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Trailing Tracy

What's it take to keep up with NapkinNights.com's on-the-go founder? More than you might think

BY KEVIN CAPP

"Where are my presents?" shrieks Tracy Lee outside of Pure Nightclub at Caesars Palace.

Her blonde-streaked hair is braided into pigtails but this, I initially suspect, is the only thing innocent about her. Clad in a red bustier and jeans, she's been zooming around the cavernous venue for the last 10 minutes, asking everybody within earshot if they know where and -- perhaps more importantly -- who's in charge of distributing the gift bags containing MAC lipstick, Big Sexy Hair hairspray and other coifing trinkets. The Caesars Player launch party (held in honor of the hotel-casino's new magazine) just wound to a conclusion, and the gift bags were only part of a free-goodies-and-booze event that also featured performances by the Pussycat Dolls burlesque troupe. My night with Lee is just beginning.

After giving up on snagging a hand-out satchel, Lee tells me to meet her at Firefly Tapas Kitchen on Paradise Road, where she's set to join friends in from Arizona and others for a little pre-going out warm-up grub. It is there, during DJs Douglas Gibbs and Jason Lema's Latin-music-oriented Tuesday night dance-and-chow-fest, my first -- negative -- impression of her is wiped clean away. She batters me with more charm and attention from a beautiful woman (at one point, she even feeds me salad) than I've received in the last year.

Over tapas, drinks and much ambient noise (our table alone erupts into mad cackles and boisterous debate every few seconds), Lee gives some background on her baby, the popular website devoted to all things nightlife, NapkinNights.com.

The site is a one-stop shop for clubbers. There they can find photos of themselves



Tracy Lee at work at the Empire opening.

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and friends and assorted other gorgeous folk partying the night away at all of Las Vegas' venues, as well as clubs in Scottsdale and Sacramento. In addition to "pretty pictures," visitors to the site can find out damn near anything they want about the Vegas nightlife world. Venue and guest list information, and pics of Lee's small army of female point-and-shooters are just some of the in-the-know curiosities available to peruse.

The slogan might be "Nightlife: Whatever you desire."

One thing many desire to know about Lee is her age. Early on, she gives it away -- almost. "I'm not old! I'm not old!" she yelps after letting slip that she's been clubbing for 15 years. She hastens to add: "I graduated in '93, but you can't tell by when I graduated how old I am, because I'm a nerd. I celebrate 19 every year, but I'm going to get in trouble with the clubs if I stay 19." In order to further confuse gossipers, she has two MySpace.com profiles, one listing her as 21, the other 24.

Besides her age, Lee is often asked what nationality she is -- something she'll gladly tell you for a buck. She says the proceeds are going toward a boob job. She doesn't need it, but I gladly toss her a single anyway. Then she lists off her countries of origin: Korea, Russia and Hungary. How did I know *that* was coming?

The quintessential self-made woman, Lee says she started college at 15 (hence the "nerd" moniker), dropped out by 17, then went back in 2003 to learn about computers. But that's about the extent of her formal education. She taught herself web design, she says. Not much there to peg her as a web guru.

But since the launch of NapkinNights.com in February 2002, that's what she's become. And a public relations specialist. And a manager. And, last but not least, a photographer, who maintains the kind of up-in-the-air clubbing schedule usually reserved for cokeheads and speed freaks. "Some nights I'll do one [venue]. Other nights ... I mean, like on New Year's, I did 12 myself. It just all depends on what's going on," she says.

Tonight isn't the kind of paint-the-town-red and snap-tons-of-photos club tour she might have on another night -- like, say, tomorrow. Actually, tomorrow she's off to Arizona with her Scottsdale-based photographer Victoria Holland, and is without her camera. She may prefer being in Vegas, but she's sometimes only here three days out of the week. Nevertheless, she still finds time to hop on her computer 12 hours a day in order to deal with all the behind-the-site stuff that goes into making NapkinNights.com functional.

While she has three guys shooting photos for her in Sacramento, the majority of her flash-bulb stable consists of girls. Lee takes pride in the fact that she hires only "real girls," not "fashion models."

The reason behind this decision is two-fold: "I want girls that people can relate to. Guys trust a girl taking their picture. Girls can trust a girl because it's probably not going to go a porno site or be modified in any way. There's definitely a trust factor and a comfort factor involved."

After spending close to two hours at Firefly, we head back to Pure. When we left, the place was in between shutting down the *Caesars Player* launch party and gearing up for the usual hullabaloo -- which is in full body-crushing swing now. DJs Farsheed and Snezana provide the soundtrack as Lee navigates her way through the club in fast-forward.

The speed with which she catapults around may be due to the fact that she's used to negotiating busy-body hordes. (Normally, she has her camera held aloft so as to avoid smacking people with it, but tonight it's a water bottle.) Or it may be due to the fact that, as we wade through the sea of clubbers, she's regularly accosted by everyone from promoters to buff 'roid-ragers. It's hard to tell.

Then, as she gives more hugs and shakes more hands on the terrace, she turns around and whispers in my ear: "You know what? I love this."

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