

The Escort Economy

A back-of-the-pillowcase analysis of just how big the high-end call-girl business really is

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WHILE ELIOT SPITZER WILL HEREAFTER BE KNOWN AS Client 9, he can take comfort in the fact that he is by no means alone. About 700,000 men in the U.S. (or 0.65 percent) pay prostitutes for carnal relations each year, according to one survey. Still, the thousands of dollars Spitzer spent for what many people believe is a low-triple-digit transaction at most was eye-popping. That's because he wasn't tangling with your run-of-the-mill streetwalker; he was participating in the high-end, room-service-style escort economy, a slice of the industry that allows customers to order in advance, pick from a number of menus, even pay with a credit card. How large is this part of the business? After isolating the three typical escort experiences and consulting with economists and academics, *Condé Nast Portfolio* calculated a number.



EXPERIENCE NO. 2 THE PLATINUM CLUB

A weekend-long encounter for the globetrotting billionaire, who will fly his escort to the rendezvous instead of making her take Amtrak. Why? Because he can.

ESTIMATED PORTION OF ESCORT CLIENTELE: **1 percent**

Escort: \$4,500	from the meeting place (a four-hour round-trip flight): \$15,400	Atmosphere (a diamond necklace she'll probably sell on eBay): \$5,000
Hotel room (a night at the Setai penthouse in Miami Beach, for example): \$30,000	Wining and dining: \$1,000	Middlemen and verification services (how an escort business checks out its clients): \$3,000
Private jet for transporting escort to and	Distracting the wife with a spa weekend: \$5,000	

ESTIMATED TOTAL COST

\$63,900



EXPERIENCE NO. 1 THE SPITZER

(a.k.a. the No. 9)

For the discerning gentleman (or nationally known politician) who regards privacy as paramount.

ESTIMATED PORTION OF ESCORT CLIENTELE: **5 percent**

Escort: \$3,200 (\$2,700 or so, plus a \$500 credit to stay in the escort's good graces)	Train ticket for transporting escort to and from the meeting place (say, from New York to D.C. and back, on the local train and not the Acela): \$138	Atmosphere (a classical CD to set the mood): \$14
Two hotel rooms (Club-floor rooms at the Mayflower hotel in Washington): \$938	"Wining and dining" (at the minibar): \$50	A.T.M. fee, if you happen to be short on cash: \$2
	Taxi to and from the hotel: \$18	

ESTIMATED TOTAL COST

\$4,360





**EXPERIENCE NO. 3
THE REGULAR V.I.P.**

For your average successful guy—say, the tech executive or the Wall Streeter on a business trip. You know someone who has done this. Seriously.

ESTIMATED PORTION OF ESCORT
CLIENTELE: **94 percent**

Escort: **\$500**

Internet connection
and telephone

service for finding
and booking
escorts:
\$40 per month



ESTIMATED TOTAL COST

\$540

THE BOTTOM LINE The sum of the cost of each experience times its portion of escort clientele gives us the cost of the average escort experience.

$$\text{A.E.E.} = (\text{cost} \times \text{portion})_{\text{Spitzer}} + (\text{cost} \times \text{portion})_{\text{Platinum}} + (\text{cost} \times \text{portion})_{\text{V.I.P.}}$$

$$\text{A.E.E.} = (\$4,360 \times .05) + (\$63,900 \times .01) + (\$540 \times .94)$$

COST OF AVERAGE ESCORT EXPERIENCE:

\$1,364.60

Multiply A.E.E. by the annual number of trysts:

$$\text{Total escort economy} = \text{A.E.E.} \times \text{annual trysts} \\ = \$1,364.60 \times 80,367$$

VALUE OF TOTAL U.S. ESCORT ECONOMY:

\$109,668,808

NOTE: 'The National Health and Social Life Survey found that men who frequent prostitutes average 2.3 visits each. Combining 2007 census data with these findings yields a total of 1.61 million tricks. Based on academics' assumptions, 5 percent of these are with escorts and not streetwalkers or brothel sex workers, resulting in 80,367 escort trysts. SOURCES: Taggart Brooks, economist, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse; Kristen Monaco, economist, California State University-Long Beach; Russ Alan Prince, president of Prince & Associates; Sudhir Venkatesh, sociology professor, Columbia University.