

Wingwoman

Want to pick up more girls? Use another girl! Miss Laura Leu trades in her pen for a pair of wings to help a guy in need.

By Laura Leu



Are you lonely? Desperate for the company of a woman? Then meet Marla, a 32-year-old singer who came to the U.S. from New Zealand with a dream and an accent so sexy it'll make your knees buckle. Or Anika, 23, a perky, blond jill-of-all-trades who works at an architecture firm while studying fashion design and pursuing acting on the side. Then there's 29-year-old Trina, a sultry business analyst who, though a vegetarian, still manages to attract a lot of meatheads. All of these women are beautiful, charming and fun. And all of them will go out with you... if you cough up \$150. They aren't prostitutes; they are professional wingwomen.

While the term *wingwoman* may be new to you, if you've seen *Top Gun* or have trustworthy bar buddies, you're familiar with the male version. He's the magnanimous guy you bring with you to help you pick up women. But now, the wingman—*ahem!*—wingperson has taken on a new dimension: Women are not only joining the ranks of this traditionally male vocation, but they are now available for rent through wingwomen.com.

This is all thanks to Shane Forbes, 30, who discovered the chicks—as—chick magnets phenomenon nearly two years ago, when he went out with two female friends and started attracting women like Colin Farrell with a puppy at a shoe sale. "My girlfriends would start talking to other girls about random stuff," Shane says. "I realized I was meeting girls without having to approach them or use lines." He walked out of the bar that night with two phone numbers and a business idea. Today, he's been running his New York-based (and soon to expand) Web site for 15 months and has close to 300 clients and 20 employees—all guaranteed to be "very good-looking and extremely personable." For 50 bucks an hour—with a three-hour minimum—they'd better be.

Wingwomen wanna-bes generally look for Shane rather than vice versa. And why wouldn't they? They get paid up to \$30 an hour to socialize and drink. (It's not mandatory to buy the ladies drinks, but most of the clients do.) The job description sounded like it matched my skill set, so I sought out Shane to earn my wings.

How to Pounce on Prey

I meet wingwomen Marla, Anika and Trina for dinner at Manhattan hot spot Sushi Samba 7 on a busy Thursday night before my first job. Between rounds of sashimi and martinis, they school me in the art of winging. The first 30 minutes should be spent getting to know the guy and learning the types of women he's attracted to. Then, after scoping the room for prospects, your client points out his prey and you pounce. Each woman has her own approach. "I'll go up to girls and say, 'There's a guy who's really bothering me. Do you mind if I chat with you for a minute?' Women like to help other women being chased, so girls usually love that," dishes Trina, who wings one to two times a week. Anika, on the other hand, goes for the classic "Do I know you from somewhere?" line, while Marla the Kiwi relies on her accent to get women talking. But the one approach all the girls use is flattery, which is much more successful when coming from a woman than from a man. Probably because when we say, "Nice shoes," it's not followed by "Wanna fuck?"

Speaking of which, what if my client assumes, just because he's paying me by the hour to spend time with him in a dimly lit bar where inhibitions recede faster than Matt Lauer's hairline, that I'm a whore? What if he wants me to spread more than just my wings? "From the way Shane describes the company, these guys know what to expect," assures Anika. She says that no such assumption has ever been made of her and probably never will be. Well, there's only one surefire way to find out. I fly away to meet my john, er, client.

Doing Daron's Dirty Work

Daron Balducci is waiting for me outside the swanky 17 nightclub in Manhattan at 11 P.M. He's a 29-year-old software-sales guy and is, surprisingly, neither bad looking nor noticeably brain damaged. During the getting-to-know-you phase, I learn what brings Daron into the wings of another woman: He just broke up with his girlfriend, and his thoughtful boss offered to rent me for the night. For the same price, he could have gotten a pint of Wild Turkey and a night of lap dances, but I don't burst his bubble and tell him that. As for his choice of ladies? "I prefer girls to be 5'7" or below," he says, puffing up his 5'10" stature. "A light-eyed brunette is killer, but I like blondes, too." With that, he points out a brunette in particular, giving me my cue to swoop.

I'm unexpectedly nervous, so I slam the rest of my vodka and then wobble my way over to her. The only thing I can remember from my wingwomen training session is how Marla sparked conversations with her accent. But since my Wisconsin accent isn't quite as exotic as hers, I take a different approach: I just ask her why the hell she's here. She introduces herself as Jessica, and we make idle chatter for about two minutes before I ask, "Oh, did you meet my friend Daron?" like it had just occurred to me. They begin talking, and I head over to the bar so he can make his move while I make my buzz. It works: Daron gets her number (and I start to tingle). I spend the rest of my night as a social lubricant, sliding from one lass to the next, pushing and pulling Daron wherever I smell estrogen. He talks to a lot of girls, dances with even more of them, and before I know it, my three hours are up: I punch out and find a happy hour.

Two weeks later, I follow up with Daron. He has already gone out with Jessica three times, and he thanks me for all my hard work. But instead of tooting my own horn, I'll let Daron toot it: "On a scale of one to 10, you were a 12," he says. "The whole point is to have a good time. I got a phone number for the girl I liked, and I had a blast with you. You were awesome." *B/w/s/h.* Well, gosh.

To get an accurate view of wingwomanship, I offer my services one more time—this time without the customer knowing that I'm not a full-time wingwoman. My client is a very nice, very straight-laced 25-year-old lawyer. He gets three numbers when we go out and e-mails Shane that night requesting me again. When Shane calls to ask if I am interested, I tell him that it's been a good run (or should I say flight?), but the pressure of picking up chicks is just too much. I'm cut out for teaching guys how to get laid, not finding them willing participants. So I hang up my wings and retire to return to my regular of life as a sex scribe.