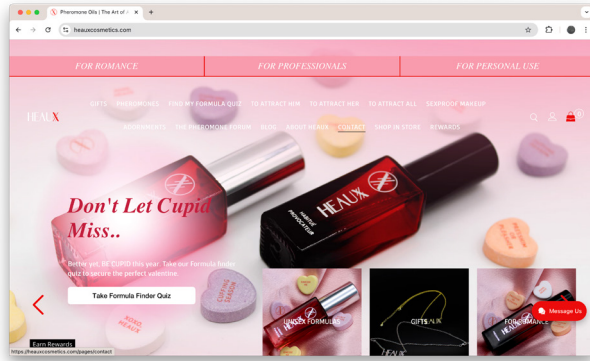




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<https://heauxcosmetics.com/>

HEAUX COSMETICS AND THE WEAPONS OF MASS SEDUCTION

“I wore this a few times with my man and he went nuts,” the influencer @stalkersarah tells her 179.4K TikTok followers.¹ She’s advising them to purchase a spray-on product from the viral beauty brand Heaux Cosmetics. “I went to a bar and everybody was touching me, everybody was grabbing me... everybody was complimenting my dress, complimenting the way I looked,” @makeupjackyluvv, reviewing the same product, tells the camera.² In another TikTok review from makeup artist and beauty influencer @joellephillips, she recounts a story in which a man she encounters at the mall professes his love for her within just three hours of meeting.³ In another, @jaedashlin tells her followers about a female worker in a movie theatre who “was stumbling over her words to tell me how pretty I was.”⁴

These women did nothing to change their outward appearance on the days they received such special attention. Nor did they cast any spells. All four were wearing Heaux Cosmetics’ pheromone concentrate *Habitué Provocateur*. The product comes






as a spray-on or roll-on liquid concocted specifically to attract male sexual attention. Although it is worn like a perfume, it is scentless aside from the acerbic aroma of an alcohol base which evaporates after touching the skin. The compound, however, is meant to trigger a subconscious response when inhaled.

The two active ingredients in Habitué Provocateur are copulins and Androstenol – copulins being a type of molecule that is released when ovulating, and Androstenol is found in the saliva, sweat, semen and piss of people with testes. It's also a chemical which is meant to make people horny by activating the Hypothalamus, a part of the brain that stimulates the reproductive hormones. Pigs have Androstenol in them too, and it is the active ingredient of Boarmate, a spray that helps farmers determine when sows are ready for artificial insemination.

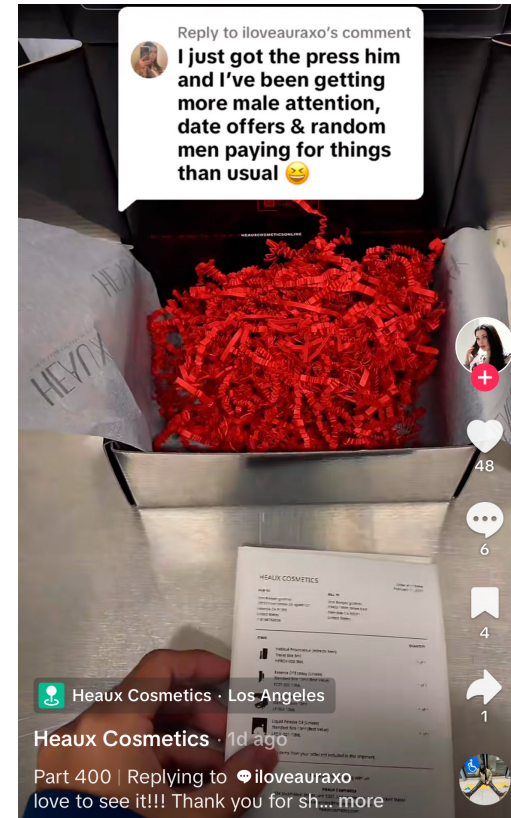
Heaux Cosmetics was founded in 2019 by the influencer and former sex worker Lydia Dupra, aka The Heaux Mentor. Dupra, whose government name is Alexandra Draco, was born on Long Island, New York State. She's now 34 years old and lives

in a penthouse in downtown LA with three French bulldogs, one of whom is called Money. She has a 102-year-old bonsai tree she cares for and used to have a pet baby shark. She also paints landscapes and cooks Korean food, hobbies she shares frequently with her 79.5k followers as if they are her close, trusted friends. Dupra originally built her online following by providing mentoring and advice to sex workers online, answering questions and helping them build their businesses via her YouTube channel and online classes. She also authored seven books between 2016 and 2017, titled *The Complete Guide to Escorting*, a series aimed at escorts to help demystify the industry and maximise their earnings.






