



Maddie James

Romance Novel Examiner

<http://www.examiner.com/x-4981-Romance-Novel-Examiner>

Marcia James, books, marketing, and thumbcuff keychains?

It might seem that this is James week on my Romance Novel Examiner page, but to be honest, it's entirely coincidental. [Ava James](#), who I interviewed earlier in the week, is a new author to me. I've known [Marcia James](#), for a while. In fact, she first contacted me when she was putting together her [James Gang blog](#), which I was a small part of.

Think about it. How many romance authors do you know with the last name of James? Tick them off in your head. Right now. Yes, that's right. Many of us hanging around...

So let's learn a little more about Marcia.

Marcia: Thanks, Maddie! My background is in communications – particularly promotion and marketing. I've worked as a corporate video scriptwriter, advertising copywriter, and journalist. The latest and most enjoyable addition to my resume is "romance author." Penning love scenes sure beats writing shoes ads or shooting videos on how to install neon signs! ;-D



Marcia's Chinese crested hairless dog

Maddie: I've followed some of your marketing strategies. You are good! It's great to see you here in the romance world. Do you have a favorite book of yours?

Marcia: Picking a favorite book is really difficult. My June 2009 release is a short story in the Berkley anthology, *Tails of Love*. The fact that this ten-author anthology raises money for the Animal Adoption Foundation, a no-kill animal shelter in Hamilton, OH, makes it special to me. "Rescue Me", my short story contribution, was a delight to write, and supporting such an important cause is icing on the cake. "Rescue Me" features a homeless Chinese crested hairless dog, who repays his rescuer by reuniting him with his college sweetheart.

At Her Command, a comic romantic suspense, was my debut book from Cerridwen Press, so it, too, is special to me. The novel explores the question: What if the DEA, FBI and Washington, D.C. police put operatives undercover at the same hedonistic club without telling each other? The comic possibilities of such a situation were too fun to resist, and I particularly enjoyed writing the character of Smokey -- a hairless "crestie" who's my DEA heroine's tiny, drug-sniffing canine partner.

Maddie: You have a lot of things going on. Tell us about your writing time? How do you manage?

Marcia: I have the great good fortune to work out of my home, so I can write when my energy is highest – usually afternoons and evenings. I'm definitely not a morning person, so I usually handle e-mail in the mornings and write after lunch.

Maddie: You are such a marketing guru. I've seen you in action at RT! What advice do you have for new authors?

Marcia: Here's a few suggestions -- mostly in the PR arena, since that's my field: Lock in your author domain name, create your Web site (at least on paper), and start to brand yourself *before* you sell. Google your proposed slogan (mine is "Hot, Humorous Romances") *before* you commit to it to make sure it's unique. Create a Web site and slogan that support the "author brand" you want – something with the tone and look that will let your readers know what to expect from your books.

Power-schmooze – with other authors, agents, editors and readers -- whenever you get the chance. Don't make the mistake in underestimating the power of networking. The author you meet today could be someone who hooks you up with her agent or gives you a cover quote in the future. If you're too shy to network, see if you can find ways to get past that hurdle, even if it means learning relaxing self-hypnosis or public speaking. And remember that people in the

romance industry are some of the nicest in the world.

Believe in yourself, be proud of your writing, and don't let anyone – including family and friends – be dismissive of your accomplishments.

Maddie: Can you tell us about your next project?

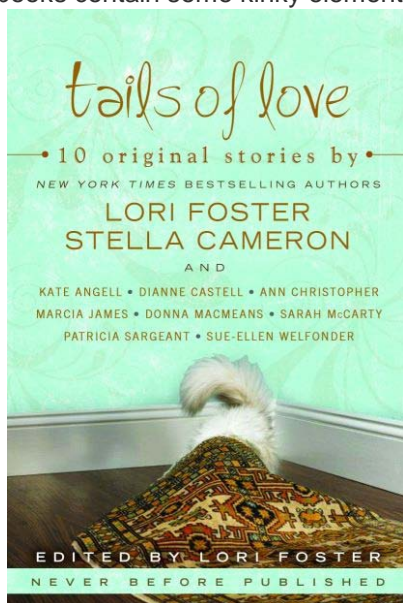
Marcia: I just finished writing the first book in a comic romantic mystery series featuring a sex therapist/amateur sleuth heroine and a hunky but uptight cop hero. This manuscript is currently at Berkley. It was incredibly fun to write, and I fell for the characters. On my website (<http://www.marciajames.net/index.html>), I have a light-hearted sex advice column “written” by my sex therapist heroine.

Maddie: Oh! That sounds like a lot of fun! I have to check out that column. LOL Is there anything else you would like to tell us about marketing books?

Marcia: Thanks to my PR and marketing background, I've been applying what I know to author promotion. I just finished presenting a month-long online workshop on author PR, and I've presented a number of in-person workshops and presentations on the same topic. I've developed a 200+ page “living document” on author promotion, which is free to any author who'd like it as a seed file to start their own. Just go to my Web site and request the file, using the email address on the “Contact Me” page. *(Note from Maddie: This living document is fabulous!)* Here are several more PR suggestions for published authors: Take advantage of the many free promotional opportunities for authors out there – especially the chance to be interviewed (like this!), guest-blog, and participate in online chats. If you have the time, post comments on other authors' blogs. All of these things increase the number of hits you'll get when Googled. Come up with a creative idea for bringing people to your Web site. For example, each month for my Web site's “James Gang” page, I interview an author or publishing insider with some form of “James” in his/her name. It's a fun form of cross-promotion.

Another example of this is author [Paige Cuccaro's “Writer's Cave” Web site pages](#). She puts photos of authors' offices on her site, and readers love to see where their favorite authors work. The Writer's Cave is a great PR idea! Depending on your finances, you can check into the many online sites that will promote an author for a fee. I haven't tried any of these, but I wouldn't rule it out for the future. And don't forget to promote to the general public, not just to established romance readers. You can send press releases to your college's alumni association and to your home town newspaper, as well as to trade publications and newsletters of associations that would have an interest in your book. For example, since I have a crested dog in my books, I have posted on a Chinese Crested dog owners' message board.

You can also come up with a creative tie-in to your books for your promotional giveaways. For example, I give away thumbcuff keychains that relate to the law enforcement protagonists in my books and also remind readers that my books contain some kinky elements. I have my Chinese Crested hairless dog logo on all of my PR items and on my Web site, which ties into the fact that I have crestedies in all of my books. So your PR materials can be part of your brand vs. just promoting a specific book.



Maddie: Wow, great marketing tips, Marcia. Thanks so much for sharing all of your knowledge with this. Now, one more question. What's the coolest, wackiest, most risk-taking thing you've ever done?

Marcia: That's a tricky one. I think participating in a March of Dimes celebrity downhill ski race when I was barely off the bunny slopes was probably pretty nervy or nuts, depending on your point of view. ;-D My team captain, Olympic gold medal pole vaulter Bob Seagren, told me our team could win if I would just snow-plow around the gates and not miss any or fall, since he didn't want me to be disqualified. I made it down and past the finish line just fine, then I fell at Bob's feet.

In addition to that, I've done some interesting things in my life. I worked for a military subcontractor, shooting training videos aboard submarines. As a special events volunteer, I've met dozens of celebrities. (There are photos on my Web site of some of these events.) ;-) My wedding was covered by People Magazine because we raised money for several charities. And most recently I petted a dolphin. ;-)

For more info: Please visit Marcia James website: <http://www.marciajames.net/index.html>