

The Record

BERGEN COUNTY

DECEMBER 24, 2006 SUNDAY

New labels for modern trends

By Abigail Leichman
North Jersey Media Group

First she gave us “metrosexual,” then “übersexual.” Now, trend spotter Marian Salzman predicts “contrasexual”—a financially independent woman who’s putting marriage and family on hold—will be one of the catchphrases pervading pop culture into the beginning of 2008.

“We live in a world where we desperately need to ‘narrowcast,’ tightening our definition for everything and everybody,” says Salzman, who grew up in River Edge. “The world is overwhelming and confusing, kind of antisocial, and we want a place where we can hang out and make everything OK.” The urge to pigeonhole and categorize isn’t new, she says, recalling that back at River Dell High School, “zoomies” were the kids who loitered in the parking lot. But as an ad exec with JWT Worldwide, her forte is predicting new classifications.

“Next Now,” her Palgrave-Macmillan book co-written with marketing guru Ira Matathia, debuts the day after Christmas and contains newly minted terms to help us describe Americana in the coming years:

ADULTESCENCE. This developmental stage refers to “kidults” at the crossroads between autonomy and relying on the ‘rents.

ALPHA MOMS. There’s already a cable channel catering to this confident multi-tasker, and NBC aired a pilot titled “Alpha Mom” for its 2006-’07 season. Examples: “Hillary Clinton was the first,” Salzman says. Kelly Ripa and Katie Couric have continued the tradition.

BRAND SLUTS. A term coined in the blogosphere to mean an obsession with consumerism, it was adapted by Salzman to define savvy consumers who are anything but brand-loyal.

GASTROPORN. Preparing, cooking, tasting and eating food have become voyeuristic pleasures separated from physical reality and carried out by experts who go through the moves. Example: “Rachael Ray with her big smile and cutie-pie outfits.”

MASSTIGE. The retail marriage of mass and prestige. Examples: Viktor & Rolf for H&M, Liz Lange for Target.

MICROGENERATION. The “personal sustainability” adherents who generate their own energy and grow their own produce. Example: Adrian Grenier of “Entourage.” Salzman says he’s putting special insulation in his Brooklyn house.

PEERENTS. These moms and dads “work through issues” and “share experiences” with their friend-kids.

SNAG. Sensitive New Age Guy. Examples: Orlando Bloom, Chris Martin.

TRUTH LITE. The shoulder-shrugging way politicians, the media and brands shrink from accountability, cloud the truth and dance around the facts. “Bill Clinton personifies this term. We learned how to tell truth lite from him.”