TikTok review of Heaux Cosmetics reposted by @heauxcosmeticsonline



@theheauxmentorofficial replies to a review on TikTok




Back in 2019, Heaux Cosmetics launched with products marketed at sex workers, positioning the company as part of her wider mentoring practice. The first set of ten products were aimed specifically at escorts. “It’s really nice to be able to offer our community something that we all need,” she tells the camera in a YouTube video, “I’m out here making videos, living the lifestyle [for] what I’m telling you this is for.”⁵ Amongst the 10 debut products was a non-sticky plumping lip gloss that freshens your breath, a vitamin E lip balm for “the sex organ of the face” and a lightweight, overnight “sex proof” makeup setting spray.

The most mysterious product, however, was Liquid Finesse, a tiny, unassuming cylindrical spray bottle of clear liquid. Filled with the molecule oxytocin (a peptide hormone that is excreted out of humans after sex and sometimes called the “love” or “cuddle” hormone) the spray was marketed as a way to get the most out of your clients. It is meant to make the person who smells it feel emotionally closer to the wearer, thus creating a shortcut to earning their trust and affection. This was part of a selection of

products she initially dubbed the “secret weapons” then later, as the line of pheromone sprays grew, “weapons of mass seduction.”

The company now boast a total of five pheromone products, including Liquid Finesse and Habitué Provocateur, plus PleasHER, a formula containing androstenone, androstenol and androstadienone that is supposed to make the wearer attractive to women;⁶ PressHIM containing vasopressin, a molecule that men supposedly release when they are in love; and Essence of Ecstasy, a mix of oxytocin and androstenol designed to boost the wearer’s mood. Whilst the products are targeted primarily at sex workers, the company also markets the scents as wellness products (it’s believed that oxytocin can relieve stress and anxiety), as well as having uses in non-sex work working environments. Liquid Finesse, for example, can “make interactions with customers and co workers [sic] go smoother.”⁷

Now no longer escorting, Dupra considers herself an entrepreneur who has built her brand from the ground up. She wears with pride all the semiotics of contemporary American startup



success: pinned on her personal Instagram account, @theheauxmentor, is a video of her shooting an AR15 at an outdoor shooting range. She regularly posts videos from her penthouse with its spectacular views over downtown LA and enjoys trading memecoins while recovering from plastic surgery. “I answer to God only,” her bio reads.

Dupra’s relationship with God is a relatively recent one. In April 2023, after 18 years of performing witchcraft, she became a born again Christian. In a YouTube video, she tells her viewers that when she began to put her faith in God, her personal troubles subsided. Like Mary Magdalene herself, one month after finding her faith she was completely sober, with eating disorders and substance abuse issues miraculously gone. “What he does is he restores people and he heals and I didn’t have to cast a protection circle first,” she tells her YouTube subscribers, “witchcraft, the best thing it’s for is material success...and prayer is free. God doesn’t ask you for things in exchange.”⁸



@theheauxmentorofficial tends to her Bonsai tree in her penthouse overlooking downtown LA




Yet, for all her piety now, the witchcraft she practised back in 2019 seems to have benefitted her greatly. Heaux Cosmetics appears to have been a financial success. According to an Instagram story posted by Dupra's former business partner and beauty influencer @pilarteespoon, by 2022 the company was turning just over \$180,000.00 per month and in July 2024, Heaux Cosmetics opened their first bricks and mortar shop in downtown LA.⁹

SNAKE OIL

Pheromones are chemical compounds found in living organisms that are used to communicate non-verbally. They work by sending out chemical signals which trigger a biological response from another member of the same species. Some species use their sense of smell to detect them. Others, such as mice, use a specially developed sense called the vomeronasal organ (VNO).¹⁰ The first ever pheromone identified was *bombykol*, the sex pheromone found in female silk moths. Moth pheromones are now widely used to attract male pantry and clothes moths to a sticky, deathly trap. Identified by German biochemist Adolf Butendandt and his team

