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'Kinky Party' Is Starting a Russian Sexual Revolution

Forget "there is no sex in the U.S.S.R."

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Kinky Party aims to create a sexually charged environment for like-minded people. **Kinky Party**

It's almost midnight on a Saturday night in a gated central Moscow courtyard and the party has just begun.

A woman wearing nothing but a long silver cloak and a pair of stilettos walks past a queue of people waiting to check their bags. Her companion is dressed in a smart suit with an open shirt underneath revealing his bare chest, and a mask covering his eyes. Behind them, another woman arrives. She's wearing a gown that covers her from neck to ankles. It's only as she gets closer that you notice the dress is see-through and she's naked underneath. This is no ordinary party; this is a Kinky Party.

In a country with little or no sex education, a lax attitude toward sexual harrassment and no

penalties for domestic violence, two young Russians have set up a business they hope allows women to enjoy sex on their own terms, and everyone to explore their sexuality.

Three years ago, Tanya Dmitriyeva, 31, was a French teacher. She got chatting to one of her students, Taisia Reshetnikova, 30, about sex parties they had both attended in Berlin and Paris, and Kinky Party was born. The company throws regular parties in Moscow with the same standards as European events while trying to build a community of like-minded, open, tolerant people. The themes are love, beauty and sex.

"Tell me where else in Russia can women dress up as they want and express any sexuality they feel while being absolutely secure? Being yourself and free is empowering," said Dmitriyeva.

The party takes place in a two-story house. On the ground floor, people lounge at the bar with beers, cocktails and shots. It could be a regular party, except for the fact that many of the attendees are partially or fully nude — the women more so than the men — and that couples and threesomes are kissing passionately.

Upstairs is a BDSM demonstration with one woman tying up another who's suspended mid-air from a rope, her body twisted and her hair hanging down. A crowd watches in silence. A few steps away, two women lie on beds having every part of their bodies attended to by male masseurs.

In the main hall, the largest crowd gathers to watch a retelling of the story of Adam and Eve. A slain Adam lies motionless and naked on the floor while a group of women beside him, led by one with a live snake wrapped around her body, have sex. When the show is over the crowd breaks into applause.

It's always clear at a Kinky Party that the women present decide how far things go. Volunteer "Kinky Police" wearing T-shirts saying *nyet znachet nyet* — no means no — ensure a safe environment. Consent is key, but once that's been established, anything goes. The first rule of the parties is *mozhno vsye* — everything is allowed.

"It's my first time," says a young woman as she steps outside to light a cigarette, as excited as she is nervous. "It feels like... it feels like we aren't in Moscow."

Across most of Russia, sex education is inadequate, at times completely absent. An Interfax report in 2014 showed resistance to changing this while in 2018, a state-run poll showed that just 60 percent of Russians support sex education in schools. Kinky Party hopes to provide Russians with opportunities to explore, learn and try out what is often considered taboo.

The first party was in March 2016, and while the company had hoped for 100 guests it ended up selling around 300 tickets. Today, Kinky Party has a full-time team of five and has held 24 parties, including "Limited Edition" gatherings with up to 200 guests, and "Big" events with up to 600 party-goers. While guests are predominantly locals some come from further afield — mostly men from Italy, Germany and Britain and once, a man who traveled from Japan. Tickets cost an average of 5,000 rubles ($76) each, taking into account higher prices for VIP access and discounts for women. Half of the people attending are couples.

Each party comes with the same strict rules that apply to all guests — everything is allowed, no means no, ask first and no photos. Even selfies are forbidden, in case an attendee wanting to remain anonymous ends up in the shot. Condoms and lubricant are distributed for free. The Kinky Police patrol the party to ensure the rules are kept and that everyone's playing safe. An "officer" once stopped a couple in a heated argument, only to find out they were married and the fight was part of their roleplay.

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The strict control that makes the parties safe starts well before the event itself. Those who hope to attend must register and provide links to their social media platforms and recent photographs. Every first-timer is then thoroughly vetted, with some being called for a phone chat. Still, many are rejected and an even female-to-male ratio is maintained. This is all to ensure party-goers are there to explore their sexuality and find like-minded people rather than attend solely for sex. At a Kinky Party, sexual activity is a potential means of exploration rather than a given.

"We want to make an environment where people feel comfortable to explore," said Reshetnikova.

Every party has a different theme and there are no limits to how far you take the suggested attire, which has included wild animals, cross-dressing and masquerades.

"It's like sexual halloween that's not just once a year," adds Reshetnikova.

Besides parties, the company also holds Kinky Practice — courses and classes about sexual practices — and Kinky Day — a festival of kinky culture with lectures and stalls.

This June, a week ahead of the month's main event, a Kinky Market acquainted those interested with the wider concepts of Kinky Party. On sale were masks, leather straps, sex toys, designer lingerie and full dress-up costumes.

But the event wasn't just about fun and fancy dress. It included talks on sex education in Russia and gender equality within Russian society, a documentary screening, a discussion with a sexologist and a question and answer session with Dmitriyeva and Reshetnikova.

"Between two men, is it OK?" one attendee asked by means of a slip of paper passed to the front of the room. "Friends, everything is allowed!" Reshetnikova assured the anonymous questioner.

Dmitriyeva believes the liberal and consent-driven nature of these parties is particularly significant in Russia.

"In a country where domestic violence is decriminalized and politicians aren't charged for sexual harassment," she said, referring to a recent case involving State Duma lawmaker Leonid Slutsky, "being able to come to a party, be yourself and stay secure at the same time is truly empowering."

Kinky Party regular Alexander, who has attended at least 10 events, said it's important that

the gatherings are not just seen as sex parties, but also as ways for people to embrace aesthetics, sexual education and community support.

“The parties make me believe that sex is as natural a process as food or sport,” he said. “There is nothing to be ashamed of, sex can be used as a way of socialization.”

For Kat, 28, and Egor, 31, a couple who have been together for 15 months, the event was an intense experience. “It started with a giddy, nervous excitement, and some point sunk to quite a low point of awkwardness, self-awareness and discomfort,” said Kat. But after giving it another go, she said, “It was hot having each other in that environment, and turning on other people by how turned on we were by each other.”

While those who have attended rave about Kinky Party, the company also has its share of critics, with some clubs refusing to host events.

The challenge of finding a location hasn’t deterred the organizers, and only adds to the feeling of accomplishment that comes after a successful event, they said.

“The best feeling is to walk through a party and to see hundreds of people who are actually enjoying the environment we’ve worked so hard to create,” said Dmitriyeva.

Kinky Party is planning to expand into VIP events and private experiences for companies and couples, but the ethics won’t change.

“If you want it, ask for it. No means no. If you don’t want it, refuse it. We hope that people learn this and apply it to their lives outside of the party,” Dmitriyeva said.

Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

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