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DECEMBER 2014

SOUTH AFRICA



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PLAYBOY

2014

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PLAYBILL

THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

Tis the season of giving, and we know how to give graciously and in abundance. Our pictorials, of course, have a holiday theme. In keeping with the notion that all Christmases must be white and frosty, we bring you our **American Playmate of the Year – Kennedy Summers** – decking the halls and getting festive. Further north and further back in time, we throwback to another **Canadian Playmate of the Year, Jayde Nicole**, whose cosy alpine hut beckons you to come inside and get warm, if she hasn't got your temperature soaring already. If you want it even hotter, our Oh, Santa, Baby! pictorial will make you feel both naughty and nice and wishing **Ali Rose and Elizabeth Marx** were in front of your fire this Christmas. We'll bet you'll be promising to be a good boy all year if we promise to bring you more of these two elves next year.

December in South Africa, however, is hot to begin with. Sun high in the sky, the smell of suntan lotion and coconut cocktails. Lush, and lovely, we all know that summer in SA is paradise but add to this mix our **Miss December, Michelle Chrystal**, and she'll make a fitting Eve in our paradise. Besides, Michelle has her own fire inside: a passion for dance. A day without dance for her is incomplete. And once you've met Michelle, a day without her will also seem unacceptable.

If you find yourself trying to catch your breath after all of this, you should read our feature on **Wim Hof in "The Ice Man Cometh."** What this guy can do with his body in typically life-threatening situations will blow your mind. Should you prefer to rely on someone, or something, else to get you out of danger, and if you have enough bucks to do so, you can now buy **the ultimate defender – a highly-trained attack dog**. Find out how they are trained, what they can do, and how much they cost in "Attack! Good Boy."

On the lighter side, we bring you some interesting new **lifestyle trends** in our Playboy Playbook and the Best Bars line-up. And we take the mickey out of all our different generations – **the Baby Boomers, Millennials, Gen-Xers**, etc. You name it, we've got fodder to attack or defend. We'll also give you some tips on what to do with your 'stache now that Movember is over, where to go if you travel to Oslo, which are the most awesome highways in the USA to drive, and offer you some decadent ideas for festive food and drink.

Of course, we have our regulars like The Interview, with **Joaquin Phoenix**, and 20Q with **Charlie Day**. Fiction is from local author Justine Loots, one of the writers who is included in the Short.Sharp.Stories awards anthology, **Adults Only**. And, since we are at the end of a year, we also have a series of 2014 Reviews on Films, Games, Books and Music.

We wish you peace and joy over the holidays. Be safe. And, as always, enjoy the read.



CONTENTS
PLAYBOY

FEATURES

- 32** THE PLAYBOY PLAYBOOK
- 60** TALKIN' 'BOUT YOUR GENERATION
- 80** THE ICE MAN COMETH
- 98** BEST BARS
- 112** MOD MEN
- 118** ATTACK! GOOD BOY



REGULARS

- 08** AUDIENCE CONNECTION
- 52** 20Q: CHARLIE DAY
- 79** PLAYBOY PARTY JOKES
- 104** INTERVIEW: JOAQUIN PHOENIX
- 126** THE PLAYBOY ADVISOR
- 132** FICTION: UNCAGED BY JUSTINE LOOTS
- 138** MEN'S FORUM: YOU ARE NOT ALONE
- 140** WOMEN'S FORUM: LET ME EAT CAKE



All I Want for Christmas:
Angela Taylor by Tony Kelly



PLAYLIST

- 22** FILMS: ON CIRCUIT NOW
- 24** ENTERTAINMENT: MEDIA MUST HAVES
- 26** MUSIC: REVIEW 2014
- 36** SAFE SEX: BEYOND CONDOMS
- 56** GAMES: REVIEW 2014
- 58** SEX: HOOKING UP
- 87** READ: BOOK REVIEWS

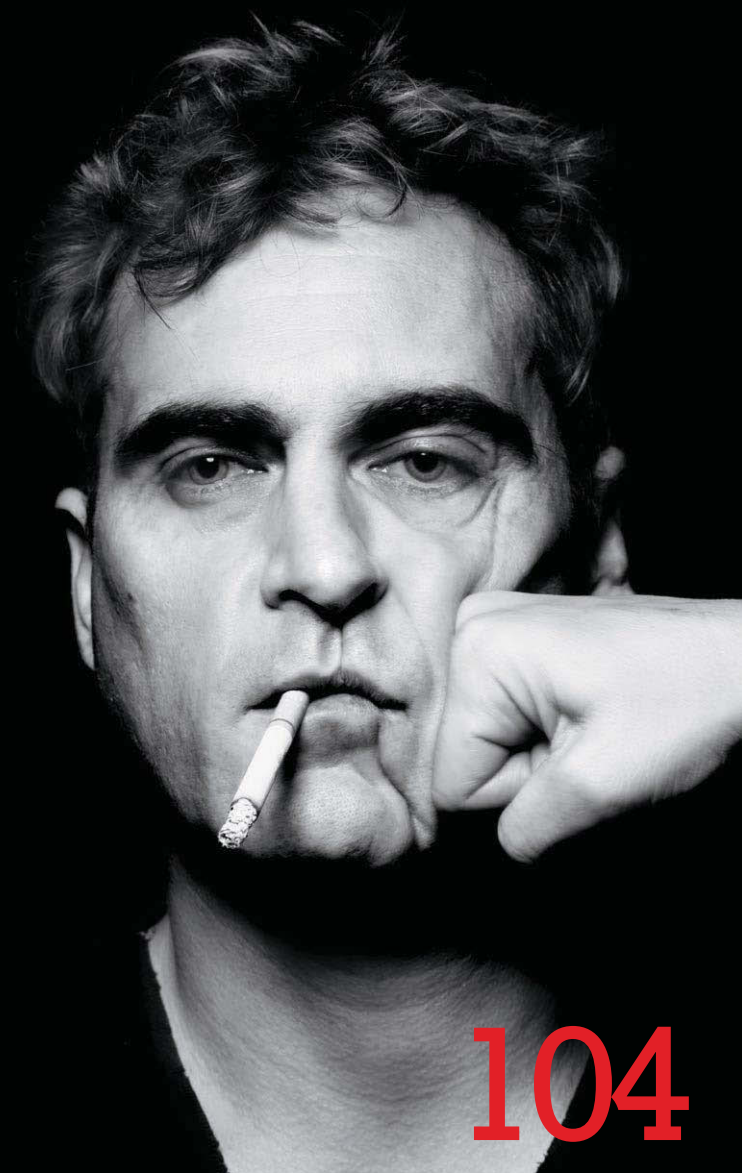
LIFESTYLE

- 28** DRINK: ROSÉ RISING
- 30** FASHION: JUNGLE LOVE
- 38** FOOD: SIR MIXALOT
- 116** MOTORING: SUMMERTIME ROLLS
- 128** TRAVEL: WIZARDS OF OSLO
- 130** GENTS CORNER: STRUT YOUR STACHE



PICTORIALS

- 10** JINGLE BELLS: KENNEDY SUMMERS BY JOSH RYAN
- 40** CANADIAN COOL: JAYDE NICOLE BY ARNY FREYTAG
- 66** PLAYMATE MISS DECEMBER, MICHELLE CHRYSTAL BY DANNY STEYN
- 88** OH, SANTA, BABY: ELIZABETH MARXS & ALI ROSE BY HOLLY RANDALL
- 144** WINK: DORA MESZAROS BY ISTVAN BOROS



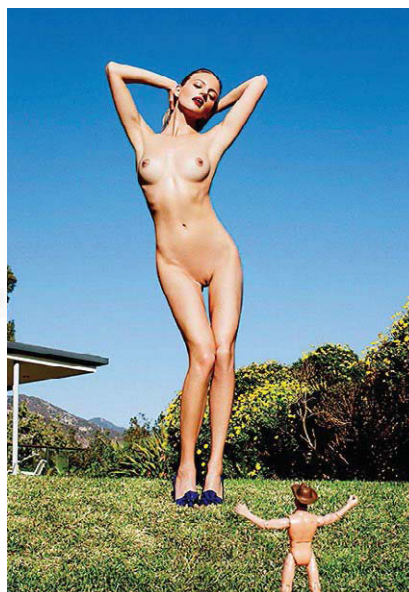
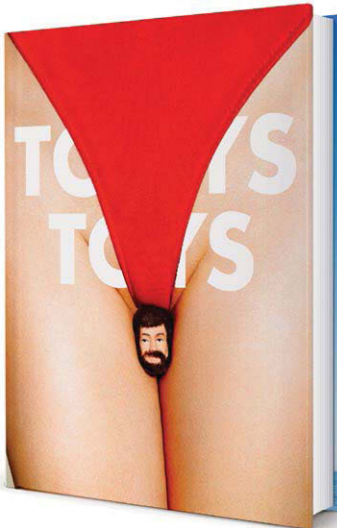
SWEET TREATS

Sugarplums and fairies have nothing on gingerbread and the girls of the Mansion. Leading up to Christmas last year for example, Kimberly Phillips, Melissa Dawn Taylor, Trisha Frick, Crystal and Caya Heffner made gingerbread houses. Fun in the Sun guests decorated gingerbread men and then sank their teeth into them.



TONYS TOYS

Senior Contributing Photographer Tony Kelly has conceived a new spin on babes in toyland. For a PLAYBOY shoot four years ago he juxtaposed little plastic men with real-life gorgeous women. Kelly kept playing and now has a 96-page collection called *Tonys Toys*. "It is a social commentary on a man's journey," he says. "Even the highest masculine form, the action hero, turns into a diminutive bendy toy in the presence of a striking woman." It's a tongue-in-cheek, G.I.-Joe-in-crotch meditation on the fairer sex holding all the power, using models and Playmates to illustrate Kelly's point of view. Self-published and hand-stitched, the collection comes in a limited print run of 1,000 copies and is available now. Kelly says, "This is not a book - it is an experience."



CELEBRITY CHEF JUDY JOO IN THE PLAYBOY CLUB KITCHEN

Judy Joo is the executive chef at the Playboy Club London, where her menu is almost as extensive as her media appearances (*Iron Chef UK*, *Iron Chef America*, *Shape* magazine). Our favorite bite is the Hef Burger: a "wagyu beef burger, rich in every way, with a choice of truffle ketchup or saffron aioli."



ED'S PICKS FROM FULL NUDE PICTORIALS

Ashley Heinrichs, Miss September
www.playboy.co.za/playmates/ashley-heinrichs
 In case you missed your favorite Playmate's pictorial, you can now see some of our Ed's picks from her shoot on our website just by registering as a free member at www.playboy.co.za. Or, you can always go get a back copy of her digital issue at MySubs www.bit.ly/YEbgkw or ZINIO www.bit.ly/GQ78VD



LOCAL EVENTS

The silly season of celebrating has begun. Follow us on Facebook or check our website to see where our lovely Playmates will be. In November, Sonny Naidoo hosted us at The Chill Bar again and, as usual, a great time was had by all. Watch this space for more...



Where old friends meet

PRESENTS

29 NOV **NEW PLAYMATE SEARCH** 8pm-late



PLAYBOY



DO YOU FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM?

We're starting to have some fun on Instagram. Come and play.

www.instagram.com/playboymagsa


<http://bit.ly/1kYFb2G>



WE LOVE OUR 3 MILLION+ FACEBOOK FANS

To say thank you to all our fans, we are giving away some VIP subscription vouchers. Make sure you like us on Facebook and are a member of our website, and you could be one of the lucky fans. Being a member, for free, means you get sneak peeks behind the scenes, find out what's happening with our local Playmates and Playmates from around the world, and get privileged access to the PLAYBOY lifestyle. <http://bit.ly/1kYFb2G>

JINGGLE



As voluptuous as Venus and as brainy as Madame Curie, Kennedy Summers has our temperature rising. With 12 years of modeling under her garter belt, Kennedy has a bachelor's degree in anthropology and is currently in medical school while simultaneously finishing her master's in health administration. "I'm so busy, my dog is lucky if he gets a one-hour walk," she says, laughing. Her ambition is to become a plastic surgeon. "It's a job where people come to me and leave happy, not sad," she says. Not that she's all work and no play. The Berlin-born, Virginia-raised

bombshell lists classic rock, Broadway theater, the Pittsburgh Steelers and sex as a sampling of her other passions. "Oh, I adore sex," she coos. As for modeling, Kennedy is just about done with that part of her career. "I wanted my grand finale in the profession to be as a PLAYBOY Playmate," she says. "Playmates are so iconic, they'll never go out of style. I thought it would be the coolest job I could go out with." Not only was Kennedy Miss December in 2013, but she also became the US Playmate of the Year. "Merry Christmas, world," she says, "here's me, naked!"

REFLECTIONS

KENNEDY SUMMERS BY JOSH RYAN

























MOVIE OF THE MONTH

THE INTERVIEW

BY STEPHEN REBELLO

In our social-networking-savvy era, movie stars James Franco and Seth Rogen hear firsthand when they're hated or loved. But it took the two actors' new romantic action-comedy to spark a full-on geopolitical

war of words. In the movie, the CIA enlists a moronic tabloid-TV host (Franco) and his producer (Rogen) to assassinate erratic, nuclear-armed North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un (Randall Park).

In the real world, state sources in Pyongyang promised "merciless" retaliation against the U.S. if President Obama doesn't halt the release of what Korean officials have called a "wanton act of terror" by "gangster moviemakers." Rogen got ahead of the controversy, wisecracking on Twitter, "People don't usually want to kill me for one of my movies until after they've paid 12 bucks to

see it." Sony appears to be taking North Korea's saber rattling seriously enough to make several concessions, including digitally altering buttons worn by the North Korean military and, maybe, changing a scene in which the face of Kim Jong-un gets melted off. As for Rogen, when Pyongyang announced the despotic film buff would see *The Interview*, the star tweeted, "I hope he likes it!"

ALSO SHOWING IN THEATERS



EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS

Take director Ridley Scott at his word when he promises this biblical saga is "fucking huge." The epic features massive horseback battles, hailstorms, thousands of extras, a special-effects parting of the Red Sea and Christian Bale's Moses shepherding the Hebrews out of Egypt. Sigourney Weaver (who worked with Scott on *Alien*) adds to the spectacle.



AMERICAN SNIPER

Clint Eastwood puts Bradley Cooper through his paces in this action-heavy drama based on the autobiography of real-life elite Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle. A conservative Texan, Kyle was deployed to Iraq for four grisly, high-stakes tours from 2003 to 2009 and is credited by the Pentagon with killing more than 150 people. Sienna Miller plays his wife.



THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES

Based largely on J.R.R. Tolkien's appendices in *The Lord of the Rings*—along with beefed-up roles for the elves, Ian McKellen's Gandalf and Luke Evans's dragon-slaying Bard—Peter Jackson's third and final installment of his Middle-earth adventure promises an epic clash of elves, trolls and orcs fighting a war to rule them all.

ALLEN LEECH



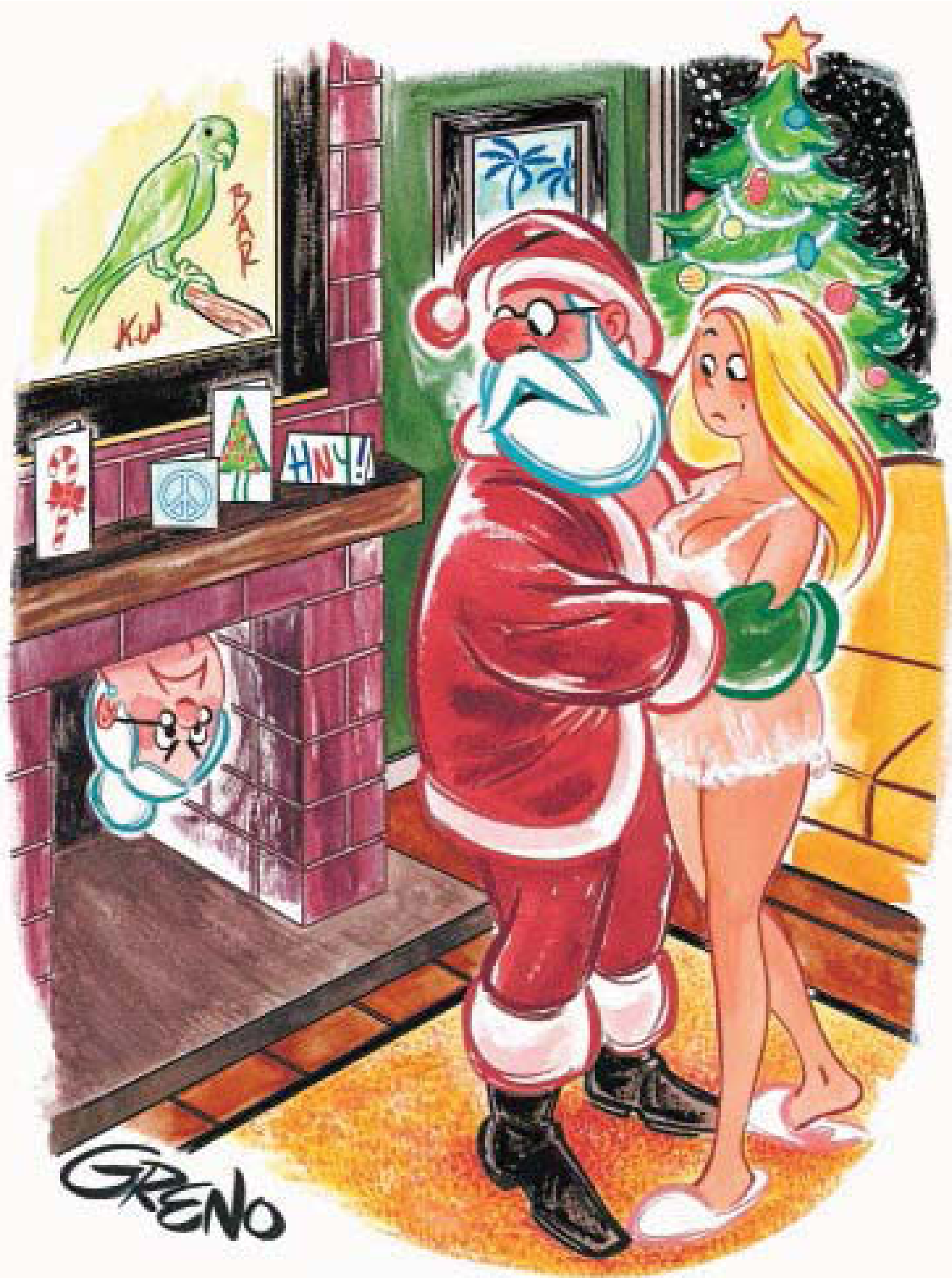
THE DOWNTON ABBEY ACTOR GETS CRACKING IN THE WORLD WAR II-ERA IMITATION GAME

PLAYBOY: There's Oscar buzz for *The Imitation Game*, in which you play real-life Scotsman John Cairncross, one of a team of British experts who race to crack the Germans' Enigma code. What about this movie appealed to you?

LEECH: Alan Turing [played by Benedict Cumberbatch] single-handedly broke the unbreakable code, which had an enormous impact on ending World War II. Turing's name should be known all around the world, but it isn't. I was struck by the story of an unsung hero. So much of his life was covered up because of his homosexuality.

PLAYBOY: The actors on *Downton Abbey* look cool in vintage costumes, but what's it like to have to wear them?

LEECH: *Downton Abbey* is set in the 1920s, and people back then must have hated to hear that gong go off for breakfast, lunch and dinner, because it meant having to wear starched shirts and changing clothes three times a day. *The Imitation Game* is set in the 1940s, when clothes became more comfortable. But you still feel different wearing those than if you were sitting around in boardshorts.



"It's my wife!"

12 MEDIA MUST-HAVES

BY GREG FAGAN

1. SPARTACUS: THE COMPLETE SERIES LIMITED EDITION BLU-RAY
The statuette packaged with this Amazon exclusive depicts TV's favorite gladiator turned slave-revolt leader Spartacus kebabbing an opponent with a spear. All editions include new bonus material. **R2,000**

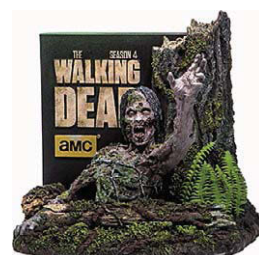


2. STANLEY KUBRICK: THE MASTERPIECE COLLECTION
Two new documentaries (one feature length) explore director Stanley Kubrick's life and enduring influence in this Amazon-only set, which also contains Blu-rays of eight of his films, from Lolita (1962) to Eyes Wide Shut (1999). **R2,000**

3. GHOSTBUSTERS 1 & 2 LIMITED EDITION GIFT SET
A "class-five full-roaming vapor" in the original 1984 film and its 1989 sequel, Slimer attains team-mascot status in the animated spin-off. He's a numbered figurine in this set, which also includes new 30th-anniversary bonus material. **R1,500**



4. THE WALKING DEAD: SEASON 4 LIMITED EDITION BLU-RAY
In an especially creepy touch, the Walker statue's arm and head pivot when you remove the discs' case from the base. All editions include deleted and extended scenes, commentaries and other bonuses. **R1,300**



5. X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST DELUXE EDITION
The best X movie yet? Maybe. But the Magneto helmet included in this Amazon exclusive has no rival in the X-Men swag spectrum. If it fits on a kitten's head, expect to see it in your Facebook news feed over the holidays. **R3,00**



6. HERZOG: THE COLLECTION LIMITED EDITION
Sixteen films from German master Werner Herzog make Blu-ray debuts in this set, including the dramas he made with actor Klaus Kinski and several of his gleefully idiosyncratic documentaries. **R1,600**

7. STAR TREK: THE COMPENDIUM
This pairing of Star Trek (2009) and Star Trek Into Darkness (2013) compiles bonuses that were split among various retailers in 2013 and weaves all the theatrical IMAX footage into the sequel's Blu-ray. **R450**



8. THE SOPRANOS: THE COMPLETE SERIES BLU-RAY
Does Tony Soprano survive the landmark show's ambiguous conclusion? Series creator David Chase still sidesteps when asked. Just enjoy one of TV's all-time best shows in high definition, and try to fuhgeddaboutit. **R2,800**

9. TRUE BLOOD: THE COMPLETE SERIES BLU-RAY
Released the same day as the final-season collection of HBO's vampire drama, this set rewards fans who waited for a single box that includes digital copies of every episode of every season. **R3,000**

10. THE OFFICE: THE COMPLETE SERIES DVD
Like Cheers before it, The Office evolved through cast changes while remaining fun and inventive. With 201 episodes from nine seasons and reams of bonuses, it's comedy comfort food served by Steve Carell. **R2,000**



11. STEVEN SPIELBERG DIRECTOR'S COLLECTION BLU-RAY
With Duel, The Sugarland Express, Jaws, E.T., 1941, Always and the first two Jurassic Park movies, this set traces Spielberg's rise from wunderkind to mogul. A booklet adds to the on-disc bonuses. **R2,000**

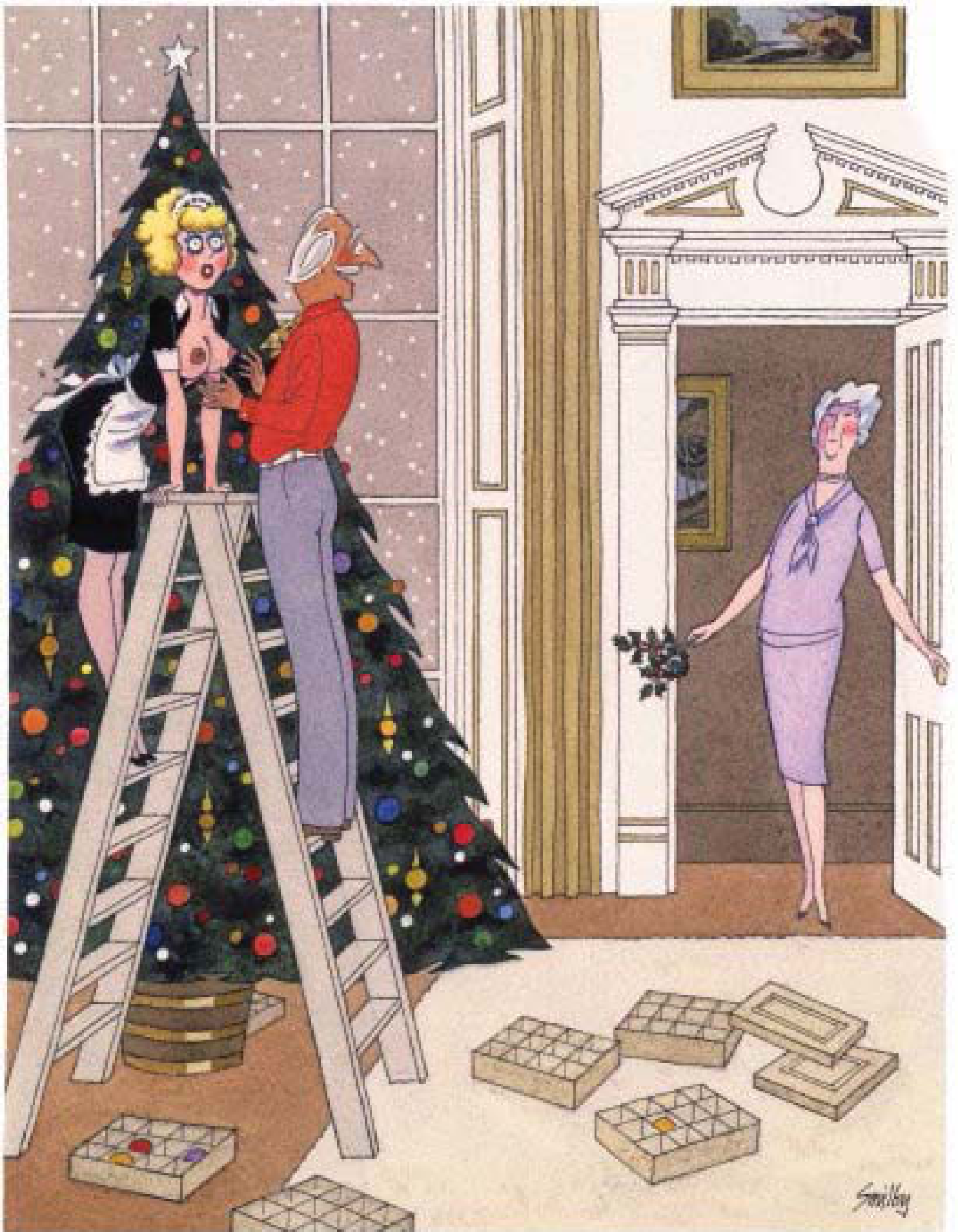
12. JOHN WAYNE: THE EPIC COLLECTION DVD
This deluxe 40-film compendium of the big man's films comes packed with 17 artifacts of memorabilia in a bound collector's book. Amazon's exclusive edition adds a Duke belt buckle that is absolutely perfect. **R1,500**



PULP: A FILM ABOUT LIFE, DEATH AND SUPERMARKETS

BY ROB TANNENBAUM

"I like music that makes you think," a fan declares in Pulp: A Film About Life, Death and Supermarkets, director Florian Habicht's documentary about the clever U.K. alternative rock band. At the center of the film is wry, bespectacled singer Jarvis Cocker, whom a bandmate fondly describes as being "a little bit obsessed" with sex. As the group prepares to play a late-2012 hometown concert in Sheffield, Habicht portrays the city by chatting with a motley array of eccentrics: fans, tour crew, pensioners, a librarian. For HD viewers, a warning: Everyone in Sheffield seems to have hideous teeth.



