

CLASSIC DRIVER

Ears looking at you, Hugh

Lead

The late Frederic W. Goudy, America's most prolific designer of print typefaces, once said that "The old fellows stole all our best ideas".

At the age of 87, Hugh Hefner could fairly be described as an 'old fellow' - he was recently seen navigating Disneyland on a mobility scooter - but there can't be a younger fellow out there who doesn't wish he had beaten Hef to the idea of producing a magazine called Playboy.

A kitchen table and a bottle blonde



Hefner assembled the inaugural issue on his kitchen table in 1953, choosing to decorate the cover with a bottle blonde called Marilyn Monroe who was also featured inside, as naked as the day she was born. For the first articles, Hefner called on friends and acquaintances in the literary trade - many of whom went on to become household names - and used his skill as a professional cartoonist and illustrator to fill in the gaps. It proved to be a winning formula.

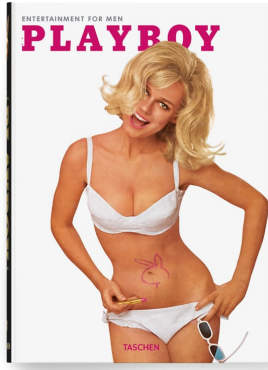


A combination of beautiful, tastefully arranged nudes, intelligent articles by well-known people and an open-minded editorial attitude made Playboy the world's top-selling men's magazine - at one time (long before the age of the Internet and the bargain boob job) it boasted 15 million readers per month. And, as a branding exercise, Playboy could scarcely have done better. After just four years on the newsstands, a New York reader sent off a letter with the magazine's signature symbol of a bow-tied bunny head as the only form of address - and it was delivered directly to the office door.

A six-volume Playboy anthology



Now, to mark the 60th anniversary of the magazine, Hefner has collaborated with Taschen, the celebrated publisher of lavish coffee table books, to produce a new edition of 'The Life and Times of Hugh M. Hefner' which reveals hitherto unheard details of his career, from his years as a cartoon-drawing schoolboy to a household name. Focusing on Playboy's golden years - the quarter-century from 1953 - 1979 - the six-volume anthology is enhanced with a selection of each era's sauciest centrefolds, as well as some literary masterpieces by contributors such as Gore Vidal, Ian Fleming and Norman Mailer.



Reproductions of previously unseen original artwork and letters are also included, along with hundreds of newly released photographs that capture some of the behind-the-scenes happenings at Hefner's Playboy mansion, various Playboy clubs and even in the legendary Big Bunny (aka 'Hare Force One') which was one of the first private jets to be fitted out like an airborne penthouse, with luxurious seating, full-sized televisions - and, of course, a king-sized bed. Oh, Hef - those were the days...

Photos: 2013 Playboy Enterprises Internation Inc./Taschen
Gallery

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