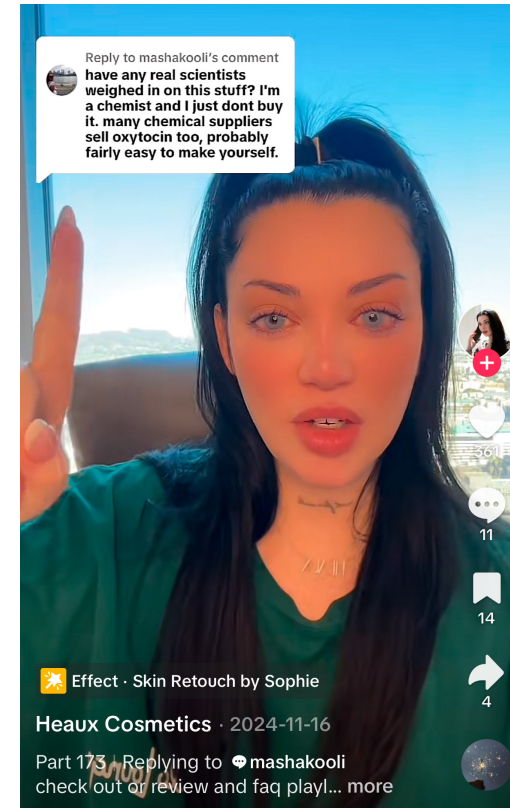
in 1959, the same year scientists Peter Karlson and Martin Lüscher named these newly identified molecular compounds pheromones, from the Greek *pherein* (to transfer) and *hormōn* (to excite).¹¹

In 1981, Jovan released the first human pheromone perfume, 'Andron for Men', just as the scientific and academic discourse around human pheromones was beginning to heat up. Just over a decade later, a new company called EROX Corporation launched a line of human pheromone scents. Their first two pheromone products debuted in 1993, named 'Realm Cologne for Men' and 'Realm Eau de Toilette for Women'. Each contained the molecules androstadienone and estratetraenol, respectively. In 1991, before patenting the use of these chemicals in commercial perfumes, EROX Corporation sponsored a conference at which a paper was presented arguing that these two compounds were human sex pheromones. The paper's lead author had a stake in EROX, thus a vested interest in proving them to be genuine human pheromones and the chemicals used in the experiments were, not coincidentally, provided by EROX to test.¹² In short, EROX sponsored the testing of their own products




in order to support the veracity of the product itself, nullifying any generally accepted scientific standards of ethics.

Yet, considering that humans are also living organisms, the existence of human pheromones is highly likely. What those pheromones are and how they affect us, however, is up for debate. Dr. Tristram Wyatt, a zoologist at the University of Oxford who specialises in researching the evolution of pheromones and animal behaviour, is doubtful that we have yet identified a genuine human sex pheromone.¹³ The four molecules that have previously been identified as human pheromones – androstenone, androstenol, androstadienone and estratetraenol – have not been tested particularly rigorously by scientists in comparison to the tests conducted on nonhuman species' pheromone production. Studies have found many inconclusive or contradictory findings and it's unlikely that humans react to pheromone signals in the same way as moths.¹⁴



@theheauxmentorofficial replies
to a comment on TikTok



Even if the science behind Heaux Cosmetics' products is dubious, as we've seen, there are many TikTok reviews that attest to their power. There are, however, relatively frequent accounts of the product's ineffectiveness. In 2023, a Reddit user posted a review of Heaux Cosmetics on r/fragrance, stating none of the products had worked. Responses were mixed. "Might be more ,hoax' cosmetics," one person responded, "Return the product and get your money back from these scams," replied another. Some, whilst sharing links to houseofpheromones.com, identified the problem not in the selling of spurious human pheromones but the concentration in the product itself.¹⁵


Others, however, did attest to their effectiveness. One person noticed she was getting more male attention than usual. "I do believe it does work a bit if anything. I didn't change anything up besides me using the pheromone perfume," they write. "of course men/women won't act like how they do in cartoons or movies or ads," suggests another, "pheromones mix with YOUR scent so it acts as a boost instead." It's hard to deduce whether they actually work or not. There is space, however, to argue


that it doesn't matter. Perhaps the molecules themselves do nothing chemically to the intended victim, but that doesn't mean they do nothing at all.

