

Are Saudis Ready to Face the Thong?

by "Pandora"

You know how it is with smells and noises and pictures:

-- that whiff of boiled cabbage that takes you straight back to your old school days;

-- that haunting rendition of The Birdie Song that reminds you of a lost misspent youth;

-- that pitter patter of raindrops which paints a picture of Tim prancing about in his knickers during February's thunder storms whilst Renee looks on in awe, wondering how the Saudis would react to the sight of a thong as her abaya is whipped up by the frenzied gale force winds...

...which in turn reminds me of my first few weeks in the magic kingdom

when I was approached by Abdullah who, as I was to discover later on, is always on the lookout for yet another business 'opportunity'.

"You westerners," he confided in me one morning over a Starbucks regular cappuccino topped with lashings of whipped cream; "you're so open with your sexual taboos. You have your Anne Summers and your Soho and your district of red lights in Amsterdam. Here in Saudi we have nothing;" and he made a dismissive gesture

indicating, no doubt, that things were about to change big time for repressed Saudi hormones.

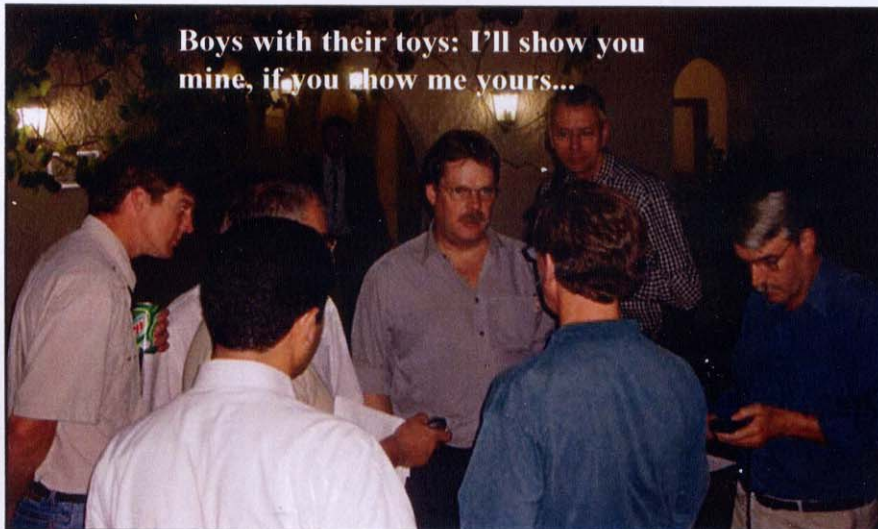
"What you say," he intoned in a low murmur "that we make some money together?" and he wiped the froth from

his moustachioed top lip onto the sleeve of his thobe with a practised carelessness that got me wondering what he was after.

What he was after was nothing less than cocking a snook at the religious order with the opening, no less, of a chain of Anne Summers look-alike-shops aimed fairly and squarely at the expat community.

After a very short discussion with Abdullah, who was by now rolling his eyes around in feverish delight, I was convinced that he'd got his marketing strategy all wrong. "Why expats, for heaven's sake? Why not the Saudis themselves?" (You could tell I was new in Kingdom.)

Patiently Abdullah explained the 'facts of (Saudi) life' to me. "La, la, la. You have it wrong. It's the expats who need these products...but no doubt the Saudis would get to hear of them and then you could sell them on at great profit, no?" and he threw me a sly wink of his greedy looking eyes.



I forget how the conversation went after that. Needless to say it came to nothing; yet when I heard about the cavorting of Tim and Renee in the desert it took me straight back to that Starbucks meeting.

For if you step back and take a long hard look at the pros and cons, at the profit and loss of such a

scheme, there is, perhaps, a way it could be made to work.

I can tell you are all agog - so in order, dear reader, not to tease you any further let me unveil my grand strategy here and now between the covers of this illustrious publication.



SANGLADDER

We all know about boys with toys. Come on girls, how many of you have heard that over-used expression 'I'll show you mine if you show me yours'? (No, no, not THAT! I'm talking here about GPS sets and how certain members of the RRR get a buzz from simply talking satellite elevations, waypoints and tracking distances.)

Wouldn't it be a great idea if whilst some of the boys played with their toys, those of us who don't go orgasmic at the prattle of navigation units could withdraw to the back of the room and set up our own 'Anne Summers'-type club?

Now I must confess at this point that never in my born puff have I actually visited one of Ms Summers' emporia, yet the principle has to be sound, especially within an organisation dedicated to the delights of off-roading.

Consider for a moment the similarities between the car-loving fraternity and those more red-blooded creatures who can turn their mind to 'other things'. We all know, for instance, that age old remedy for a broken fan belt. Simply ask the missus/girlfriend to remove her tights/stockings/pantyhose and get on with effecting a repair. (And if you're still up to it after all the grease and cussing and broken finger nails, there are other benefits which we don't need to go into here, though the back seat of a 4x4 does have more than its fair share of uses.)

What else could be employed? Ever used a vibrator to clear

sand out of those difficult to reach places? Or a condom to protect certain areas from dirt ingress? Where else would you search for a replacement red light? Or a flasher? Want a dirty video? No problem (have you ever seen the state of Andy's car?) Got a problem with yo angle of elevation? Need a retracting antenna? A cover for your gear knob? ... well you get the idea by now.

To me, the surprise is that it hasn't been thought of before. I mean, admittedly turnout on club nights is pretty high already, but imagine what it would do to overall membership if this new section were to be introduced. Arabian Homes wouldn't be able to cope with the numbers, let alone some of the overnighter camping trips.

Of course the practicalities would need sorting out. Who for instance would act as models for the saucy shamals, the alluring abayas and the titillating thongs? Answers on a postcard to the usual address please. *[How can a thong be titillating? Ed]*

Marketing? You can imagine the slogan, can't you. Next time you're out with Caprice or Cedric and you want your overnight barbie to go with a sizzle, stock up at the RRR club night.

But just remember ... you read it here first in Sandladder!

