

The Little Bra Company Debuts

Who: The Little Bra Company

What: Fashion show and launch party

Where: Smashbox Studios, Culver City, Calif.

When: May 6

The scene: A petite cup size doesn't have to mean a flat sexy sizzle, according to The Little Bra Company's founders, Amy Huang and Emily Lau. The co-founders introduced their lingerie line, which was designed to give a sexy boost to women that are size 32A to 36B.

Lau, who used to work as a television producer on projects for the **History Channel** and the **Discovery Channel**, said the only place she could find lingerie that fit her small size was in Asia.

"I've always been small-busted, so I was always looking for ways to give myself some cleavage, and I never felt like all the bras I found here [in the United States] fit," said Lau.

Huang, who works as the director of strategic planning for Smashbox, added that while the fit of Asian bras was right, "the styles were not quite as sexy."

The Little Bra Company bowed four styles at its fashion show, each with corresponding makeup looks in conjunction with Smashbox cosmetics and **Sephora**. After curvy burlesque dancers set a sultry mood, the show kicked off with a model strutting in the smooth, nude "Angela" bra and accessorized like the biblical Eve, with a red apple in hand and leafy vines wrapped around her arms. Ladies in the rose-and-mocha-colored lace "Ethel" bra and matching panties were done up with feather-trimmed umbrellas and Victorian hats. The pure, demure embroidered "Victoria" bra was modeled by brides wearing white elbow-length gloves and tulle trains. The show closed on a vampy note with the deep-plunge "Lucia" bra. The models sported Bettie Page haircuts and accessorized the black lace bra with black fishnet stockings, platform shoes and kinky whips.

The bras retail from \$50 to \$60 and have been sold to **Lula Lu** in San Mateo, Calif.—a lingerie store specializing in petite sizes—and **Tracey Ross** in Los Angeles.—*Rhea Cortado*



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Lingerie & Innerwear

Lingerie Entrepreneurs Jump In to Address a Petite-Size Market

By Rhea Cortado
 ASSOCIATE EDITOR



A LITTLE LACE: The Little Bra Co. offers fashionable push-up bras for smaller-frame women.

...Emily Lau, a former TV producer for The History Channel and the Discovery Channel, ended her quest for the perfect petite push-up bra with the launch of her line, The Little Bra Co., last March. ...

Lingerie retailers who specialize in fitting bras for all sizes agree that there are not as many options for the petite-size customer. "I have a lot of customers who are size 28 [band] and they have a really hard time," said Yolaida Duran, co-owner of the 10-year-old lingerie shop Alla Prima in San Francisco. "There aren't very many manufacturers who make a size 28." Alla Prima stocks high-end European brands such as La Perla, Andres Sarda, Eres, Aubade and Chantelle.

Duran credited the increased attention to and awareness of a wider variety of bra fits and sizes to talk-show host Oprah Winfrey's well-remembered show about finding the perfect-fitting bra. "Those of us who had been for years asking for smaller band sizes or larger cup sizes or different kinds of bras finally got what we wanted because [the "Oprah" show] was such a phenomenon that everyone had to pay attention," Duran said. "Manufacturers saw the great need and opportunity to increase their sales."

It is as difficult to fit extremely petite women as it is to fit extremely plus-size women, Duran said, but manufacturers have been slower to respond to petite-size needs.

"They tend to be the manufacturers of larger cups that are responding to the question of fit because people still don't think of small cups as having a problem with fit," Duran said. "The assumption is, 'You're small. You're not going to spend as much money on a bra because you don't need a

bra.' Maybe that's a segment of the population that's sort of left behind a little bit."

Connie Esposito's store, A Perfect Fit Fine Lingerie in Tustin, Calif., was known for her extensive size offerings "all the way up to Ks." She started stocking petite-size lingerie, including styles from The Little Bra Co., after several customer requests for smaller

sizes. "The Little Bra Co. is the first line to go out the door faster than anyone," said Esposito, who added that smaller sizes account for "maybe a quarter of my business." Esposito said

The Little Bra Co.'s bras are successful because they don't gap, which is a common problem when fitting smaller sizes.

Lau, who developed The Little Bra Co.'s lightly padded push-up style, elaborated on the engineering: "The back is cut smaller. The cups are closer together to get more cleavage for a smaller-proportion woman." Fashion was as important to Lau as the fit. Styles include a sexy red lace "Lucia" plunge style and a mocha lace "Ethel" bra. "I could find bras that fit, but they weren't very attractive. I wanted colors, a little bit of lace," said Lau, whose company is based in Los Angeles' Toluca Lake neighborhood.