VIBES AND BODIES

"If you have a superpower, wouldn't you want it to be more powerful?" Julia Fox asks Dupra rhetorically on an episode of her podcast, *Forbidden Fruits*. Here, Fox is referring to her outsized popularity with men. "I feel like it's something that everyone should experience just to see if it could improve your quality of life, right?" Dupra replies. "Our smallest bottle of Liquid Finesse is \$30 – it's like, why not?" As the theorist Sara Ahmed writes, what we feel when we walk into a room "depends on the angle of our arrival".¹⁶ Heaux Cosmetics offers a shortcut to finding the perfect angle every time.

Synthesised liquid pheromones give a physical presence to something that we are supposed to feel (confident, sexy) and others are meant to feel towards us (attraction, closeness), thus they are positioned as affect made material. Affect is something that exists between objects (or 'bodies' in





affect theory speak). It is “the messiness of the experiential, the unfolding of bodies into worlds and the drama of contingency,” or, “how we are touched by what we are near.”¹⁷ Affect, writes Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, is both a state of relation as well as the force of these relations.¹⁸ It is a form of sensory experience which is explicitly defined by the non-physical nature of its presence. In simpler terms, affect is what we might in colloquial language call “vibes”.¹⁹

Affected objects usually do not tend to signal how they will engage in affecting another, yet liquid pheromones are singular: they do as they say on the box. When we spray on a pheromone concentrate, we are given a chance to dictate the conditions of our own affectual presence. Without changing anything physical, mental or otherwise, we are given control over our vibes, thus power over other people’s emotions. Luxury marketing is designed to make the consumer subconsciously believe their life will be improved after the purchase of a new possession. Heaux Cosmetics, however, makes no secret that the product is meant to change the consumer’s life. What it changes for the person, though,

is not precisely what one might expect. It would be all too easy to consider Heaux Cosmetics’ liquid pheromones simply as a tool to help us get laid. There is something else at work.

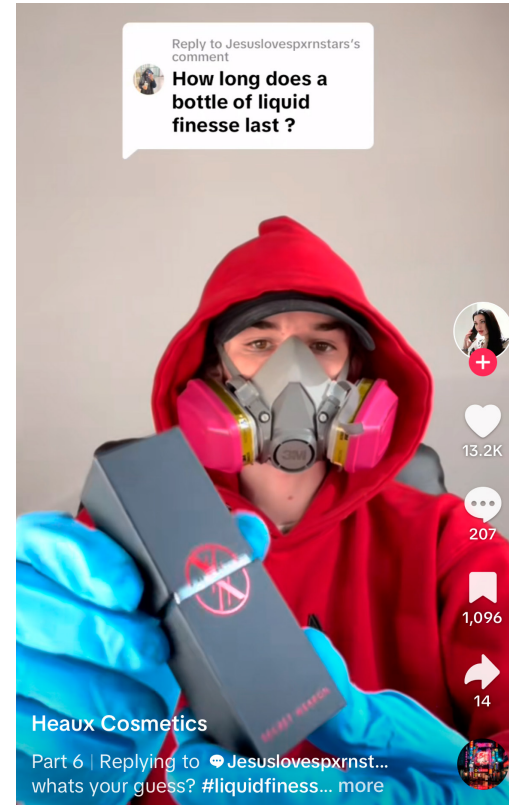
THE AESTHETICS OF HEAUX

On Instagram Dupra often emphasises that these liquids are the source of potential financial growth, insisting that the products “pay for themselves” via the vast amount of free gifts that wearers will receive.²⁰ The messaging is not at all subliminal: a package sold by Heaux Cosmetics containing Liquid Finesse and Essence of Ecstasy is titled the ‘CEO Secrets Kit’ which, the website description insists, might be considered “a tax write off as a business expense!”²¹ Accounts of economically beneficial encounters pepper the online discourse around the brand. Wearing one of their products, someone may have their entire evening paid for by a stranger, a taxi driver might find he is “attracting success” and a single mother could manage to convince a man to buy her a house after just two short months of dating.²² For the customer of Heaux Cosmetics, hustling is rendered miraculously easy.