"Just giving Suzette a hand with the Christmas baubles, my dear."

Music Reviews

of 2014

BY ROB TANNENBAUM



SHARON JONES AND THE DAP-KINGS

Last year surgeons cut out Sharon Jones's gallbladder and parts of her pancreas and small intestine after she was diagnosed with cancer. But the 57-year-old soul dynamo sounds whole on *Give the People What They Want*, the best album of an underdog career. Her music expresses a personal resilience: Overlooked by record labels, Jones toiled as a corrections officer and was in her mid-40s when she released her first album. Amid R&B horns and shoop-shoop harmonies, she reprimands a no-good man on "You'll Be Lonely" by demanding r-e-s-p-e-c-t. Cancer messed with the wrong broad.



EMA

Erika M Anderson hates technology and loves it too, so on *The Future's Void*, her second album as EMA, she celebrates it by telling us how much it sucks. In 11 ominous songs she coos or caterwauls about satellites, selfies and dead celebrities over an indie-rock mix of hooks and what she calls "harsh tones." Maybe modern life is "just a big advertising campaign," as she sings, but these smart, chilly critiques couldn't exist without her mastery of synths, drum machines and other technology.



ARE WE THERE

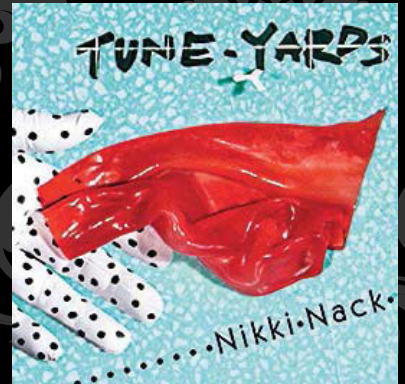
We don't have any inside dope on Sharon Van Etten's personal life, but based on *Are We There*, we'd be shocked to learn she's in a happy, loving relationship. Most of this New York singer's slow-moving fourth album seems to occur in the final, exhausted moments of a breakup, which may be why her lyrics feel like private communications. (What could "Send in the owl" mean? Or "I washed your dishes, then I shit in your bathroom"?) Van Etten has a gift for dramatizing misery and stasis in her late-night ballads and can drag out the word nothing until it feels like a conversation that will never end. Her songs are soft but never gentle.

NIKKI NACK

Merrill Garbus is blunt about it: The oddball stylization she uses for the name of her music project, tUnEzArDs, is "intended to annoy people." Those letters symbolize her commitment to the unexpected, as heard on two previous albums full of dazzling invention and now on a new, even better one, *Nikki Nack*.

Her theme seems to be the moral idiocy of America. "I come from the land of slaves / Let's go Redskins, let's go Braves" is a

lyric written with the knowledge that it will be quoted. Garbus sings obliquely about violence, power and how close our society is to ruin. But mostly what you hear in her repertoire is the joy of uninhibited vocal whoops, discordant harmonies and the jarring, dynamic disruptions she adds to funky beats. Every 20 seconds her songs surprise you with sharp turns or unexpected sounds. We can't promise that you'll like Garbus's musical whirlwinds, only that you'll be astonished.



KILLER MIKE OF RUN THE JEWELS

Q: Your partner El-P tweeted that you two consumed two ounces of sativa, an ounce of mushrooms and four grams of hash while recording the new Run the Jewels album, *RTJ2*. True?

A: For the whole album, I'd say we had almost a pound of weed and 21 grams of hash. No, only my wife and El smoked hash, so I'd say 14 grams. And shrooms.



Q: What was your first impression of El?

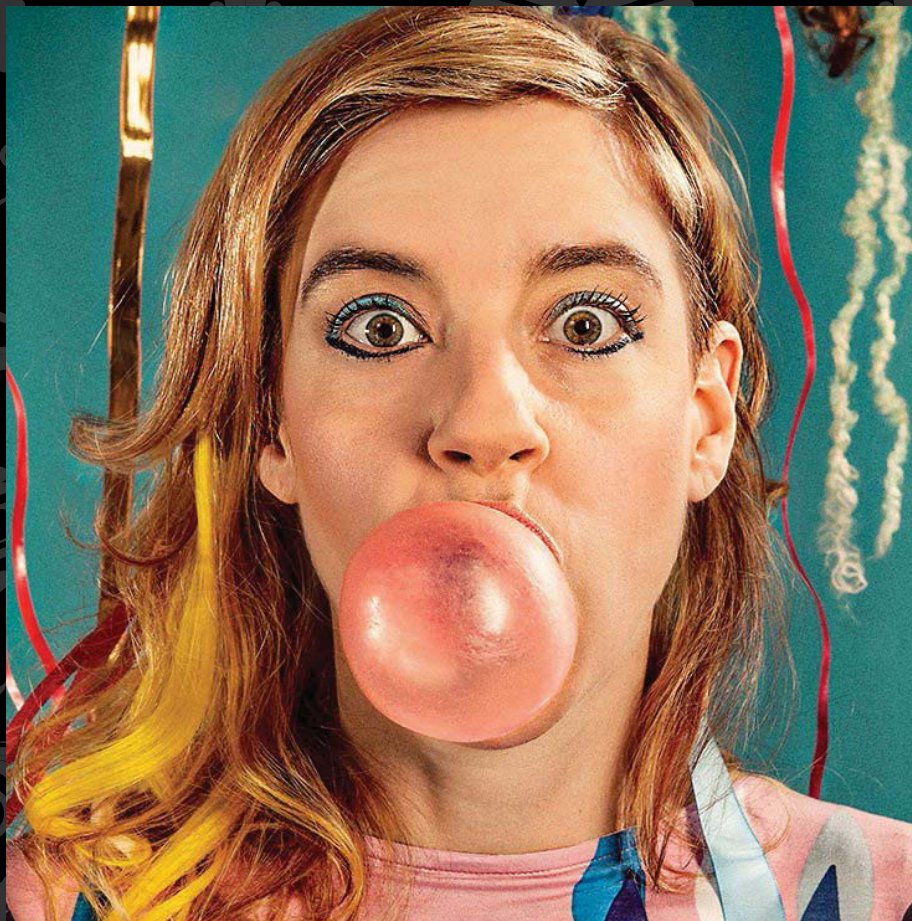
A: That he's a typical New York guy: confident, gruff, assertive. I'm a typical Southerner. Even if we're saying the cruelest thing, we usually end with please and thank you.

Q: You're unique in rap for your concern about constitutional rights.

A: I'm a fierce fighter for constitutional rights because I like pornography, I like praising whatever god I choose, I like marijuana and I own guns. I'll even defend the KKK's right to protest.

Q: You've said Run the Jewels is the greatest rap duo ever. Really? With only two records?

A: I have to think that; I'm a rapper. We are the best



ANGELS & DEVILS

Kevin Martin, a.k.a. the Bug, isn't one of those electronic producers who want their music to sound like a beach party – he'd rather it sound like an itch that's bleeding or a broken-down car sputtering in a dim alley. "Ugh! Sickness!" shouts MC Ride of Death Grips in one of 10 guest appearances that punctuate *Angels & Devils*, the Bug's latest offering. In his diseased world, drum machines are snipers, whispers are probably threats and distortion hangs in the air like rain clouds. If you listen through earphones, it's not just brilliantly layered and detailed music, it's the scariest movie of the year.



ROSÉ RISING

IF YOU THINK DRINKING PINK IS UNMANLY, IT'S TIME TO REVISIT ROSÉ

For decades, cheap pink "white" zinfandels dominated the wine market, sadly sullyng the reputation of rosé for most men. But with the top-quality versions available today, it's becoming hard to find a bad bottle. Typically made from red grapes whose juices have been left in contact with the skins just long enough to tint the wine, rosé has enough backbone to justify drinking it beyond summer. (FYI: Hemingway dug the Spanish stuff.) Here are three bottles that just might have you calling it brosé.



PINK PONG

Play a vinous version of beer pong with wine glasses and rosé. Wine is three times stronger than beer, so keep your game short.



1. Saved Rosé, 2013

This delicious and dry California rosé comes from winemaker Clay Brock and tattoo artist Scott Campbell (Kanye and Robert Downey Jr. sport his ink). Campbell also designed the label.



2. Bastianich Rosato, 2012

Restaurateur and MasterChef judge Joe Bastianich is the man behind this refreshing, food-friendly wine from Italy's Friuli region. It has enough weight and tannin to appeal to red-wine drinkers.



3. Miraval Côtes de Provence Rosé, 2013

Rosé from France's Provence region is considered the benchmark in the category. Miraval's crisp and seductively aromatic version is one of the best.





"Okay, I get it – you're jolly. Now show me what's in the bag."



JUNGLE LOVE

GET SOME COLOR THIS SUMMER WITH TOUGH AND TROPICAL GRAPHIC PRINTS

In the past few years superbright patterned clothes have become the madcap uniform of summer. We say leave the wackier stuff for the kids at the music festivals and Clifton pool parties, and wear something with a tropical jungle vibe. We're not talking baggy Hawaiian shirts but slimmed-down clothes like this lightweight bright linen camo shirt from LimoLand (www.shoplimoland.com). When going graphic, just be sure not to go head to toe with the look.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN SAELINGER



High Hat

Sometimes a baseball hat looks a little too sporty when you're hanging at the beach. This jungle bucket hat from Neff is crushable and packable and can be soaked in the water for low-tech AC.

- Neff jungle bucket hat, R290

www.pacsun.com



Palm Squad

The Massachusetts company Penfield makes this zippable wallet, suitable for buying a round of drinks at any poolside bar-and for securing your cash and loose change should you get too tipsy.

- Lostville zip wallet, R350

www.penfield.com



Get Shorty

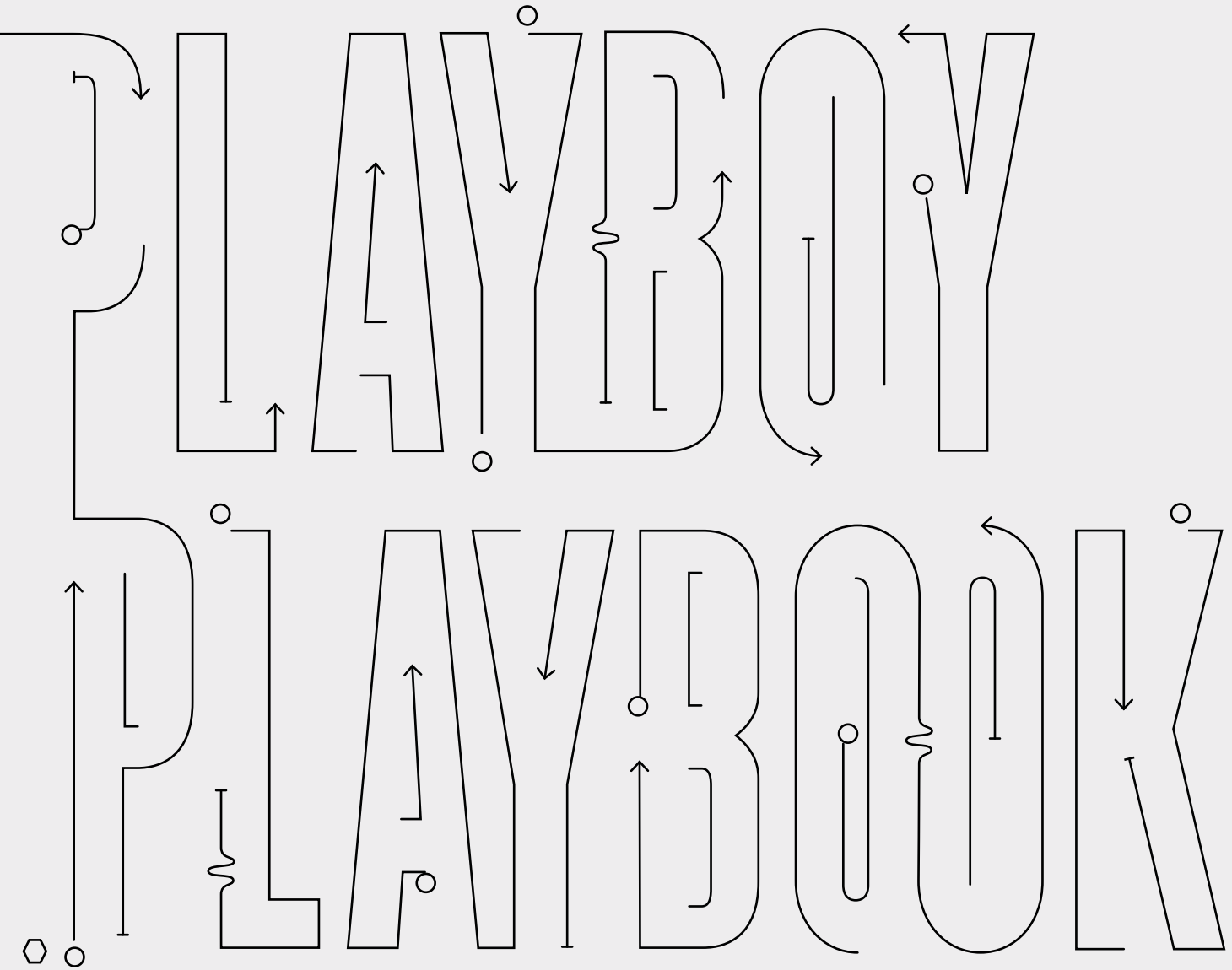
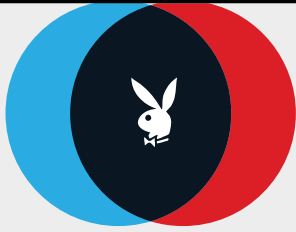
These lightweight oxford cotton shorts from Gitman Vintage are loud and proud and made in the USA. With shorts this bold you should keep your shirt on the quiet side-as in a white tee.

- Bahia shorts, R1,800

www.gitmanvintage.com



"How many times do you have to sleep with someone before you put them on your Christmas card list?"



UPGRADE
2014

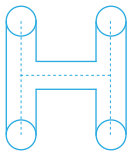
BRING YOUR
A-GAME TO
LIVING WELL
WITH THESE
WINNING
STRATEGIES
FOR THE
MODERN
GENTLEMAN

December is the perfect month to take stock of what's in your closet, in your garage, on your itinerary and in your glass. It's a fast-paced world and chances are things have changed a bit since you last looked. Those clothes? You could have designed them. That car? It might just be on the verge of outdated. That drink? You could have mixed it with your own custom booze. With our playbook it's time to take your game to the next level.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE MCKENDRY

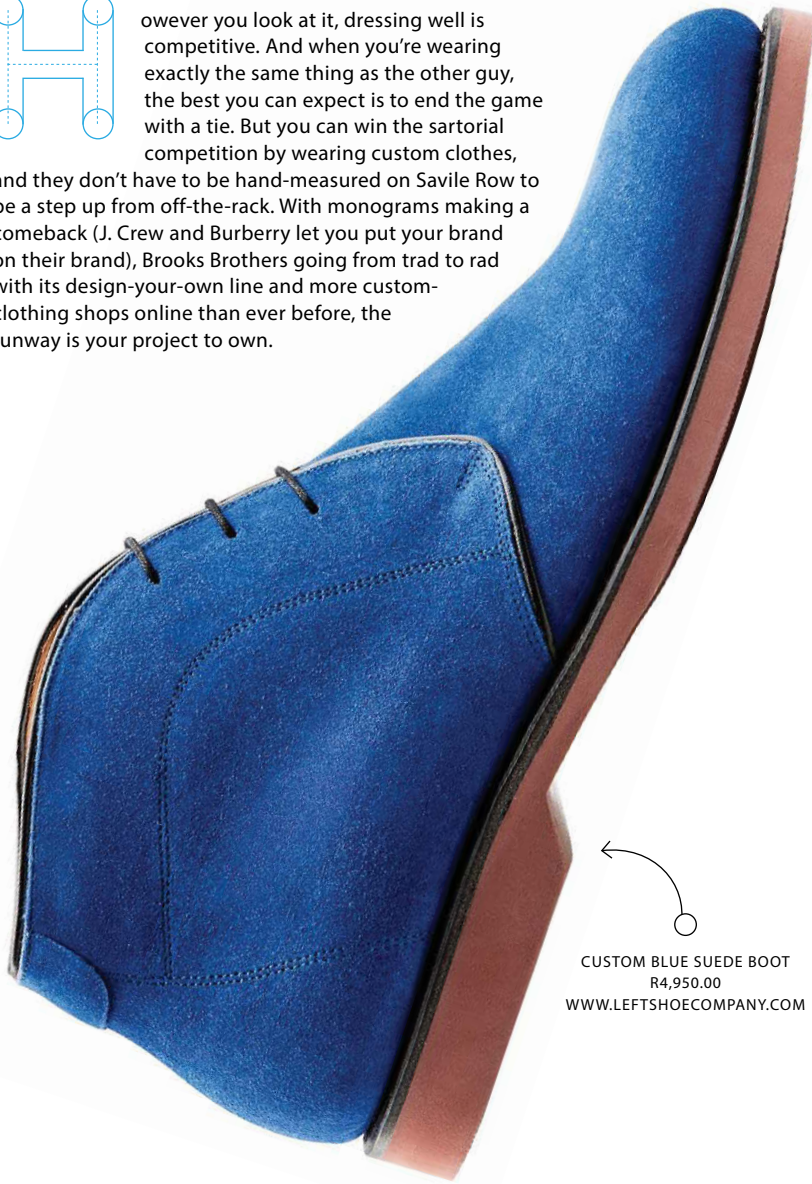
1 → CUSTOMIZE IT

BE YOUR OWN DESIGNER



However you look at it, dressing well is competitive. And when you're wearing exactly the same thing as the other guy, the best you can expect is to end the game with a tie. But you can win the sartorial competition by wearing custom clothes,

and they don't have to be hand-measured on Savile Row to be a step up from off-the-rack. With monograms making a comeback (J. Crew and Burberry let you put your brand on their brand), Brooks Brothers going from trad to rad with its design-your-own line and more custom-clothing shops online than ever before, the runway is your project to own.



CUSTOM BLUE SUEDE BOOT
R4,950.00
WWW.LEFTSHOECOMPANY.COM

2 | CLICK FOR COUTURE CLOTHES

1

PROPER CLOTH

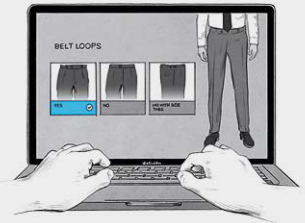
At this custom shirt site, nerd out on the dizzying array of collar heights and fabric options, then custom design a shirt down to the cuffs (barrel, mitered or otherwise).



2

INDOCHINO

Get your girlfriend to take your measurements, then dial in a dandy blazer or suit with your choice of vents, lapels and even contrasting lining, and have it fabricated for you and only you.



3

BLACK LAPEL

In addition to custom shirts and suits, Black Lapel lets you break out and break down your fantasy pair of pants, whether you prefer them pleated, flat front, cuffed or streamlined.



No. 3 PLUG AND PLAY

Whether it's your first car or your midlife-crisis-mobile, thanks to the plug-in car revolution you have fewer excuses not to get an electric car. Here are your high-low high-voltage options.



GET SMART

The tiny two-seater Smart Fortwo electric car can charge off a household current and is barely longer than a motorcycle. The only downside is the lack of a backseat.



ACE THE TESLA

Elegant and comparatively spacious, the Tesla Model S is the electric sedan to beat, with a zero-to-60 time of 5.4 seconds and a 265-mile range.



AUTOBAHN TRON

BMW's i8 plug-in hybrid is as quick as a Corvette and easier on the environment. And with contrasting paint highlights it looks like something straight out of a Tron remake.

DO VEGAS LIKE AN INSIDER



We know you've graduated from walking around with a boozy slushie in a souvenir plastic guitar cup, but chances are you haven't cracked the code for getting your money's worth out of the reverse



ATM that Sin City often feels like. You don't have to be a whale or even a high roller to be a victor in Vegas. The trick is to treat it as industry insiders do—you know, the people who profit from the whales and high rollers but still know how to have a good time on their own dime. Catch a free show at Rose Rabbit. Lie. (1, 4) at the Cosmopolitan, where an over-the-top dinner comes complete with live performances in a Baz Luhrmann–like dinner-club setting (think Cirque du Soleil–level talent without the sticker shock). Head to downtown's Container Park (2), a complex of shops, restaurants and bars where the city's new creative and tech classes (e.g., Zappos wunderkinder) go to get down on weekend nights. Eat like a pro at Kabuto Edomae



Sushi (3) in Vegas's Chinatown off Spring Mountain Road, where you'll likely bump into a top casino chef on his night off. You'd be wise to book a room at the brand-spanking-new (read: untrashed) super-luxe SLS casino and hotel. This pleasure palace resets the bar for debauchery and dining: It's home to three clubs (Foxtail, LiFE and the Sayers Club Las Vegas—sister to the Hollywood hot spot); everyone's favorite, Umami Burger; and Bazaar Meat by José Andrés, a carnivore's Valhalla. Have a classic nightcap (if you need it) at the intimate Monkey Bar.

5 | WATCH OUT

If you're looking for a timeless watch, it's all about the Hamiltons—specifically the brand's sleek and dashing Intra-Matic model. R8,450 www.hamiltonwatch.com



No. 6 INFUSE YOUR BOOZE



You don't have to be the scion of a sports conglomerate or a bored tech billionaire to make your own custom-crafted spirits. With a bottle of high-quality vodka and some flavors of the moment you can create mixology-worthy liquor for mixing up fine cocktails at home. Bacontini, anyone?



BACONY

Put three tablespoons bacon drippings and 750 milliliters vodka in a glass container and shake to combine. Freeze until bacon fat is solidified. Strain through a coffee filter to remove bacon fat.



CITRUSY

Combine about six quartered oranges, lemons or limes and 750 milliliters vodka in a glass container. Cover and let sit for a week or more, until the flavor has developed. Remove citrus.



SPICY

Mix a cup of your favorite dried whole chilis (such as chipotle) with 750 milliliters vodka in a glass container. Cover and let sit for a week or more. Remove peppers when the heat level is right.

No. 7

MOVE SMOOTH.

Yes, it's okay for a guy to use moisturizer. Rough hands may seem manly, but some situations require delicacy. This stuff has the added benefit of the intoxicating aroma of absinthe.

Wormwood
Absinthium cream, R160
www.prospectorco.com



8



MAKE COFFEE LIKE A BARISTA ON HIS DAY OFF

RICHER POUR

Let modern café-culture nerds debate the finer points of a coffee drink made with a La Marzocco versus a Clover versus a French press. For coffee insiders (like the guys who own the coolest coffee shops), the Chemex coffeemaker is the preferred apparatus for making a stripped-down,

back-to-basics cup of joe to perfection. The glass laboratory pitcher with the wooden grip is a thing of beauty. The proprietary filters are designed to remove bitterness and let the true flavors of the bean come through.
www.chemexcoffeemaker.com

10 | BE EGG-CELLENT

No dish shows you're a strong, sensitive, provider type of guy better than a perfectly cooked omelet. (Making one is often used as an employment test for chefs seeking jobs.) Here's how to do it right.

1



LET IT RUN

Whip the hell out of three or four eggs until they're frothy. Salt them. Heat a pat of butter in a pan over medium heat until it foams and subsides. Pour in eggs and let them set a bit. Tilt the pan and push the cooked eggs to the top. Let the uncooked eggs run off onto the hot pan to cook.

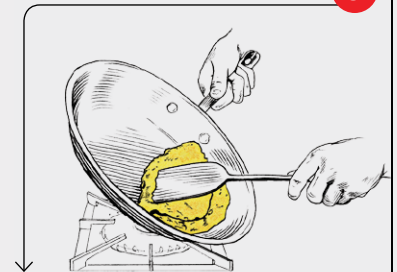
2



GET SET

Once the eggs have set and there's nothing wet on the bottom of the pan, you're in the homestretch. This is when you can keep it minimalist or put fancy fillings (cheese, ham, fresh herbs) in the middle. Don't overstuff.

3



TILT, TAP, FLIP, SLIDE

Tilt the pan, tap it on the stove so the omelet slides up a bit on one side of the pan. With the help of gravity and a spatula, fold one half of the omelet over the other (if you added fillings, be sure to cover them all), then slide it onto a plate.

9

FLY RIGHT

HELI YEAH

Praise be to the gods of aeronautics: Uber—which kills it with cars and dabbles in jets—has turned its attention to a more affordable airborne conveyance, the helicopter. Recent test flights in New York and Los Angeles had city dwellers shuttling to party zones such as Malibu and the Hamptons at discounted fares (around \$5,000 a person). While Uber has pop-up seasonal collaborations, one of its partners, Blade, operates year-round in New York City.



BEYOND CONDOMS

BY NORA O'DONNELL

GET LOST, LATEX. A COMPETITION TO REINVENT THE CONDOM PRODUCES SOME STIMULATING PROPOSALS

When latex condoms hit bedrooms in the 1930s, they were game changers. Since then, companies such as Trojan and Durex have added improvements including ribbing and warming lubricants, but condoms' basic design hasn't changed much in the past 80 years. They're still uncomfortable, unforgiving and downright difficult to put on in the dark. Enter Bill and Melinda Gates. Last year their Gates Foundation challenged scientists to build a better condom. More than 800 applicants responded, and 11 proposals were chosen to receive \$100,000 grants to manufacture prototypes. Here are five promising contest winners from around the world that hope to make it to your nightstand.



USA

Bovine Bop

Things that make you go moo: A scientist in San Diego is developing a condom that resembles a sausage casing. Crafted of raw collagen from cow tendons and ligaments, this hydrated second skin creates a more natural sensation. Move along, vegetarians.

Cling Wrap

Researchers in Los Angeles are introducing a stronger but thinner condom made of polyethylene. The hypoallergenic material clings to (but doesn't squeeze) your manhood, thereby reducing the risk of limpness. The condom

also comes with tabs on each side, allowing men to pull on—rather than roll on—protection.

Shape Shifter

In Oregon, a scientist is making a condom out of an elastic polymer that comfortably forms to a man's member when it comes into contact with body heat. Gives "memory fabric" a whole new meaning.

INDIA

Super Strength

Ready for manhood of steel? A team in India proposes a condom that contains graphene, an incredibly tough, elastic material that conducts heat. Graphene is more than 200 times stronger than steel, and researchers claim it can be incorporated with latex to reduce condom thickness and improve sensation without compromising strength.



