



PANTS ON FIRE

It started with Burning Man. Now British festivals are taking sex to the next level. Spanking workshops, anyone? *Stephanie Theobald* reports

While Lianne La Havas struts her stuff on the main stage at this summer's Wilderness festival in August, she might have competition in the form of Cloe Jackson, who will be leading a naked bacchanal in the woods. "Feeling sexual energy is not a crime," says Jackson, 34, whose Dance Your Naked Truth sessions of "ecstatic dance" have been gathering force at mainstream festivals from Wilderness in Oxfordshire to Bestival on the Isle of White. The dance is a cathartic experience, says Jackson, with "95% of people" taking off their clothes by the end of her class. "Festivals are great, because people are more open to try something new. Like learning how to release repressed sexual energy."

Jackson's rapturous revel is at the lighter end of this season's new-look summer orgies, which have been inspired by the daring of Burning Man. The radical art festival in the Nevada desert is an extravaganza of

self-expression or a basic orgy, depending on your point of view. Burning Nest, held last month in South Wales, was inspired by its American cousin, but didn't have the spanking workshops, the hands-free erection contests or the women-run spaces offering advice about strapping on; however there were some "playrooms" among the tents full of kooky art. Next month comes the sexier, European take on Burning Man: held on the scorching plains of northern Spain, Nowhere will see tents filling with tanned young things running ice cubes over bare flesh, playing violins naked and having sex at dawn on pieces of huge artwork. "Music is not in the forefront at these new festivals," says Peter Hamilton, 32, a graphic designer from Manchester who attended Burning Man and Nowhere last year. "It's about self-discovery, and sex is a big part of that."

Andrew Heritage, aka Buzzy, one of the organisers behind the new Queer Spirit (LGBTQI) festival, which takes place in Wiltshire in August, says: "Dancing in a field can lead to

sex, so let's support the sex in a proper, open way." To do this, the organisers of Queer Spirit have created a "sacred sexuality temple", offering workshops such as "conscious speed-dating" that teach techniques to help people connect properly. There is also Rise and Shine, a "self-pleasuring ritual", and a Tantra-meets-BDSM play party. Buzzy believes the kind of sensuality offered in the over-18 sexuality temple — where all parts of the body are seen as pleasurable, and where sex can get so intense, it takes you to another plane — will relieve the pressure on couples who are bored with their sex life. Especially gay men, who "see sex as something you have to do while on drugs".

Amanda Gay Love, who runs sessions in the sexuality temple, says that sex has always been part of a good festival, along with dancing and connection with nature. "The difference is that people are now asking for more explicit permission for sexuality to be conscious and open. The experience you're going to have here will be much more

fulfilling than the classic Glastonbury thing of being so drunk, you pass out in the middle of a random encounter."

The technology-free, off-grid Restival, taking place in the Moroccan Sahara in November, will be taking a new direction. "We're going to look at relationships and the ingredients that go into making them," says the founder Caroline Jones. "Sexuality is an important ingredient."

Emma Sayle, who runs the high-end Killing Kittens sex parties, has changed her ideas as to what a 21st-century orgy should look like. This summer, for the first time, her haute orgies, in Mayfair penthouses and St Tropez superyachts, come with a new twist: Tantric pleasure playrooms run by women. There will be one at the KK summer party, on July 23 in East Sussex. "Most single women want a female masseur, even if they identify as straight," she says. And what's the difference between a Tantric and a regular massage? "A female Tantric masseuse is usually naked, for a start. And rather than just using her hands on your body, she'll use her

hair or she'll slide her oiled breasts up the inside of your legs and brush them across your crotch. It's a much more seductive experience."

Sayle, whose memoir, *Behind the Mask*, has just been bought by Simon Cowell's company, Syco Entertainment, for development as a TV series, admits she has never particularly liked orgies or multipartnered sex herself, but finds watching Tantric massage "very arousing". "Financially independent women are becoming more experimental and confident about sex," she says. "The traditional orgy has moved on. They might not want penetration. They might not want to be with a man. Say, four girls might just want to play around with each other."

She adds that you have to suit your orgy to the environment in which you find yourself. "The Tantric stuff works better with what we call the 'silver kittens', or the over-45s. They're usually more comfortable with themselves. If you're a twentysomething, partying your arse off, you'll be looking for more conventional forms of free love." ●

SUMMER ORGY RULES

WHERE *Killing Kittens* The Hamptons, New York, June 25; East Sussex, July 23; killingkittens.com.

Nowhere July 5-10; goingnowhere.org.

Queer Spirit August 17-21; queer-spirit.net. **Burning Man**: August 28-September 5; burningman.org.

WHAT TO WEAR Naked is best, but "Burners" should get a fake-fur/bikini/neon/S&M/wedding-dress vibe going first.

WHO TO GO WITH Go on your own, you'll have much more fun.

WHAT TO SAY In America, be direct: "I like you, would you like to play?" In the UK, beat around the bush: "Nice weather. Do you like fig rolls?"

DO SAY No, if you're not into something or someone, or, better, "That's a lovely offer, but I'm with my boy/girlfriend."

DON'T SAY "Phwoar!" The buzzword at new orgies is "conscious sexuality".