

For south Charlotte women, Mama knows best

New local Web site clues women to 'all that's fabulous' in the area

by Sean O'Connell
sean@thecharlotteweekly.com

Do you know where the "Tweener Eaters" are dining in south Charlotte? Would you know who to instant message when you are researching up-to-the-minute shopping deals? Do you know where to find Margarita pants at a discounted price?

Brooke Gibson does.

The SouthPark entrepreneur includes these tidbits and more in waxMAIL — a daily, free e-newsletter provided by Gibson's new company, waxMAMA. She calls the missives "an inbox full of Charlotte awesome," and said they are "designed to keep the ladies of the Queen City completely 'in the know' about all that is fabulous in and around the city."

Gibson's newsletter is published Monday through Friday around 8 a.m., and distributed to almost 300 subscribers in Mecklenburg County. She describes her writing style as conversational, and says she wants her readers to feel comfortable and open while they read it, to think of Gibson as a friend.

She admits she's still perfecting the format of her newsletter and accompanying Web site (www.waxmama.com). Give her time. WaxMAMA only celebrated its one-month anniversary last week.

Early roots, future plans

Gibson has lived in south Charlotte almost eight years, six of them spent as a commercial real estate broker for

American Asset Corporation.

After leaving that field, Gibson said she wanted to create "a central, online meeting place for women in Charlotte to share ideas." WaxMAMA and waxMAIL were

inspired by Daily Candy, another free, daily e-mail founded by Dany Levy that services major-metropolitan readers in New York, Boston, Atlanta, London, Miami and beyond.

"I loved her concept," Gibson said. "I've read forum after forum where people talked about her site, and I never

heard anything negative. And I thought Charlotte could use (this)."

Launching waxMAMA required a leap of faith, as Gibson has no publishing, editing or writing experience. "I've been asked that so many times. 'How can we trust you? How do you know what you're doing?' I don't. I don't have any formal background.



"Basically I feel like what I'm doing now uses my natural skills, whereas what I was doing before was using my college skills," she said.

She knows what she likes. And she has a

team of friends — some of whom are unemployed — who use their free time to help Gibson track down unique events and opportunities. "There are tons of sites you can go to and learn about 'Alive After 5' (in uptown's Epi-Centre). I try and dig a little deeper," Gibson said.

She has unearthed "interesting" and "accessible" opportunities from as far north as Huntersville and as far south as Fort Mill, S.C. She's starting to receive tips from people she doesn't know. A reader tipped her off to mini-cupcakes that are inspired by a West Coast bakery. Gibson also was contacted by a clothing designer trying to break into the Charlotte market. She offered waxMAMA's subscribers a discount on her current line, hoping to generate interest in her stylish products.

Eventually, Gibson said she'll add a forum to the Web site to increase waxMAMA's interactivity. She admits she's not Web savvy. "It's the one thing that gives me anxiety at night," Gibson said, noting that she needs more time and technical support so the site fully represents her vision.

Gibson also said she'd like to start soliciting advertisers in the next two to three months, and will consider expanding to other midsize markets such as Nashville, Jacksonville and cities that likely wouldn't be targeted by Daily Candy.

"My goal would be to expand enough and eventually get a national sponsor," Gibson said. □