SOUTH AFRICA

It's a Snap

Chances are you've put on a condom incorrectly at some point, which is why scientists in South Africa are designing

a unique applicator for traditional latex condoms. Called Rapidom, the prototype is pure ingenuity: You simply

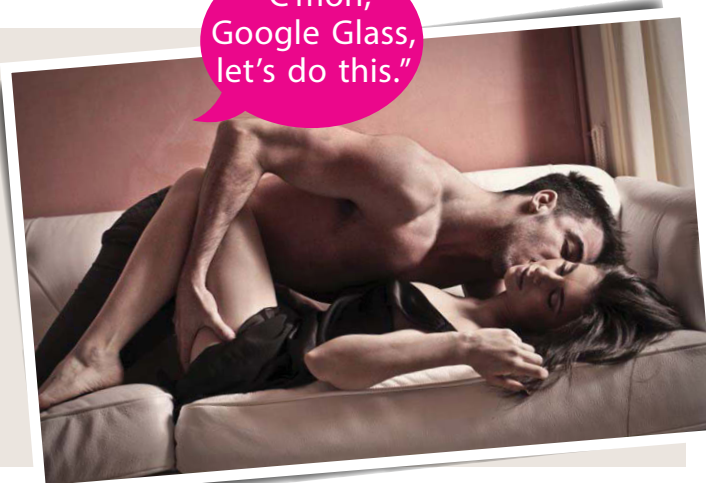
crack open the package, roll on the condom and snap off the applicator in a single motion.

TOTAL TURNOFF

BY DAMON BROWN

GOOGLE UNPLUGS YOUR VIRTUAL SEX LIFE

Tits & Glass lasted only a few hours. Then the app, which allowed Google Glass users to swap sexy videos, was removed. It appears Google wants its virtual-reality eyewear to remain rated PG. "New gadgets will be used for sex no matter what the creators think," says Johannes Grenzfurthner, founder of the Arse Elektronika sex and tech conference. Case in point: Tits & Glass developers and adult-film star James Deen plan to make the first virtual-reality porn-filmed with Google Glass, of course.





"For the kind of stuff you want, you'll have to ask the elf in the alley in back of the department store."



TOWER OF POWER

Sure, some competitors out there can destroy an iPhone on YouTube, but nothing beats the classic Vitamix 5200 for chef cred and rugged good looks.

SIR MIXALOT

YES, A BLENDER CAN BE BADASS. THE POWERFUL KITCHEN TOOL EVERY MAN SHOULD OWN

While much has been said about the virtues of a sharp chef's knife, the blender remains a secret, high-powered weapon in the manly culinary arsenal. Step into a professional kitchen during dinner prep and chances are you'll find a blender on duty, often a Vitamix. It's also the brand you'll find on the back bars of upscale watering holes, in the homes of professional bodybuilders and anywhere a man needs to consume something liquefied, fortifying and on a regular basis. The reasons are twofold: First, it's blisteringly fast, with steel blades that approach 240 miles an hour; second, it's nearly indestructible, with a high-impact pitcher and a two-horsepower motor that refuses to burn out. Gentlemen, start your blenders.

SPIN CITY

Four ways to blast your blender

1. **Freeze!**
Blast up a batch of frozen margaritas, or make snowy ice for boozy snow cones.
2. **Paleo Power**
Blend your own nut and seed flours to bake like a caveman.
3. **Souper Man**
Combine your favorite vegetables and blend them till they're steaming hot. (Yes, it produces enough friction to do that.) No stove required.
4. **Smoothie Move**
The viciously powerful vortex can turn any protein shake into a silky smooth elixir.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN SAELINGER

FOOD STYLING BY CAROL LADD



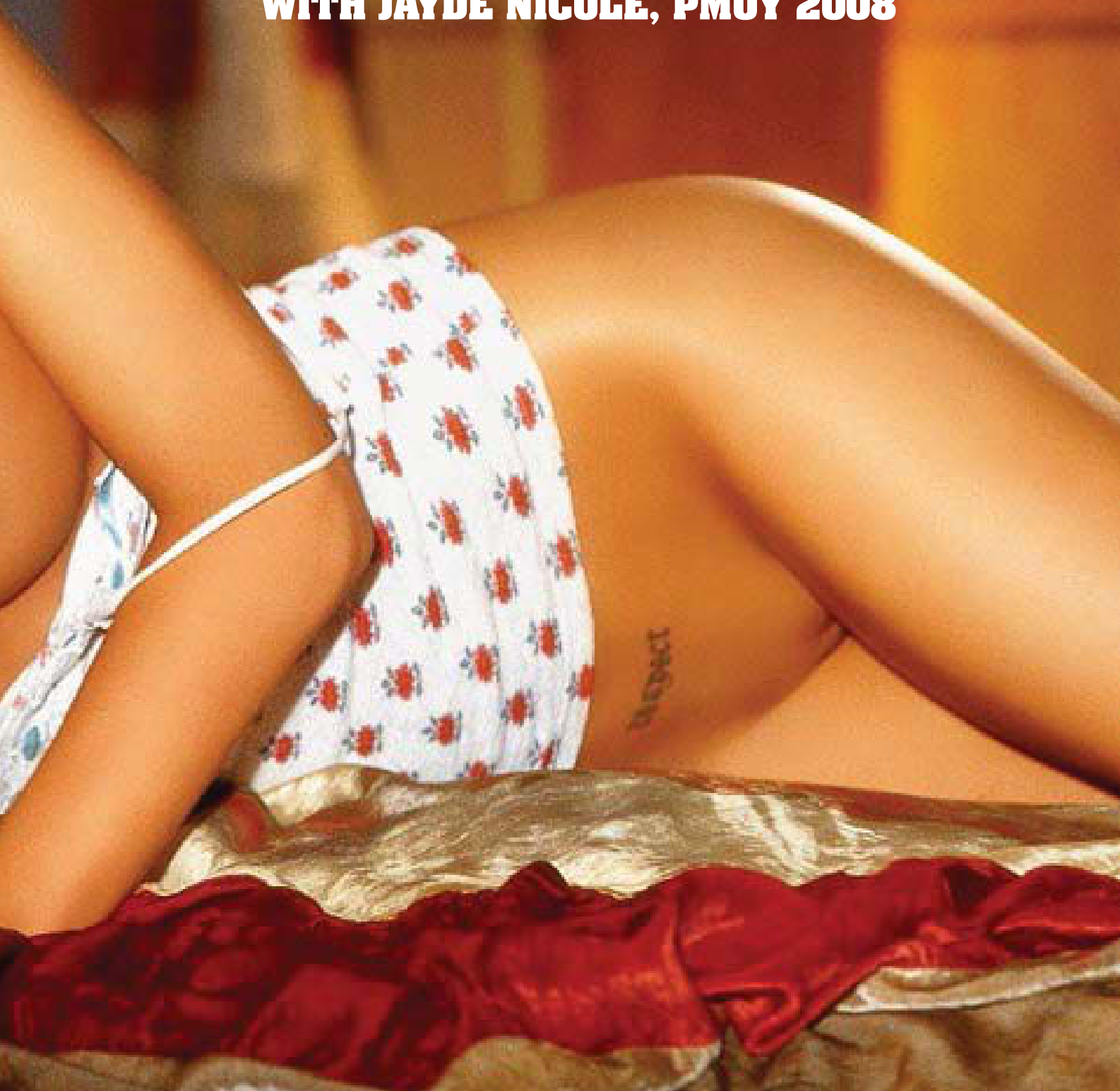
"That is you, isn't it, Arnold?"



STEP BACK IN TIME & OUT OF THE COLD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNY FREYTAG

WITH JAYDE NICOLE, PMOY 2008





respect



Anyone who has traveled into Canada knows this chilly outback possesses a certain undeniable magic. As for Canada's brand of beautiful women, Jayde Nicole is the perfect example.

Born in Scarborough, Ontario, in 2008 Jayde became PLAYBOY's third-ever Canadian Playmate of the Year, like Dorothy Stratten and Shannon Tweed before her. She's tall – 5'9" – and all natural, with dark brown hair, brown eyes and soft lips.

"I've been modelling since I was six years old," says Jayde. "I was in college, but I left to pursue a career as a model." Her mom handed her an issue of PLAYBOY and told her to go for it. After she made Playmate as Miss January 2007, Jayde was featured on *The Girls Next Door* and *The Bunny House*, and she was a main character on *Holly's World*. She also starred as Brody Jenner's real-life girlfriend on MTV's *The Hills*.

These days, Jayde is a working model and actress in Los Angeles. But, like so many of our favourite Playmates, Jayde is far more than just a pretty face. She says that being sexy "is not about how others see you, but how you see yourself." Jayde is a certified personal trainer and nutritionist with her own DVD and online fitness store. She has a huge heart, too. Jayde lends her support to the JNF Foundation, a non-profit organization she helped found in 2013 for sole purpose of helping rescue and shelter animals. In the rare event that she's not working, the long-time vegetarian and PETA supporter spends time at home with her Chihuahuas. "I'm always on the go," she says, "but I wouldn't have it any other way." Neither would we, Jayde – neither would we.











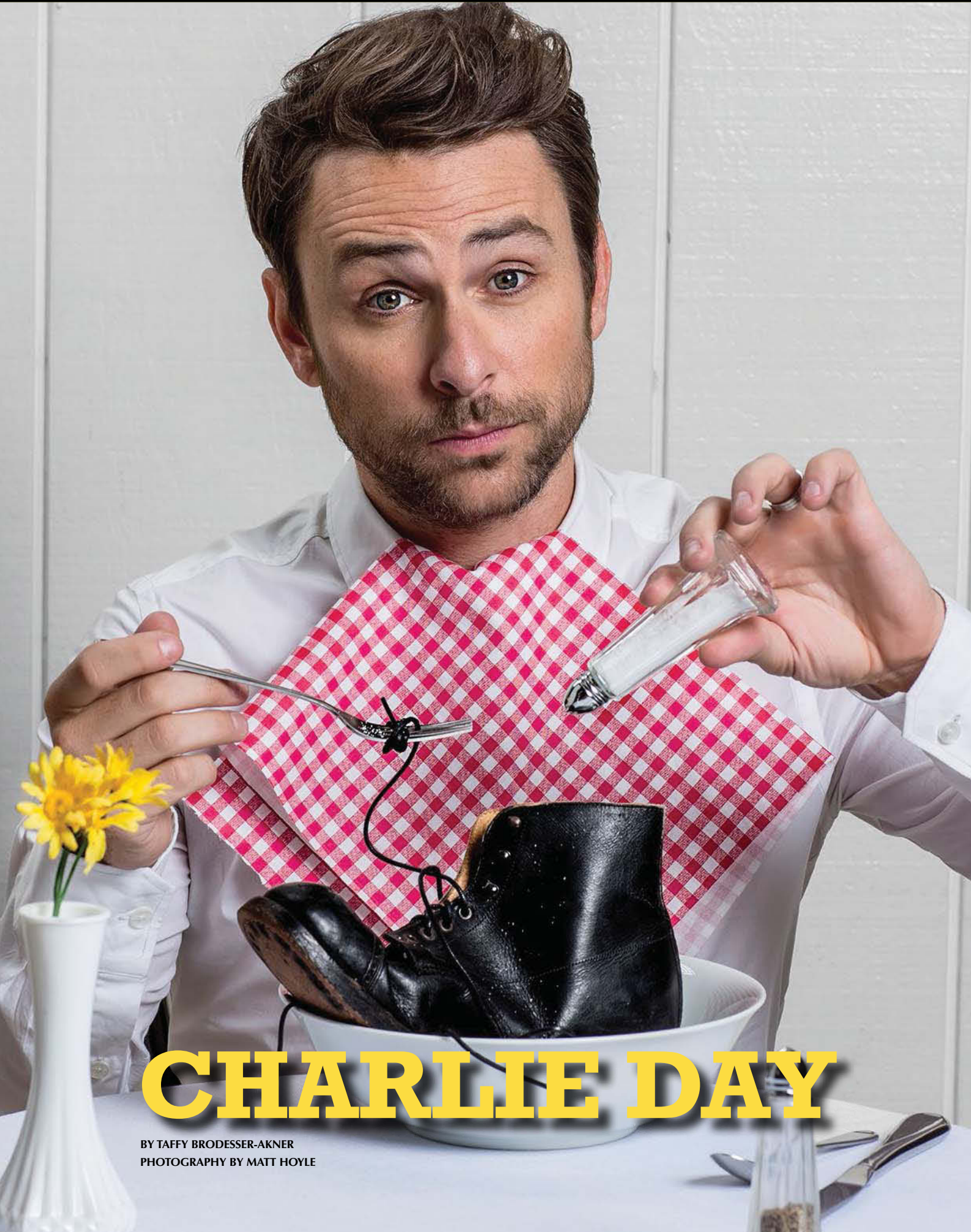






See more of Jayde
<http://bit.ly/1r01wQQ>
<http://bit.ly/1phtXVd>

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www.twitter.com/Jayde_Nicole



CHARLIE DAY

BY TAFFY BRODESSER-AKNER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATT HOYLE

The guy with the **sunny disposition** and unique voice talks about **bad bosses**, **lucky breaks** and **getting fired**.

Q1

Playboy: You star in *Horrible Bosses 2*. What have your real-life experiences with bosses been like?

DAY: I worked as a busboy and bar-back at this divey place in Manhattan. On Saint Patrick's Day I opened up the place at sunrise – 4:00am, I'm there. By 7:00am we were packed shoulder-to-shoulder with firemen and cops. I worked 24 hours straight, but the frat-boy bartenders didn't tip me out. They tipped me maybe 20 bucks. They're supposed to at least give me five or 10 percent – *something*. But they gave me nothing, and these guys made thousands of dollars. I was so furious, I was like, I have to fuck this restaurant over. So I'm thinking, I'm going to throw a brick through the big glass window. No, that's not me. Instead, I'll erase the blackboard with the menus and write "No blacks or Jews" – get them in some sort of heat. And then I thought, You know what I'm gonna do? I'm just never going to come back to work. And that's what I did. I just never went back there again.

Q2

PLAYBOY: Have you ever been fired?

DAY: Sort of, from a Via Via Pizza in Newport, Rhode Island, where I grew up, because I was a really dumb employee. I showed up and I didn't bring a pen. I was supposed to have a pen for some reason. They were very upset that I didn't bring my own pen. I had long hair at the time, which they weren't into. I looked like a hippie who put a tie on. Everything they wanted me to do or learn, I didn't get right. They were like, "We got your number, right?" And I knew then they weren't going to call me. I felt humiliated. But in the long run it was good that I didn't find a career as a pizza waiter.

Q3

Playboy: You eventually got a job as the voice of the IFC network, which helped you break into bigger things.

DAY: I did that from maybe 2000 to 2003. Anytime you heard "Coming up on IFC" or "Tonight at eight, Dario Argento" – this was way back when it was actually a channel about independent films – I would announce them all. When my voice-over agent called me, he said, "I got this thing for you, for the Independent Film Channel." But I had a callback that same day with Curtis Hanson for the movie *8 Mile*.

Q4

Playboy: Was it the starring role?

DAY: No, but it was a good part. It was a good medium-size part for a guy who has a conflict with Eminem's character. So I called my agent and said, "I don't want to do this IFC thing." And he said, "Look, if you take this gig, you won't have to worry about rent." I said, "Oh, what are we talking about?" And suddenly I realized I was going to be financially secure just from doing those IFC promos. But I almost blew the whole thing off.

Q5

Playboy: Was getting the IFC job when you realized you had a unique voice? You've described your voice as "a squeaky dog toy mixed with a bag full of rusty nails" and as that of "a 10-year-old who smokes."

DAY: I think it was when I started to read comments from people complaining about it. When I'm agitated in scenes it gets higher and scratchier and squeakier. I was slightly aware of it when I was starting out in the theater and certain people would say, "You need to work on that." I became more aware of it after we started making *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* and I was on TV a lot, and one out of three people would have some comment about it. Of course you don't hear yourself the way other people do. But I certainly don't have a complex about it.

Q6

PLAYBOY: You once said that if you don't establish yourself as a McDreamy type in Hollywood, then you don't have to live up to it. If you're not McDreamy, how have you established yourself?

DAY: I try not to know. When you start to know, that's when you're in trouble, because you have to live up to some idea of yourself. I also talked about how many weights I'd have to lift to be that type. And I talked about tanning. It's a relief for me not to do any tanning.

Q7

PLAYBOY: Yet you must be curious about the world of beefcake roles.

DAY: There are two sides to every coin. It would be great to be Brad Pitt for a day.

Q8

PLAYBOY: What would you do if you woke up as Brad Pitt tomorrow?

DAY: I would fuck my wife. What would you do?





Q9

PLAYBOY: That's a reasonable choice.

DAY: I probably know the reality of what he would do. He would wake up and then he would go deal with the kids. How many kids do they have? Thirty? He would deal with the 30 kids, and he wouldn't go anywhere near his wife, because they've been together for years.

Q10

PLAYBOY: Your parents are music teachers. Was there a lot of music in your home when you were growing up?

DAY: I remember a pile of records, and I know I'm dating myself. I remember I was really into the Al Jolson records – you know, the most racist records of all; not the lyrics but the blackface makeup he wore. Somehow I'd also gotten the *Star Wars* music, and I would put that on and run around the house and pretend I was fighting people. Right now I'm into James Booker, a New Orleans jazz musician. I've been on a New Orleans jazz music kick. And I like mariachi music. I don't speak a word of Spanish, but for some reason I love the music.

Q11

PLAYBOY: On *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, your wife, Mary Elizabeth Ellis, plays the object of your unrequited desire, identified only as "the Waitress." How does your character's relationship with the Waitress reflect your relationship with your wife?

DAY: It doesn't reflect it at all. I got my wife the day I met her.

Q12

PLAYBOY: *Sunny* has been on for nearly 10 years. It's been called *Seinfeld* on crack, with episodes that address cannibalism, transgender people, crack addiction, lots of cancer. Is there anything that could come up in the writers' room that would make you say, "Whoa, too far"?

DAY: No, not really. If you have a unique point of view or approach,

you're able to get away with subjects that could, from an outside standpoint, be perceived as edgy. Some of the episodes are tragic or shocking, but the characters are so self-serving, they're blind to what would be edgy, and that's what's funny about it. During season four, my character writes a musical called *The Nightman Cometh*. It's this elaborate marriage proposal to the Waitress. The whole musical is a metaphor about a boy becoming a man, but the character doesn't realize all the lyrics sound like they're about a little boy being raped. There's nothing funny about that – I'm a parent; there's nothing funny at all about that. That a man is oblivious to it because he thinks his work is great is what's funny.

Q13

PLAYBOY: Do the characters have any kind of moral code?

DAY: They have their weird moral codes when it serves them, and then they're quick to drop them. So the answer really is no.

Q14

PLAYBOY: It's one of the longest-running sitcoms on TV. Do you feel you've gotten the respect and attention you deserve?

DAY: We don't get a lot of attention. Our fans have kept us on the air. The industry hasn't necessarily kept us on the air, and the press hasn't necessarily kept the show on the air. We've never been on the cover of *Entertainment Weekly*. We've never been nominated or even talked about on any of the awards shows. We're almost completely ignored by the Huffington Post. For some reason we've never quite clicked into that mainstream. It's so crazy to me that everywhere I go, I'm no longer a person who can just walk around and not be recognized, and 99 percent of the time it's because of *Sunny*. It's not *Horrible Bosses*, and it's not *Pacific Rim*. Sometimes it's all that, but more often than not it's people who just know and love *Sunny*.

Q15

PLAYBOY: And what are your feelings about that?

DAY: It makes me disgruntled. A *New Yorker* critic wrote a wonderful piece on the show last year, and it was really nice, maybe just to validate it in my parents' eyes. But constantly seeing the Emmys and the Golden Globes and another actor or another writer, and you're not invited – it can't help but feel a little bit like high school. I guess the cool kids are never going to invite me to the party. That was my high school experience, so it's just history repeating itself.

Q16

PLAYBOY: What was your childhood bedroom like?

DAY: It was wall-to-wall baseball posters. I loved Rickey Henderson. Even though I grew up in New England and was a Red Sox fan, I was a gigantic fan of Rickey Henderson. I don't know why I selected him. I think maybe when I was really young my grandmother gave me a baseball card or a sticker or something, and it was this guy Rickey Henderson. I would have dreams that I'd meet him at the park and he would be like, "Hey, dude, you want to have a catch?" I loved Wade Boggs too. We wrote a part for him on *Sunny* this year, and he came and did it. He was fantastic. Wade Boggs is a Hall of Fame third baseman for the Red Sox, and he would allegedly drink 50 to 100 beers on these cross-country trips – it's been backed up by his teammates. He told me it was something like 107. So we decided we would do an episode where we'd see if we could break his beer-drinking record. He came in and played himself in a hallucination my character has. After we shot it I asked him if he wanted to have a catch, and so we had a catch. I had my catch with Wade Boggs, so it was pretty fun.

Q17

PLAYBOY: Many actors who do mostly or only comedy are also stand-ups. But you're not. Did you always know you wanted to do comedy?

DAY: I did not always want to do comedy. I started out at a place called the Williamstown Theatre Festival, and it was great. You did whatever. You did a drama, you did a comedy, you did whatever you could get a role in. My career goal was to be like Al Pacino or Dustin Hoffman, people I saw doing amazing work in all sorts of different roles. They were just great actors. My first gigs, aside from commercial work, were things like the junkie younger brother on *Third Watch* or *Law & Order*. I would always come close to getting cast in television comedies, but I couldn't get over that hump. And then we made *Sunny* and it just changed everything. I just wanted to act, so whatever opportunity came up first I would have done. I have never considered myself a comedian. I'm just an actor who can be funny.

Q18

PLAYBOY: After almost 10 years doing a show you have complete creative control over, you started to act in other people's movies. What is it like to have to do what you're told?

DAY: It's a mixed bag. On one hand, sometimes it's like a paid vacation for me because I don't have to stress about what the set looks like. It doesn't fall on me. Guillermo del Toro is an amazingly creative, brilliant original director, so with *Pacific Rim*



it was great because I could just plug into his vision and not have to worry. And then I could enjoy the movie as a spectator and only have to worry about whether between "action" and "cut" I did a good job.

Q19

PLAYBOY: Is there anything you wanted us to ask? Anything we haven't covered?

DAY: It's over? I wanted to have my Gary Oldman moment.

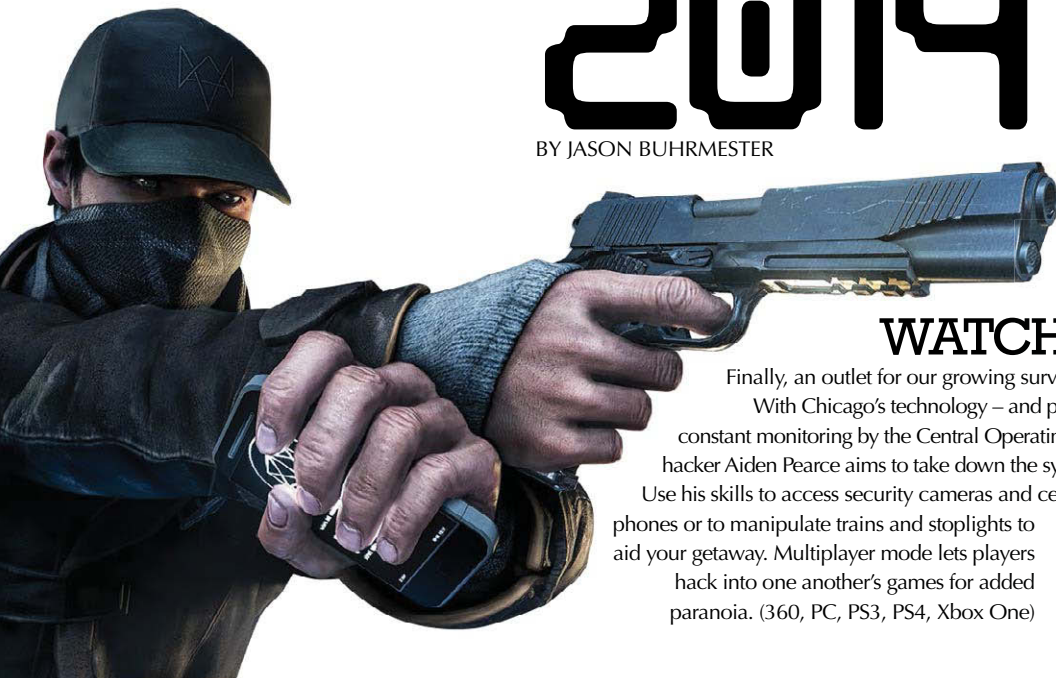
Q20

PLAYBOY: You want to get in the type of trouble he did when he said some controversial things in his PLAYBOY Interview? Okay. You could get in something anti-Semitic or racist under the wire. Or you could make a strong case for a Mel Gibson resurgence. Or maybe just say something against unions.

DAY: Yeah, stupid unions ruining our country. [laughs] The truth is, I'm not smart enough to have an opinion on those things. It's funny, talking about people you forgive for their talent. I was just back in Rhode Island, and Woody Allen was shooting a movie. I love his movies so much, I wanted to just go to the set and be like, "Hey, you know, I'm a guy who's in the business." Most likely Woody Allen would have said, "I have never seen *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*," and that would have killed me, so I avoided it.

GAME REVIEWS 2014

BY JASON BUHRMESTER



WATCH DOGS

Finally, an outlet for our growing surveillance paranoia.

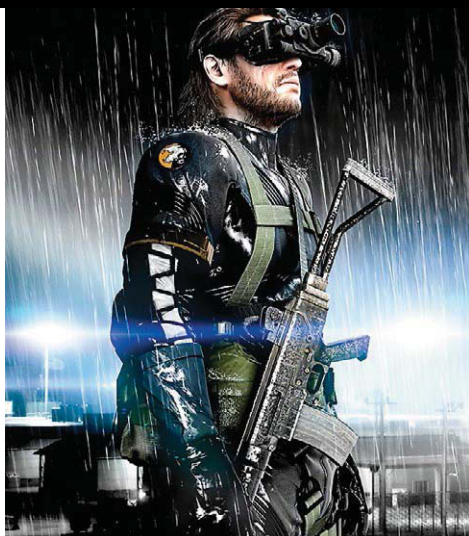
With Chicago's technology – and people – under constant monitoring by the Central Operating System, hacker Aiden Pearce aims to take down the system.

Use his skills to access security cameras and cell phones or to manipulate trains and stoplights to aid your getaway. Multiplayer mode lets players hack into one another's games for added paranoia. (360, PC, PS3, PS4, Xbox One)



TITANFALL

Titanfall (360, PC, Xbox One) is here to blow up everything – buildings, giant robots and video games as we know them. The blockbuster new title from a co-creator of the Call of Duty franchise torches the idea of a traditional shooter game. Instead, the action takes place strictly online, where players join multiplayer squads on a war-torn futuristic world and engage in intense firefights. Jetpackted soldiers run across walls and jump in and out of giant, armed robots called Titans. It looks and plays like the future of gaming.



METAL GEAR SOLID V GROUND ZEROES

It has been 27 years since the first appearance of Snake and we still don't know the whole truth about gaming's most enigmatic character. *Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes* (360, PS3, PS4, Xbox One) finds Snake circa 1975 as he sets out to infiltrate a covert US base in Cuba. No series does stealth as well as Metal Gear, helped here by nonlinear play that lets you take out a guard from a distance or sneak up close and use a knife. Sure, it's only a prequel to the upcoming *Metal Gear: Phantom Pain*, but it's still a solid chapter in the book of Snake.



