

**DEPARTMENTS**

HEADLINES

NEWS

FASHION

BEAUTY

LIP

OUTSKIRTS

OFF THE CUFF

WIREDEUROPE

WIREDLIFE

WIREDNEWYORK

WIREDWEST

UNWIRED

UNWIRED FILM

UNWIRED MUSIC

UNWIRED TRAVEL

WIREDIMAGE

**PURCHASE**

ADVERTISING

SUBSCRIPTION

SHOPPING BAG

**RESOURCES**

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**Lather Up! Spongeables Make It Simple**By **Jenny Peters**

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Inspiration sometimes comes from the most mundane moments of life. Consider how the Spongeables line of "soap 'n sponge all in one" was born.

"About four years ago I was watching my five-year-old son, Daniel, wasting my expensive shower gel in no time," remembers Elaine Binder, who along with husband Michael Popovsky created Spongeables. "I would buy a fifteen- or twenty-dollar bottle of shower gel and I would use it a couple of times and then it would be gone, like in less than two weeks. I couldn't figure out what was going on. Then I looked at how he just poured half of the bottle on his hands, making huge bubbles out of it and just enjoying himself. I said to my husband, 'Michael, there's got to be a way, I'm sure that there's a delivery system out there that allows you to control how much of the product that you can use.'"

The couple started brainstorming, and together began the development that has led to Spongeables being available in thousands of retail locations, including Nordstrom, Saks, and countless other specialty boutiques and spas, as well as at [www.spongeables.com](http://www.spongeables.com).

"So we started researching and looking for a product that gave us a way to control how much shower gel we use. I went online and I talked to my industry friends. And I couldn't find anything that would give me this time release ability to know exactly how much of each product I could use," Binder says. So what else was there to do, except create it themselves?

"My husband is a chemical engineer and at that point he was president of a pharmaceutical company. But he was watching me watching my son. He got excited about this simple idea of finding something out there because we couldn't find anything. I kept on saying, 'There's no way the product isn't out there.' But it wasn't. Then we came across a round sponge bed that I loved because it was uniquely shaped. We brought it home and I started literally cooking the sponge in our kitchen using the shower gel."

After lots of experimenting, the duo finally ended up with their "patent-pending technology," that they dubbed a "Spongeable." It's a hypoallergenic synthetic sponge infused with natural glycerin and olive oil based soap, that delivers a bubbly, measured amount each time it is squeezed. The exfoliating sponges come in either seven or thirty shower sizes, in a variety of scents and colors, and stay germ-free in the shower because of a wasabi extract included in the formulation. There is also a kid's line, with sponges in shapes like dinosaurs and teddy bears. They really do work, steadily releasing the soap as promised, but Binder won't explain just how they figured it out.

"I can't tell you how we do this because it's in the patent, but I know that it absolutely delivers the number of showers it says it will on the Spongeable. Maybe more, but no less. We wouldn't be so successful if it delivered less!" Binder laughs.

And successful they are, with well over a million Spongeables sold in the last two years, since the couple gave up their other pursuits and careers and went full-time into the



business of giving consumers a new way to bathe.

As for the shower-gel-loving son who started "this amazing roller coaster ride"? He's now nine, and one of the company's key players.

"My son is always giving me good advice on how to name the next product, or what to infuse it with. He's the quality control. He's right most of the time. Believe it or not, when I bring him a new shape and I ask him to try it and give me his opinion he will write it down for me. And most of the time he's right!"