

"We want to shape the game industry in Australia and sell a million Nitty Grittys," says play-maker Johnschwager (with boyfriend Ruff and friends at home in Sydney).



# On a Roll

Bored with Trivial Pursuit and Pictionary, Nicole Johnschwager invents her own board game

Coming up with the first 500 questions for her brain teaser, Nitty Gritty, was easy for budding board-game creator Nicole Johnschwager. "Who would you most like to see naked? What toothpaste do you use?" is obvious," says the Sydney legal consultant. Conjuring the second 500 was like pulling teeth. "I had to start thinking

of weird situations, like 'Would you prefer to have stitches in your tongue or an injection in your eyeball?'"

The agony paid off. While only expected to sell 500 in its first year, the \$49.95 Nitty Gritty—which tests how well you know your friends—has sold more than 2,500 worldwide since its launch in December, mostly via the internet. "We wanted

a game where you didn't need to know trivia or how to draw," says Johnschwager, 33. "The questions range from innocent to naughty and confronting."

Though she had the idea while working in Perth in 1997, she shelved her homemade board and coloured questions cards for two years until her boyfriend, Nathan Ruff, 28, found it at the bottom of her cupboard. "I thought, 'We can do this!'" says Ruff, an IT consultant. Australian company Tree Toys agreed and now produces it for Johnschwager. Today she still gets a kick out of playing it. "Be prepared to laugh," says Johnschwager, "and don't play it with your parents."

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