INFAMOUS SECOND SON

When Seattle 20-something Delsin Rowe discovers he has superpowers, he uses them to take on the Department of Unified Protection, a government agency tasked with detaining superhumans. True to the series, *InFamous: Second Son* (PS4) offers a sprawling city to fly over

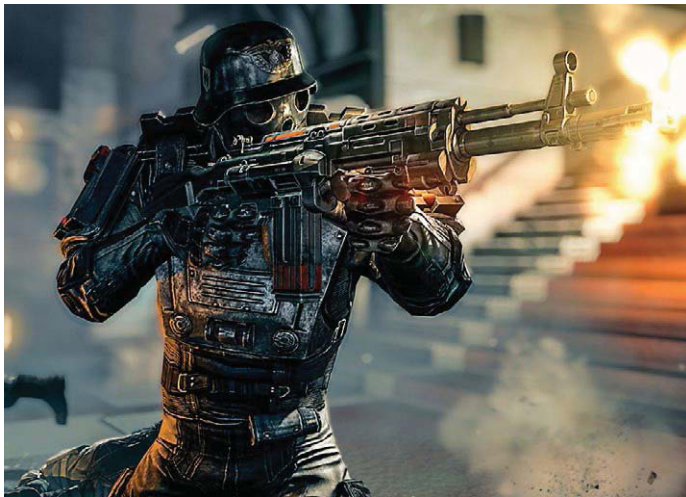
and plenty of real estate to destroy with Cinder Blast and other powers, including Neon, a new ability that lets Rowe absorb light to fire lasers. It's X-Men as filtered through Occupy Wall Street.



ELDER SCROLLS ONLINE

Fair or not, PC gaming has always been considered a nerdy cousin by those who prefer to play on Xbox and PlayStation. *Elder Scrolls Online* (Mac, PC, PS4, Xbox One) unites everyone in the

first multiplatform online game based on the best-selling *Elder Scrolls* series. Build a knight, a sorcerer or one of the other classes and explore the world of Tamriel, battling creatures and clans as you take on quests alone or with friends, regardless of your gaming preferences.



WOLFENSTEIN: THE NEW ORDER

Call of Duty wasn't even in boot camp when *Wolfenstein 3-D* revolutionized shooter games forever upon its release in 1992. *Wolfenstein: The New Order* (360, PC, PS3, PS4, Xbox One) reimagines the original game as soldier BJ Blazkowicz awakens from a 14-year coma to find the Nazis have won World War II and now rule the world. Toppling the regime means taking on Nazi super-soldiers, giant robots and mechanical beasts in intense firefights and creeping into bases undiscovered. Stellar graphics heighten the tension, especially in gruesome torture scenes involving Dr Deathshead. Seriously.



DESTINY

The first new game from the creators of *Halo* opens with the universe being destroyed. How's that for a fresh start? Humanity's problems began after a mysterious entity called the Traveler helped us colonize across the universe until our new friend's enemies arrived and wiped it all out. Even in

tatters, the world of *Destiny* (360, PS3, PS4, Xbox One) is more alive than *Halo* ever was, from sci-fi megacities to the remnants of a Mars colony buried under sand dunes, all populated with four-armed aliens and zombielike creatures. Survival means teaming up with other players, and *Destiny's* gameplay blurs the lines between single and multiplayer as you join fellow adventurers or go it alone. It's gaming's new frontier.

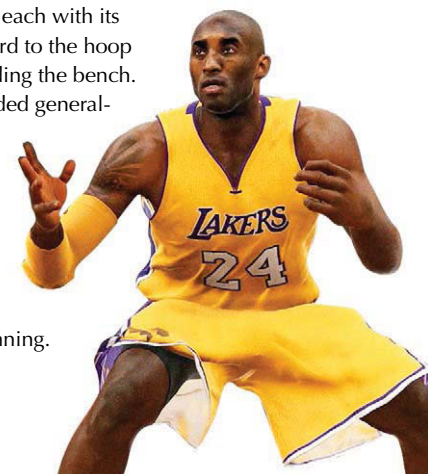


THE EVIL WITHIN

The horror genre went stiff around the time shooters such as *Call of Duty* took over. A resurrection is happening with *The Evil Within* (360, PC, PS3, PS4, Xbox One), developed by legendary *Resident Evil* creator Shinji Mikami. The story line, about a detective investigating a mass murder, weaves between reality and a demented fantasy overrun with hideous creatures and sadistic traps. Run, hide and hope it doesn't see you.

NBA 2K15

Go easy on Kobe's knee. The updated injury mechanics of *NBA 2K15* (360, PC, PS3, PS4, Xbox One) break down a player's body into 16 parts, each with its own durability rating. Take Kobe hard to the hoop too many times and he'll end up riding the bench. Again. The good news is the expanded general-manager mode allows greater freedom to trade, sign and draft players. Not that it will be easy to find the next LeBron. Only four players have a skill rating above 90 points, down from 10 players in last year's game. Fewer elite players means you'll need better game planning. Time to get out the chalkboard.



HOOKING UP

BY JESSICA OGILVIE

HOW WOMEN USE TINDER AND WHAT IT SAYS ABOUT THE STATE OF CASUAL SEX. SPOILER: IT'S GOOD

Early last year, 22-year-old Lori “matched” with John on the dating app Tinder. Lured by what she fondly calls his “shitty tattoos,” she agreed to meet him at a bar. Later they returned to his place, where what followed was some of the kinkiest sex of her young life. “We go at it in the kitchen, in the living room,” she recalls, “and I was like, Fuck it. Worst-case scenario is I never see him again. I’m getting a little freaky.”

Lori’s experience isn’t unusual. Although there are newer entries in the crowded field of dating services, Tinder is giving women a way to pursue casual sex like never before. “Maybe I felt that free because we didn’t know each other,” she says. “We were there for what we both wanted.”

Tinder pulls its users’ photos and interests from Facebook to create instant profiles and ensure authenticity. Without the tedious personality quizzes and introductory emails of traditional dating services, Tinder requires little up-front commitment, lowering user expectations from meeting “the one” to meeting anyone, for anything.

“A lot of women are interested in casual sex,” says sex journalist Amanda Hess, “but expressing it has been a little difficult. A weird key to Tinder’s success is it’s not based on stereotypes like that.”

Tinder’s success may also be in its matchmaking. If users like what they see in a profile, they swipe to the right, and if both swipe, they’re allowed to chat. Allowing conversation only if the other party reciprocates means ladies aren’t flooded with emails from dudes they would categorically avoid in real life. “You never get this residual grossness from guys you never wanted to hear from,” Hess explains.

Tinder commands a more even gender split than competitors such as OKCupid, and it skews younger, with just 10 percent of users older than 35, creating what one woman calls “a never-ending buffet.”

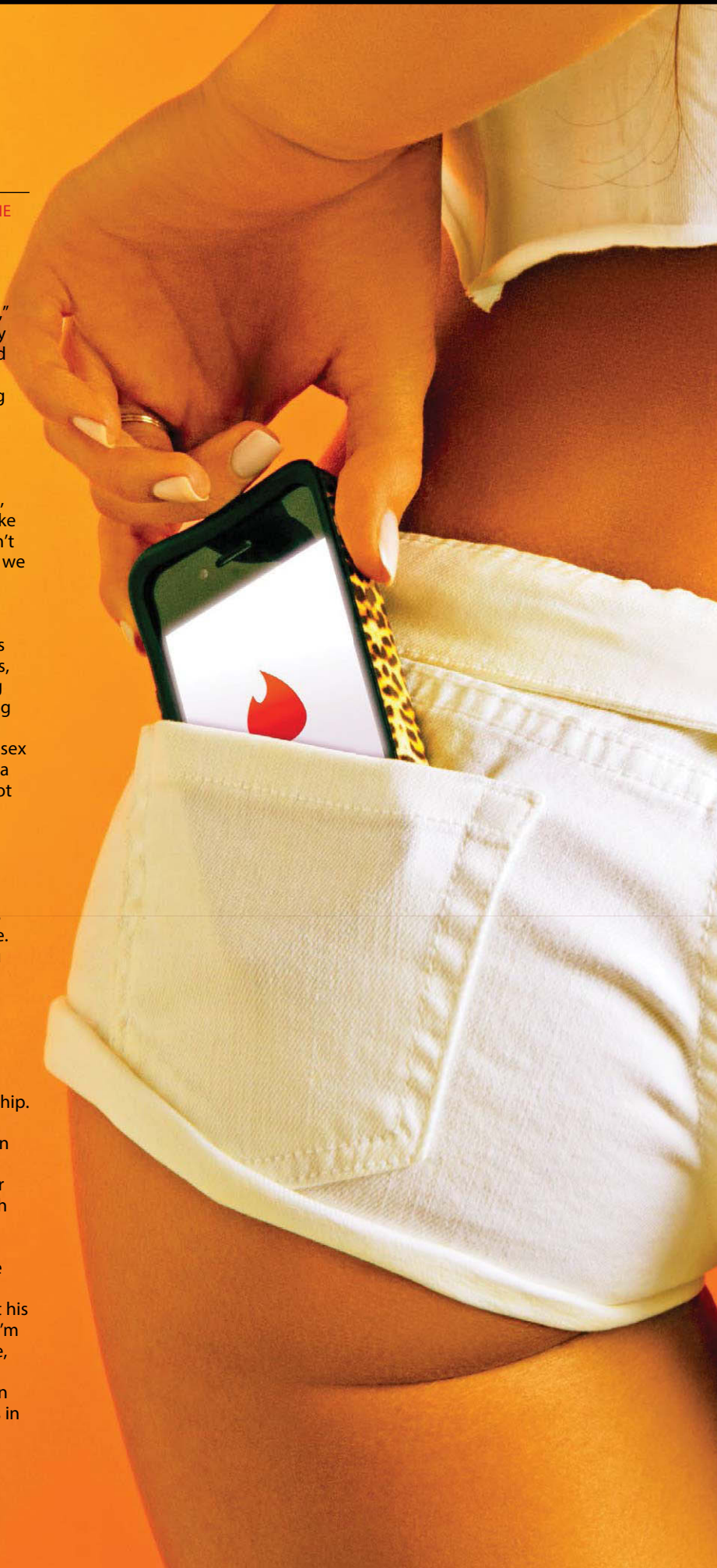
Beth, a 29-year-old casting associate from Los Angeles, turned to Tinder after a long-term relationship. As with Lori, the app led her to some heated carnal maneuvers. Last August she matched with a musician with “a sweet face-but with that grimy, bad-boy feel too.” After messaging for months, the two met at her apartment, where they almost immediately tore each other’s clothes off. “He did things I’m still trying to figure out,” she says. “He told me, ‘I’m going to drive you crazy. I know what to do with your body,’ and he proved himself.”

Beth’s Tinder paramour travels often, she says, but his schedule fits perfectly with what she wants. “When I’m working,” she says, “I want to know I can come home, have sex and go to bed.”

She’s another happy user among the many women who find Tinder a means to pursue libidinous whims in an easy and safe environment.

“The demand for it was always there,” says Hess of women’s craving for casual sex. “Now it just has a platform to reveal itself.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE VOVAS





MATCH MAKER

There's something striking about fine artist Joseph Martinez's small-scale nudes painted inside matchbook covers. The Denver-based artist manages to portray a great deal of beauty in a limited space. "I liked the idea of giving some sort of value to something that is usually disposed of or given away," he says. Martinez creates his eye-popping portraits without the use of a magnifying glass. "It takes a lot of patience. Knowing where to lay down the paint is a bit of a puzzle because there isn't much room to work with." Perhaps that explains Martinez's next move. "I've proven to myself that I can paint tiny, so maybe the next challenge is to go opposite and oversize it all."





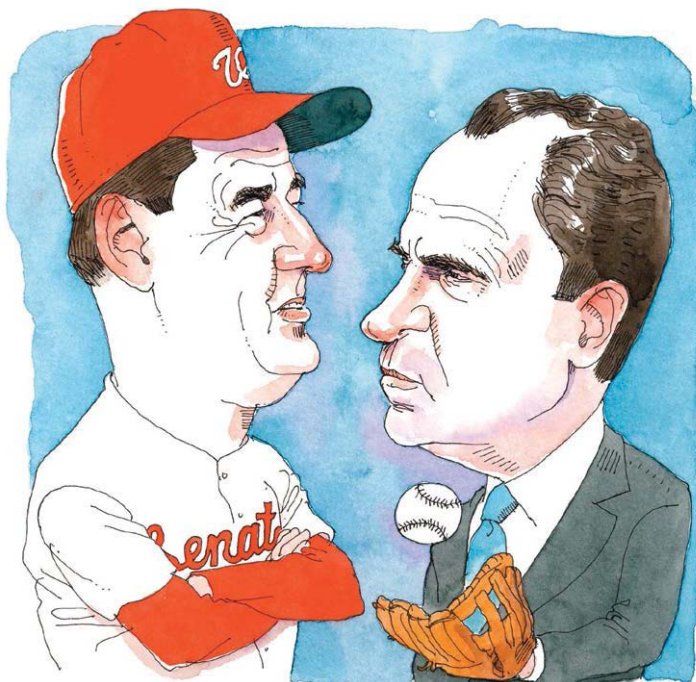
Talkin' Bout Your
Generation

Is the Greatest Generation really that great? Are the Boomers a joke? Do Millennials suck? Finally, your definitive guide to defending or attacking any age group

BY STEVEN CHEAN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE CIARDIELLO

Ah yes, that time-tested evergreen, trundled out at holiday parties, family gatherings and pretty much anytime the alcohol starts flowing: “My generation is [glowing superlatives here]. Your generation is [insult here].” The argument is inevitable, considering the oceans of time and complexities of circumstance separating each epoch. After all, Grandpa may have checked out at Omaha Beach, but he certainly never checked in on Foursquare. Still, there’s one truth that binds us all: Whether you’re a member of the Greatest Generation, the Silent Generation, the Baby Boomers or the Gen Xers, Yers or Zers, you must understand the defining characteristics of each in order to issue an informed verbal beatdown. That’s where we come in.



THE GREATEST GENERATION

Born 1901–1924

Heroes

- John F. Kennedy, Julia Child, Jackie Robinson, Walt Disney, Margaret Mead, Frank Sinatra, John Wayne, Jack Kerouac, Charles Lindbergh, Louis Armstrong, Betty Friedan, Jonas Salk, Ronald Reagan

Villains

- Richard Nixon, Joseph McCarthy, John Dillinger, Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel, Joseph Bonanno, Leona Helmsley, Charles Keating Jr., Ronald Reagan

What they're known for

- Character forged on the breadlines of the Great Depression, bravery tested via drop-kicking Hitler to the great hereafter, ingenuity demonstrated while building America into the greatest country on earth—in the midst of the Cold War, no less. Did we mention frugality, personal responsibility and humility? Well, those too.

What we think of them

- “It is, I believe, the greatest generation any society has ever produced,” writes newsman Tom Brokaw in his aptly titled best-seller *The Greatest Generation*. They fought “not for fame and recognition but because it was the right thing to do.”

What they'd rather you not know

- According to polls conducted as late as the 1990s,

the Greatest Generation might not have been as great as previously thought. The majority of them opposed interracial marriage, objected to the proliferation of working mothers and supported discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Shining example

- Like many of his peers, Ted Williams walked away from baseball, at the height of his powers, when his country needed him. Was one war enough for Williams? Hell, no. He served as a Marines fighter pilot in World War II and went back for seconds during the Korean War. “He was a marine just like the rest of us, and he did a great job,” said fellow soldier and future astronaut John Glenn. “Everybody tries to make a hero out of me,” added Williams with characteristic modesty some 39 missions and one hearing impairment later. “I was no hero. There were maybe 75 pilots in our two squadrons, and 99 percent of them did a better job than I did.”

Not-so-shining example

- Like absolutely none of his peers, Richard Nixon resigned the presidency for his role in the Watergate conspiracy—a scandal involving wiretapping, robbery, hush money and so much more that served as a public-image wrecking ball to American politics.

Bottom line

- Somehow brave *and* bigoted, progressive *and* regressive.

THE SILENT GENERATION

Born 1925–1945

Heroes

- Martin Luther King Jr., Elvis Presley, Hugh Hefner, Jackie Kennedy, Bob Dylan, Muhammad Ali, Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, Malcolm X, Gloria Steinem, Warren Buffett, Andy Warhol, Clint Eastwood, Maya Angelou, Jim Morrison, Cesar Chavez

Villains

- Charles Manson, Lee Harvey Oswald, James Earl Ray, John Gotti, Jerry Sandusky, Bernie Madoff, Jim Jones, John Wayne Gacy, Dick Cheney, Ivan Boesky, Pat Robertson, Ted Kaczynski

What they're known for

- Baby Boomers carried the torch for racial and sexual equality, but the Silent Generation sparked the match, giving birth to the leaders who got everyone marching to the promised land in the first place. And though Boomers happily take credit for making rock and roll “classic,” it’s the Silent Generation who plugged in and brought the blues-infused monster to life in the first place.

What we think of them

- We don’t. After all, they’re not called “silent” for nothing. Born into the depths of the Depression, raised hard by a world war and made paranoid by anticommunist fever, the Silent Generation grew up, according to a 1951 *Time* magazine cover story, “withdrawn” and “cautious,” seen and not heard. (Being sandwiched between the history-book heroics of the Greatest Generation and the larger-than-life legacy of the Boomers didn’t help.)

What they'd rather you not know

- Sure, they walked to school... uphill... in the snow... both ways. But their tales of hard rearing (which have come to be referred



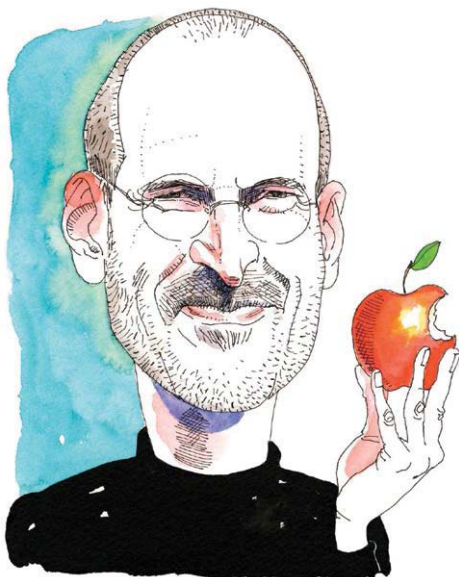
to as “old-school”) mask upbringings in the most stable families in U.S. history. Plus, they were the first generation to have unprecedented access to higher education, funded by veterans benefits earned during a time of minimal bloodshed.

Shining example

- Perhaps no single American has brought his country closer to realizing its democratic dream than Martin Luther King Jr. In a few short years, the engine of the civil rights movement helped deliver his generation, and all those to follow, from the Jim Crow dark ages into the very real promise of justice for all.

Not-so-shining example

- Never short on uninformed commentary, televangelist Pat Robertson has made something of a second career offering his opinion on lifestyles other than his own. To wit: “Many of those people involved in Adolf Hitler were Satanists. Many were homosexuals. The two things seem to go together.” Naturally he’s had plenty to say about feminism: “a socialist, antifamily political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians.”



BABY BOOMERS

Born 1946–1964

Heroes

- Steve Jobs, Oprah Winfrey, Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Michael Jackson, Bill Gates, George Clooney, Bruce Springsteen, Michael Jordan, David Letterman, Tom Hanks, Magic Johnson, Madonna

Villains

- O.J. Simpson, Donald Trump, Karl Rove, Sarah

Palin, Jay Leno, Michael Moore, John Edwards, Rush Limbaugh, Mel Gibson, Kathie Lee Gifford, Michael Milken

What they're known for

- Powered by 40 percent of the U.S. population, Boomers changed the face of popular culture like no generation before or since—its movies and music, its cars and clothes, its power and

politics. Taking up the cause for peace, love and understanding, they made a clean break with the past. Better yet, they did it against a backdrop of unprecedented chemical and sexual experimentation. And half a century later, they won't let us forget it.

what we think of them

• It depends on whom you ask. According to a 2009 poll, 27 percent of people surveyed said Baby Boomers would be remembered for challenging an unjust war and changing social values. Another 42 percent claimed they would be remembered for rampant consumerism and self-indulgence. The rest simply weren't sure or chose "nothing at all." (We're fairly certain all of them pondered the same question: *Why won't this generation just shut up already?*)

what they'd rather you not know

• A generation once defined by its unflinching idealism became equally noted for its narcissism and epic self-indulgence. Before long, the Me Generation, as they became known, had turned drug use into drug abuse, given us disco, tried to get rich on junk bonds and handed an unholy national debt to their children. And they're still not done: By 2030, social welfare will buckle under the strain of one in five Americans reaching his or her conclusion.

shining example

• Seeing Steve Jobs's name on a definitive list of the 20 most influential Americans of all time—alongside the likes of George Washington, Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison—should come as no surprise. Who else so completely changed the way we live our lives? Before his death at 56, Apple's founder revolutionized not only personal computing but also the wireless, music and film industries. And we had the feeling he was just getting started.

not-so-shining example

• Gordon Gekko, the character who claims "greed is good" in the 1980s capitalism-on-steroids classic *Wall Street*, is, the filmmakers admitted, partly based on Michael Milken. At his peak, Milken earned between \$200 million and \$550 million a year by bankrolling mergers and acquisitions with junk bonds. Since doing time for securities fraud, ponying up \$600 million in fines and being diagnosed with prostate cancer, he has turned his moneymaking mind to the treatment of cancer and other diseases. If he funds a cure, we'll call it even.

Bottom line

• Apparently there is an *I* in *team*.

GENERATION X

Born 1965–1979

Heroes

• Larry Page, Sergey Brin, Jay Z, Kurt Cobain, Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, Jawed Karim, Tina Fey, Judd Apatow, J.K. Rowling, Dave Eggers, Tiger Woods

Villains

• Kanye West, Lance Armstrong, Kobe Bryant, John Mayer, Gwyneth Paltrow, Alex Rodriguez, Charlie Sheen, Jesse James, Tiger Woods

What they're known for

• Slacking. And changing the world. The children of MTV and Reaganomics came out of the gate the radiant products of divorce, a broken political process, an AIDS epidemic, yuppie materialism and diminished prospects amid a cavalcade of financial meltdowns. Written off as detached and disenfranchised, they've shown serious entrepreneurial skills, transforming our lives with Google, YouTube, Amazon and more.

what we think of them

• Boy, that ambiguous *X* sure has come in handy. A generation devoted to fighting corruption, embracing diversity and searching for personal freedom has desperately sought a sense of security. The same group that excelled at education and volunteerism can't

seem to shake its slacker reputation. The young adults who put off having families of their own are hitting middle age only to confront the same nagging question: "How am I going to pay the rent?"

what they'd rather you not know

• While they'd have you believe they hold the patent on existential angst (grunge, anyone?), Gen Xers are actually "active, balanced and happy," according to a 2011 study. Pessimistic about marriage? *Bah*. A higher percentage of them stay together compared with Boomers, and a majority claim to enjoy the institution. They're social, hardworking, devoted parents—a generation that has grown into "technologically savvy, adventurous pragmatists."

shining example

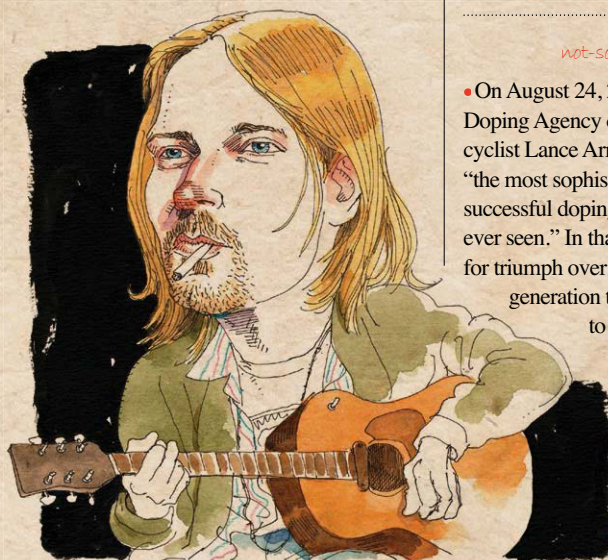
• If the man once known as Shawn Carter had simply gone from rags to riches, he'd be like many who came before him. But in becoming Jay Z, a symbol of human potential realized, he's like no one else. In a mere 20 years, the kid from Brooklyn's Marcy Projects has gone from dopeman to superman—a hip-hop hall of famer turned visionary entrepreneur with a net worth of approximately \$500 million. Businessman, family man, Beyoncé's man, Jigga Man snapped the slacker stereotype without losing an ounce of integrity.

not-so-shining example

• On August 24, 2012 the United States Anti-Doping Agency concluded that champion cyclist Lance Armstrong had engaged in "the most sophisticated, professionalized and successful doping program that sport has ever seen." In that moment the poster child for triumph over adversity, who inspired a generation to live strong, was revealed to be a one-man force of corruption—and a real a-hole.

Bottom line

• The apathy and cynicism you've heard about—never mind.





GENERATION Y

(a.k.a. the millennialS)

Born 1980–2000

HEROES

- Mark Zuckerberg, Beyoncé, David Karp, Lady Gaga, Lena Dunham, Adele, Kevin Systrom, Serena Williams, Jennifer Lawrence, Frank Ocean, Sandra Fluke

VILLAINS

- Kim Kardashian, LeBron James, Lindsay Lohan, Michael Vick, Casey Anthony, Chris

Brown, Paris Hilton, Anne Hathaway, Ryan Braun, Aaron Hernandez, Justin Bieber

WHAT THEY'RE KNOWN FOR

- They're digital natives: Millennials who tried to quit social media showed the same symptoms as drug addicts in withdrawal. They're children of the Great Recession, which has left them overeducated, underemployed perpetual tenants of their helicopter parents. Still, the generation most responsible for electing Barack Obama is nothing if not open-minded and optimistic about the future.

WHAT WE THINK OF THEM

- Our opinion changes about as often as their Facebook status. A knowing, media-savvy generation, they grew up fast, sexting before it was even a word. The fact that fewer of them drive, uncertain as to whether they need or even want a car, simultaneously confuses and impresses their elders. Coddled from the crib, they lack the gumption to leave the nest and achieve. Yet, paradoxically, they're entrepreneurial and have excelled outside the confines of the cubicle—though maybe not as much as their profiles would have us believe.

WHAT THEY'D RATHER YOU NOT KNOW

- They've earned the nickname the Me Me Me Generation for a reason: They're three times more likely than Boomers to have narcissistic personality disorder. Materialism and a lofty sense of entitlement—minus the means to realize their caviar dreams—have contributed to breathtaking delusions of grandeur. Moreover,

Generation Y is arguably the most medicated on record, their hazy state and sedentary social-media lifestyle contributing to a rise in obesity and its BFF, diabetes.

SHINING EXAMPLE

- “I think that I may be the voice of my generation... or at least *a* voice... of *a* generation.” So sort-of declares Hannah Horvath, a girl among *Girls*, HBO's breakthrough dramedy. Hannah's assertion may have more legitimacy than she seems to believe. Creator Lena Dunham does what television has never done before, honestly, unsparingly capturing the lives of a generation's young women, albeit a narrow slice of white, privileged, self-obsessed young women. Love her or hate her (you'd be in good company either way), Dunham is a quadruple-threat writer-producer-director-star with a singular vision.

