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DISTRICT**Local beauties expose talents for Playboy scouts**By Guy Taylor
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The healthy blondes, brunettes and redheads of Playboy magazine, according to Hugh Hefner's people, are the quintessential "girls next door." Right ... if you live next door to Dow Corning or a L'Oreal distributorship and everybody in the neighborhood drives convertible BMWs.

Scouts from Mr. Hefner's conglomerate converged on the D.C. Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Northwest yesterday and they're there again today, looking for new talent and snapping off trial portfolios of local beauties hoping for, um, exposure.

The scouting sessions typically attract 200 or so and give the women

— who come in every shape, size and degree of modeling experience — a chance to explore their options with Playboy. Kind of like a career fair. Playboy gets some fresh faces to fill the glossy pages of its secondary publications, without the six- and seven-figure offers made to, say, some of the "Survivor" contestants or to Jennifer Flowers.

"We like to look at ourselves as a farm system of Playboy — but we're Triple A," said Jeff Cohen, executive editor and publisher of Playboy Special Editions. "It's a wonderful way for a young lady to introduce herself to Playboy."

The scouts take a series of snapshots of the women in lingerie or a two-piece bathing suit. The photos are evaluated and the chosen are

brought to Chicago or New York.

Stacy Natasha, 25, unveiled herself to the scouts in hopes of earning a contract — maybe scoring a trip to Beverly Hills and a visit to the Playboy Mansion.

"I would like to use this as a steppingstone into modeling," said Miss Natasha, a psychology major at Marymount University in Arlington.

It wasn't just about the money, though. Seems love — or love gone bad — also drew her to the tryout.

"I would also like to rub this in my ex-boyfriend's face, who works on the Hill," she said.

But she was philosophical about her future as a nude model. "Whether it works out or not," Miss Natasha said, "I intend to become a

psychiatrist."

The scouting sessions have yielded success stories for both parties.

"Three of this year's Playmates came from searches in other cities like the one going on at the Ritz," Mr. Cohen said.

A first-time Playmate, or center-fold model, makes about \$25,000, along with other such perks as expense-paid trips to swinging parties in the Playboy world.

This being Washington, the Playboy team was keeping its eyes open for a special allure.

"If we stumble upon a young lady that has a connection to a politician or a high-powered businessman, certainly that adds to the interest and charm and editorial mix behind her," Mr. Cohen said.

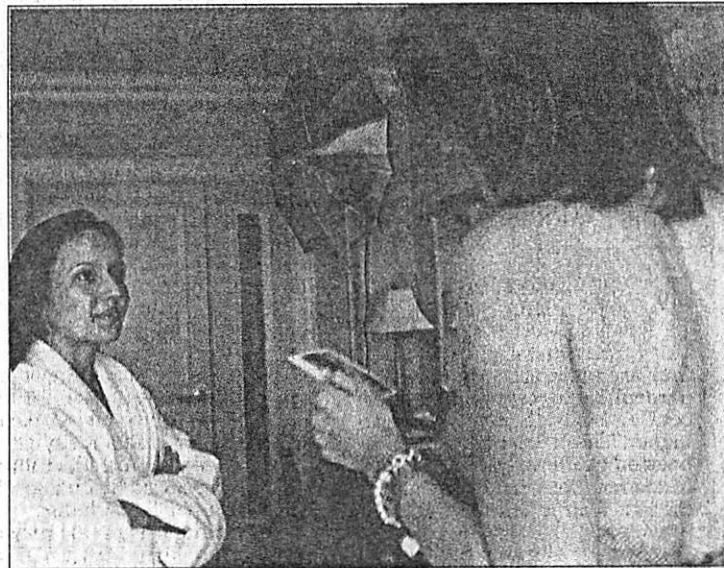


Photo by Vance Jacobs/The Washington Times

Playboy scout Jodi Vander Woude looks at a test picture of Kiki Warrick, 20, of Manassas, Va., during yesterday's casting call at the Ritz Carlton hotel.