

You Can't Hurry Love

TEST DRIVE Can you find your soulmate in four minutes? By Chandra R. Thomas

VALENTINE'S DAY IS SUPPOSED to be a joyous celebration of love, but when you're flying solo, it can be excruciating. HurryDate, which brought the speed-dating craze to Atlanta in 2001, claims to help participants "meet oodles of people." So ignoring that nagging loser feeling, I log onto the website, locate the next "party," and pay \$35 to reserve a spot.

The typical first-date jitters surface as I step into the swanky lounge where women ages 30 to 40 and men 35 to 45 are about to race through a series of four-minute "dates." It's awkward, but the guide, Shelly, is friendly and clearly used to confronting that "Omigosh, I can't believe I'm doing this" look. So with name tag in place and scorecard in hand—along with a fruity martini that takes its effect immediately because there's no food around—I settle into a cozy booth.

As guys rotate through, I settle on a standard "Have you

done this before?" opener but end up gabbing mostly about my job, what I do for fun, and what part of town I live in. (For best results, avoid blathering about your loser ex or why your life truly sucks.) After each meeting, I write down the visitor's name, ID number, and brief notes such as "spikey hair," "clammy hand," "no way in hell," or "cute."

Unfortunately, many of the men fuel my worst fears about dating services; they're friendly—but also short, balding, boring, or all of the above. One guy appears to have walked straight off the set of *Revenge of the Nerds*—perhaps it's his wrinkled short-sleeved shirt and tie combo.

At home, I log onto HurryDate's site to list my seven choices, just for the heck of it. (You can only contact those who select you.) The next day, I learn I've only been picked by two men. Even the geek dissed me! Soon, messages



with the subject line "hello pretty lady" start appearing in my inbox from 42-year-old Michael. I don't have the guts to reply but decide to give HurryDate another shot.

At a posh Midtown sushi bar, with a hipper crowd of 25- to 35-year-olds, I meet James, a German who enjoys the outdoors; Steve, on his first date since his divorce; Jon, a cute Asian attorney; and Dave,

a self-described "stud." Only Stud Boy e-mails me.

HurryDate may not be the perfect cure for an ailing love life, but it's a fun, innovative way to meet people and definitely delivers on its promise to "cut to the chase!" ★

▶ For more information or to find out about the next party in your area, visit hurrydate.com.

OUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE

SIGHTSEEING

When the Emporis Standards Committee ranked the visual impact of the world's skylines last December, it clearly stated that points were awarded only for completed high-rises. Bridges, TV towers, and

masts were not considered. Nor were enormous metal peaches in the sky. Even so, Atlanta's rapidly expanding skyline was named the seventh most impressive in the nation, and 39th in the world—beating out Mexico City, Paris, and Madrid, among others. The finest city views in the U.S. can be found in:

1. NEW YORK
2. CHICAGO
3. HOUSTON
4. HONOLULU
5. LOS ANGELES
6. DALLAS
7. ATLANTA
8. SAN FRANCISCO
9. MIAMI
10. PHILADELPHIA

