



Nick Cowen · Features · General  
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## Sexpo 2015: Tinder, toys and... 3D prints?

A first time punter at Sexpo may be forgiven for pre-empting what the annual “Health, Sexuality and Lifestyle Expo” may have in store for them. The clue is in the name. The clue is also in the image of a man on all fours wearing a dog collar that’s adorned a couple of billboards dotted around Johannesburg.

Anyone heading to Sexpo out at Gallagher Estate in Midrand this weekend can expect an eyeful. However, after strolling through the two massive halls that house Sexpo 2015, it becomes quite clear that Sexpo is about more than just... well, sex.

Oh sure, there are loads and loads of stalls where one can buy all manner of naughty entertainment – be it in the form of toys, DVDs (does anyone really buy those any more?) and accoutrements for their boudoir.

There are also a host of talks ranging from a discussion on the difference between BDSM and Abuse (which is worth attending) and how to master the dating app Tinder (which isn’t).



There are even a couple of live acts to watch – amateur stripping, wet T-shirt contests and a dance troop that’s made its way to South Africa from Brazil to put on a show (although I’m confidently told by some Sexpo regulars they aren’t as good as the Pulse Dancers, who are notable in their absence).

But beyond the shows, toys and general bacchanalia, Sexpo’s main purpose is to create a safe space for its attendees.

Since local views lean towards the conservative – in spite of South Africa having the most liberal constitution in the world – a lot of the people who attend Sexpo habitually find themselves the target of ire for their sexual tastes, preferences, orientation and general lifestyle choices. Sexpo allows them to check that outside prejudice at the door – much in the same way GeekFest or rAge does for nerds and gamers.

“It’s about making people feel comfortable,” says Mistress Page, proprietor of BDSM shop (and online store) Different Strokes, “the staff here are good at making people feel comfy. We relax them so they don’t feel nervous and we explain things to them in a way they can understand. It’s not about selling the most expensive toy we have here.”

In terms of its location at Sexpo, Different Strokes seems to be the old school stall in the high-tech neighbourhood. Mistress Page’s store is surrounded on all sides by stalls promoting and selling the latest in high-tech sex toys. To the left is a booth demo-ing a device called the SmartKegel, a vaginal exercise device that both synchs with the users smartphone – to measure how much pressure they’re exerting – and rewards them occasionally by vibrating.



To the right is a booth promoting a device called the Womanizer, a vacuum-enhanced vibrator that the booth personnel confidently inform is guaranteed to satisfy any consumer. Apparently the longest it’s taken to work on a user is seven seconds.

Mistress Page thinks that a lot of these battery-operated and remote-charged sex are unnecessary.

“Human hands have been working just as well since the dawn of time,” she says.

It shouldn’t surprise too many of our readers that Sexpo offers a sex tech that sits on the bleeding edge. After all, the tech and sex industries have a long and mutually beneficial relationship. In fact, the latter has acted as a catalyst in lot of instances to both launch new technologies (see: online payment) and bring about the demise of others (see: VHS vs Betamax, see also: Bluray vs HD DVD).

It also shouldn’t be too much of a shock to note that most of the toys at Sexpo are targeted at the fairer sex. After all, while male orgasms have been researched up the ying-yang, it wasn’t until 2009 that academia started to map the nerve endings contained the female clitoris. The female orgasm seems to be a wide-open space for the sex industry to explore. It’s certainly proving lucrative at Sexpo 2015.

Away from the toy stands and sex workshops, however, are stalls one might not expect from an expo billed as Johannesburg’s premier annual sex show. There are purveyors of fine wines, moonshine distilleries and you can even catch the World Cup rugby if you’ve been dragged here against your will.



And then there's Andre Dreyer, the proprietor of CloneMe3D, a maker in every sense of the word. His stall offers punters the chance to order their own 3D printed statue of... well, whomever they wish, provided that person can make an appearance at Sexpo.

Dreyer's set up allows him to scan clients and then print off statues of them with his 3D printer. He can even shave a couple of curves off the end result if you feel you'd look better without your beer belly.

At Sexpo you can take the ultimate selfie. Who knew?

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