



Michael Stipe
photographed for BUTT
magazine in 2004 by
Wolfgang Tillmans.

Nice Butt

BUTT BOOK Ed. Jop van Bennekom
(Taschen) £16.99 ★★★★★

Matt Teasdale enjoys Jake Shears in a jockstrap and other highlights from the unflinching Dutch gay magazine



As gay culture becomes increasingly mainstream and homogenised, BUTT magazine stands out.

Rejecting the 'acceptable' model of homosexuality, every page of every issue of this quarterly is both very homo and very sexual. Comprising explicit Q&As and candid photographs, BUTT resembles a high-end fanzine. It's well written and designed, small, and printed on quality pink paper. The tone is funny, intelligent, interesting, unflinching and uncompromising.

Self-proclaimed 'International

Faggot Magazine For Interesting Homosexuals And The Men Who Love Them', BUTT's message is simple – the subversive side of gay (sub)culture is still thriving. It is a forum for artistic homosexual expression. As its contributing editor, Wolfgang Tillmans said: 'There's more to [gay culture] than spending money and getting drunk.' While the Scissor Sisters' brand of gay may be palatable to a large proportion of the UK's music-buying public, BUTT remains staunchly queer.

Started in 2001 in Amsterdam, BUTT is marking its fifth birthday with the publication of BUTT Book, an anthology of highlights from all the issues to date. Alongside features such as 'Boring interview with a random gay stranger', 'Embarrassing

interview with a one-night stand' and photographs of 'auto-fellatio man', Jake Shears of the Scissor Sisters is pictured in a jockstrap to accompany an article in which five of his old lovers answer probing questions about their relationships with him. Other musical highlights have included Michael Stipe's 2004 cover feature in which he defined his sexuality in 'non-gay queer' terms, Rufus Wainwright's recent discussion of everything from 'camp' to 'penetration' with designers Viktor & Rolf, and Stephin Merritt of the Magnetic Fields explaining why he likes to write music in grotty gay bars. These men aren't necessarily appearing in BUTT to promote their latest projects; they're in there because they love this magazine.

'I just like it when you open a magazine and you can be sure that you're looking at, or reading about, a guy who is at least bisexual,' explained co-founder Jop van Bennekom. 'It's almost like a club magazine of a group of gays, and we just interview people we are fascinated by.'