

# Surge in sales of quiet sex toys

Louise Eccles, Consumer Affairs Editor

Sunday February 21 2021, 12.01am, The Sunday Times



From left: Lora DiCarlo, Cara Delevingne and a Goop wand vibrator

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Deprived of the freedom to go on dates and have spontaneous sexual encounters, singletons appear to have taken matters into their own hands. Figures suggest a rise in sales of erotic fiction and high-end sex toys, particularly among women in their twenties.

The retailer Ann Summers said sales of premium sex toys, priced at £100 or more, were up 160 per cent between November and mid-February compared with the same period a year earlier. Sales tripled year-on-year in the first lockdown last spring.

Sales of the quietest vibrator, the Whisper Rabbit, are up by 60 per cent compared with a year ago, which Ann Summers attributed to people wishing to be discreet while living and working in close proximity to flatmates, or grown-up children who have had to move back in with their parents during lockdown.

Experts said many people were embracing “sexual wellness” products as a form of self-care to help them through a long winter. Couples are also said to have become more adventurous in the bedroom, as they spend more time together.

The industry has responded with new brands of “sex tech”, including from celebrities. In November, the British model and actress Cara Delevingne became a co-owner and creative adviser of Lora DiCarlo, whose products include a “premium robotic massager” costing £270.

The same month, Dakota Johnson, the actress who starred in the film adaptation of erotic romance novel *Fifty Shades of Grey*, became an investor and creative director in high-end sex-toy brand Maude, which sells sculpture-like toys and organic lubricants. In October, the singer [Lily Allen collaborated with German brand Womanizer](#) to design her own £89 stimulator, saying women should talk about their sexuality “frequently, and without shame or guilt”.

They follow the actress Gwyneth Paltrow, whose health brand Goop sells a range of intimacy products including a £110 double-sided wand vibrator. It is described on Goop's website as “a thing of beauty on a nightstand”.

There has also been a revival of erotic fiction and audiobooks, accelerated by the success of *Bridgerton*, a television adaptation of Julia Quinn's sensual novels.

Lickerish Library, an online subscription service that publishes erotic short stories by women, was launched in October. Founder Tara Fischer said the “sophisticated” stories were an alternative to “misogynistic pornography devoid of any emotion”.

She added: “We thought our demographic would be women aged 30 upwards, but, rather thrillingly, we're reaching lots of people in their twenties.”

Alexandra Dunhill, great-granddaughter of Sir Alfred Dunhill, founder of the menswear label, is launching a £48 lubricant and £52 massage oil range, After Dusk, under her Lady A brand. It contains CBD or cannabidiol, derived from the cannabis plant but without its psychoactive properties.

Dunhill said: “Your sex life is all part of the circle of a balanced life, so, as a wellness brand, if we didn't offer these products it would feel like a missing link.”

According to a recent survey by Lovehoney, a British website that sells erotic products, young people's sex lives have been disrupted the most, with those aged 18-34 experiencing a 32 per cent decline in sexual activity.

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