

Dangerous Curves!

By Cathleen Laporte



Gwendolyn DeVoe, a former plus-size model and the CEO of DeVoe Signatur' Events, is the mastermind behind a new phenomenon storming the cities of the United States, a plus-size runway fashion tour entitled, "Dangerous Curves...The Tour—Hips, Heels & Curves!"

The mission of DeVoe Signatur' Events is to empower plus-size women through the production of celebratory events such as that of the Dangerous Curves Tour,

and workshops and seminars addressing curvy lifestyle issues, health & fitness, career development, fashion, beauty, and style for the full-figured woman. Along with celebrity guest hosts, "Dangerous Curves...the Tour—Hips, Heels & Curves!" will journey across the nation promoting and advocating positive body imagery, self-confidence, and the celebration of one's curves. Participating designers in the runway fashion tour have included: Qristyl Designs, Ashley Stewart, Franklin Rowe, Lawrence H. Levens Millinery, Her Game 2, Tuesday Conner, Hy Fishman Furs, Mad! Couture, Michi Designer Knitwear, Big Girls United, Voluptuous Woman Boutique, and Richard Metzger.

Despite 70% of average women wearing size 12 or above, their needs are grossly ignored by mainstream fashion designers and manufacturers. Women with curves are speaking out and demanding equal opportunity in high-end fashion. DeVoe Signatur' Events has heard their cry and has made it a mission to bring "Dangerous Curves...The Tour" to as many cities throughout the United States as possible. They will be making stops in Miami, FL, Nashville, TN, Philadelphia, PA, Richmond, VA and Atlanta, GA during 2004-2005.

DeVoe Signatur' Events recently presented an event where the guests were treated to a wonderful showcase of plus size designer clothing worn by a diverse mix of plus size models. The event's tropical theme, Carnival, drew a sold-out audience at the Capitol Skyline Hotel in Washington, DC. After the runway show, guests were invited to shop the racks of designer clothing and products—all geared towards the plus size consumer—at "Hips, Heels & Curves"—the tour's signature sample sale.

Gwendolyn DeVoe has succeeded in uniting plus-size model training, development, and management and has also been a long time advocate and supporter of increasing awareness of fuller figures on fashion runways. In 1998, she successfully opened the Plus Academy, one of New York's first model training and beauty programs for the plus-size woman. Always will-

ing to share the gift of empowerment with women of size, she is a highly sought after motivational speaker on the topics of body image, plus modeling, and fashion consultation. Her television appearances include the nationally-syndicated Ricki Lake Show, Fox 5's Good Day New York morning show, and New York 1 News. Gwendolyn DeVoe is a true pioneer of the new millennium for plus-size woman and the "Curvy Sisterhood."

Plus-size women are rising up and demanding that their voices be heard and that their curves be seen, and more designers are beginning to take notice thanks to the efforts of DeVoe Signatur' Events. The Black Fashion Designers Association, Inc. applauds the work of Gwendolyn DeVoe and her commitment towards the empowerment of plus-size women and the advancement of plus-size models onto the runways. Keep up the great work!

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