

Does Underwear Deserve A National Day? We Ask The Guy Who Started It

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From front door to backstage all you saw were naked boys. They were dancing on stage, sauntering through the crowd, and cheekily flirting with girls and boys. This wasn't a scene from a strip club or a night at with the Chippendales, but something all together wholesome: the celebration for National Underwear Day.

Ever heard of it?

The annual celebration, which just reached its sixth year on August 5th, is the brainchild of Michael Kleinmann. Kleinmann, 32, is the entrepreneur who launched Freshpair.com a site which sells - you guessed it- fresh pairs of boxers, briefs and thongs. Part promotional vehicle, part public service announcement, the day serves as reminder for the outside world to celebrate what lies beneath. If the laundry list of amazing brands who sponsor the event - from Champion to 2xist to Sean John - doesn't move you, then perhaps the presence of taut and toned models will. It certainly stirred the crowd of celebrities and reporters who turned up to cover the fashion show which accompanies National Underwear day at E-Space in Time Square. Before the show, I caught up with Kleinmann for an intimate Q&A.

It's less than 24 hours before the sixth annual National Underwear Day, how are you feeling?

I am feeling excited! National Underwear Day is the best day of the year! I've got a fresh pair of underwear picked out for the occasion.

There's been a lot of hype surrounding this one, from your celeb hosts to the special "secret guest," what separates this years events from previous ones?

After 5 years, we decided to shake things up and bring the event indoors to accommodate the growing number of National Underwear Day enthusiasts. As the event has grown, it has really become more about the fashions, so we are putting on 10 runway shows with brands like Diesel, Sean John, Wacoal, Le Mystere, 2(x)ist, DKNY, Unico and more. We think this year will be the best year yet. The festivities will be hosted by the beautiful actress and model Lydia Hearst.

As the event grows and grows do you worry that the buzz might be surpassing the message?

Even as the event grows, the message continues to be about celebrating underwear.

What exactly is the underlying mission/purpose of this day/event?

Freshpair.com created the event to bring attention to the first thing you put on and the last thing you take off.

Is there a charity or awareness arm to National Underwear Day?

We work with a variety of charities through our newly launch charitable arm of freshpair.com, "Freshpair, Freshstart" program. You have a very healthy group of sponsors lined up, is this event essentially to drum up publicity - and sales - for their business? The intimate apparel industry has been experiencing major growth over the past few years, and the event helps bring more attention to the industry, as well as the individual sponsors. Not to mention it's a fun excuse to mention our "unmentionables."

Aside from the New York City area, how do you take your message all over America?

We use the Internet to spread the word about National Underwear Day. Even if you don't live in New York, people can still participate.

Any plans to take this international?

You never know :). Brazil seems to have established a day dedicated to underwear as well - they just celebrated National Underwear Day this May. So its catching on!

Where do you see this event/organization in the next six years?

We plan to keep working on growing Freshpair.com and National Underwear Day! We are already working on plans for next year's event. As hard as it is to believe, it's going to top this year!

Honestly, do you think this event is more style or substance?

The event is both style and substance.

Finally, after six years in this position, where do you draw your passion and inspiration to go on? I love going to work every day, working with amazing people, and working in a fun industry. Selling online is like the wild west of retail, and its so much fun! At 32, I never thought I'd be President of an intimate apparel company!