

Coffee table book of the month #1

The History Of Men's Magazines (Volumes 1– 6)

Taschen £29.99 each

Once again, Taschen knocks its publishing rivals straight down with these historical compendiums of men's periodicals, edited by Dian Hanson, a veteran of the genre and former editor of *Oui*, *Juggs* and *Leg Show*.

The first two volumes (out this month) cover 1900 to the Fifties and are interesting as historical curios, but it's with the next two volumes (out in the spring) that things start to get really interesting. *Volume 3: Swinging Sixties: At The Newsstand* documents a tumultuous period when America's obscenity laws were redrawn and mass distribution opened up the worldwide market. Simultaneously, Europe's sexual revolution was getting underway. But as the work here illustrates, this was as much to do with the dismantling of political systems and ideas as it was to do with hippies fumbling around under their kaftans. (German "sexual

physicist" Wilhelm Reich, who wrote about the link between sexual liberation and political revolution, crops up a lot.)

Furthermore, all previous design conventions were disregarded: magazines were sold with covers that suggested an anarchic streak of genius – or mescaline.

These impulses were pushed even harder the further readers moved from the mainstream, and *Volume 4: Under The Counter* sees things get properly strange. Even seasoned grot fans will find themselves raising an eyebrow at men being crushed in collages of naked women, underwear made of money, and Little Red Riding Hood being ravaged by a wolf (in an ermine dressing gown, obviously). Even *Arena* – with its hatred of all things nostalgic – was won over.

Volumes 5 and 6 – covering worldwide porn mags – are out later in 2005.

