

Welcome to BIZARR E S



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PHOTOS **NAOMI HARRIS**

Meet the Americans yanking over each other's partners

It's 3am, and the party is slowly coming to an end. Having spent hours swapping partners in an orgy in the adjoining room, the guests are hungry and crowd around a breakfast buffet that's been laid out for them by a man in a crisp, white chef's outfit. Photographer Naomi Harris takes a fruit salad and watches as a large, middle-aged woman – wearing nothing but six-inch high heels – fills her paper plate with prune pastries. "I knew then that I had to take photos of swingers. No-one else had, and I knew no-one would believe my story of this night if I didn't," says Naomi.

Earlier that day, Naomi had been relaxing on a Miami beach. A hatred of tan lines and

shopping for swimsuits had drawn her to the nudist area three years before, and she'd become good friends with a few of the regulars. Naomi had discovered that many of them were swingers, but it wasn't until a single guy, Roger, asked her to be his 'key' to a party that was being held in an abandoned strip mall, that she considered finding out more.

"Single women can go to swinger's parties, but not single men – they have to be escorted," explains Naomi. "He thought I might find the experience interesting. He said there were no strings attached, and I didn't have to do anything."

Have yer cake and eat it

That evening in 2002, Naomi stood in a small office building, surrounded by men

in shiny shirts, and women in fishnets, lace bras, leather mini skirts and stripper-style high heels. Aged 29, Naomi was by far the youngest and slimmest person there. For a while they gorged on the roast beef and potatoes at the buffet, having a few drinks, and making small talk. Then people started drifting into the next room and, taking her clothes off as required, Naomi followed.

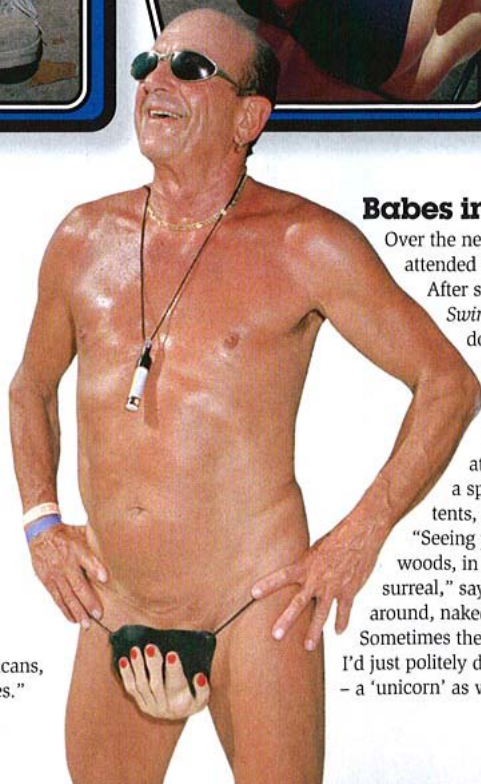
Inside she found mismatched mattresses pushed together under a low ceiling, and people having sex. "It was the funniest thing I'd ever



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seen – people eating all that food, and then having sex,” grins Naomi. “I expected it to be luxurious, with Egyptian cotton sheets and so on, but that stuff didn’t matter to them. The swinging community in the US is just a cross-section of normal Americans, minus the clothes.”



Babes in the woods

Over the next five years, Naomi attended more than 40 parties. After seeing the largest US event, *Swingstock*, featured in the TV documentary series *Real Sex*, she wangled an invite and things snowballed from there. In 2003 the four-day fornication festival was held at a campsite in Wisconsin, a sprawling makeshift city of tents, campers and RV buses. “Seeing people having sex in the woods, in bright sunlight, looks surreal,” says Naomi. “I was wandering around, naked, taking pictures of people. Sometimes they’d ask me to join in, but I’d just politely decline. As a single woman – a ‘unicorn’ as we’re called by swingers

– I was attractive to the couples, but no really means no at these events.”

Naomi found that the swingers were happy to be photographed, and some told her it added to their enjoyment. She left with invitations to other parties all over America, and threw herself into the scene. During the summer, when events are more frequent, Naomi went to two a week, and says it was a privilege to be welcomed because most private house parties and resort conventions have a strict no-cameras policy.

“I took many photographs of a fellow unicorn at *Swingstock*, a nurse named Martie, as she got more action than anyone else,” Naomi recalls. “She was running wild, and everyone was chasing her. Some of my favourite pictures are of Martie: one of her lying on a swing in the woods while a husband and wife service her, and a little crowd watches on, and another of her on the ‘boner chair’, a penis-shaped throne →



Swinging in the bushes at the 2003 *Swingstock* in Wisconsin

Rick and Diane got married in front of hundreds of nude friends at *Swingstock* 2001



Tim and his wife Nancy. Tim lost his leg aged four in an accident on the family farm, but swingers have never rejected him for his disability



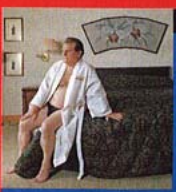
Bare-butt riding at *Strophia*, Mexico, 2005. Only hotties can go to the exclusive event



Matt munches on Stephanie's pudding



The *Sturpybowl* at Robin and Paul's house



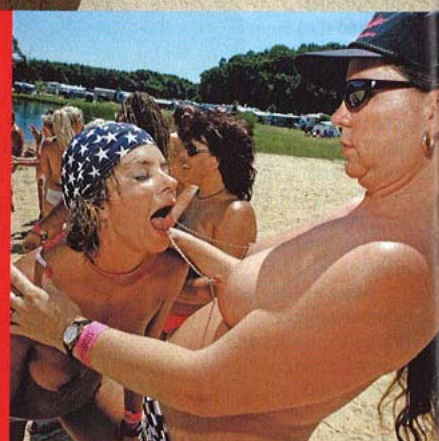
Founding father: DR ROBERT MCGINLEY

At my parties in the 1970s there would be 30-40 couples in a house set up for swinging, with a pool, an outdoor Jacuzzi, and a warm living room. At the start we talked and laughed. Some people had sex several times in one night, others only once, some not at all. But they still enjoyed themselves. Swinging isn't about having sex, it's about being in a sexually charged environment in which you're playing a part. It was more intimate in the 1970s and 1980s.



