



Carson City mom writes one of the 'hottest beauty blogs' on the Net

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A tiny dog and 5-year-old girl circle Erika Valente as she tries to convince one of her teenagers she needs to use the computer. A calendar lies open on her desk. Beauty products fill a cabinet in the room.

Valente, a meeting planner and mother of four, said writing a part-time blog is more work than she thought, but it's worth it.

She gets free products, tickets to fashion shows and, recently, her Web site was named as one of the ten "hottest beauty blogs" by Women's Wear Daily, a magazine the New York Times called "the beauty bible."

"It was really an honor," she said. "I could not believe it."

Valente, 36, started Makeupbag.net a year and a half ago. She loved trying beauty products and found out she liked to write after starting a blog about her family.

She started writing because she loved beauty products, but also because she wanted to help women find good deals. Companies sell so many different things, she said, and that can be confusing.

"If you spend a bunch of money on something that doesn't work for you, it's a total bummer," she said.

Companies soon found her blog and started to mail her products.

Oils, creams, blushes, balms, glosses, powders, soaps.

"We started getting packages delivered, and the girls were like, 'It's from MAC (Cosmetics)! Let us open it!'"

She has about 50 products in her bathroom she's testing now.

The free samples are nice, she said, because many of them are products she might not normally be interested in or would be too expensive to try. She said her husband sometimes complains when she actually buys some of the expensive products, but he has things he spends a lot on, too.

"Everybody has their little thing that's important to them," she said. "I feel one good thing about beauty products is that every woman can put a spritz of fragrance on and suddenly boost her mood."

Valente has always loved beauty products even though her mom didn't let her wear makeup until she was in her late

Cathleen Allison/Nevada Appeal Erika Valente and her daughter Bree Young, 15, run the business MakeUpBag.net from their Carson City home.



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Valente's blog was recently named one of the top ten "hottest" beauty blogs by the fashion magazine Women's Wear Daily.

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teens. She said when she was 8 years old, she climbed onto the bathroom counter to use her mother's eyelash curler but fell and ripped the eyelashes out of her right eye.

Valente is less strict with her daughters. Bree, 15, even writes a column on the blog, though her mother said she has to use makeup samples as an incentive to get her to write it.

Bree said it can be a struggle, but she likes working for her mom.

"My girlfriends love it, too," she said. "They all come over and pick out the makeup they want because we have so much of it. We just give it away."

Valente is in New York this week reviewing fashion shows.

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On the Net:

<http://www.Makeupbag.net>

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