

people

Matchmaking Across Miles and Megabytes

By JASON INOCENCIO

As a new decade begins, one might think that with all of this new-fangled technology, it would be easier to find a date. After all, the arrival of cell-phones, the Internet, Facebook, and Twitter should lead to myriad ways to find and meet interesting people. The problem that a lot of people face is when trying to look for a specific type of mate. Consider the dilemma by thousands of Caucasian males around the world who've developed a crush on Asian women. They aren't as lucky as Filipinos who are surrounded by the beauty of the Filipina the moment they're born.

Enter Nils Rognerud. A 56-year-old transplant from Oslo, Norway, Nils has long been attracted to women from this part of the globe. "I was just following my own passion," he states matter-of-factly. "I've dated a lot of girls, but was always more attracted to Asians." Once married to a Filipina for seven years and a father of three, Nils also used to work in the banking industry and was making a decent living. Despite all this, he felt an emptiness in his life. After quitting his old job and doing a bit of travelling, he noticed that a lot of Western males like him wanted to meet women from Asia.

Having previous experience in building websites, Nils took a big paycut and built the website meetasianbabes.com, launching it on a small scale in August 2008. In the span of one year, the website has taken off and become a hub for men to meet the Asian woman of their dreams.

The Clientele

Nils shares that among the males who frequent meetasianbabes.com, their age range is usually between 30 to 60 years of age. Americans, Canadians, Australians, and British men, along with some other Europeans, are the most frequent visitors. On the female side, they tend to be 20 to 30 years old and come from the Philippines, Thailand and (more recently) China.

One thing that Nils wants to stress about the website is this: it's not about selling sex. "We are way, way different from that," Nils states. "We are not a marriage agency, but neither are we a sex website." Nils defines meetasianbabes.com as: "A social website for romance or for lovers."

From the girls' point of view, he's noticed that some "are just looking for a better material life, and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. But some are

looking for real love and they're more serious when they sign up with us." Whether it is just meeting someone with certain physical attributes, looking for companionship, or finding the one person to complete their lives, Nils has witnessed many stories in one form or another since the website went online.

Finding Love in Asia

Nils shared a story of a man from California who found himself penniless after an ugly divorce. His ex-wife and her attorney had frozen his bank accounts and made it almost impossible for him to pay his bills and live a normal life. This was on top of the emotional trauma that the breakup entailed. For two years he had been fighting his ex-wife in the US legal system, and when it was all said and done, he had no car, no house and no kids to see every morning. He was financially and emotionally destroyed. He then accidentally came across meetasianbabes.com. Initially skeptical on the veracity of the girls' looks, he thought they were all just hired models. He still gave it a shot and sent off a few emails through the site's engine. To his surprise, he almost immediately received a large number of replies. In contrast, most US-based dating websites take ages to generate responses. Through meetasianbabes.com, he traveled to Shenzhen, China and met one of the girls face-to-face. She was just as good looking as her photos as no Photoshop trickery was used.

Unfortunately, as great and exciting as that first meeting was, this particular relationship fizzled out. Still, the good "hook-ups" have outweighed the bad by a wide margin and Nils is living proof of this. "I've dated a lot of women through meetasianbabes.com," he shares matter-of-factly. "Currently, I'm not looking for a steady girlfriend or a wife. I'm just enjoying the many warm friendships and the hospitality I've received from the Filipino people... until I find Miss Right."

Words of Warning

There are, of course, cautionary tales with any service that facilitates dating. Nils warns that he doesn't advise anyone to meet based on photos alone. "It costs only about Php20 in the Philippines for a girl to rent an Internet computer with a webcam to verify her identity and see if



she looks the same as in her photos."

Another dilemma occurs when certain unscrupulous elements use the website to cheat people out of money. "We had a female from Thailand who was scammed by someone claiming to be British," Nils says. "The Brit claimed that he sent an expensive gift via a non-existent delivery company. When the package arrived in Thailand, the Thai girl was sent an email that she must pay for import fees of about USD 500 to take delivery of the parcel." Luckily, she was smart enough to refuse, but the man started threatening her. Nils adds that, "It turned very scary, but no harm was done to our dating site member."

Growing by Leaps and Bounds

Despite these hiccups, meetasianbabes.com has become a success mainly through Nils' efforts. "We've been doing a lot of marketing and it has increased our site's visibility so it's no accident that we've grown so quickly," Nils noted, adding that "we get about 60,000 hits a day and 2 million hits a month. It just keeps growing every month." Competitors do exist, and Nils says "they're quite good, but we have more traffic than all of them combined."

"Our site is a simple and efficient way to find a mate for love and romance across countries," Nils shares. "It is up to the members if they want to structure the romantic relationship, be it something leading to marriage, just a fling, or something in between."

The reviews from members have been quite positive, so much so that some have requested that their memberships be cancelled. Why? "Because they found their soulmate through the site," Nils says proudly.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email Nils Rognerud at nils@meetasianbabes.com and he'll be glad to address your queries.

Thai Regional Head Visits New Furniture Showroom

Recently, Infinite Quality Designs Center, Inc. (IQDCI) inaugurated its newly renovated 3-storey showroom showcasing contemporary and stylish residential and commercial furniture. IQDCI is a holding company which owns and operates IDO, IDO Contracts and Designers World Trade Center. On hand at the ribbon cutting ceremony was Vitit Tangtulanot, dealer development manager for the Asia Pacific region of Rockworth, together with Bonifacio Co, president of IQDCI and PIID president Arlen De Guzman, UAP, FPIID. Also present were celebrity chefs Jacky Po and Aileen Anastacio.

Rockworth is the newest line of office systems furniture carried by Designers World Trade Center. Rockworth, made in Thailand, is one of Asia's leading manufacturer of high quality office furniture. Established since 1972 to meet the emerging demands of companies in need of specialist design and superior quality in office furniture, the name has since become recognized and respected throughout the region, famous for everything from design concepts to after-sales service. All Rockworth products have been tested and approved to ANSI:BIFMA Safety and ISTA Performance Standards issued by the American National Standards Institute. The company now has more than 700 dedicated employees and serves clients through a global network of authorized dealers in 22 countries.

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