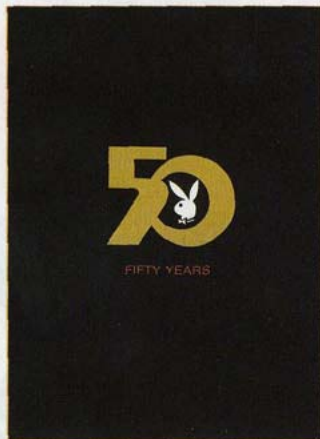


The Playboy Book

Taschen

£19.99

Far be it for me to spoon praise over a rival magazine, but occasionally we have to give Ol' Uncle Hef some kudos – Playboy's now been around for half a century (longer than the web, longer than legalised buggery, longer than electricity...),



and it's sure not keeping quiet about it. The latest globule of their anniversary publishing spurt is a zesty retrospective tome that highlights the covers, interviews, articles, cartoons and, of course, Playmates that have sent the bunny interstellar, broken down into decade-by-decade overviews. All the greats are there, from the nude Marilyn Monroe that opened the worm tin back in 1953, through to the first published tuft of pubic

hair in '71, the starkers Madonna in the 80s, Debbie Harry's Bunny Girl days and all the all-America cuties we've dribbled over through the years. But let's not forget the articles: genuine political insight, big name short stories, stunningly imaginative illustration and probing interviews with stars and public figures. More than any other adult magazine, Playboy captured the aspirations of a nation of men and has continued to do so. And, boy, does this book know it. Worthy in tone, and prone to self-aggrandisement, (of the 'Without Playboy, we'd all be Mormons and the world would end' ilk), it's essentially a long, languid bout of self-love. The thing is, though, Hef and his posse did rather change the world, so, self-loving or not, it's only right we should all lean in and give them a hand in the celebration. **AL**