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Hot Pink

Think Pink for a free girl's night out.

[Erin Brereton](#) » March 24, 2005

Today's women do it all: We balance great careers, great (and sometimes, not-so-great) men and hectic social lives, in the meantime, of course, squeezing in those necessary beauty rituals like highlighting, manicuring and electrolysis.

It's all part of how we condition ourselves to feel fabulous. And while these rituals often do make us feel fabulous, frankly, they're exhausting. Any woman who works knows it's damn near impossible to get to that laundry that's been rising from your hamper like a volcanic cloth eruption for the past week, let alone is it easy to find time to get sprayed repeatedly inside a giant box until you're a delicate, tawny shade of brown.

But the thing is, we do. We pluck and pay and schedule appointments over our lunch hour to get things tanned, toned or just plain taken off. It's time consuming, and, as much as it makes us feel fabulous, it can also make us feel poor. The 2001 American Express Retail Index survey found that Americans planned to spend \$396 for health and beauty aids that year; and that's only stuff like lipstick and shampoo. Imagine how high that figure would skyrocket if you added in haircuts, dye jobs, waxing and gym fees.

And shoes.

When I heard about [Hot Pink's](#) free monthly manicures, martinis and more night party, held on the second Thursday of every month, I was in. Shopping, drinking and grooming on the cheapest of cheap? It was a can't-miss combo I had to try.

When I called the store to confirm the evening's events, I was informed manicures weren't on the menu, which was fine, but I wish they'd also told me they also weren't really planning on opening the doors at 6 p.m., as advertised. When I arrived with two friends, so did the make-up artist, and the masseuse, and the eyebrow lady and so on.

Not to be discouraged, we headed across the street to Ginbucks to sip on a drink and watch the action unfold through the windows. And although the first portion of the evening seemed chaotic, the hosts quickly moved everyone into gear. By the time we'd finished our first round, Hot Pink was hopping, so we headed over to check it out.

The event isn't really billed as a girl's night out, but it should be: In addition to the neon-blue martinis being served, beauty-minded folks were on hand to do make-up, wax away facial hair and the like. In addition, the publisher of the new Chicago-based magazine, "Nuestra ImagenHispana," was milling around to talk up his latest issue.

And lest we forget the night was all for the ladies, we only had to glance around at the racks of trendy women's fashions that surrounded us, or the bright pink decor (or the stacks of pink paint cans in the back of the store, in case anything, or anyone, needed a touch up).

We mingled. We pawed at tiny tops and almost-too-funky-to-be-functional pants. We drank glass after glass of bright blue cocktails, warming our insides with what appeared to be anti-freeze mixed with champagne. We paused to get make-up tips or, in my case, an eyebrow waxing that, thanks to the drinks, almost tickled.

But what we didn't do was shop. Yes, this was a store-sponsored event; yes, there were about 30 women in the store, browsing. And yes, you could get everything there from a stylish outfit to a pair of gelatinous boobs with which to bustily fill it out.

But as it turns out, shopping, drinking and being beautified is actually a bit overwhelming. (Hey, I'm all for multitasking but not necessarily when it involves hair removal.) Long lines formed for each available expert, even though they were working off a sign-up list. During the downtime, women stood in small groups chatting with friends. And somehow, though my new browline looked great, it juuust didn't inspire me to buy a pair of capris.

So I'm not sure if Hot Pink saw a huge profit from the evening, but I sure found it beneficial: I was coiffed, massaged and slightly buzzed by the time I made my way home. All that fabulous for free? It's an offer even the busiest girl couldn't refuse. Now if I could only get the library to start offering roots touch-ups...

Want to check out Hot Pink's next second Tuesday night party yourself? Hot Pink has three Chicago locations. Call the Bucktown store at 1464 N. Milwaukee at (773) 227-7477 for more information.



Erin Brereton is Centerstage Chicago's resident urban cowgirl, in search for life on the cheap.

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