

THE HISTORY OF MEN'S MAGAZINES: TASCHEN UNDRESSES PRINT'S BLUE LEGACY.

WITH DESENSITIZATION COMES ACCEPTANCE. ONCE THOUGHT TO BE ENVELOPE PUSHING, SALACIOUS, AND DOWNRIGHT DIRTY, GIRLIE MAGAZINES WERE MOSTLY RELEGATED TO CRAMPED SOCK DRAWERS AND TUCKED BENEATH MATTRESSES THE WORLD OVER. IN THIS DAY AND AGE, WE CAN NOW LOOK AT THEM WITH A QUIANT CURIOSITY—WERE THINGS REALLY THAT REPRESSED?—AND A NOSTALGIC EYE FOR THE EXCELLENT DESIGN. EXHAUSTING AND INTRICATE, THE HISTORY OF MEN'S MAGAZINES IS A TROUSER-POPPING COLLECTION OF LAD MAGS BOTH POPULAR AND OBSCURE, OVERSEEN BY VETERAN PORN EDITOR DIAN HANSON AND PUBLISHED BY TASCHEN BOOKS.

Hanson, who helmed such notable under-the-counter delights as *Puritan*, *Oui*, *Juggs*, and *Leg Show*, has, for the past decade, headed Taschen's Sexy Book division. In a six-book chronicle of the rise of sex literature from the 1900s through its golden age in the '70s—when Hanson herself entered the business—*The History of Men's Magazines* explodes with eye candy from *Playboy* to *Nugget*, *Bizarre* to *Big Boobs and Beavers*. The encyclopedic work, totaling nearly 3,000 pages, follows the art form as it unfolds, both in form and function, legality and fetish.

Volume One of the collection begins in the early 1900s with French and German burlesque dancers posing in softcore photography that, while tame by today's standards, incensed the censors and titillated the early eros enthusiast. Even more shocking are turn-of-the-century "Tijuana bibles," which depicted black-and-white sketches of notable stars and cartoon characters, such as Flash Gordon and Bettie Boop, in fantastically graphic, carnal scenarios. By World War II, the word "pinup" had been coined to describe those pictures of the sultry female form torn from magazines and tacked to the barrack walls of homesick soldiers. Volume Two lays bare the boom in American men's magazines with dozens of playful women flouncing around, hosting the young pubescent's first

self-love adventure, and creating fantasies that held fast. Perhaps the

Volumes Three and Four enter the world of the swinging '60s and a whole new sexual revolution, during which hundreds of additional titles were openly available on street corners and newsstands worldwide. *Penthouse*, a Britain-based (later relocated to America, now Germany) institution birthed in 1965, was the first men's magazine to publish both full frontal nudity and "short and curlies" (a euphemism for the hair found atop the *mons pubis*). It was during this time that the epic legacy of the California

its ups and downs—with spread after spread of sheer-pantied, open-mouthed beauties. It's fun to look back upon bushes in the days of mini-skirts and Mustangs, and peep in on the life of a nymphet all gussied up for her photo shoot, sporting visibly dirty feet.

1973 saw a resurgence of the old tight-assed attitude towards the subject matter with the Supreme Court's establishment of the Miller Test, which was meant to define what was obscene, namely works that are considered to "lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value." Erotic magazines, of course, continued to be lumped into this outsider category, alongside pornography. At the time, Justice William O. Douglas of the Court mourned the motion's passing, lamenting that legally condoned censorship would "make a sharp and radical break with the traditions of a free society."

Regardless, the '70s forged ahead with new magazines throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia, as depicted in Volume Five. Volume Six rounds out the series with the decade's more extreme, inventive, outrageous, and niche magazines on the worldwide publishing scale.

An early fascination with the sexuality of the human body compelled Hanson as a little girl to make drawings of bodies and breasts, which she then felt she had to destroy, tearing the curvy figures to pieces and hiding them at the bottom of her family's trashcan. Several decades later, with the embarrassment and shame fully melted away, she has crafted a collection that may proudly

porn industry began to surge, while European publishing houses continued to push the boundaries of provocative and sexually creative printed material. Hanson documents the burgeoning industry—and all

line bookshelves in a rainbow of impeccable, expensive spines. No longer sequestered in seedy back rooms or viewing booths, pinups can now hold their heads (and legs) up high.

