

'Latina' fills ethnic niche left by other magazines

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The cover model on this month's *Vogue* is slim, de-aged — and white. The women on the *Vanity Fair* and *Town & Country* covers are blond, sexy — and white. On *Newsweek* and *Time* & *Leisure*, the male and female models are toned, tanned and white again — both white.

To glance at many mainstream magazines, it can appear as though Latinas don't wear makeup, blacks don't exercise, Asians don't care about trends, and none of them buy magazines.

The reality, of course, is very different — and one that niche publications targeted at ethnic communities are increasingly tapping into and depending on for their success.

Recently, *Latina* magazine — a bilingual publication for Latinas — was launched by 27-year old lawyer Christy Haubegger, who grew up in Texas reading fashion magazines but rarely saw herself reflected in their articles or glossy pictures.

After a teacher told her and fellow students that they should start a business based on a passion, Haubegger, a Latina, approached *Essence* magazine with her idea to start a bilingual publication

for Latinas. Focus groups told *Essence* executives what Haubegger already knew — that Latinas wanted to see someone that looked like them staring out from a newsstand — and they backed the idea.

The first issue hit newsstands May 30. Actress and Latina Jennifer Lopez, who starred in *Money Train* with Wesley Snipes and Woody Harrelson, appeared on the cover. The magazine also included dozens of articles geared to its Latina readers.

"It was extremely important for me to have people walk by a newsstand and see this woman looking stunning next to Claudia Schiffer," Haubegger said. "I want to change what we see of ourselves. . . . I want to change how people sometimes see us. I want them to see us, to see our beauty right out there, which I never saw before now. I walk by newsstands now and I just want to cry."

Haubegger said the magazine is selling out at some newsstands and said if the focus groups prove

to be right, she expects it to be successful.

But that's not all she has to go on.

At the very same time that Haubegger has her fingers crossed, she is targeting the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population. The Census Bureau estimates there are some 27 million Latinos in the United States and they estimate that number will grow to 36 million by the year 2000.

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