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Guy Expo: Worth leaving the man cave for?



Anthony Souffle, Star Tribune

With her entourage of helpers each dressed as Elvis, Shawna Suckow, creator of The Guy Expo, hands out coupons to the upcoming event during the Twins game Tuesday evening outside the Metrodome.

This expo is geared for guys - and the gals who love them (including the event's creator).

By **BILL WARD**bill.ward@startribune.com

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At this weekend's Guy Expo, mere men need not apply.

"We're going for guys who like to take off their ties and cut loose and get out of the house with a kitchen pass for a couple of hours."

That's the word from the event's progenitor and coordinator, who should know. After all, she's married to a "guys' guy."

Yes, *she*, as in Shawna Suckow, an Eagan resident who's been planning trade shows for 17 years and concocted this two-day event at St. Paul's RiverCentre. According to the expo's (wait for it) "Guy'd Book," there will be a whole lotta tailgating, Elvis-imitating and man-cave-creating goin' on. Plus, wheeled vehicles of all stripes and contests involving beer-can-stacking, wing-eating and seriously dumb near-death experiences.

Will nice guys finish last? Probably, but we actually had a few less-speculative questions for Suckow.

Q Did you grow up around a lot of guys?

A I grew up a tomboy. I had a brother [Dan] who locked me out of the house if I couldn't beat him in "H-O-R-S-E." I was the only girl in my sorority who knew how to quarterback. So I like all those things. I am pretty good at home improvement. I like sports. I drink beer.

Q How did you come up with the idea?

A We were brainstorming in January and looking for something that did not exist. And that was

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about the time of the Women's Expo, so we thought, 'Why not a Men's Expo?' There are only two others; one's a luxury event and the other's the Mad City Men's Expo in Madison. Ours is definitely more beer than fine Scotch. Ours is definitely for "guy guys." You can't go to another expo and see a wing-eating contest where guys have to wear Elvis suits.

Q How many different kinds of guys are there in the world?

A I think there are two kinds of guys. There are men, and there are guys. Guys drink beer, eat wings, and are sports enthusiasts who like tailgating. [Men] like high-end stuff, a top-of-the-line cigar and double malt whiskey. Men hire out; guys do it themselves.

Q Was there anything that you thought about doing that turned out to be too guy-like?

A Is there such a thing [chuckles]? Actually, we want to keep this PG, don't want it to be over-the-top. There won't be a pole dancer. The Miss Guy Expo contestants have to wear a tool belt and drink a beer and tell a joke and be funny. There will be women there, but it will be guys' girls.

Q So there actually are reasons for guys to bring their wives or girlfriends to this?

A Interestingly, we have as many female fans on our Facebook page as men. So there are a lot of

women out there who like this cross-section of things we're doing, women who want to get a taste of recreation and home improvement. Also, this is a great place for women to come and scope out guys. If they're looking for a handyman type, they can hang out by the home-improvement exhibit. And the lines to the ladies' room will be shorter than the men's; that never happens.

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