



A Star Is Porn

Rubi is 30 and an aspiring porn actress. She's had nude photos published in three amateur magazines, but that's the extent of her career so far. Last Thursday she and her husband Dan came down to the Erotic USA expo at the Javits Convention Center to see what they could do about that.

Hyped as "the world's most controversial exposition of romance, adventures and sensuality," Erotic USA featured vendors, dance performances, speakers relating to all things sexual, and nighttime parties at Manhattan clubs. According to Markham/Novell Communications, Ltd., who promoted the event, Erotica USA LLC predicted 40,000 visitors over the four-day event. Though traffic was light when it opened last Thursday, by late afternoon the second floor hall was jammed, a steady flow of people exiting with small shopping bags.

While there were a few booths devoted to nonsexual products, the vast majority of the 80-or-so vendors were hawking adult items. Half of the businesses present were based in New York City. *Gallery* magazine, which sponsored a Thursday night party at Ohm, was on hand, as was Al Goldstein, of course, and International Tours-Fifth Avenue, which books vacations at a club called Hedonism III ("Sun, surf, sand, and sex!"). A British erotic photographer named John Dietrich offered his framed photos for up to \$1150 each. The booths selling magazines and videos drew the heaviest traffic, but fetish wear appeared to do good business and lots of folks stopped at the Sinful Chocolates display of life-size edible breasts, penises and vaginas. *NYP*ress, the *New York Observer* and *Popsmeat* had booths as well.



Several vendors I spoke to complained about the high cost of participating. According to the April 16 *New York Times*, Erotica USA had rented the 45,000-foot Galleria River Pavillion from the Javits center for a relatively low \$39,000. It charged vendors \$28 per square foot, with 100 square feet the standard booth size. One video distributor calculated it had cost him \$3000 for floor space, \$275 to hook up an Internet and phone connec-

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Rubi the would-be porn star.

tion so he could show off his Web pages, \$110 for electricity, and three cents a minute to run each of his two computers—a four-day total of nearly \$500. “Worst of all is that we weren’t even allowed to carry our stuff up to the expo floor,” he complained. “Once you got through the door, you weren’t allowed to take it any further. You had to pay union guys from Javits to carry it—\$50 for every 100 pounds.”

Nearly every vendor I spoke with emphasized that porn is a booming business, and an increasingly competitive one. They’ve been forced to diversify and market aggressively. “I’m here all four days, standing here freezing in this outfit [a tiny leather dress], all day long, getting as much exposure of my products and services as I can,” dominatrix Mistress Rhiannon said. A television behind her played one of the 15 videos she has made, this one featuring one of her slaves tied to a bed, ball in mouth, Mistress Rhiannon pinching his penis with tongs. In addition to her personal services, she was pushing the videos at \$45 each, a comic book, photos of her and access to her House of Whacks website, www.mistressrhiannon.com. By late Friday afternoon she had ceased allowing *Erotica* attendees to snap photos of her and her 16-lb. breasts, she said, because it was cutting into her sales of her own photos (at \$15 each).

Born upstate in Glen Falls, Rubi (Rubisela Chandler) is an attractive brunette who could pass for 24. She

graduated from Sage College in 1990 with a degree in graphic design. “College was really, really rough on me,” she says. “I was working to pay my way through, though I still have a student loan I’m paying on. I was putting in lots of hours on my artwork and school and trying to work at the same time. When I got out I just wanted to quit all of it.” She’s bounced around various jobs—state government, retail—and of late has been tending bar and waiting tables at a 50s theme restaurant. “It’s a pretty corny place, but it’s all right.”

Now she was standing behind a table at the Free Speech Coalition booth, all 5-foot 3-inches and 110 pounds of her poured into a tight new red, white and blue tight dress and 3-inch clear plastic heels. Eight months ago she had written veteran porn star Nina

Hartley to ask how to break into the business. Hartley had sent her a copy of her video describing the pros and cons, and urged her to call William Margold if she wanted to get a start.

Margold has been involved in over 300 porn films and spent almost 30 years in the business, but he wasn’t able to offer a part to Rubi. He did get her to start calling herself Lynxxx, and made her an offer: By helping him man the Free Speech Coalition booth and drum up donations for the anticensorship group, she’d have the opportunity to work the convention and meet porn stars and filmmakers.

Rubi accepted his offer, packed up Dan and their two dogs, and drove down last Wednesday night from their home in Clifton Park to a motel in Secaucus. “Kennels are expensive and we couldn’t get a sitter for the whole trip,” she explained about the dogs, “so we had to bring them to the Red Roof Inn.”

Thursday afternoon she and Dan were looking exhausted and downtrodden. They hadn’t slept much the night before, and they were worried about the expense of the trip—\$150 each for admission, a motel room for five nights, travel. “It was \$43 bucks for a cab ride from Secaucus and \$16 bucks just to get a couple of sandwiches and an ice tea from the food court here,” Dan fretted. “An expensive day.”

Margold was ambivalent about Lynxxx’s prospects. “I don’t know if she has what it takes. She doesn’t have the

looks of a superstar like Viper or Seka, but she certainly is pretty enough to be on film. I see no reason that she can’t get a starring part in a mid-level production and earn \$300-\$500 for a half-day’s work. You saw the pictures, didn’t you?”

(I had. Shortly after meeting me, Dan had handed me a plastic scrapbook with four photos—two of his wife in garters and a bra, cups pulled down to expose her breasts; one fingering her crotch and pouting; one lying naked on her back sucking her red-painted big toe. Dan had taken the photos with a Canon SureShot. The two of them had rigged up a set in their bedroom, using purple fake-satin material they’d bought at a discount fabric store to create a porn-set look.)

“To make it in adult film you have to have a hot look, which she does, but you also need a killer instinct,” Margold continued. “Does she have that instinct? I don’t know. Will she meet someone who’ll offer her a part? I don’t know.”

Asked why she wants to get into porn, Rubi says, “It’s a business. A lot of the people in it are really cool people, and the money is really good... I can’t see bartending for the rest of my life. So why not give this a try?”

Not surprisingly, her husband sounds a bit equivocal about her decision, but supportive. “She loves me, we’ve been married three years, together eight years. It’s a job. It’s acting. Besides, if she wants to do it, she’s going to do it. I couldn’t stop her, so I’ll help her all I can.”

Things suddenly looked up for them on Friday. *Newsday* ran a story on Margold with a picture of him holding Lynxxx in his arms. Later, Charlie Latour, a buxom middle-aged woman known as the Diva of Porn, came by to help man the booth. Latour, with nearly three decades of acting and producing experience and owner of an elaborate film set in Pennsylvania, took to Lynxxx and offered her a scene in an upcoming film. Though there was no word on when filming will begin, the movie will have something to do with a women’s prison, with Lynxxx playing a prison secretary seduced by Latour, her boss.

Saturday night Lynxxx and Dan left the convention and headed back upstate to Clifton Park. “She got what she came for,” said a smiling Margold. “She’s got an offer from Charlie and perhaps a couple other tentative offers for scenes on the West Coast... She left here with tears in her eyes. She was so happy. She felt like she had been adopted into the family of X. I went through much the same when I broke into adult film in ‘72.”

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