

Divine Creation

Divine 9 Lube Re-enters Adult Market With Health Focus

BY ALEX GLASS

Divine Corporation was formed in April of 2000 to pursue a concept originated by two business executives, Stephanie Leavine and Dean Fresonke. The goal was to create a personal lubricant that would have great playtime characteristics but eliminate the stickiness and resulting skin irritation that could result in the evaporation cycle of lube.

Dr. Mario Tremblay, who has a PhD in chemistry, also is part of the founding team and, having managed new product development for Max Factor and CoverGirl Cosmetics, brought with him the expertise to establish an accomplished product formulation team.

The formulation team had not created personal lubricants prior and approached the task using a broad spectrum of compounds, the company said. The formulation team strived to move away from waxes and silicone, which cannot be absorbed by the skin and have to be washed off, as well as parabens and glycerins that can cause skin irritation. According to the company, it found that skin irritation problems occur from residual deposits and partial absorption of ingredients.

"After sequencing through many different compounds, a vial labeled simply '9' was delivered for testing" the company says. "Unlike any of the others, it exhibited superior slip characteristics and a unique evaporation cycle which, when finished, left the skin with a smooth and silky 'baby powder' feel. With further refinement, composition '9' became the basis of Divine 9."

The key ingredient of Divine 9 is a special extract of sea algae commonly referred to as carrageenan. Carrageenan is an edible compound Generally Recognized As Safe (GRAS) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). According to the company, carrageenan is used as a thickener and smoothing agent in such products as baby formula and ice cream.

With many different types of sea algae and variety of methods for the extraction of carrageenan, Divine 9's unique carrageenan extract and formulation technique is a trade secret.

"There are many different types of carrageenan on the market, derived from a wide variety of sea algae species," Divine Corporation's Jeff Hawkins said. "The molecular composition of carrageenan is very complex and these variations could explain why Carragel works best but frankly the exact reason is still unknown."

The company later introduced Divine 8, which featured the same formula with an added vanilla scent. Divine 8 has since been removed from Divine Corporation's

offerings to "focus all attention on the potential benefits of Divine 9 and Carragel," Hawkins said.

The Divine Corporation stopped serving the adult retail market in 2006, however resurfaced recently with the addition of industry vet Jeff Hawkins to the company.

"Company management did not have experience in the adult retail market," the company said. "With the addition of industry veteran Jeff Hawkins to the management team, that situation has been completely turned around and the company is anxious to work with all aspects of the adult industry that are interested in promoting sexual wellness."

According to the company, the National Cancer Institute began researching the HPV-blocking capabilities of carrageenan in 2006. In June of 2008, Divine Corporation announced the research results from NCI's Laboratory of Cellular Oncology. For the study, NCI researchers produced a derivative of the cervical cancer-causing HPV16 virus but replaced it with

a marker gene. According to the company, by selectively applying the marker-enhanced virus to the vaginal tracts of mice, the research team was able to analyze the amount of infection and determine the effects of applied products.

"The decision to select Divine 9 was made completely by them [NCI]," Hawkins said. "They looked across the market for reputable products that contained carrageenan and they selected Divine 9 because it contained Carragel, Divine's proprietary carrageenan formulation. Divine management was not informed of their decision until after the studies were completed. The selection of Divine 9 for the study at McGill was based on the positive results obtained by NCI. NCI encouraged the collaboration and put the McGill researchers directly in touch with Divine management."

Following the series of laboratory studies on mice by NCI with Divine 9 and Divine 8, the Divine 9 formula was chosen to be used in a double blind study of more than 400 women currently being con-

ducted by McGill University under the auspices of NCI. "The study is expected to take several years because of the large number of (over 400) women involved," Hawkins said. "In the world of medical research, this is a very comprehensive study."

Divine Corporation is currently syncing up with medical professionals nationwide, Hawkins said.

"Doctors are recommending Divine 9 and the company is working on a new program to allow doctors to provide samples to their patients," he explained. "Divine Corporation has on its advisory board Dr. Michael Swor, Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Sarasota Memorial Healthcare Systems and Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of South Florida College of Medicine."

With the reintroduction of Divine 9 into adult retail, Hawkins says "Carragel will also become available to other lubricant and condom manufacturers to use in their products" this year.



Sexual Wellness

Divine 9 is formulated with a focus on health benefits.

