





Sex in the City

Sexpert, Kate Taylor, asks 'When did we all get so damn sexy'?

Five years ago, I considered myself awesome in bed. I was the sex columnist for *GQ* magazine and had written two books on better bonking, so I honestly thought that few women were more liberal, open-minded or bendy than me. At that stage, I felt confident enough to leave London and get married and knocked-up in the suburbs, safe in the knowledge that I could always return to SW1 and be seen as a catch the rest of my life.

Er, wrong! In the five years that have passed since I left London, you lot have gone bonking-bonkers. When I left you, the only thing that desperate women could buy in Superdrug was a vaguely willy-shaped deodorant. Now you can sail in and browse the Durex Play Range of vibrators and some self-heating KY. In my day – or rather, my night – sex toys were something that divorcees bought at Ann Summers parties. But since that *Sex & The City* episode where Charlotte falls for her Rampant Rabbit, now every woman's bedside cabinet looks like a scene from *Watership Down*.

One place that this recent rise in rogering has been charted nicely is *Big Brother*. In the first series, in 2000, the most shocking thing about the series was Anna, the lesbian Nun. To our seaside sensibilities, this was front-page scandal. By 2004, Michelle and Stuart were shagging underneath a buffet table, and by 2005, Kinga was bottling

out, and in, and out, and in, on the front lawn. If this had happened in series One, the shockwaves would have cancelled the series. As it was, by last year, the nation only gave a collective yawn.

In 2000, I attended a Swingers Party to write about it for *GQ*. At that time, swingers parties were like Butlins on Viagra: small, sweaty rooms filled with fat, sweaty couples in various stages of late-onset ugliness, all desperately vying for the one good-looking girl who'd mistakenly thought this was a good idea. I still have nightmares about what I saw in that west-London home, especially through the window of the "Voyeur Room", where it usually looked like two pink bouncy castles were having a fight over a chipolata. The only man who eyed me up was so drunk he went on to throw up over his own shoes, and even the owner of the club looked vaguely apologetic when several guests seemed more into the pre-orgy buffet (apty, pork and stuffing) than the upstairs shenanigans.

In contrast, last year I wrote about a swingers party in Chelsea run by Fever. Fever is the company that promises to take the mingling out of swinging, by the simple process of not letting anyone ugly attend. Inside a vast, beautiful town house, hundreds of gorgeous couples stood around quaffing Perrier Jouet, before running up the sweeping staircase to frolic on the four-posters.



Underneath a chandelier in the main bedroom, nine mattresses had been pushed together to form one vast bed. In the olden days, this would have been big enough to fit two old-style swingers. This time, I counted over 100 lithe-limbed lovers squirming around in ecstasy until it all got too much and I needed a sit down. Crystal bowls by the beds were filled with condoms, and rose petals fluttered into the air with every thrust. It looked like a spread from *World of Interiors* – which I suppose it was, in a way.

Notice that the Fever party was in west London? It's not a coincidence. In the recent sexual revolution that's going on in the Capital, most of the action is happening in the western sector. You'll notice this for yourself when *Erotica* opens at Olympia next month, bringing the bi-annual crowds of PVC-wearing pervs flooding through Earl's Court Tube. *Scarlet* magazine has its horny headquarters in Fulham. Coco de Mer has its flagship store in WC2. And Amora, Britain's first

ever "sex theme park" will open in the next few months in the Trocadero, in London's fashionable West End.

Why all the action in the West? It might be "lay-lines", bringing currents of sexual energy pulsing through west London up to Primrose Hill, where Jude and Sadie notoriously ran their Neighbourhood Crotch swinging scheme. It might just be boredom – after all, south London brings its own adrenaline thrills in the forms of gangs and guns, but there's not really much going on in Chiswick. It might just be wealth – you can only swing from chandeliers if you've got the dosh to buy them.

Personally, I choose to blame John Leslie. It was his home in leafy North Sheen, in June 2002, that was the setting for his infamous soapy Titmuss home-movie. While house prices immediately dropped in his street, knickers followed, and these days the W in your postcode stands for "Wild" and "Wet" and "Watch

me". It's getting so bad, the London Underground will soon have to change the west-London tube name to the "Circle and Red Light District Line".

Where will it end? Will the sexiness continue to creep westwards until Cornwall becomes a hot-bed of, er, hot beds? Frankly the whole thing seems to be bringing out my inner prude (and that hasn't happened since I watched Rebecca loos relieving a pig on prime time television!). Part of me is genuinely hoping that chastity suddenly comes back into fashion? If only because next February my new book comes out, called *Not Tonight, Mr Right!*, which is all about why saying "No" to sex can perk up your interest, your libido and your love-life.

But then, maybe I'm just a bit jealous. After all, I don't live in London anymore.

Not Tonight, Mr Right!
(Michael Joseph, £6.99) is out in February 2007.



West London's hottest addresses

Fulham

- **Scarlet magazine**

www.scarletmagazine.co.uk
9 Rickett Street, Fulham, SW6

The women's sex magazine that comes every month. Let's hope its readers have more luck.

Earls Court

- **Erotica 06, Olympia**

www.erotica-uk.com
Hammersmith Road, W14 8UX

Erotica is Britain's annual sexhibition. This year it runs from November 17-19.

Chelsea & Kensington

- **Myla**

www.myla.com
77 Lonsdale Road, W11 2DF

Very posh lingerie, sex toys and adult goods. Think "Di Does Dallas".

- **Fever Parties**

www.feverparties.com
Fever run swinging parties in London, Manchester and abroad. The London parties are usually in Chelsea or Kensington.

West End

- **Agent Provocateur**

www.agentprovocateur.com
305 Westbourne Grove, W11 2QA

Hey, good looking. Where'd you get those sexy split-crotch knickers?

- **Spearmint Rhino**

www.spearmintrhino.com
161 Tottenham Court Road, W1T 7NN

As much fun as you can have with someone else's clothes off.

- **Sophisticats**

www.thesophisticats.com
1 Marylebone Lane, W1U 1DA

The strip-club where West Londoners go when they're feline lonely.

- **Ann Summers' flagship store**

www.annsummers.com
522 Oxford Street, W1C 1LL

A whopping great big emporium of filth. Ann Summers sells one rampant rabbit every 2 minutes — buy yours here.

Covent Garden

- **Coco de Mer**

www.coco-de-mer.co.uk
23 Monmouth Street, WC2H 9DD

The upmarket sex-toy retailer. Check out the peepholes in the changing rooms.

- **Coffee, Cake and Kink**

www.coffeecakeandkink.com
61 Endell Street, Covent Garden, WC2H 9AJ
Where erotic books and art-prints are sure to put the foam in your cappuccino.