NOT-SO-SHINING EXAMPLE

- In the annals of teen idoldom, Justin Bieber is unique in that he's totally a product of social media. With his 45 million Twitter followers, his zany antics—urinating in public, spitting in faces, refusing to wear shirts, hoping Anne Frank would've been a “Belieber”—are inescapable, threatening to turn him into a pop-culture pariah in record-breaking time.

BOTTOM LINE

- The most connected generation is still trying to make a connection.

GENERATION Z

2001–present

HEROES

- Suri Cruise, the Jolie-Pitt brood

VILLAINS

- Honey Boo Boo, North West

WHAT WE THINK OF THEM

- If Generation Y is optimistic, its successors are realistic. Can you blame them? They've known nothing but a post-9/11 world of terrorism, crippling recession, climate change and school violence. Understandably, they take their entertainment dark

and dystopian, with characters rising above grim circumstances to create a better way of life for all. Watching their parents grapple with unemployment and their Gen-Y elders move back home will make them financially conservative and savvy. Hyperconnected from conception, they're set to speed through childhood like a runaway train, likely emerging the most diverse, inquisitive, globally aware generation in history.

BOTTOM LINE

- The jury's still out.



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Michelle Chrystal



MISS DECEMBER



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANNY STEYN (WWW.DANNYSTEYN.COM)



A day without dance for our determined and energetic local lass Michelle Chrystal, is a day incomplete. Her passion is for both ballet and contemporary dance and you can find her in a studio in Sandton (she's a qualified teacher, and a Pilates instructor as well) burning off some energy, and burning up the house, when she's not busy studying for her Chartered Accountant degree.

Though this all sounds quite serious, Michelle knows how to let loose and tells us she enjoys the club scene as well as a cocktail-inspired Sunday lunch with just the girls.

Speaking of the girls and the freedom to have some fun, Michelle's funniest modeling story to date, she reveals, is when the top seam of her corset tore in a recent photoshoot. "Just as the photographer snapped the picture – my boobs popped completely out. As that happened, we both just started laughing and singing, "I want to break free...!" For her pictorial with us, no such slip-ups had the chance to arise. Because we're PLAYBOY, after all.

With a great sense of humor, and the lithe, lovely body of a dancer, Michelle will have you on the tips of your toes begging for more.

MUA: LEANNE ROUX
ASSISTANT: GAWIE VAN DER WALT















MISS DECEMBER



Michelle Chrystal

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: *Michelle Chrystal*

BUST: *91cm*

WAIST: *63cm*

HIPS: *74cm*

HEIGHT: *175cm*

WEIGHT: *53kg*

BIRTH DATE: *19 July 1992*

BIRTHPLACE: *Johannesburg, South Africa*



WHAT ARE YOUR PROFESSIONAL AMBITIONS?

I hope to qualify as a Chartered Accountant and eventually become a CEO for a company. I also want to travel to New York and London for modelling, dancing and acting opportunities.

TURN-ONS

Tall with a good physique, a genuine smile, and someone who is intelligent.

TURN-OFFS

Arrogance and lack of ambition.

MY DREAM DATE

I'm "old school" when it comes to dating — so I appreciate a man who still believes in chivalry. My dream date would be to go for a late afternoon lunch at a Greek/Italian restaurant, followed by a hot air balloon ride in the evening, finishing off with an overdose of chocolate ice-cream! Overall I just want the date to be fun & enjoyable for the both of us.

WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A MAN?

I look for a man who has a positive and happy approach towards life. He needs to be career driven and ambitious — and strive for independence. I appreciate a man who takes care of himself, as well as the lady he is with.

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

I call up my girls for a chilled Sunday lunch — and make sure every cocktail on the menu is tried at least once!

PEOPLE I'D LIKE TO MEET: *Eminem and Lana Del Rey.*

THREE THINGS I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT: *Chocolate, showering and my glasses!*

MY GUILTY PLEASURE: *Eating a full tub of chocolate mousse from Woolworths.*

SEXY IS: *Not what you wear, but how you take it off ;-)*

FAVORITE QUOTE

"The pain you feel today, will be the strength you feel tomorrow"





PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

There are a number of mechanical devices you can give your lover for Christmas that will increase sexual arousal. Chief among these is an Aston Martin DB9 convertible.



A group of women were talking about the metaphysics of love and compatibility. "I should have known it wasn't going to work out between me and my ex-husband," one piped up. "After all, I'm an Aries, and he's an asshole."



Christmas was rough when I was a kid because I believed in Santa Claus and, unfortunately, so did my parents.



What is the worst part of office Christmas parties?
Looking for a new job the next day.



Why are there no nativity scenes in Gauteng?
They can't find three wise men.



The four stages of life:
You believe in Santa Claus.
You don't believe in Santa Claus.
You become Santa Claus.
You look like Santa Claus.



How might a man make Kim Kardashian's eyes twinkle?
Shine a flashlight in her ear.



Two women were admiring each other's Christmas gifts.
"How did you get a mink out of your husband?" the first asked.
The second replied, "The same way minks get minks."

Three guys stayed at a ski lodge that had only one room, so they had to share a bed. The next morning, over breakfast, the man who'd slept on the right side of the bed said, "I had this wild, vivid dream of getting a hand job!"

The guy who'd slept on the left said, "That's unbelievable – I had the same dream!"

"Huh," the guy who'd been in the middle said as he took a sip of coffee. "I dreamed that I was skiing."



A man was pouring a cocktail for his female boss during a holiday party in the office. "Say when," he told her. She replied, "Right after this drink."



A fed-up wife asked her persnickety car-loving husband what he wanted for Christmas.

"Something that goes from zero to 220 in three seconds flat," he said.
On Christmas Day he unwrapped a bathroom scale.



Who said that just because I tried to kiss you at last month's Christmas party you could neglect your work around here?" a boss asked his secretary.

She responded, "My lawyer."



Santa Claus has the right idea: Visit people once a year.



Why will a woman never be the one to propose?

Because as soon as she gets on her knees, he'll start to unzip his pants.



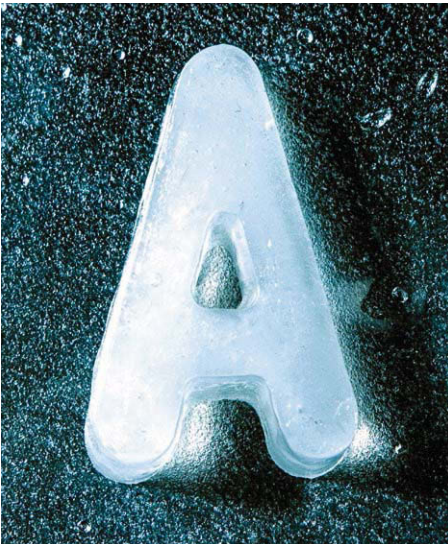


Ice Man Cometh

WIM HOF CLIMBED
MOUNT EVEREST IN
SHORTS, CAN HOLD
HIS BREATH FOR FIVE
MINUTES AND CAN
FIGHT OFF DISEASE
WITH HIS MIND.
NOW HE WANTS
TO TEACH YOU

📖 SCOTT CARNEY

📷 JEREMY LIEBMAN



A dilapidated farmhouse in the Polish countryside creaks and groans on its foundation as six men hyperventilate inside one of its frigid rooms. The windows are caked with frost and snow piles up outside the front door. Wim Hof surveys his students with stern blue eyes as he counts their breaths. They are lying in sleeping bags and covered in blankets. Every breath they expel appears as a tiny puff of mist as the heat of their bodies crystallizes in the near-arctic air. When the students are bleached white from exhaustion, Hof commands them to let all the air out of their lungs and hold their breath until their bodies shake and shudder. I exhale all my breath into the frigid air.

"Fainting is okay," he says. "It just means you went deep."

Hof is one of the world's most recognized extremophiles. In 2007 he made headlines around the world when he attempted to summit Mount Everest wearing nothing but spandex shorts and hiking boots. He has run barefoot marathons in the arctic circle and submerged his entire body beneath the ice for almost two hours. Every feat defies the boundaries of what medical science says is possible. Hof believes he is much more than a stuntman performing tricks; he thinks he has stumbled on hidden evolutionary potential locked inside every human body.

With my lungs empty and my head dizzy from hyperventilation, I note the stopwatch on my iPad as it slowly ticks by the seconds. At 30 seconds I want to let go and feel the cool air rush inside, but I hold on.

Participants have come from across Europe and America for this seven-day training program aimed at extending control over the body's autonomic processes. The human body performs most of its daily functions on autopilot. Whether it's regulating internal temperature, setting the steady pace of a heartbeat or rushing lymph and blood to a limb when it's injured, the body, like a computer, uses preset responses for most external stimuli. Hof's training aims to create a wedge between the body's internal programming and external pressures in order to force the body to cede control to the conscious mind. He is a hacker, tweaking the body's programming to expand its capabilities.

At 60 seconds, with empty lungs, my diaphragm begins to quiver and I have to rock back and forth to keep from gasping. Even so, my mind is strangely calm. My eyes are closed, and I see swirling red shapes behind my lids. Hof explains that the light is a window into my pituitary gland.

Hof promises he can teach people to hold their breath for five minutes and stay warm without clothes in freezing snow. With a few days of training I should be able to consciously control my immune system to ramp up against sicknesses or, if necessary, suppress it against autoimmune malfunctions such as arthritis and lupus. It's a tall order, to be sure. The world is full of would-be gurus proffering miracle cures, and Hof's promises sound superhuman.

The undertaking resonates with a male clientele willing to wage war on their bodies and pay \$2,000 for the privilege of a weeklong program. Across the room Hans Spaan's hands are shaking. Diagnosed with Parkinson's 10 years ago, he had to quit his job as an IT

HOSPITAL DEVICES DECLARED HIM DEAD AFTER TWO MINUTES. HOF STAYED IN THE ICE FOR 72 MINUTES.



Students at Wim Hof's camp in Poland end their training with a nearly mile-long, seven-and-a-half-hour climb up Sněžka Mountain in shorts and boots.

executive, but he claims Hof's method has enabled him to cut the amount of drugs his doctors insist he needs. Next to him, Andrew Lescelius, a Nebraskan whose asthma can be crippling, hasn't used his inhaler for a week.

For almost an hour we've been cycling between hyperventilating and holding our breath. Every repetition has made it incrementally easier to hold on just a bit longer. Hof tells us the quick breathing adds oxygen to our blood supply so that, at least until we use it up, we don't have to rely on the air in our lungs to survive. The autonomic urge to gasp for air is based on the mind's ordinary programming: No air in the lungs means it's time to breathe. My nervous system hasn't yet realized there's still air in my blood.

Ninety-two seconds and my vision starts to cloud over. The room has taken on a red sheen I don't remember being there before. I may be seeing lights. I let go and allow air to rush in. It's far from a record, but after only an hour of trying, it's my longest attempt. I smile with a small sense of accomplishment.

Hof then commands us to undergo another breathing cycle, but this time, instead of holding my breath, he instructs me to do as

many push-ups as I can. Raised on a diet of cheese curds and little exercise, I'm out of shape. At home I can manage an embarrassingly feeble 20 before collapsing. Now, with no air in my lungs, I push myself off the floor with almost no effort. They roll out one after another, and before I know it I've done 40.

I decide I'm going to have to reevaluate everything I've ever thought about gurus. Hof is a difficult figure to dissect. On one level he speaks in a familiar creole of New Age mumbo jumbo. There's a spiel about universal compassion and connection to divine energies. Then, of course, there are the results. His relatively simple exercises make undeniable changes in my body seemingly overnight. Following his prescriptions for a week, I hack my body to perform physical feats of endurance I didn't think possible and earn confidence I didn't know I had. As a bonus, I lose seven pounds of fat—which come out in oily clumps during my morning eliminations.

Our goal by the end of the week: to complete an arduous eight-hour climb up a powder-covered mountain, wearing nothing but shorts. It will be my own personal Everest, though in this case the mountain is called Sněžka. But even with these first routines in the safety of a training

room, I'm not sure I'm up for it.

I am at the mercy of Hof, who wears a pointy green hat that makes him look like a life-size garden gnome. A bushy beard frames his piercing blue eyes and ruddy nose, and his body bristles with tightly corded muscles. A six-inch surgical scar across his stomach marks a time he took his training too far and ended up in the hospital. Hof is a savant and a madman. He's a prophet and a foil. And as is occasionally the case with people who try to cultivate superpowers, Hof's abilities have come at a heavy price.



Born in the Dutch city of Sittard in 1959, on the eve of Europe's hippie revolution, Hof spent his early years in the middle of a working-class family of nine children. While the rest of the Hof family learned Catholic liturgy, Wim became fascinated with Eastern teachings, memorizing parts of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and scouring the Bhagavad Gita and Zen Buddhism for wisdom. He was keen on exploring the connections between the body and the mind, but none of what he read was quite what he was looking for.

Then, in the winter of 1979, when he was 20 years old, he was walking alone on a frosty morning in Amsterdam's picturesque Beatrixpark when he noticed a thin skin of ice on one of the canals. He wondered what it would feel like if he jumped in. With juvenile impulsiveness he has never quite shed, he took off his clothes and plunged in naked. The shock was immediate, he says, but "the feeling wasn't of cold; it was something like tremendous good. I was in the water only a minute, but time just slowed down. It felt like ages." A wash of endorphins cruised through his system, and the high lasted through the afternoon. He went on to repeat the exercise every day since. "The cold is my teacher," he says.

The breathing technique emerged naturally. He started by mimicking the rapid breaths people take instinctively when they plunge into icy water, which he says are similar to the breaths a woman takes during childbirth. In both cases the body switches to an instinctual program. When Hof dunked under the ice, he went from rapid breathing to holding his breath. That's when he began to feel changes in his body.

The way Hof explains it, humans must have evolved with an innate ability to resist the elements. Our remote ancestors traversed icy mountains and parched deserts long before they invented the most basic footwear or animal-skin coats. While technology has made us more comfortable, the underlying biology is still there, and the key to unlocking our lost potential lies in re-creating the sorts of harsh experiences our ancestors would have faced.

Hof trained on his own in obscurity for 15 years, rarely talking about his growing abilities. His first student was his son Enahm. When Enahm was still an infant, Hof took him down to the canals and dunked him in the water

like Achilles. While it's anyone's guess what nearby pedestrians might have thought of this sight, most of his close friends shrugged off his morning routines as just another eccentricity in an already eccentric city.

Hof did odd jobs, including working as a mail carrier, and took gigs as a canyoneering instructor in Spain during the summers. Money was always a problem, and his wife—a beautiful Basque woman named Olaya—began to show signs of a serious mental disorder. She was depressed. She heard voices. In July 1995 she jumped off the eighth floor of her parents' apartment building in Pamplona on the first day of the Running of the Bulls.

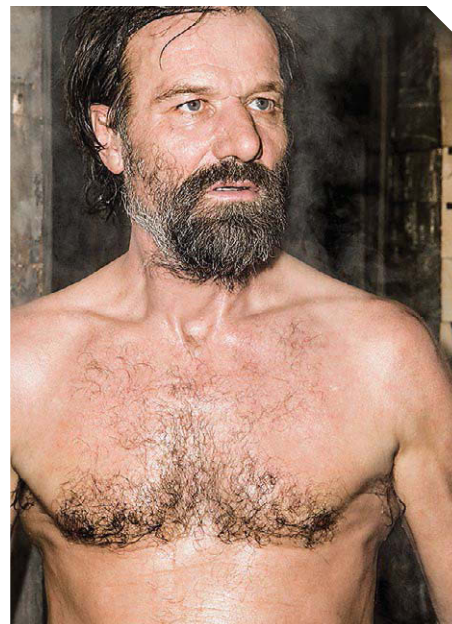
Sitting at a handmade wooden table in what serves as lunchroom and breakfast nook in his Polish headquarters, Hof recounts Olaya's death as tears roll freely down his cheeks. "Why would God take my wife from me?" he asks. Confronted with loss and a broken heart, he put all his faith into the one thing that set him apart from everyone else: his ability to control his body. Olaya had never shown interest in Hof's methods, but he felt he could have done more to help her. "The inclination I have to train people now is because of my wife's death," says Hof. "I can bring people back to tranquility. Schizophrenia and multiple-personality disorder draw away people's energy. My method can give them back control." It was his call to action. But he still needed a way to announce himself to the world.

His opportunity came a few years later. As winter settled on Amsterdam, a local newspaper ran a series of articles about odd things people did in the snow. Hof called the editor and explained that for the past couple of decades he'd been skinny-dipping in icy water. The paper sent a reporter, and Hof jumped into a nearby lake he frequented. The next week a television crew showed up.

In one famous segment, Hof cut holes in the ice and jumped in while a Dutch news crew filmed. He was drying himself off when, a few meters away, a man stepped on a thin patch and fell through. Hof charged out onto the lake, jumped in a second time and dragged the man to safety. The news crew caught the exchange, and soon Hof wasn't just a local oddity, he was a local hero. Someone dubbed him the Iceman, and the name stuck.

After that act of heroism, Hof became a household name across the Netherlands. A Dutch television program hosted by the eminent newscaster Willibrord Frequin asked Hof to perform on camera. The gimmick was to have Hof establish a Guinness world record. They planned for him to swim 50 meters beneath arctic ice without breathing. It would be sensationalist fun, but the program would air throughout Scandinavia and give Hof a shot at doing stunts for other channels around the world.

A few weeks later Hof stood on the surface of a frozen lake near the small village of Pello, Finland, a handful of miles from the arctic circle, wearing only a bathing suit. Although the temperature would drop to minus 12 degrees



During a 2007 medical study, Hof sat in ice for 72 minutes. His heart rate dropped to a mere 35 beats per minute, and he didn't breathe for more than two minutes.

Fahrenheit, his skin glistened with sweat. Below him a diamond-shape hole shot down a meter through the ice. There were two other holes 25 and 50 meters from the first. A camera crew watched as Hof descended and dipped his toe in the periwinkle waters.

On the first day of shooting he was supposed to swim only to the first hole so the crew could get the right shots and feel comfortable with the safety setup. But Hof had other plans. He wanted to surprise and impress the crew by clearing the whole distance in one go. He had done his calculations in advance. One stroke took him one meter, so he would need to do 50 to reach his destination. Taking a giant gulp of air into his lungs, Hof disappeared and began his sprint.

He later recalled that he opened his eyes midway between the first and second hole and could make out a beam of sunlight slicing through the water. But at stroke 29, with the safety of the first hole and rescue team behind him, something went wrong. He hadn't anticipated what the cold water would do to his eyes. His corneas began to freeze over, and crystallization blurred his vision. Five strokes later he was blind, with only his stroke count to direct him to oxygen. Soon he was off course. At 50 strokes he grabbed around in vain for the rim of the second hole. He turned around thinking maybe he had passed it. He wanted to gasp for air but knew the results would be fatal. At 65 strokes his hope was beginning to fade. Seventy strokes in, just as he began to lose consciousness, he felt a hand wrap around his ankle. A safety diver dragged him to the surface. He knew he had almost died and that his hubris had led him there. Despite that close call, the next day he would set a world record, with the cameras rolling.

The show went on to be a hit and secured him a series of similar on-air stunts for international channels from Discovery to National Geographic. But success came at a price. Although he was capable of incredible feats,



Hof in a salt room, which is said to help respiratory problems, near his farmhouse in Przesieka, Poland.

Hof's desire to impress and please the people around him would time and again lead him into near-fatal situations. Should he die, the world might never understand how he had achieved his dramatic results. Hof needed a better plan.



To understand Hof's abilities, I board a plane from Los Angeles to Wrocław, Poland, where he meets me at the terminal gate with a broad smile. Hof decided to make his headquarters here instead of the Netherlands so he could be close to icy streams and snow-covered mountains and also take advantage of the weaker economy to purchase a larger space. We pile into a tiny gray Volkswagen with two other devotees—a Croatian and a Latvian—who have come to study his technique, and we

traverse miles of Polish pines and picturesque villages toward Hof's rural headquarters.

Janis Kuze sits crammed next to me with my hiking backpack overflowing onto his lap. The burly Latvian grew up amid the turmoil of a collapsing Soviet Union, when bandits roamed the countryside. His father stashed a loaded AK-47 beneath his son's bed so it was never more than an instant away should they need to defend themselves. Now Kuze studies the Israeli combat system Krav Maga in his spare time and spars with his equally intimidating and, he assures me, beautiful girlfriend. Asked if he's ready to immerse himself in ice water, he replies, "When my father was in the special forces, they tested soldiers' ability to adapt by making them sit in ice water. If they survived, they passed. Not everyone passed."

We arrive in the tiny village of Przesieka, where Hof owns an isolated farmhouse he was

able to purchase after signing a sponsorship deal with Columbia Sportswear to shill a line of battery-heated jackets in 2011. In the commercials, which were created for TV but thrived on the internet, Hof swims in a frozen lake while giving icy stares to toasty outdoorsmen who use the high-tech gear to warm themselves with the touch of a button. The videos went viral, and commentators compared Hof to Chuck Norris, propelling him to a sort of internet alpha-male celebrity. But the condition of the house confirms that web fame does not necessarily translate to riches. The space is a permanent work in progress, with an assortment of bunk beds and yoga mats. A busted sauna sits next door to its new replacement. The coal furnace doesn't quite work and spews black smoke through cracks in the floorboards. Most of the floors don't seem level.

The crumbling building is headquarters for Hof's growing global presence as a New Age guru and ground zero for the experimental training regimens he's developing. One of Hof's first students at the house, Justin Rosales, now 25, flew here from Pennsylvania in 2010 to serve as a guinea pig. "If we want to become strong, passionate and motivated, we have to take on seemingly impossible tasks. Without an open mind, the cold will never be your friend," Rosales tells me over email. He has written a book with Hof about the experience, called *Becoming the Iceman*, which is often passed among devotees interested in cultivating superpowers.

I stash what little winter gear I've brought beneath a bunk on the second floor and look out the window onto a snowy field that serves as the main training site. Andrew Lescelius, the wiry asthmatic Nebraskan who arrived a week earlier, crosses the field outside clad only in black underwear, stopping to pick up handfuls of snow and rub them over his arms and chest. Steam erupts off his body in great clouds.

Kuze chooses a bunk next to mine and looks eager to get out into the snow. I let him go on his own. I will have plenty of opportunities to be cold when training begins tomorrow.

After a restless night we meet Hof in the yoga studio. He explains that every training program he runs is different, and the method varies depending on the constitution of the group. But no matter how it starts, the building blocks are simple and, he assures us, our progress will be rapid. "This week we will win the war on bacteria!" he proclaims before warning us he will challenge everything we think about the limits of our body.

At one point Hof tells us to shed our clothing and head outside. We round the farmhouse to a small snowy field frequented by deer and the curious gazes of inquisitive neighbors. As we file past, one of them yells something to us in Polish and Hof chuckles. Most people here think he's crazy, if affable.

It's the first time in my life I've put my feet directly onto snow, and they feel as sensitive as a newly broken tooth. My heart rate jumps. Kuze lets out a gasp and Hof beams a trickster smile. We stand in a circle and take low horse stances.

We try to focus on our foreheads and simply endure the cold, our chests bare to the air. Five minutes is excruciating, but Hof has us stand for six before sending us numbly into the sauna.

But with numb limbs, going from ice to a 100-plus-degree room is a mistake. The body's natural reaction to cold is self-preservation. To keep the core warm, the muscles that control arteries clench tightly and restrict the flow of blood only to vital areas in a process known as

vasoconstriction. This is why frostbite starts in the extremities. The sudden change to heat has the opposite effect. Veins suddenly pop open and send warm blood rushing through cold areas. The pain is even worse than when we were standing in the snow, something I didn't think possible.

Kuze stretches his feet toward a box of coals and says he may cry. Lescelius clenches his teeth and holds his breath. A side effect of asthma, he tells me, is poor circulation, and the sensation of vasoconstriction is even more painful. "But I like to think of it as lifting weights for the circulatory system," he says. Hof nods at the statement. After years of exposing himself to the cold, he can consciously restrict the flow of blood in his body and effectively send it to any part he wants.

Although the first day of exercises is painful and exhausting, true to Hof's word our progress is rapid. The next day we stand in the snow for 15 minutes before the same feeling of panic sets in. In the afternoon we take a brief dip in the basin of an ice-cold waterfall. It is an experience not unlike walking across a bed of hot coals—a trial by fire but with ice. With every attempt, the barriers we've built in our heads about the cold seem to recede.

By the fourth day, standing in the snow is barely a challenge. An hour passes by quicker than five minutes had just days earlier. In the evening we sit on snow-covered rocks by a stream until they're warm, Hof smiling over us.



What we know about how the human body reacts to cold comes mostly from gruesomely accurate studies that emerged from the Dachau death camp. Nazis tracked Jewish prisoners' core temperatures as they died in ice water. As terrible as they are, these morally compromised studies helped doctors understand how quickly the body loses heat in such conditions. Sitting in 32-degree water, humans begin to feel sluggish after only a minute or two. By 15 minutes most people fall unconscious. They die between 15 and 45 minutes. When the core body temperature falls below 82 degrees, death is almost inevitable. Measured against that data set, Hof seems to perform miracles.

In 2007 at the Feinstein Institute on Long Island, Kenneth Kamler, a world-renowned expedition doctor who has worked on Everest, observed an experiment in which Hof was connected to heart and blood monitors and immersed in ice. At first the experiment hit a major snag. The standard hospital devices that track respiration declared him dead after he'd been in the ice only two minutes. The machine got confused because he didn't take a breath for more than two minutes and his resting heart rate was a mere 35 beats per minute. He wasn't dead, though, and Kamler had to disconnect the device to continue. Hof stayed in the ice

for 72 minutes. The results were astounding. Hof's core temperature initially declined a few degrees but then rose again. It was the first scientific validation of Hof's method. It was becoming clear that Hof could consciously affect his autonomic nervous system to increase his core temperature. "Exactly how you explain it depends on the kind of philosophy you want to believe in," says Kamler, who references similar feats called tummo performed by Tibetan monks. Ultimately, he says, it boils down to how Hof uses his brain. "The brain uses a lot of energy on higher functions that are not essential to survival. By focusing his mind he can channel that energy to generate body heat," he speculates.

Interest among scientists snowballed in 2008 just as it had in the mass media more than a decade earlier. At Maastricht University researchers wondered if Hof's abilities stemmed from a high concentration of mitochondria-rich brown adipose tissue, also known as brown fat. This little-understood tissue can rapidly heat the body when metabolized; it is what allows infants not to succumb to cold in their earliest moments. Usually brown fat mostly disappears by early childhood, but evolutionary biologists believe that early humans may have carried higher concentrations of it to resist extreme

Hof's corneas began to freeze over, and crystallization blurred his vision. Five strokes later he was blind. Soon he was off course.

environments. The scientists learned that Hof, now 55, had extremely high concentrations—enough to produce five times more energy than the typical 20-year-old—most likely because he repeatedly exposed himself to cold.

