

Inventor up for award

ALEXANDRA KAYLE

A SANDTON inventor has become the first South African to be chosen as one of the finalists for the Cartier Women's Initiative Awards.

The prestigious awards take place at the Annual Global Meeting of the Women's Forum in Deauville, France.

The awards are given to five women, one per continent, who lead creative, sustainable and socially responsible companies, and have business ideas.

Mother-of-two Lee-Ann Kassel, who struggled to find a comfortable yet fashionable maternity bra that would prevent breast milk from leaking onto her clothes, decided to invent one instead. Kassel founded Kasselot, a company that is dedicated to creating maternity lingerie.

She also extended her business to create natural perfumes.

"The birth of my daughter Cheyanne was my inspiration. With the patented Evanesse bra, made from a special membrane that absorbs moisture, breastfeeding mothers can live their lives as usual while remaining attractive and feminine.

"That should make for happier mothers and healthier babies," Kassel said.

In 2000, Kassel was the winner of the FairLady Business Awards. She has spent seven years researching ways to improve breastfeeding and baby health.

Kassel supports the World Health Organisation's belief that mothers should be empowered to practice exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and so improve the potential for babies to grow healthily.

Kassel said that inventing is a passion. "Since I was five years old I have loved to create. If you want to be your best in



Innovative inventor... Lee-Ann Kassel has been honoured as one of the finalists for the Cartier Women's Initiative Awards.

business, you need to be the best of who you are at the end of the day.

"I think it's important to have a balanced lifestyle, and have a happy family as well as a successful career.

"To upcoming entrepreneurs out there, I would say that starting a new business is very hard; you need tenacity and the will to never give up. Success breeds success."

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