Owner Rebecca Apsan recently took the time to speak with *BODY Magazine* regarding trends in the industry, as well as what is selling well in her stores.

"Retail stores can be a huge driving force behind trends. If you have a trust worthy sales staff telling you how wonderful something is, you are more likely to try it," she said.

At La Petite Coquette, Apsan said she has an informed sales staff to assist its diverse customer base, which draws customers from New York and across the country.

"Boy shorts are the biggest trend and I think that they are here to stay," she continued, recommending the brand, FleurT.

Also, in the underwear category, Hanky Panky thongs continue to be best-sellers at La Petite Coquette, she said.

"Corsets are making a comeback, although I think the trend of real old fashion corsets has sadly disappeared," Apsan continued.

Some of the best selling brands at La Petite Coquette are Chantelle, Timpa, Simone Perele and La Perla. The company also does a lot of business with the Lise Charmel, Prima Donna, Aubade, and Huit.

"A huge up-and-comer is Spoylt. I love Spoylt's unique take on sex appeal," she commented.

In textile technology, seamless lingerie is in high demand.

"I make it a priority to keep seamless lingerie in stock all the time. Laser cut modal fabrics are also important," the owner said.

In response to the rise in demand for more plus size apparel, the retailer is expanding its offerings in lingerie for "curvy girls." Apsan said that she carries both basic and special beautiful bras in larger cup sizes.

Recently, Apsan has created a line with QVC that reaches up to size 3X.

"I am currently working with QVC to create more in this area. I believe that television and the Internet is where the market is going," she stated.

In other news, the store recently started carrying into high-end sex toys.

"Not only can a customer find a 400 dollar platinum vibrator but she can feel comfortable enough to purchase it," Apsan explained.



Phyllis Heppenstall

service and stay on the leading edge of trends, is paramount in the industry today," Heppenstall said, "I've seen many brands come and go, however, Forplay continues to be in touch with and on top of trends."

Forplay is standard stock in half of the Peekay stores and is rotated throughout the remainder.

"My stores are very forward-thinking. We never let the inventory go stale," she commented. "Forplay is a very elegant line. You don't usually find elegance such as this [with other brands]," she concluded.

Because the media has played a big role in moving clubwear and costumes into the mainstream, Heppenstall said the market for this category is continuing to increase.

"Not a lot of retailers are taking advantage of this," she commented.

Within the lingerie category, dancewear clubwear and costumes currently account for 25 percent of sales in Peekay stores.

"The message we are giving people is education, permission and fun. All of our stores are located in neighborhood centers because we market our product to the mainstream. When you take an inferior

location, you send a different message to the customer," she explained.

The store caters to a wide range of customers: from ages 18-78 and from professional dancers to everyday women. In addition, Heppenstall boasted that the company's sales staff is educated in its merchandise.

Peekay International has 32 retail locations located in Washington and California. Other brands that the stores carry include Shirley of Hollywood, Dreamgirl and Fantasy. — E.B.



forplay at the forefront

Peekay International, distributors, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers of lingerie, games, accessories, adult products and video, with its Lovers Package, Touch of Romance and Condom Revolution stores, is celebrating its 25th anniversary. For approximately 10 years, the company has been carrying Forplay clubwear, dancewear and costumes. The brand is one of the company's top sellers in this category, according to Peekay owner Phyllis Heppenstall.

"Sustainability, being able to continue to give