

SIZE MATTERS

With a subtle and playful curved line of graphite, Touko Laaksonen (affectionately known as Tom of Finland) changed how the world perceived the homosexual male. In mainstream American culture, gay men were generally believed to be limp-wrist sissies with flamboyant mannerisms because of stereotypes and generalizations perpetuated in popular entertainment. Enter Tom!

He shattered these pre-conceived notions and blurred the line between assumption and actuality by introducing the world to his uber-masculine "Men of Finland." These strong, strapping well-endowed men of disproportion would introduce a new barometer for male-on-male lust, forge a new identity for a community—and do this with both grace and distinction as well as undeniable eroticism (and hotness!).

Dian Hanson, and the remarkable team at TASCHEN publishing grace us with a truly beautiful and definitive collection of Tom's quite large—ahem—body of work. Suitably titled, *Tom of Finland: XXL* gives us unbridled access to the long-hidden archives of his art, in this 666-page, extra-extra-large, 12" x 16" format (size queens!). The book features clever, informative essays written by the likes of Armistead Maupin, John Waters and Todd Oldham who offer their insights about the true societal impact Finland had on the art world and the greater gay community.

And who can deny the simple pleasure of gawking—page after page after super-large page—at the hundreds of impossibly hot men drawn together and getting it on? Now you can stop wondering where all those circuit boys got their inspiration.

Undoubtedly, we gotta agree here: bigger is indeed better.
—**ROBERT TAFOYA**