Hubby-swapper STEPHANIE

I'm totally in love with my husband, Matt, and I don't share that kind of love. But I'm also an animal and a sexual being. Experiencing another partner and coming back to the man I'm dedicated to is comforting, although I can get jealous if Matt gets someone better than the person I've got. I've always been bisexual, and my kids know that Matt and I swing. My son's girlfriend told me they now swing, and running into them is my biggest worry.





**American bi
JODI GREGGS**

My husband and I swing twice a year. He's OK with it, if it's a gal. But my husband wants to be

there if there's another guy. He prefers to find a couple and swap, but I prefer just to be with a woman. At *Swingstock* we're all 'naked', even if we've got clothes on. We're not trying to impress people, we're all equal. It's tough for me to achieve orgasm when swinging, and I go for the fun and attention. I'm not there just to see how many people I can screw.

she sat on for hours as people came by to play with her. Martie had the time of her life. She told me she had more than 50 orgasms over the course of that weekend."

Ethno-graphic

Naomi had a boyfriend in the period between the first party and *Swingstock*, and it wasn't until they broke up that she decided to dedicate her time to putting together a book proposal for the sex editor at Taschen publishing house. Within two years she'd clinched a deal, and took to swinging full time. "Taschen found my pictures erotic. We only tend to see one body type in the media, and not everyone fancies skinny, perfect girls," she says. "Amateur porn is successful now because it involves real people. You don't get more real than the people in my book."

Naomi's photographs represent the mainstream swinging community: white, middle-class, middle-aged, overweight people. There are parties for the young and beautiful, but they usually involve couples getting together to fool around, strip naked and then go home to have sex with their partners. However, at *Utopia*, an exclusive event held at a resort in

Mexico, Naomi took pictures of a young woman called Kylie who wanted her husband to organise a 26-person gang-bang in their hotel room for her 26th birthday. Her hubby dutifully went around the pool asking for volunteers, but he only managed to recruit one couple and a girl gagging to use a strap-on for the first time, so he gave up.

They've since divorced, as have a number of other couples profiled in the book. "At parties, everyone tells me that swinging is the glue that holds their marriage together," Naomi explains, "but when I called couples up for interviews later on, a good few of them were separated, so I don't know if that's true."

Swapping plum sauce

Many of the swinging set throw normal holiday parties, at Christmas and Easter and so on, with sex on the side. At a Thanksgiving dinner held by friends who often swing together, the group of couples sat around a long dining table, naked, chatting over turkey and cranberry sauce. Before dessert was served, two of the diners got sidetracked and started having sex on the table. When Naomi got her camera out, the woman accidentally dropped her foot in the pecan pie. "I got so hungry later on that I ate a slice of that pie," Naomi admits. "I'd been around so many bodily fluids by then, I figured it didn't matter."

But while some swingers like fine dining, others prefer fast-food-style sex. When Naomi went to a *Superbowl* party held by married couple Robin and Paul, three men snacking on cocktail sausages and giant bags of chips were being pleased by their partners as they watched the game. When it was over they swapped with their friends around the kitchen table. "It was a typical *Superbowl* party, but with sex," explains Naomi, "There's nothing more American than football, beer and blow jobs."

Swinging parties are, on the whole, a purely heterosexual affair when it comes to men. Women are encouraged to be bisexual, partly so they can play among themselves if the men



can no longer perform. But as Naomi explains, "If there are many people on a bed and a guy's foot touches another guy's foot, the men make a big scene and have to ensure that everyone knows they're not gay."

All for one and one for all

Aside from this taboo, Naomi found that swingers are open-minded and inclusive, only shunning people at parties for having bad personalities, or nasty BO. Tim, half of a married couple that Naomi met, had lost one of his legs when he was a child during an accident on his family farm, but was welcomed by the swinging community. "Tim didn't date anyone at high school," Naomi explains. "He was an outsider, and a virgin when he met his wife. Yet in all the years he's been swinging, no-one has turned him down because of his disability. Swingers don't have an issue with his disability, but conventional people do."

Naomi admits that her experiences have changed her. "I was never disgusted by those people - in fact, I was amazed by them," she says. "I'd see a 250-pound woman getting screwed by different guys and having orgasm after orgasm, and I'd be thinking, 'Why has this never happened to me?' I'd always thought that I was hang-up free and open to anything, but swinging women made me feel as though I wasn't operating on all cylinders. They aren't traditional beauties, but they don't care that they've got a spare tyre or their boobs sag to their waist. They have great sex because they make sure the other person is having a good time, otherwise no-one will want to swing with them."

But rather than turning her on, Naomi suspects that all those years of watching others going at it "numbed" her to sex, and she hasn't been in a relationship since. →



Cock-cart racing at the 2007 *Swingstock* in Minnesota