Brown fat may be the missing organic structure that separates humans from the natural world. White fat stores caloric energy from food, which the body tends to burn only as a last resort. In fact, it's difficult to burn the spare tire off your waistline because the body is programmed to store energy: It will burn muscle before it uses white fat to create heat or energy. Brown fat is different. Most people create it automatically when they're in cold environments—the body detects physical extremes and starts to store mitochondria. The way Hof describes it, when brown fat is activated, the mitochondria enter the bloodstream and metabolize white fat directly to generate heat. Because most people do everything they can to avoid environmental extremes, they never build up brown fat at all. If we lived without clothing, the way our distant ancestors must have, we would have relied on the internal properties of brown fat to keep us alive.

As we sit in the sauna, I ask Hof how someone activates brown fat consciously. Instead of explaining, he tries to demonstrate. He clenches the muscles in his body in sequence, from his rectum to his shoulders, as if pushing something up from below. Then he furrows his brow and

squinces down his neck as though trapping that energy in a point that he says is behind his ear. The process turns his skin bright red as if he were catching fire. Suddenly he kicks out his leg, falls against the wall and gasps. "Oh my God," he says, dazed. In his eagerness to teach, he didn't calculate the heat of the sauna. He almost blew a fuse. He lurches out of the sauna and rolls in the snow outside. He returns with an embarrassed smirk. "That's how you do it. But try it only in the cold."



Hans Spaan, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2004, credits Hof with saving his life. "With this disease," he says, "most people have to take more and more drugs just to maintain the same level of mobility and quality of life, and eventually you max out and begin the long decline." Spaan is trying to manage his drug regime by accompanying it with the breathing technique and ice-cold showers. He tracks his drug use on spreadsheets and claims to be on far fewer drugs now than when he was first diagnosed. He credits Hof with keeping him out of a wheelchair. Although the anecdotal evidence is encouraging, it's

hard to determine how much of Hof's abilities can be chalked up to the placebo effect. Since Hof claims to be able to control his autonomic nervous

system—the system affected by Parkinson's—it is important to have scientific backing.

Peter Pickkers is just about the last scientist who would be swayed by outlandish claims. An expert on sepsis and infection at Radboud University Medical Center in the Netherlands, he specializes in studies that look at responses of the immune system in humans. In 2010 Hof contacted Pickkers, saying he could suppress or ramp up his immune system at will. The feat is, by definition, almost impossible. But Pickkers, who had watched Hof's career rise on TV, was curious.

Pickkers devised a test in which he administered endotoxin, a component of *E. coli* bacteria the body thinks is dangerous but is actually inert. A previous trial Pickkers pioneered proved that 99 percent of healthy people who come in contact with endotoxin react as though they have the flu before the body realizes it has been duped and goes back to normal.

While Hof meditated, Pickkers injected him with the endotoxin. The results were unheard of. "Wim had done things that, if you had asked me prior to the experiment, I would not have thought possible," Pickkers told me. Whereas almost every other person dosed with endotoxin experienced severe side effects, Hof had nothing more than a minor headache. Blood tests showed he had much higher levels of cortisol—a hormone usually released only during times of extreme stress, sort of like

adrenaline than had been previously recorded. Also, blood drawn while he was meditating remained resistant to endotoxin for six days after it had left his body.

Hof is unambiguous about what he thinks of the results: "If I can show that I can consciously affect my immune system, we will have to rewrite all the medical books." But Pickkers and much of the rest of the scientific community are more reserved. While the results show an unprecedented response to endotoxin, there is no proof that Hof is anything more than a genetic anomaly. However, the results were promising enough for Pickkers and his colleague Matthijs Kox to commission a second study, this time with Hof guiding a group of college students through the same basic course I took to learn his technique before being injected with endotoxin. If his technique proves to be teachable, then the ground may begin to shift under Pickkers's feet.

In April 2013, just after I was there, 12 students flew to Poland. Pickkers and Kox remained tight-lipped about the results while the journal article wended its way through the peer-review process, but they've issued a press release saying "the trained men produced fewer inflammatory proteins and suffered far less from flu-like symptoms." Hof is ebullient. In several conversations he tells me that his students were able to master convulsions and fever responses within 15 minutes. Whether he is exaggerating or not remains to be seen, but if the results mirror the 2010 study Pickkers published, Hof will be a certified medical marvel.



All I can definitively report is my experience in Poland. I still have my challenge to complete: Despite my progress, I'm not sure I am up for the grueling bare-chested hike straight up a mountain. Sněžka Mountain straddles the Polish-Czech border and is battered by icy winds throughout the winter months. At its 5,260-foot

summit, frequented mostly by intrepid cross-country skiers who hike up from a ski lift, a lonely observatory records the movements of the stars. Starting at the base of the mountain, Hof, myself and three other disciples begin the arduous climb through two feet of fresh powder. Seconds after we pile out of Hof's dilapidated Volkswagen van, the cold slices through our winter coats like a knife. At 25 degrees Fahrenheit even modest breezes feel excruciating. In the parking lot, skiers clad head to toe in colorful Gore-Tex ensembles wrestle with their gear and trek slowly to the chairlifts.

Hof leads us to a side trail that snakes through parkland to the summit. Ten minutes up the trail, after our bodies have had time to build some internal heat, we start stripping off layers. Ashley Johnson, a former English hooligan who has found new direction in life doing work around Hof's house in exchange for lessons, slaps Lescelius and Kuze on the back in camaraderie. Bare to the cold, we stash our clothes in a backpack and crunch forward through powder.

The moment I take off my shirt it begins to make some sense how our primordial ancestors survived. Trudging forward I don't feel the bite of the cold the way I used to. Whatever heat I build up through exertion seems to stay in my skin as if I were wearing a wet suit. I can feel the sting of cold on my skin, but I focus on the point behind my ears that Hof said would help activate my brown fat and send waves of heat through my body.

Then I try to imitate what I witnessed Hof do in the sauna. With my muscles clenched, mind focused, it isn't long before I am sweating. A thin steamy mist wafts upward from our group. A skier stops to take pictures. A ski patrolman on a snowmobile stops to see if we are okay. A snowboarder lets out a shocked cry and speeds by. Together we plod forward to the summit.

There is a parallel to walking across a bed of hot coals. The temperature is subservient to the task ahead. Six hours later I am nearing the

summit, bare-chested and with my legs caked in snow. I have gone from California palm trees to Poland's snowy peaks in seven days and feel perfectly warm-hot, even.

The trek takes more than seven hours, and every step upward leaves us more exposed than before. The outside temperature drops to eight degrees. About 300 feet shy of the summit, something changes. My core temperature is fine, but the wind has intensified and the incline has gotten steeper. Every step feels harder than the one before, and I am beginning to tire. We are seven hours into the ascent, and I have given my backpack to the younger, fitter Johnson. I worry what would happen to me if I stopped. Would the cold break through the mental barrier I've erected and send me cascading into hypothermia? Fear, more than anything else, keeps me walking. Twenty minutes later I reach the summit. I'm not cold but more tired than I can ever remember being before. After taking a couple of photos we walk into the observatory to warm up.

Just like entering the sauna after standing on ice, the warm air hits me and I feel cold. I shed my mental armor and feel ice leak into my bloodstream. I begin to rely on my environment rather than my mind to keep me warm. I shiver, and then I begin to shake. My teeth clatter. I have never been this cold before. It is an hour until I feel ready to get back on my feet for the climb down the mountain. This time, though, I wear a black peacoat that I brought up in a backpack.

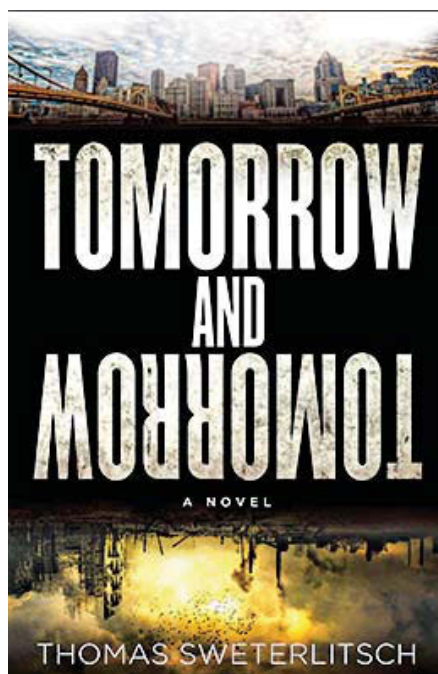
Hof plans to attempt to summit Mount Everest soon. It will be his second time after an earlier, aborted, nearly naked attempt. I ask Hof what he thinks would happen if he finally meets his limits on this climb and joins the hundreds who have died on the mountain. Would his message be lost to time? Would even the modest lessons he has been able to give to his flock mean anything if he dies in a way most people would deem foolish? His face grows dark at the thought. He tells me he might cry. "I must not die," he says. "I've decided."



2. Hof's training camp promises to teach students to hold their breath for five minutes and to stay warm without clothes.

BY CAT AUER

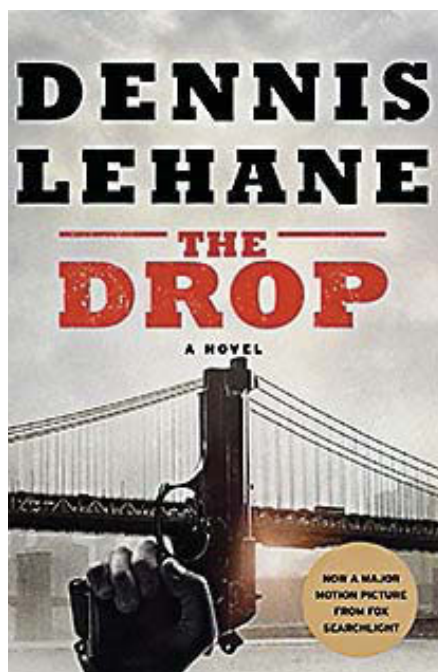
THOMAS SWETERLITSCH
TOMORROW AND
TOMORROW



Souls, like data, are easily corrupted. In Thomas Sweterlitsch's futuristic novel, marketers know what you want before you do. When the filthy-rich inventor of the Adware implant – think Google Brain instead of Glass – asks Dominic Blaxton for help, the disgraced insurance-claims investigator accepts. Tasked with finding out why all traces of a mysterious redhead are disappearing from the digital Archive, Blaxton uncovers evidence of brutal crimes that may involve his new boss. Before he realizes what he's gotten into, it becomes clear that he desperately needs to disconnect to save himself. The moral? Always read the user agreement.

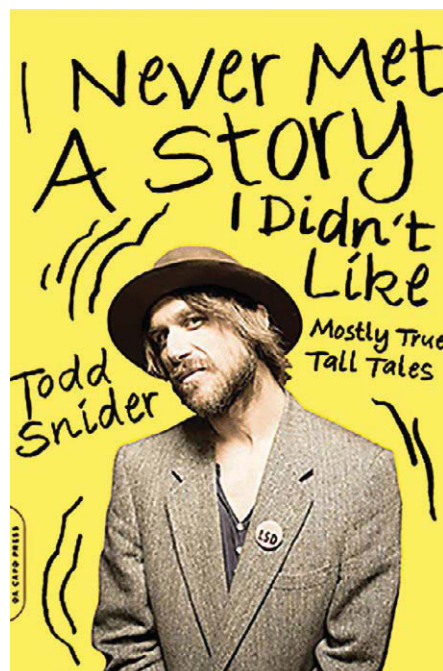
DENNIS LEHANE
THE DROP

Dennis Lehane's latest Boston tale skates across the black ice of a cruel winter in fictional East Buckingham. By all appearances a pushover, Bob Seginowski keeps the wider world at



arm's length, tending bar at Cousin Marv's, repenting his sins at Saint Dom's and keeping a secret he can't forgive himself for. One day Bob rescues a near-dead dog that makes him forget his past and meets a blonde who makes him dream about the future. A dangerous ex-con threatens to take away both, and Bob must decide what's worth fighting for. Underworld vignettes – Chechen thugs drilling a man's foot, bagmen depositing cash at Marv's (the "drop"), a fiery shootout and fumbled heroin heist – show Lehane at his best. A film based on the book hits theaters soon.

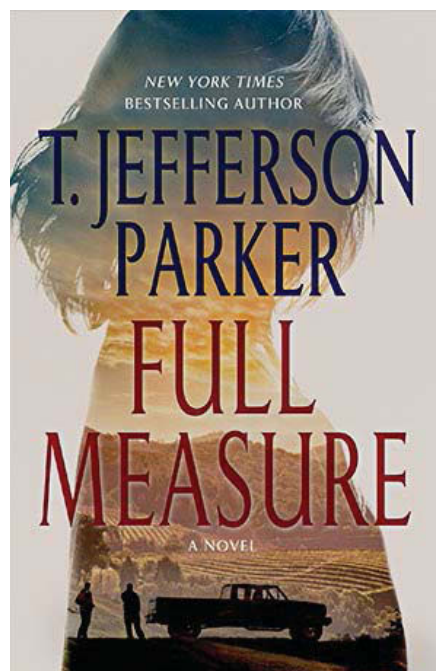
ROB TANNENBAUM
I NEVER MET A STORY
I DIDN'T LIKE: MOSTLY
TRUE TALL TALES



Todd Snider calls himself a folksinger, but he's what your dad would refer to as a card. Snider, who is 47 on the outside and 12 on the inside, begins his riotous memoir, *I Never Met a Story I Didn't Like*, with a tale of being pelted with fruit by Jimmy Buffett ("and not in a playful way"), then proceeds to arrests, booze, drugs and yarns that involve people named Trog, Bonehead, Moon Bitch and Matthew McConaughey. He clearly declares his one goal: to "keep my life as fucked up as it is." Because Snider doesn't narrate in chronological order, you'll probably lose count of how many times he's been in rehab. Basically, this undeservedly unpopular singer has led a life like Keith Richards's but without fame or money to hold him down.

JEFFERSON PARKER
FULL MEASURE

In T Jefferson Parker's latest novel, machine gunner Patrick Norris returns to Fallbrook, California after surviving an Afghanistan deployment many fellow marines did not. He's happy to be home



from a war he didn't believe in but aches for the exhilaration of combat. When his dad asks for help saving the family farm, most of which burned in a suspicious wildfire, Pat puts aside dreams of opening a fly-fishing business and trades duty to country for duty to family. How the fire started is the secret that Parker's skillful narrative builds up to revealing, with suspenseful subplots – a romance with a local reporter, a hit-and-run whodunit, a troubled brother drawn into the orbit of a racist townie mechanic – woven into a satisfying finish. A departure from Parker's typical California crime fare, *Full Measure* looks at what it means to sacrifice for things you believe in – and things you don't.



OH, SANTA,



If you've been a very, very good boy this year, you can forget about Santa. We've got fur-trimmed, red-clad Cybergirls Elizabeth Marx and Ali Rose here to give you everything – and we mean everything – you want for Christmas. All-natural, with warm smiles and generous breasts, Elizabeth and Ali have a little something in common – and under their cute little outfits, they've got some Christmas presents just for you. These little ladies are nice and naughty, and lucky for you, they're right here.

BABY!

IT'S ELIZABETH MARXS AND ALI ROSE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HOLLY RANDALL



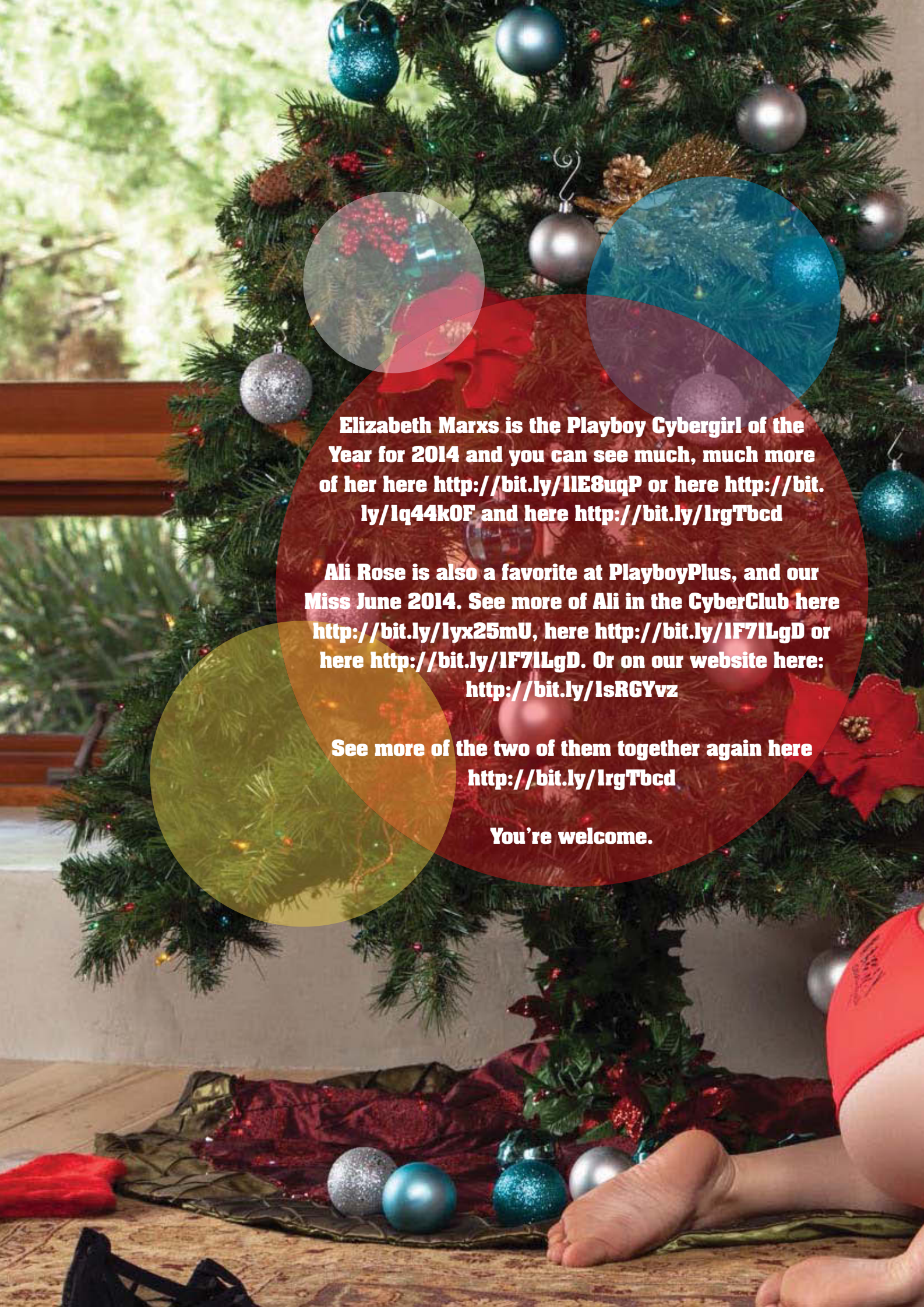












Elizabeth Marx is the Playboy Cybergirl of the Year for 2014 and you can see much, much more of her here <http://bit.ly/1IE8uqP> or here <http://bit.ly/1q44k0F> and here <http://bit.ly/1rgTbcd>

Ali Rose is also a favorite at PlayboyPlus, and our Miss June 2014. See more of Ali in the CyberClub here <http://bit.ly/1yx25mU>, here <http://bit.ly/1F71LgD> or here <http://bit.ly/1F71LgD>. Or on our website here: <http://bit.ly/1sRGYvz>

See more of the two of them together again here <http://bit.ly/1rgTbcd>

You're welcome.

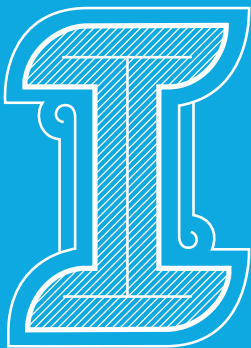


BEST

BAR

BY THE EDITORS OF PLAYBOY

OUR FAVORITE BARS IN AMERICA LIKE TO PLAY HARD TO GET. HERE ARE THE TOP CLANDESTINE WATERING HOLES, NEO-SPEAKEASIES AND STEALTH GIN MILLS



If you asked us five years ago whether we thought the whole speakeasy revival was going to last, we would have told you heck no. And we would have been dead wrong. Today every major city has not one but often several bars that are hidden behind secret doors, down back alleys, in converted storefronts or within other bars. Since these spots are generally on the small side, the focus can be on the quality of the drinks and the overall experience. And the best of the lot are breaking away from speakeasy clichés: Not all the bartenders have waxed handlebar mustaches, not every drink has 50 ingredients, and they're better than ever. We can drink to that.



NAUTICAL BY NATURE

ZZ'S CLAM BAR / NEW YORK

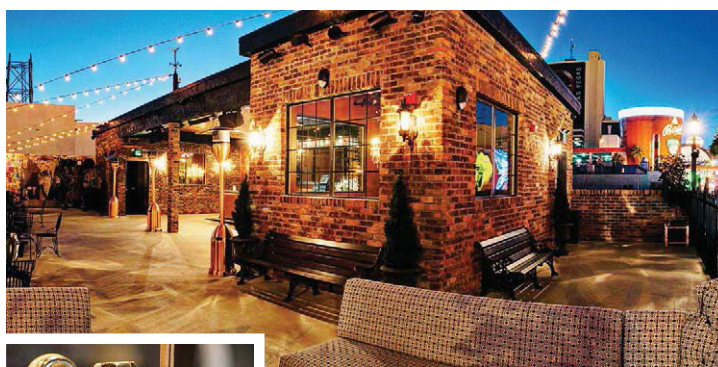
Eating while drinking is usually just a good idea, but at ZZ's Clam Bar it's a necessity. To taste the fine tiki-inspired cocktails at this jewel box of a spot, you have to make a dinner reservation. When the menu is from the guys behind the restaurants Carbone, Torrisi

Italian Specialties and Parm, we're happy to settle in for a couple of hours. The seafood is smartly prepared, and the cardamom cocktail tastes like something the Buddha would have served had he gone to bartending school.



BAR FOODIE

Chianina beef, caviar and sea urchin star in one of ZZ's aquatic carpaccios.



CLEANING UP

LAUNDRY ROOM / LAS VEGAS

The whole bigger-is-better formula is deliciously destroyed at this tiny civilized bar

within another bar in downtown Las Vegas (which, if you haven't heard, is the hot new

neighborhood to hang and party like a Zappos exec or a casino chef on his night off). There's no blaring music on the sound system, photography isn't allowed, and the drinks are textbook renditions of classics from the first golden age of the cocktail. Visit Laundry Room's Facebook or Yelp page to get the number to make a reservation. If it's booked solid, have a consolation drink outside at Commonwealth.



TEXTOLOGY

THE NOBLE EXPERIMENT / SAN DIEGO

Leave behind the touristy throngs of San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter at this delightfully inaccessible bar

inside Neighborhood restaurant. To gain access, not only must you text a reservation request in advance (give yourself a week

if you're heading there on a Friday or Saturday night), but you also have to locate the darn entrance (it's behind that stack of beer kegs by the restroom). Inside you'll find the cocktail palace of your dreams: White tufted banquettes, a wall of skulls and a crystal

chandelier are the dramatic backdrop for some serious mixology. If you don't know your oleo saccharum from your orgeat syrup, put yourself in the hands of one of the staff and ask for the bartender's choice.



FIRE IT UP

← Complicated classic cocktails such as the incendiary blue blazer are on the menu.



BOOKED SOLID

WILLIAMS & GRAHAM / DENVER

The front for this drinking establishment is a tiny faux bookstore, but that's where the gimmicky stops. The convivial neighborhood bar it hides serves a host of seriously crafted cocktails but without being too serious about it. Case in point: the names of the drinks. There's the white drank, a cocktail made with silver tequila and white wine, and the rye-based sexual chocolate, made with a dash of chocolaty mole bitters. Like many of the other bars that made our list this year, Williams & Graham also serves excellent food designed to stand up to the full-flavored cocktails. Braised duck potpie and house-made beer nuts spiced with Aleppo pepper and sriracha are our idea of bar food.



GET DOWN

Punch House / Chicago

This subterranean bar from the guys behind Chicago's revered Longman & Eagle is our kind of kitsch. If you're going to drink in a basement, you could do worse than this exquisitely rendered version of a 1970s rec-room bar (think wood paneling, an aquarium and a taxidermied trophy fish). Instead of Dad's kegerator, there are eight punches on draft, from old-school versions to modern variations, including one made with curried pisco. Soak it all up with a braised beef cheek sandwich on house-made challah.





DISCO AND A DRINK

HONEYCUT / LOS ANGELES

Not all mixologically inclined cocktail menus are served in monastic quarters by overly serious bartenders in suspenders and professorial facial hair circa 1893. At Honeycut in downtown Los Angeles things get funky in the very best way. Yes, the drinks are well-

crafted, but when one of the menu categories is "classy as fuck," you know the establishment doesn't take itself too seriously. Unlike many of the other spots on our list, this is not a place to come for a quiet drink. But that's a good thing at Honeycut. The flashing multicolored checkerboard of a dance floor straight out of Saturday Night Fever and a rotating roster of DJs keep the place hopping. Be warned: You'll need to walk down an alley to find it, and it's slammed on weekends. Tuesday is the new Friday, but you already knew that.



SPEAK EASIER

MIDNIGHT COWBOY / AUSTIN

Any bar housed in a former massage parlor gets our attention—especially when the name hasn't changed. (Don't worry: Everything on the inside has.) Still, there's something a little brothel-like about being able to book a private booth for two hours, and we like that. We especially like that Midnight Cowboy's house rules request that patrons keep their

voices at a reasonable volume and that they refrain from using their phones. We also like that you need to press a buzzer marked HARRY CRADDOCK to get in. Craddock is the author of *The Savoy Cocktail Book*, the seminal drinks manual from the 1930s, which every good bartender has committed to memory.

THAI ONE

Patpong Road / Miami Beach

On the real Patpong Road in Bangkok some serious Hangover-level debauchery takes place. Here, above Miami Beach's Khong River House, you can expect a more refined but appropriately raucous experience. The bar serves its signature rum-based laid-ee cocktail in a plastic bag, an homage to the bagged drinks sold on the streets in Southeast Asia.





TIKI TAKEOVER

HALE PELE, PORTLAND

Of all the towns in need of some tropical relief, sun-deprived Portland just may be the most deserving. That plus the local handcrafted ethos go a long way toward explaining the success of

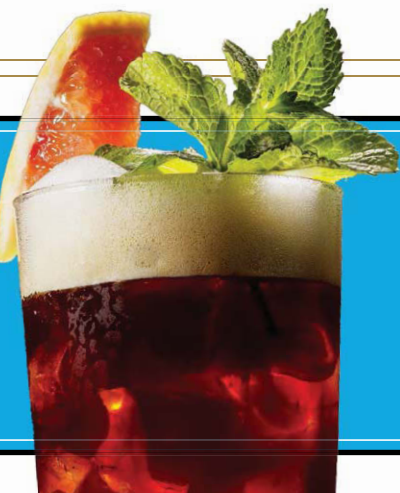
Hale Pele. Here the tiki drinks are artisanal (including superfresh juices and top-shelf rum) and the staff wisely limits the high-octane zombie cocktail to two per customer. Book the private Chieftain's

Hut in advance if you have a big party, and settle in for the evening. Soak it all up with bites from the pupu menu, which this being Portland includes a kale salad.