@sheraseven reviews liquid pheromones on TikTok, reposted by @heauxcosmeticsonline

Whilst perfume marketing typically sells a fantasy, Dupra is selling something considerably more reliable. Heaux Cosmetics' products are positioned as something closer to medicine than makeup. Yet like medicine, they are unstable: use too much of the liquid and you will experience adverse reactions. A few too many sprays may induce "nausea, headaches, dizziness and aggression."²³ Doubling down on the 'scientific' nature of the products, Dupra will often refer to her employees as 'chemists' and, like many contemporary beauty and wellness brands, the semiotics of the lab are evoked in Heaux Cosmetics' branding. Dupra's lab is unique, though. These chemists aren't pictured wearing white coats and safety glasses, but hazmat suits. In a TikTok video, a product tester appears wearing a respirator worthy of Walter White.²⁴ Where most health and wellness brands tend to use the colour palette of the science laboratory (shiny, bright whites, pastels and silver) Heaux Cosmetics uses tones more readily found in a strip club: deep black, gunmetal grey and bright, LED red.



@theheauxmentor's chemists



There is an undercurrent of lawlessness to Lydia Dupra's operation, an espionage of the senses. Their tagline "weapons of mass seduction" alludes to the product's insurgent edge. Like weapons of mass *destruction*, Heaux's liquid pheromones threaten the order of things. Through the lens (or in the pheromone haze) of Heaux Cosmetics, we are asked to reevaluate the type of labour these workers perform. The exploited becomes the exploiter. The escort now has agency over how she is treated by a client; the single mother now has dominance over the men that alienate her labour of care; a gig worker is hacking the system. When wearing a pheromone concentrate, precarious working situations are turned into sites of opportunity; men are vessels ready and willing to do a woman's bidding. Wearers of Heaux Cosmetics have found a way to subvert the conditions of their labour and surreptitiously come out on top.


Lydia Dupra is the epitome of this new Heaux. Her lifestyle (the penthouse, the pedigree dogs and the ancient, priceless bonsai tree) is the best advertisement for her products. Dupra's life is an example of what you can become if you buy Heaux

Cosmetics: heaux-ing your way to the top, if you will. Comments like "I aspire to be like you ❤️🥰" and "grateful for you and your shoppe! thank you so much. you are truly helping people 🥰💜👉" are commonly seen on her Instagram posts. She has crafted this version of herself with care, with videos posted on her Instagram and TikTok showing off the best, most envy-inducing parts of her lifestyle.²⁵

Pinned to her Instagram page is a video taken just before the opening of her store, in which Dupra is filmed giving a teary-eyed speech to her employees:

*If there's any feeling I could really convey today it's just that hoes...I just wanna make them feel normal. Even if it's just for one day, they can just feel appreciated, that's what it's all for...As long as they feel good and human, this is a success...it's for mental health, it's for moving us forward in society and really trying to advance our community.*²⁶

"I don't think many people ever see this side of you," one comment on the video reads. "The fact you're doing this with a purpose behind it shows you're meant to be successful instead of chasing money



and greed first.” Another, more earnest comment reads, “I can’t tell you how many times I felt down because of my past and I still get put down to this day so this means a LOT 💖👏👏.”

For many, Dupra is an inspiration – and rightly so. She has built a business from very little that allows her to sustain a lavish lifestyle. Heaux Cosmetics, whether it works or not, whether Lydia Dupra’s lifestyle is genuine, is a rupture, or a puncture in the fabric of contemporary American political reality. Lydia Dupra represents the American Dream, yet it’s not the new Alex Clark, traditional values and MAHA conservatism of the mid-2020s. Frankly, it’s the opposite. Heaux Cosmetics is a beauty brand from below.

While their products won’t make you prettier, they’ll give you something harder won. The logo itself, a large red ‘X’ wrapped in a circle, also alludes to the true aim of these cosmetics. Resembling the viewfinder of a sniper rifle, the Heaux logo will help you hit your mark.

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- 11 Ibid.
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- 14 Ibid.
- 15 @imnhr, *Heaux cosmetics*, <https://www.reddit.com/r/fragrance/comments/14zf4sm/heaux_cosmetics/> [accessed 3 February 2025].
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