

City Rump

An ass-eye tour of New York with the editors of 'BUTT' magazine

by Mara Altman

December 26th, 2006 12:32 PM

Gert Jonkers bends down to pick up his shopping bags. His crack peeks out below his T-shirt hemline; I take the partial moon as an auspicious sign. In their less-than-100-hour visit from Holland, Gert and Jop Van Bennekom, the editors of the cult magazine *BUTT*, are dedicating two hours to helping me understand the components of an alluring butt. At least, that's the idea. Jop straps on his new shoes, purchased in Soho, so he can break them in while we check out the asses around town.



photo: Jorge Colombo

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The Finest Ass in New York

Photo gallery by Tricia Romano

Jop and Gert run *BUTT*, a small, pink publication with a homoerotic sensibility. They fill it with nude black-and-white photos, Q&A interviews, and anecdotes from readers around the world. The work of famous photographers like Terry Richardson and Wolfgang Tillmans often graces its pages; one image, Tillmans's "Bottoms," is taken from the perspective of an ant looking upward from between the straddled feet of a naked man. Extensive interviews with guys like Rufus Wainwright, Marc Jacobs, Gus Van Sant, and Michael Stipe make this publication more than just a porn-type mag that you'd toss after a fast flip-through. *BUTT* calls itself "the international faggot magazine for interesting homosexuals and the men who love them." It's a good read—for gay men, but for straight men and women too, it provides unusual insight into male desires and anxieties.

We stride up the Bowery. To Gert, an ass should be two perfectly round circles, really firm. "Like cheese wheels," he says, "you put two together and that's a description of a good ass." Jop describes a desirable ass as something that takes on a life of its own. "But I don't want to call it a bubble butt," he says. "It's not exactly a bubble butt."

They're dressed similarly. Both have on designer jeans—Jop in Acne and Gert in Dior. On top, they wear waist-length jackets and have light hair, kept at a half-inch length. Suddenly, our tour de ass takes a turn. Jop divulges a heartbreaking detail: He's more of a neck than ass man. Gert says it's broad chests that turn him on. Jop and Gert take nice asses for granted. They grew up in a country where people bicycle everywhere, toning the gluteus from a very young age. "The Dutch butt is very good," says Gert. "We come from an assy country."

We go east at Astor Place, heading for St. Marks Bookstore to check out the placement of *BUTT Book*. Taschen recently published this 560-page collection of highlights from the magazine's first five years. It includes stories like the one by an Israeli man who uses his boyfriend's asshole as a cookie mold, and the play-by-play account of a man breaking his "gay

holiday man-hymen" on the balcony of some Spanish hotel.

Gert and Jop protest a bit as I try to focus them on behinds, but I can't let their interest in other body parts get in the way of our quest: understanding the good butt, New York style. For Jop, there's one kind of ass that thrills him every time. "There is the black ass," he says. "Which is fantastic. They can be 50 and have a belly, but the ass is still there." Gert begins discussing the architecture of Cooper Square when I ask him to comment on a butt clad in baggy jeans by a kabob stand. "When there is a straight line from shoulder to knees," he says, "it's not good. A flat ass." Instead of rating this butt, Jop offers fashion advice. He explains that jeans don't do butts justice these days, especially mass-produced Walmart-quality apparel.