LET'S GET LOST

THE MYSTERY ROOM / PHOENIX

The Arizona Biltmore is a grand example of 1920s architecture: The sprawling deco resort looks like a set straight out of Baz Luhrmann's *Gatsby*. On Sunday nights the hotel resurrects its past (it opened during Prohibition) with the Mystery Room, a tiny secret bar that requires a password for entry. Although it may seem late to the game, the venue is a rare example of a speakeasy-revival bar that was once actually a speakeasy.



THE WRITE

Local Edition / San Francisco

The perfect pairing of drinking and journalism is celebrated at Local Edition, a subterranean bar (yes, it's a trend) in the basement of the Hearst Building in the Embarcadero. Vintage typewriters, old newspapers and printing-press components celebrate the power of the printed word, as young tech executives toast this bygone era with 1950s-inspired cocktails such as the brass knuckle, made with Japanese whiskey and spiced blood-orange liqueur.



BIG ON JAPAN

Bar Jackalope / Los Angeles



You used to have to head to the top of the Park Hyatt in Shinjuku to get your Suntory time on. But now, with more Japanese whiskeys making their way to the States, you can get your fix at Jackalope, a tiny bar within a bar at the back of whiskey-focused Seven Grand. Insider tip: Go earlier in the week to avoid the weekend masses. That way you can focus on the subtle differences between a Hibiki and a Yamazaki.

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INTERVIEW JOAQUIN PHOENIX

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW

JOAQUIN PHOENIX

BY STEPHEN REBELLO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMANDA DEMME

A candid conversation with the eccentric actor about dealing with fame, the truth about his hip-hop spoof and embracing the mystery of it all.



Something few people get about Joaquin Phoenix is that off screen, he's not a moody, egocentric, arrogant, volatile twit. He's a sardonic jester, a leg-puller engineered for fame but smart enough to see right through it.

On-screen or off, Joaquin Phoenix isn't for the fainthearted. Known best for film roles that showcase his capacity for brooding intensity, idiosyncrasy, physicality, combustibility and raw vulnerability, Phoenix has impressed as a megalomaniac Roman emperor in *Gladiator* (earning an Oscar nomination), a country-music hellion in *Walk the Line* (another Oscar nomination), a traumatized World War II veteran in *The Master* (yet another nomination) and a heartbroken divorcé who falls in love with a Siri-like operating system in *Her* (an Oscar nomination that should have been). But after 30-plus years in the acting game, when he's not busy filming with top directors such as Ridley Scott, Paul Thomas Anderson or Spike Jonze, Phoenix's public image has been known to get murky. Or downright mind-boggling. Or ominous. Or darkly funny.

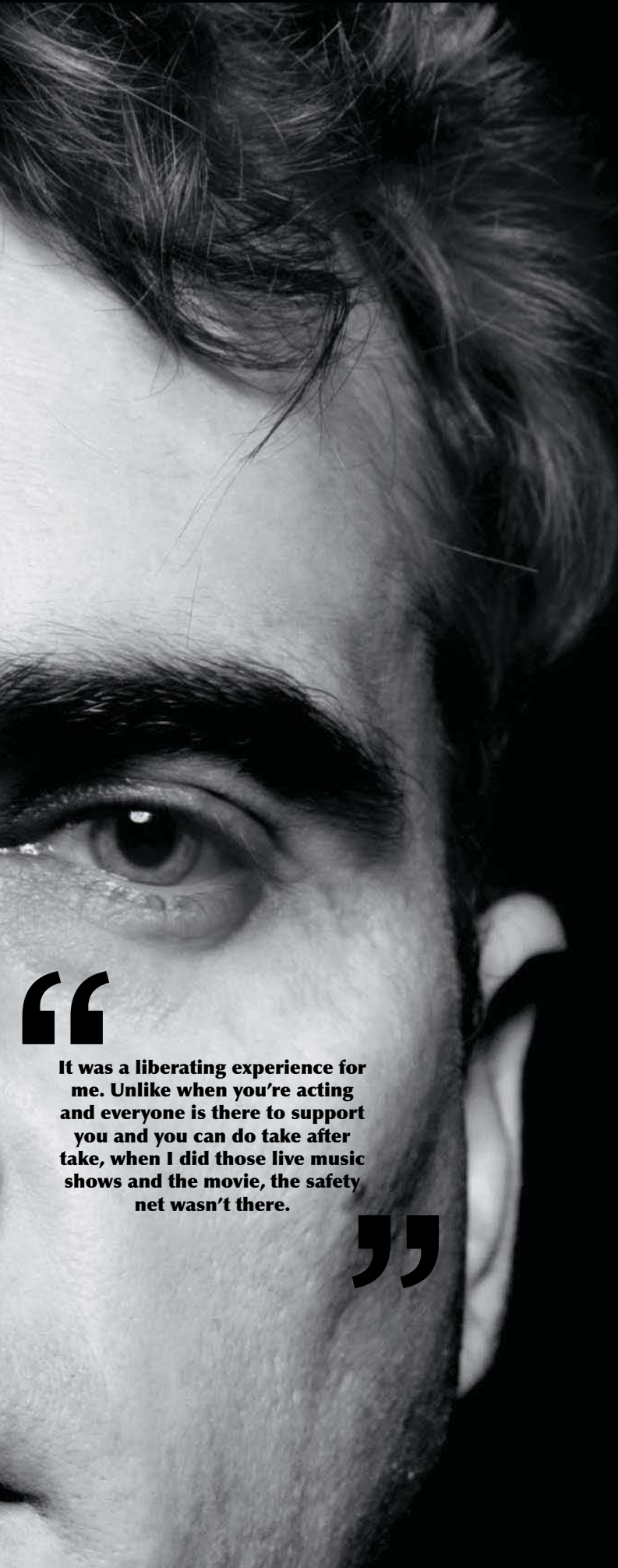
In 2005 he entered rehab for alcoholism; less than a year later he crashed and rolled his car and, as it filled with leaking gasoline, was saved by director Werner Herzog, who miraculously happened to be passing by. In 2008 Phoenix told the world he was bowing out of acting to become a hip-hop artist. His weight ballooned; he sprouted a bushy beard, donned sunglasses, dreadlocked his hair and played a couple of train-wreck gigs. Actor Casey Affleck, Phoenix's friend and brother-in-law (married since 2006 to Phoenix's sister Summer), filmed it all – including Phoenix's romps with hookers and cocaine – for a 2010 movie, *I'm Still Here*, advertised as a documentary. Then, in front of 4 million TV viewers (and hundreds of thousands more on YouTube), Phoenix appeared to strike the final match in his career self-immolation with an infamous guest appearance on *Late Show With David Letterman* during which he seemed spacey and incoherent. It turned out to be a hoax, of course, an elaborately staged, drawn-out Andy Kaufman meets Sacha Baron Cohen-esque performance piece.

But something few people get about Joaquin Phoenix is that off screen, he's not a moody, egocentric, arrogant, volatile twit. He's a sardonic jester, a leg-puller engineered for fame but smart enough to see right through it. His

parents, Arlyn and John Bottom, raised him that way. Searching, nomadic hippies, the two met as hitchhikers in 1968; by 1974, when Joaquin was born in Puerto Rico, they (with River and Rain, Joaquin's older brother and sister) had gravitated to the Children of God sect, a lightning rod for controversy. Watching TV and fraternizing with nonbelievers was discouraged. When Phoenix's parents fled Children of God in 1977, they boarded a Miami-bound ship, then relocated to Los Angeles. To celebrate what they saw as a risen-from-the-ashes rebirth, they changed their last name to Phoenix.

Arlyn Phoenix got a job as secretary to NBC's head of casting. The Phoenix kids went to work. Billed as "Leaf Phoenix" throughout the 1980s, Joaquin scored roles on *Murder, She Wrote* and *Hill Street Blues*, leading to attention-getting big-screen stints in *Ruszkies* and *Parenthood*. By 1989, tired of what he called "banana in the tailpipe" roles, he stopped making movies, until something much better came along six years later in the form of *To Die For*, a smart, wicked, Gus Van Sant-directed bit of comic nastiness. Phoenix, hoping to show off his range in a wider variety of material, including big comedies, kept the dark stuff coming with such downers as *8MM* (as a character who sells porn films) and *Return to Paradise* (as a flower child awaiting execution for drug possession). But those flicks led to *Gladiator*, a box-office hit and awards grabber. Accolades, fame and stardom have brought things Phoenix tolerates but probably hates, such as scrutiny and intense public curiosity – and interviews.

We sent PLAYBOY Contributing Editor Stephen Rebello, who last interviewed David Fincher, to track down Phoenix at a Middle Eastern restaurant in LA's explosively hip East Side. Rebello reports: "I first met Phoenix in 2007 when I interviewed him for a PLAYBOY 20Q, during which he smoked and fidgeted a lot but was charming, kind and archly funny. That same guy turned up seven years later for this interview, minus the cigarettes. Arrogant? Combative? Uncommunicative? Please. He might rather have been doing something else – maybe anything else – but Joaquin was frank, talkative and endearingly off center."



“

It was a liberating experience for me. Unlike when you're acting and everyone is there to support you and you can do take after take, when I did those live music shows and the movie, the safety net wasn't there.

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PLAYBOY: In three decades as an actor, you've received Oscar nominations for *Gladiator*, *Walk the Line* and *The Master*, won a best actor Golden Globe for *Walk the Line* and been nominated for dozens of other US and international awards. You're most identified with isolated, intense, troubled characters in films by some of the most individualistic directors, including, most recently, *Her* by Spike Jonze, the upcoming *Inherent Vice* by Paul Thomas Anderson and a new dramatic film by Woody Allen. Aspects of your life and your off-screen behavior have caused some to think of you as eccentric, unfiltered, maybe even unhinged. Can we discuss what's real and what's not about that?

PHOENIX: Oh boy.

PLAYBOY: You announced in 2008 that you were giving up acting for a career as a hip-hop artist and infamously guested on *Late Show With David Letterman*, thickly bearded, twitchy, wearing dark glasses and mumbling in monosyllables. In the movie *I'm Still Here*, Casey Affleck filmed you apparently snorting cocaine, hiring a hooker and, during an embarrassingly bad hip-hop performance in Miami, hurling yourself into the crowd to brawl with an audience member. You kept this up for more than a year, later confirming what many had already guessed: It was a stunt, and the movie was a faux documentary. You said you did it as a comment on the disintegration of celebrity and because you were "frustrated with acting because I took it so seriously." Even so, it's the kind of stunt that could leave fans, critics, moviemakers and guys like David Letterman feeling as though they'd been chumped. When Letterman had you back on the show the next year, you apologized and claimed he wasn't in on it. But come on – was he?

PHOENIX: David Letterman was not in on the joke. My agents, my publicist Sue Patricola – she's really good in the movie because she seems so concerned, right? – they were all in on it, of course. But look, David Letterman is one of the smartest guys on television. There's no way that guy doesn't know what's going on in some way. That's what I'll say about it.

PLAYBOY: Is it true that Ben Affleck, Casey Affleck's brother, as well as Matt Damon urged you to come clean sooner because they thought the stunt could hurt your and Casey's careers?

PHOENIX: Maybe Casey had that conversation with them, but I didn't. I can see how people felt like they'd been duped. I think I would have had a similar reaction. I totally understand people getting defensive and scared because they don't want to be taken advantage of. I think now everyone knows it was never our intention to attack people. We were clearly attacking ourselves.

PLAYBOY: Did the self-spoofing accomplish what you hoped it would?

PHOENIX: Well, I'm under the impression that it was a liberating experience for me. Unlike when you're acting and everyone is there to support you and you can do take after take, when I did those live music shows and the movie, the safety net wasn't there. Or maybe the safety net was there, but it was old, worn, full of holes and probably going to collapse.

PLAYBOY: Did it collapse?

PHOENIX: When you're dealing with a thousand people in a club and you're doing a fake fight everyone thinks is real except you and the guy you're fighting with, you don't know what's going to happen, and the outcome was very

unclear. That was scary and also a great experience. I said it was done to experience a change. I don't really know what it did. Only time will tell. You try to analyze it on your own, or you do interviews and get asked questions about it, so you try to say something that sounds interesting and cool. But really, I don't know. Maybe it's just human nature to want to find some positive outcome in whatever it is you do. You lie to yourself all the time, right?

PLAYBOY: Do you think we all lie to ourselves?

PHOENIX: Yeah. This is actually true and proven. If you didn't lie to yourself, it would be awfully lonely. Statistically, in all of us, in all our affairs, the odds of failure are so high that if you didn't lie to yourself, you'd probably just give up. So maybe we're prone to wanting to see positive results based on our actions.

PLAYBOY: The incident had the press sifting through old quotes of yours, looking for clues or explanations. One quote that was offered as evidence several times was this: "My significant other right now is myself, which is what happens when you suffer from multiple personality disorder and self-obsession." To us that sounds like you being flip and funny rather than literal.

PHOENIX: I definitely did not say that, or if I did, I didn't say it seriously. I could have been in a fucking mood and just felt like, "I don't want to talk to you," but felt pressured into doing something I didn't want to do. So it's totally possible someone might have been like, "He's an asshole," or whatever. But they're probably just doing their jobs.

PLAYBOY: Do fans approach you more cautiously now?

PHOENIX: It's no different. I think I know what it's like to be an attractive woman. I think that's basically what the experience is, right?

PLAYBOY: How do you mean?

PHOENIX: It's like when you notice somebody walk past you, then stop and turn around. I started to realize it's the same thing that sometimes happens to attractive women. They'll be like, "Just come up and say, 'Hey, how are you?' Talk to me." When someone is shuffling back and forth, it makes me uneasy. I'm definitely not interested. But if somebody comes up and goes, "Hey, how are you? My name is so-and-so" – great. I'll rap with you. If you're genuine in your curiosity about something, that's great. But that sycophantic energy is uncomfortable to be around. Nobody wants to experience that.

PLAYBOY: It's got to be uncomfortable for

the person who's hemming and hawing about talking with you.

PHOENIX: Of course, and I understand that as well. A woman came up the other day in a store and said, "I'm really sorry, but can we take a picture?" I said, "You know what? I don't do that, but thanks so much for coming up. I mean, I'm here with two of my friends and you're alone and came up and said hi.

That was really brave of you." Whatever energy she had was gone instantly. We chatted a bit. It was fun. Then she went and bought her fucking tube socks and I bought my stupid little sweatpants, and that was it.

PLAYBOY: Your first film after *I'm Still Here* and a four-year break from filmmaking was 2012's stunning *The Master*, Paul Thomas Anderson's controversial epic that had a Scientology-like cult as its backdrop. Its release revived interest in how, in the early 1970s, your parents, John and Arlyn Bottom, and your siblings, River, Rain, Liberty and Summer, traveled through Central and South America as part of the Children of God religious group. The group has become highly controversial as ex-members continue to surface and publicly reveal the sexual abuse of young children and a highly sexualized environment in which husbands and wives are expected to share their partners with others.

PHOENIX: As I understand it, you're on the outside of that group until you're accepted. I don't think we ever got to that point, because frankly, as it got closer, I think my parents went, "Wait a minute. This is more than a religious community. There's something else going on here, and this doesn't seem right." And so they left very early on.

PLAYBOY: How were they introduced to the group?

PHOENIX: Through friends. I think my parents had a religious experience and felt strongly about it. They wanted to share

with Rose McGowan, who has talked about spending the first nine years of her life with her parents in an Italy-based version of the cult? She told the press about the sect's female members being perceived as existing only to serve their men sexually and having to go "flirty fishing" in bars to lure new recruits.

PHOENIX: We haven't, but I think a lot of what has been exposed about the group happened in the 1980s. She was there well into the 1980s, I think. It's kind of a typical progression of something like that, you know? It starts out one way and takes some time before it evolves into something else. When people bring up Children of God, there's always something vaguely accusatory about it. It's guilt by association. I think it was really innocent on my parents' part. They really believed, but I don't think most people see it that way. I've always thought that was strange and unfair.

PLAYBOY: With all the traveling you did with your family, was it tough to make friends and then have to say good-bye?

PHOENIX: Yeah. We were fun kids, so there were plenty of friends. I had some pretty solid friends at different times, sure. To be honest, most of my friends were my sister's friends and they were girls. It was much more fun to hang out with girls than boys.

PLAYBOY: When did you figure out that girls were as aware of you as you were of them?

PHOENIX: Well, that's immediate, isn't it? I don't know what age, but it's as soon as you all start becoming curious about each other. I don't recall sex being discussed in my family. You become a teenager and start having curiosity about it.

PLAYBOY: Your parents' disillusionment with the group prompted them to celebrate a rebirth by changing your surname from Bottom to Phoenix and relocating to southern California. That's when your

mother got a job at NBC and brought you to talent agents, who signed you at the age of six. Did you enter show business willingly?

PHOENIX: Oh yeah. We were always singing and playing music, and

we were encouraged to express ourselves. When you're a kid, acting is an extension of playing. You have an imagination, right? If that's encouraged and you're in an environment where you're given these props and opportunities to express yourself, it's terribly exciting. I always loved it. In fact, I was thinking about it driving across the San Fernando Valley today. We used to live deep in the valley, and the station wagon would break down all the time when we'd go on

Maybe it's just human nature to want to find some positive outcome in whatever it is you do.

that with other people who wanted to talk about their experience with religion. These friends were like, "Oh, we believe in Jesus as well." I think my parents thought they'd found a community that shared their ideals. Cults rarely advertise themselves as such. It's usually someone saying, "We're like-minded people. This is a community," but I think the moment my parents realized there was something more to it, they got out.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever compared notes

auditions. But I loved those moments when you'd walk into an audition or onto a set and have an experience you didn't know you were capable of and didn't really even know where it came from. It was so fulfilling to have that experience.

PLAYBOY: You sound pretty positive, but some actors who began their careers as kids harbor resentment or have real horror stories.

PHOENIX: It's weird that I never had that experience. If that stuff had ever come up, I would just have gone, "Fuck you," and that would have been it. But again, I had a great, supportive family. The most important thing was that I never felt I was put in a position where I had to endure something.

PLAYBOY: There was a four-year difference in age between you and your brother, River, but both of you got lots of TV and movie work right from the beginning. Was there much competition among your siblings?

PHOENIX: We were a team, and whoever was working, well, that was great. We're always supportive of each other. There wasn't competition.

We just didn't have that competitive streak in us the way we were raised.

PLAYBOY: You were homeschooled and were required by the state to be tutored while working in movies and on TV shows. Were you into it?

PHOENIX: No. I don't know if I'm lazy, but I'm a sprinter. Endurance has never been my thing. I just want to go to the next thing. I like acting because I can focus hard for three, four months and then walk away. I hate weekends. I would shoot seven days a week if I could; two days off is way too much. When I'm in it, I don't know if I'm lazy. Luckily, I don't think I've gotten that with acting, but if I had to stick with something for a year or two, I don't know if I could have that kind of commitment. I have hardcore commitment in the moment for a certain thing. I can get into it and give it my all, but I'm not going to last.

PLAYBOY: So you didn't give school your all?

PHOENIX: No, and I regret not giving it my all. I always had the feeling I can't be stuck here doing this; I have other things to do. You get old enough and realize there was plenty of time to invest yourself in several things. I've had a few blocks of four, five years off when I could have dedicated myself to a lot of stuff. For example, I've just started taking trumpet lessons. I tried to play trumpet when I was 15. I figured I would have to study five years before I could play decently. I took a couple of lessons, but five years feels like forever when you're 15,

and I stopped. I bought a trumpet about six years ago and took another class. Same thing happened. And so then I was like, Well, now six years have fucking gone by, and if I'd only stuck with it... Anyway, I took my first trumpet lesson two weeks ago, and I've been practicing half an hour every day since. I don't know if I'll progress that much because I'm easily satisfied.

PLAYBOY: How do you mean?

PHOENIX: I was doing the lesson and we were both just holding these notes together. I found it so enjoyable. I was like, "This is totally satisfying." I don't have this need to achieve greatness, like, "I want more! I want more!" I was totally satisfied running this scale.

PLAYBOY: As you mentioned in your December 2007 20Q interview in PLAYBOY, you've been a vegan since your third birthday. Is it true you refused to wear any leather in your costumes for *Gladiator* and *Walk the Line*?

PHOENIX: I don't know where that came from, because in *Walk the Line* there were

Statistically, in all of us, in all our affairs, the odds of failure are so high that if you didn't lie to yourself, you'd probably just give up.

definitely some vintage boots, and I'm sure there was leather in *Gladiator* too. I don't wear leather in my life, but with movies, there are some things I struggle with, like if there are budget constraints or a particular vintage thing they need. For food on set, vegan is pretty common now. There are veggie burgers at fucking fast-food restaurants and shit. So I think people are pretty good with that.

PLAYBOY: When you're not getting veggie burgers at fucking fast-food restaurants, do you cook?

PHOENIX: Just white-trash vegan cooking. I can make a fucking sandwich, salad and pasta, but I'm not a proper cook.

PLAYBOY: As an up-and-coming actor, you reportedly lived with Liv Tyler for several years after co-starring with her in the 1997 movie *Inventing the Abbotts*. Some sources speculated that you dated Anna Paquin, with whom you made the 2001 movie *Buffalo Soldiers*. Do you have any rules for dating co-stars?

PHOENIX: It depends, right? I mean, love is love. I don't think your profession should affect your actions, but you shouldn't do anything that's going to distract you from the work.

PLAYBOY: Lately your name has been linked with Allie Teitz, a 20-year-old DJ. Romantic relationships can be tough enough; does the presence of press and photographers bump up the difficulties exponentially?

PHOENIX: Relationships are difficult, so adding public awareness is probably not a good thing. I've been fortunate, and my friends, like me, don't pay attention to that stuff. If you let it be a part of your world, it affects you. If you want to go online or look at yourself in a magazine, it'll probably fuck with you. Luckily I've never had an interest in that. Oftentimes now we have the experience of walking down Melrose Avenue right by the paparazzi, and they sometimes go, "Hey, Joaquin," or they don't say anything, but they don't take a picture. Sure, a couple of times in my 20s when I was dating an actress or some shit, they were curious. Now they mostly take pictures in the hopes that I'll get hit by a car or trip or somebody will throw something at me.

PLAYBOY: Having had such an interesting nomadic childhood and traveling so much

while making movies, do you like to stay loose and uncommitted, or do you like putting down roots?

PHOENIX: When I work I usually travel, so when I'm not working I tend to want to just be at home. I can't recall the last time I took a vacation. When

I was 20 I went with a girlfriend to some island. "Vacation" to me is getting to stay at home, and I'm fortunate in that I work for a few months, then take off for a couple of months and don't work at all.

PLAYBOY: You've definitely been working a lot lately. You play a permanently stoned, funny private eye in the upcoming *Inherent Vice*, Paul Thomas Anderson's screen version of the Thomas Pynchon novel. The movie is a kind of late-1960s Raymond Chandler-style film noir, except full of stoners, beach bunnies and eccentrics. It's also baffling, trippy and stylized.

PHOENIX: It's an experience, right? It's amazing you said that, because I think that's what you have to do. It just lulls you into this experience. I wasn't aware of it until after the fact, when the movie was finished. I was walking around in everyday life, thinking, Wow, I was in this other place for so long; I have been taken away on this journey and this experience. As a director, Paul doesn't throw you right into it. He guides you so subtly that you don't even realize you've just been brought into this other world, this other time.

PLAYBOY: One of your co-stars, Josh Brolin, meant it as a compliment when he called

making the movie “absolute fucking chaos every day,” that the vibe was “crazy and nuts and created insecurity.” Was it that way for you?

PHOENIX: Well, Josh is the best. *The best.* Yeah, working with Paul is such an immersive experience. Everybody on set is so committed to that experience. It doesn't feel like making a movie in some ways. Sometimes I don't even fully understand how he does what he does – how he gets you in this feeling like you're watching a movie rather than being in one. Some days you're driving home and you go, “Wow, wait – I know we were on that set, but what were we shooting today?” It was dreamy.

PLAYBOY: *Inherent Vice* took so many years to launch that Robert Downey Jr, who was frequently mentioned as most likely to play the hippie detective, recently said Anderson had to break the news to him that he'd grown “too old” to star in it.

PHOENIX: When I get cast, I always think it's because their first choice wasn't available. Of course, who's going to admit that to you? But I don't have any problem with that. For me it's like, just get in where you can. I remember I told Paul, “Listen, man, I don't want you to feel any obligation.” When we were filming I said the same thing, and he was like, “Yeah, no, I'll fire you if you don't...”

PLAYBOY: If you don't cut it in the role, he'd fire you?

PHOENIX: [Laughs] I don't know if he actually said that. I want the filmmakers I admire, the people I work with, to make the best movie possible. If that includes me, great. If it doesn't, I understand.

PLAYBOY: Who hasn't called who you wish would?

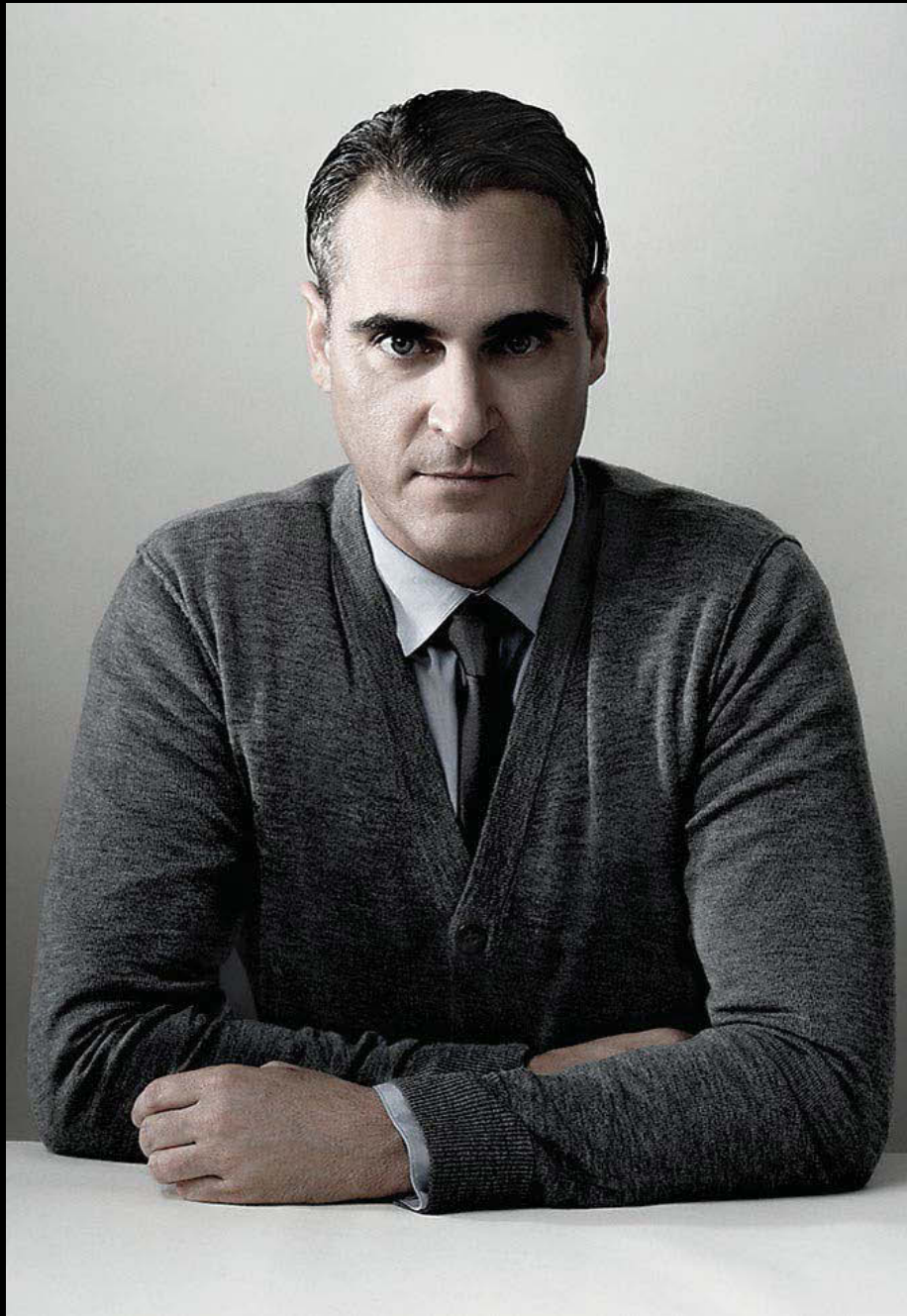
PHOENIX: I'll always want to work for David Lynch.

