



Naked as a Jaybird

Dian Hanson

Taschen £19.99

www.taschen.com

Modern nudism, frighteningly, began with the Germans and, unsurprisingly, it wasn't much fun - all vegetarianism and hiking. When it reached California in the 60s,

however, it was a different matter entirely. The 'Jaybirds' as they came to be called, took to the beaches, stripped off the trappings of social enslavement, (i.e. their kecks), and kicked sand in the face of 'the man' by waving their bits every which way, especially loose. Between 1965 and 1972, the short-lived but influential Jaybird range of nudist magazines made landmark reading. While the simmering girlie mag market was still constrained by the censors, Jaybird offered readers gleeful hippie models with thick bushes and proudly brandished genitalia, and got away with it by being classified separately to smut. When the censors relaxed, and girlie mags got the go-ahead, the Jaybirds stopped singing. Hanson's book is a chronicle of a remarkable time in American history, packed with the glorious poses and progressively ridiculous cover photos that make each issue a collector's item today. Naked as a Jaybird is yet another proof of the fact that Taschen have moved from being high brow art pedlars to all-round cultural archivists, and are still the best at getting naked people into high street bookstores.

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