

# HEMA gets busted with intimates advert



Photo: Daan for HEMA

**The young woman in HEMA's new ad campaign is not a woman at all, but an androgynous male model. TIFFANY JANSEN investigates the miracle of the Mega Push-up bra to reveal little more than a marketing milestone.**

"Enlarges breasts by a minimum of two cup sizes."

"Two cups extra."

These are the lofty promises of the Mega Push-Up bra, the hot new item from HEMA, Holland's popular economy department store.

In December 2011, poster ads went up all over Amsterdam featuring a petite, sultry model with an impressive rack. All thanks to the Mega Push-Up bra.

What makes this particular bra's bust-boosting abilities all the more im-

pressive is that the model is a dude.

Twenty-year-old androgynous male model Andrej Pejic's coupling with HEMA is the first time ever that a male has modelled women's lingerie. And it is raising eyebrows the world over.

The ad features Pejic in slinky dresses, accentuating his new-found cleavage. There is no slogan, no mention of Pejic's gender. Only the company's logo, the product name and price adorn the ad, along with the model's equally androgynous name.

"We wanted the PR to do its work," Judy op het Veld, HEMA's manager of corporate communication, told Canada's Toronto Star newspaper.

"If we mentioned it was a man, it wouldn't be surprising. Now it makes people curious. We could have found a female model with a beautiful body, but we wanted to do something different."

Different it is.

Regardless of how one feels about a man modelling something as intimate as women's underwear, the question on all

women's minds is, "If this bra can do that for him, what kind of miracles can it perform for me?"

I set out to answer that very question. One HEMA trip and 20 euros later, I was the proud owner of my very own Mega Push-Up bra. Already a size D, I was frightened by the prospect of the bra living up to its promise of a double cup increase.

Though the tight design did bring "the twins" closer together to create a Grand Canyon of cleavage, the bra only provided about a one cup increase. If that.

The theory behind the design seems to be that when most of the bra is filled with padding, the breasts have no choice but to spill out over the cups.

But the real test was yet to come. To see if this bra really performed the miracles it claimed, I needed to see it in action - on a man. My lovely, compliant husband agreed to be my guinea pig (what a guy!).

The verdict: while the bra did give my husband a nice set of knockers, once I coaxed him out of his shirt, I was disappointed to find that the bosoms were simply a result of the bra's padding.

What does Pejic think of the bra? "Heavenly," was the word he used during an interview with the NRC's Ernest van der Kwast. His only complaint was the impossible to unhook clasps.

While HEMA's advertising campaign is most definitely buzz-worthy, if it is a surgery-free breast enhancement you are after, save yourself some money and buy one of the department store chain's cheaper bras one cup size too small.

Despite the product's poor performance, HEMA seems to have gotten the exact reaction it was after. Just hours after the advertisement was released, the controversial ad campaign had gone viral on Facebook and Twitter.

In our own sample survey, The Holland Times hit the streets to see what people really had to say.

Amy, a Austrian currently living in the UK was somewhat flabbergasted by the ad. "I'm sorry, but that is ridiculous of the Hema," she said. "How can a man be used as an example of a product that is for women?"

"I think he's hot," was Jules' first response. An American living in Nijmegen, she went even further, "I'd kill for those knockers!"

Edda, a Dutch native from Utrecht said she loves the campaign.

"It makes no difference who you are, if you like wearing what you are wearing, being a woman, man or other, keep wearing that. We are all equal, in my humble opinion."

"I would never have guessed it was a man! Guess it must be a pretty effective bra to give a skinny guy a female shape," said Derval, an Irishwoman living in Utrecht.

Judith, a Dutch woman living in the States, had perhaps the most poignant response to the ad, "Only in Holland."

## Dental fees to rise

**THE HAGUE** | From 2012, dentists may set their own fees rather than comply with government guidelines. According to health insurance group VGZ, that means a sharp rise in dental fees. In a survey of 200 dentists, VGZ found an average increase of 10 percent and predicts a further rise of 30 percent for some treatments. A similar survey from NOS news found annual check-ups now vary in price from 19 to 30 euros with the cost of a filling ranging from 26 to 85 euros. Opposition MPs have responded with calls for the "experiment" to be halted.

## Rutte called "cold-blooded"

**BRUSSELS** | Newly elected chairman of the European Parliament Martin Schulz told NOS television he would like to be more like Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte. The German social democrat, who will be working closely with the Christian Democrat and Socialist parties, has a reputation for being passionate. He said he would tone it down in his new role, adding the Dutch PM set a good example. "I would like to be more cold-blooded, like Mark Rutte," he said. "He laughs in Geert Wilders' face and still gets PVV support."

## Police want tougher image

**BREDA** | Dutch police officers want to look tougher. According to a large survey from police union ACP, officers want to wear more military-looking berets, cargo trousers and boots. Most reported this was more functional attire that gives off a tougher image. Currently, Dutch police wear caps, neat slacks and street shoes. "In a nutshell, the 2012 uniform should be comfortable and look more suitable," said ACP's head Gerrit van de Kamp. The military police who patrol Schiphol airport wear berets, boots and cargo trousers, de Volkskrant reported.



## Delft University gets easier

**DELFT** | Coursework and certain required subjects will be cut at Delft University of Technology to enable students to finish their degrees more quickly. According to reports in de Volkskrant, 75 percent of Delft students take longer than four years to complete their degrees. In particular, aerospace engineering course loads will be cut by 15 percent and non-essential subjects including sustainable development will no longer be offered. In response, Deputy chairman of Delft's student union warned the quality of graduate leaving the university will decrease.

westvliet | FITNESS- & RACKETCLUB

**Not satisfied?  
Money back guaranteed!\***

Try Westvliet for 2 weeks and find out for yourself if you like it.



Westvlietweg 55 // 2491 ED The Hague // T 070 386 44 40 // info@westvliet.nl // www.westvliet.nl

\*valid in the month of February