

Tuesday » June  
6 » 2006

## Beauty's in the eyes or ears of beholder, depending on your sex

**Misty Harris**

CanWest News Service

*Monday, January 30, 2006*

The results of a new global survey may offer insight into one of life's most enduring mysteries: Woody Allen's ability to seduce gorgeous women.

According to the 2006 Harlequin Romance Report, three-quarters of Canadian women are more attracted to a man's wit than his appearance in a first encounter -- the highest proportion in any of the 16 countries surveyed. Seventy per cent of American and German women likewise favour humour over hotness, as do 60 per cent of those from Mexico and Sweden.

In contrast, more than six in 10 Canuck men say beauty trumps brains in the first-impression pecking order, a sentiment echoed by males from every country surveyed but Portugal.



Woody Allen, 2002. (AP Photo/Sandro Pace)

"Men seem to be attracted to what they see and women to what they hear," says Marleah Stout, co-editor of the report. "But you need the combination of both to enjoy the whole show."

Alberta males lead the country in their appreciation of physical appearances (61.9 per cent), followed closely by residents of Atlantic Canada (61.8), Manitoba (58.5) and Saskatchewan (58.5).

Financial status proved the least enticing characteristic in an initial encounter, with, on average, 7.2 per cent of men and women citing it as a draw.

All this is irrelevant, of course, if neither party is willing to act.

Fully 75 per cent of unattached Canadians -- and 61 per cent of all the country's respondents -- have met someone they were interested in, but were too afraid to make the first move. And those who do break the ice may find themselves waging an uphill battle to tell the truth.

Nearly six per cent of Canadians surveyed admitted to lying about their job or finances to impress, while five per cent have lied about their marital or relationship status.

Seekers of romance are more apt to fake the circumstances of a meeting with someone who strongly appeals to them.

"Most people think a chance encounter is just kismet or something," says Stout. "But one-in-five Canadians admitted to fabricating an encounter so they could 'bump into' someone."

Men and women who find one another without scheming are doing so through friends (32 per cent), workplace (19 per cent) and by chance (18 per cent). Other methods include parties, nightclubs and the Internet.

At least once, 22 per cent of Canadian men and 6.5 per cent of Canadian women have spent the night on a first date, with the highest provincial averages in Quebec (18 per cent), Alberta (17.9 per cent) and B.C. (16.3 per cent). Internationally, first-date sleepovers were most popular in

Spain, Germany, Greece and Britain.

The Canadian data was collected from a phone survey of 1,000 adults and is considered accurate within three percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is higher for regional statistics.

© The Calgary Herald 2006

---

Copyright © 2006 CanWest Interactive, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.