PLAYBOY: Your first time working with Anderson was for *The Master*, in which you play a lost, almost animalistic World War II vet who comes under the sway of a charismatic Scientologist-type leader played by Philip Seymour Hoffman. Both of you got Oscar nominations. After working so closely with him, how did his tragic death affect you?

PHOENIX: I don't want to discuss this.

PLAYBOY: But having suffered such a high-profile loss as Philip Seymour Hoffman – not to mention your brother, River Phoenix, in 1993 at the age of 23 – do you have a philosophy about what happens after death?

PHOENIX: I don't have a fucking clue, man. I mean, Jesus fuck. If you told me I'm a fucking video game that some aliens are playing somewhere, well, that seems totally plausible to me. Hey, you and I might be some kind of simulation from someone 200 years in the future. I don't fucking know. I mean,



anybody's theory seems plausible. So I say, let go, man. Just let go.

PLAYBOY: How did starring in Woody Allen's new movie work out for you?

PHOENIX: He's not at all like what you think or like the characters he plays. He's very assertive and strong, knows what he wants. I liked working with him very much. His writing is so good, and he understands the rhythm of a scene so well, it's amazing to experience. You think of a scene and it seems all right, and then he'll make a couple of small adjustments, and it's like unclogging an artery.

PLAYBOY: Had you ever come close to working together before?

PHOENIX: My mom reminded me that I

auditioned for him when I was 20 or something. I don't even know for what. Listen, he's the first filmmaker I was aware of. I remember seeing *Love and Death* when I was a kid. I always wanted to work with him, but I didn't think it was going to happen. So I was very pleased.

PLAYBOY: When you were in your late teens, you took four years off from movies because you were disenchanted with the roles available to you. You did it again in 2008 and didn't turn up in a movie for another four years, citing a lack of inspiration, among other reasons. Would you do that again?

PHOENIX: Believe me, it's hard not to be inspired and excited when you work with people like Paul Thomas Anderson, Spike

Jonze or Woody Allen. I'm very open to giving myself to the process now and not trying to control it. I think maybe I did that when I was younger. I had specific ideas about how I wanted to play something, and I was quite rigid in a way. I used to try to map things out from start to finish. That started to change a few years ago when I got to work with these wonderful directors who weren't afraid of uncertainty or of discovering something in the moment. I don't really know anything about surfing, but I imagine surfers interact with something that's constantly changing, that feels like it's alive. I'm after that experience. I've been fortunate to work with directors who seem to enjoy that experience as well. I don't have much ego when it comes to work now.

PLAYBOY: You've won a lot of respect from fans and critics for taking risks as an actor, doing high-wire stuff in your roles – stuff that, if it didn't work, could be pretty embarrassing. Do you see it that way?

PHOENIX: It's not really a high wire. Or maybe it is a high wire but with a strong net and a huge soft mattress underneath. I mean, you're just making a movie. I look at these kids who are fucking 22 years old and playing in the World Cup finals, where you get one shot, no second take, and all the time the opposing team is screaming at you and waving stuff in your face to make you lose. Everyone on the movie is supporting the actors. Everybody wants one another to succeed. We're all working together.

PLAYBOY: So your adrenaline never pumps on a movie set?

PHOENIX: No, I still find it terrifying, and that's crazy, isn't it? In some ways, it's fucking ridiculous that I've literally been doing it for 30 years and still feel like it's the fucking first time I'm making a movie every time I go in. It's probably good, though, just because it means I still care and it matters so much to me. But I think it's a motivating anxiety and fear, as opposed to a debilitating one. Maybe sometimes it's debilitating, and it can get in the way. Hopefully I've gotten better at not fighting it, knowing it's there and just allowing myself to walk with my fear.

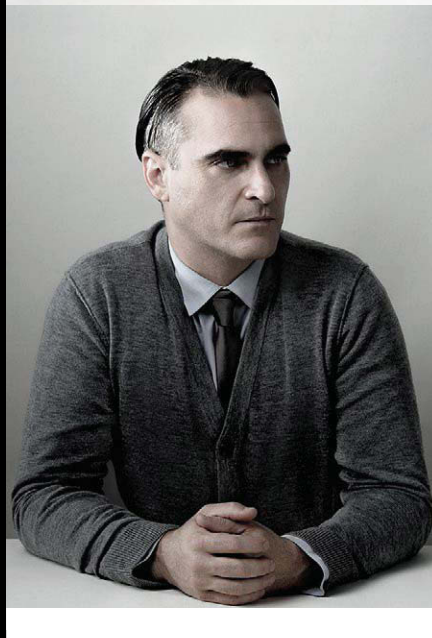
PLAYBOY: When you're not working, what do you do to get the adrenaline surging?

PHOENIX: I'm a total fucking coward. In some ways that's probably why I'm an actor. I have fear. I've never had the desire to bungee, to jump out of a plane, to zip-line or anything like that. I find it terrifying. I don't think I'm risky in that way. If anything, I've eased off. Four or five years ago I used to ride motorcycles, but you can't really ride without riding fast, and I don't know if that's worth it. It's great fun, but fuck, it's so dangerous. I think I've probably gotten even

softer.

PLAYBOY: But you look healthy and in shape these days.

PHOENIX: I meditate, mornings at eight and again at night. I really don't know what the fuck that's about or why it works, but I don't really know how Tylenol works either. Maybe it's a placebo. Whatever you do to take time out of your day and just stop for a while, I think is beneficial. At least it has



been for me. I just started Iyengar yoga, something I'd avoided because I think it's boring.

PLAYBOY: So you're pushing through the boredom?

PHOENIX: For the Woody Allen movie I was very sedentary and out of shape, with a bit of a gut. By chance I was talking to

somebody I'd known for some time but didn't know what he did. I asked him, and he said, "I teach yoga." I said, "Great, I'm coming tomorrow." After the first class I told him, "I'll be honest, I don't think I'm coming back. This is miserable, and I used to like you very much, and now I hate you. I don't want this to alter our relationship too much." But I've stuck with it because I like the idea of pushing myself. It's fun to break yourself mentally, give in to something and give up control. That's something I've had a hard time with before.

PLAYBOY: There was a rumor that you might be getting in shape to star in the Marvel Studios superhero epic *Doctor Strange*. But those negotiations seem to have faltered.

PHOENIX: I can't talk about it. I've met on all sorts of movies throughout the years. What seems appealing about some of them is the idea of pushing myself in a way that's out of my comfort zone. But really, it's what I'm always looking for – good characters, big ideas and a passionate filmmaker. If those things line up with any kind of movie, I have interest in it.

PLAYBOY: Were you into comic books growing up?

PHOENIX: There's some great Batman stuff and classic Frank Miller *Dark Knight* stuff and *Arkham Asylum*. But I was always a big Wolverine guy. I love Wolverine – big fucking great dramatic character. They're all conflicted, and they're really interesting.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever regretted saying no to a big movie, maybe even a Marvel movie?

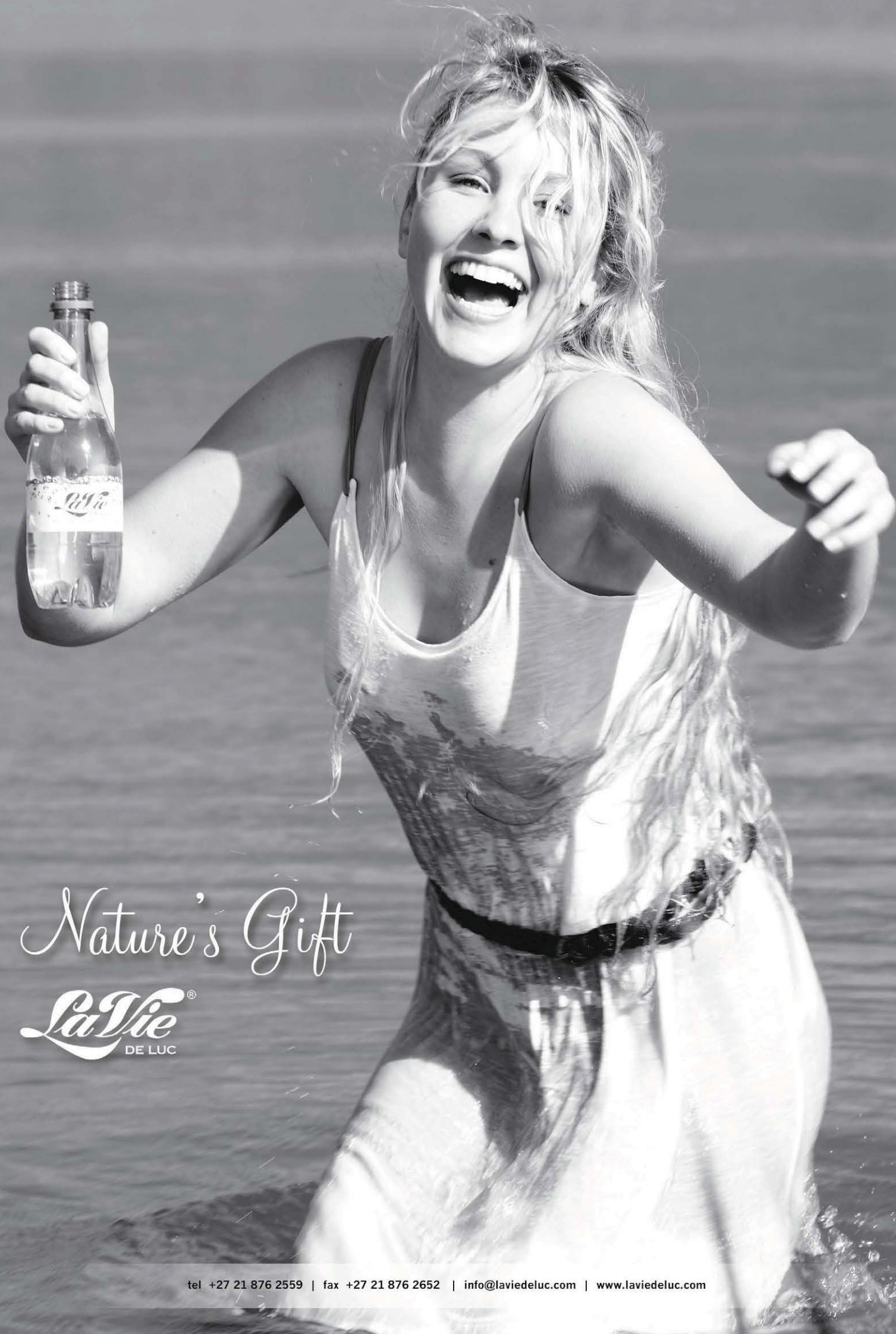
PHOENIX: There's only one movie I regret saying no to – except the person who ended up doing it was so good and was absolutely meant to do it, so I don't have any regrets. I'm not going to say which one, but it was a really big hit. It's getting to the point where they're making some pretty decent movies. I thought *Iron Man* was fantastic.

PLAYBOY: Do you vote?

PHOENIX: Sure, the cowardly approach to voting – some pathetic, lame-ass way of voting for the better of two evils. I wish I were more involved politically. I vote, but I certainly don't know much about the issues. I don't say that with pride. It's terrible. I ought to.

PLAYBOY: What do you know now that you didn't know when you talked to PLAYBOY seven years ago?

PHOENIX: All I know is that I've been fortunate, and my good fortune continues. Other than that, the older I get, the more I know that I don't fucking know anything at all. I feel like I just make up shit, like, "I try not to have any rules," but maybe I do have rules. I don't fucking know. I'm trying to get better at being open to the mystery of it all.



Nature's Gift

La Vie[®]
DE LUC

MOD MEN

BY NICHOLAS TAMARIN



THE BACHELOR PAD GETS A MANLY AND MODERN UPGRADE

With the economy picking up again, it's time to upgrade your domestic situation—how else are you going to land the girl of your dreams? Not with the bachelor pad clichés of yesteryear. Ditch the black leather sofa, mirrored ceiling and (most

definitely) your water bed, and let three architecture firms that are taking the mansion to mind-blowingly sleek and sophisticated new heights help you spend with style. All you have to do now is come up with the down payment.

XTEN

Nos. 1 & 3

Nakahouse, Hollywood Hills, California (1);
Madisonhouse, Coachella Valley, California (3).

Whether it's L.A. or desert living, make sure your architecture is strong and silent.



Bates Masi

Nos. 2 & 5

Piersons Way, East Hampton, New York (2); Sam's Creek, Bridgehampton, New York (5). The firm's work is both rustic and restrained, embracing sweeping, grassy dunes as well as impeccable, golf-course-quality lawns.

Briggs Edward Solomon

No. 4

The Rushmore, New York City. If you can afford the views – in this case, of the Hudson River – let them do all the work; make them the focal point of the room.

1

HOLLYWOOD



XTEN

Want to live in a Michael Mann movie but without the threat of jail or death? Turn to Monika Häfelfinger and Austin Kelly, whether you're in southern California or Sissach, Switzerland, home of their satellite office. Their work, clean-lined and open, is the

ultimate in Los Angeles-style architecture. It's traceable to the Case Study houses of the 1940s, as well as to Frank Gehry (Kelly's old boss), Richard Meier and Thom Mayne – and don't forget Robert De Niro in *Heat*. www.xtenarchitecture.com



3

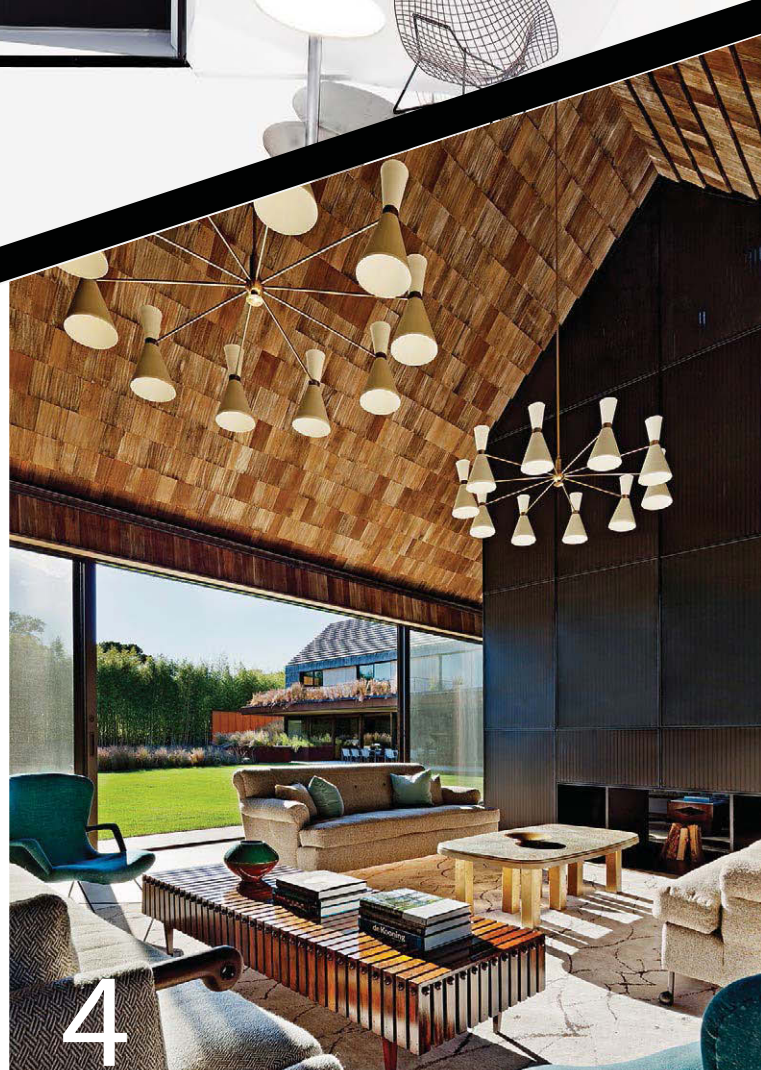


BATES MASI

When Harry Bates founded his firm during the original *Mad Men* era, his early clients included advertising executives. Thrust into its current phase by Richard Meier & Partners alum Paul Masi, who teamed with Bates

in 1998, the firm not only helped invent the Hamptons vernacular, it also continues to define it. Its client list these days runs to hedge funders whose expertise has more to do with money than with modern

architecture. High rollers should be prepared for disappointment: With only 12 employees, Bates Masi turns down far more projects than it accepts. www.batesmasi.com



4

Nos. 1 & 2

Nakahouse (1); Openhouse, Hollywood Hills (2). Let your angles dangle – a sculptural home will always stand out from the crowd. And with copious amounts of transparent glass as your home's primary enclosure material, so will you.

Nos. 3 & 4

Sam's Creek (3); Piersons Way (4). Soaring ceilings, midcentury furniture, travertine floors, simple but focused landscaping: all keys to a beach house that's better than the primary residence – or is one.

Nos. 5 & 6

The Rushmore. Hire an art consultant to work with your architect and interior designer, and no one will ever know you spent more time at the movies than in museums.



BRIGGS EDWARD SOLOMON

Have \$300 million and a year? Collaborate with Miami-based Briggs Edward Solomon on your New York *piéd-à-terre*. That's what Alex Rodriguez did with his \$5.5 million 35th-floor Upper West Side condo.

He purchased the 3,600-square-foot four-bedroom apartment in the Rushmore building in 2011 and enlisted Solomon, who also designed his Miami home, to gut it. Less than a year later, A-Rod flipped

the pad – complete with an antique black-felt pool table, an Andy Warhol portrait of Jean-Michel Basquiat and panoramic Hudson River views – for \$7 million. Perhaps he has designs on design as a second career?

www.briggsedwardsolomon.com

SUMMERTIME ROLLS

AMERICA IS THE ULTIMATE PARAMOUR IN SUMMER. ADORE IT ON THIS BUCKET LIST OF AMAZING ROADS

As T.S. Eliot wrote, "We shall not cease from exploration / And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time." Here we've compiled a short list of must-see roads, matched with the best machinery to explore them. Now get out of town!



1. Pacific Coast Highway, California
Best vehicle

Porsche 911 Targa

Tackle Big Sur in the Targa, this season's hottest convertible. Stunning ocean vistas on one side, redwood forest on the other. Stop for a cheeseburger at the iconic Nepenthe - just don't let the seagulls snag your fries.

1.

2. Blue Ridge Parkway, Virginia
Best vehicle

1935 Packard Twelve Roadster

Not only is this 469-mile parkway through the Appalachians in Virginia and North Carolina breathtaking, it's also a trip back in time. Opened in the 1930s as a Works Progress Administration project under FDR, the scenery hasn't changed much. Drive it in a topless 1935 Packard for maximum effect.

3. Kancamagus Highway, New Hampshire
Best vehicle

2015 Subaru WRX STI

They love their Subarus in New England. But there's nothing crunchy about the 2015 WRX STI, the cheapest supercar performance money can buy (\$34,500). What a way to wind through New Hampshire's White Mountains. Bonus: the famous Albany covered bridge.





4.

4. Seward Highway, Alaska
Best vehicle
Mercedes-Benz S63 AMG

Experience this byway through Alaska's Chugach National Forest with the 577 horsepower of Mercedes-Benz's newest AMG luxury performance sedan and you will have truly lived. The road is a series of bridges (with the Alaska Railroad winding beneath) and bends that beg for throttle. The drive ends in Anchorage, where a martini at Sub Zero Bistro awaits.

5. Rubicon Trail, California
Best vehicle
Jeep Rubicon

This off-road mountain route just west of Lake Tahoe is so craggy, Jeep named its rugged

Rubicon after it. Power through 22 legendary miles of rough Sierra Nevada trails and you are officially a badass.



5.

6. Million Dollar Highway, Colorado
Best vehicle
McLaren P1

If ever there was a "killer" drive, this is it. Roar through this scenic mountain stretch from Montrose to Silverton, winding along steep cliffs - no guardrails - in the supercar of the moment: the \$1.15 million, 217 mph hybrid P1. Breathtaking? For sure. Dangerous? Possibly, but it's worth it.



7.

7. All Roads Leading to Sturgis, South Dakota
Best vehicle
Harley-Davidson Fat Bob

Of course Lynyrd Skynyrd rocked the 74th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally when the legendary biker bash ran in August. Glide up to the all-you-can-eat biker breakfast buffet in style on the new 103.1-cubic-inch Harley Fat Bob.



1.



ATTACK! GOOD BOY

BY ADAM SKOLNICK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JARED RYDER

For \$100,000 man's best friend can become man's best weapon. Inside the bizarre world of the executive-protection dog industry.

We're parked in front of our target, a two-story house perched on a corner lot, fringed with flowers and set on the sweetest oak-shaded street in Georgia.

Owned by one of the best orthopedic surgeons in the country, it's a postcard for the family man's American dream. There's a basketball hoop in the driveway, a Lexus SUV parked alongside it and an expansive lawn that surrounds the home like a moat.

"It's time," says Joseph Cinnante, 32. Handsome, compact and athletic, with shoulder-length hair and a manicured beard, he gets out of the car and begins to suit up in his protective gear, which he always wears when breaking and entering.

"What if he comes at me instead?" I ask.

"Just stay close," he says. "I got you."

We cross the street and move along the back of the property, toward the basement, narrowly avoiding detection by two joggers. The windows are locked, so Cinnante edges close to the door and turns the brass knob. Disco.

We hear it right away, toenails clattering on the hardwood above, an ominous growl, then an explosion of rapid barks behind a door at the top of a darkened staircase. Cinnante's brown eyes flicker with delight as the door opens and Mako, a four-year-old Belgian Malinois, lunges at us from above, tethered to a leash held by Dr Timothy Franklin. The surgeon stands tall, his eyes locked on ours, relaxed yet alert. He shouts commands at Mako, who is foaming at the mouth.

“Attack!” shouts Franklin. Mako charges, launches into midair and latches onto Cinnante’s biceps. Cinnante pounds Mako’s flank and tries to shake the dog loose, but he just bites down harder.

Franklin stands like a proud dad at the top of the staircase, taking it all in. The week his family moved in to this house, it was vandalized. A mob of teenagers emptied 100 gallons of water through his front door in the middle of the night. The flood caused more than \$20,000 in damage and sent Franklin rushing into the darkness, wielding a baseball bat and lusting for blood. His wife and two children had been threatened, and he was spun out.

“I honestly don’t know what I would have done to them,” he says, sounding like a guy who’s lucky the kids outran him. A few days after his house was vandalized, he began a search for a guard dog that led him to Canine Protection International, an elite executive-protection dog company, and Cinnante, one of CPI’s top trainers, who delivered Mako in four months.

Cinnante stares lovingly at Mako, who is still attempting to rip him apart. Despite the bite suit Cinnante can feel the pressure and pain, but it seems to transport him to the happy place he discovered when he was 16 years old and got paid a few bucks to let the first Belgian Malinois he’d ever seen tackle him from behind. That initial thrill – the addictive burn and wild animal adrenaline – was something Cinnante began to crave, and finding it over and over again led him to his life’s work: burrowing into and then building the brains of the deadliest, and some of the cuddliest, dogs on the planet.

“Okay,” Cinnante says, breathless as the dog continues to sink his teeth into the Michelin Man bite suit, his gums bleeding, bloody foam gathering in the folds. “That was excellent, Mako. Call him off!”

“Aus!” calls the surgeon. The dog hears it and seems befuddled for a moment. “Aus!” Franklin tries again and hits a remote that fires the dog’s collar, stimulating Mako with electricity to emphasize his point. Mako hustles over to his master to catch his breath

when, with a flash of recognition, he realizes who he has just tussled with. It’s as if he has shaken off his preprogrammed rage like so much bathwater, and he begins to wag his tail.

The golden dog’s natural personality has returned. Sweet and charming, with his tongue hanging out of his gaping mouth, he rubs his head against Cinnante’s thigh. Cinnante prepared Mako at CPI’s kennel in the Boston suburbs for just such a moment, to defend his family against intruders and imminent danger. Cinnante kneels and gives his old pal a hug.



While our unofficial ranking of canine ferocity places pit bulls at the top of the list because of a common myth about having powerful locking jaws, German shepherds actually bite harder, and Belgian Malinois have those same jaws but are smaller and faster, with an endless motor. They will



PROTECT & SERVE

Harrison K-9's highly trained, purebred European German Shepherds are the pick of the litter



literally work themselves to death. That's why they staff police and military units the world over. In fact, the first SEAL Team Six warrior to reach Osama bin Laden in that midnight raid wasn't man, it was Malinois. And with increasing frequency, trainers are selling both shepherds and Malinois as protection dogs to private citizens who crave added security.

Trainers like Cinnante comb the cities and villages of Europe, building relationships with top breeders, whose detailed genetic records span hundreds of years and who train shepherds and Malinois to compete in *Schutzhund*, a German dog sport, and French Ring Sport, an arguably more difficult version popular in France, the Czech Republic and Germany. Championship-level events in these countries draw tens of thousands of spectators to watch dogs compete in obedience, protection and tracking or agility exercises developed 100 years ago to maintain the desired intelligence, physical structure (yes, looks matter), abilities and temperament (so does personality) in the bloodline.

But nature is one thing. Nurture matters too, and these pups are trained to bite with the entire jaw – which is both a learned and a genetic trait – from the time they are six weeks old. When they're two or three, the

animals are sold for anywhere from \$3,000 to \$20,000 to trainers such as Cinnante, who then import them to the United States and train them for an additional six weeks to six months, tailoring their behavior and abilities to dovetail with the lives of demanding clients with high disposable incomes.

Prices are so high it's shocking, ranging from \$35,000 to \$230,000. To hear Cinnante tell it, what these new owners get is quite possibly the perfect animal. Like the best family pets, these dogs enjoy a snuggle and are good with kids, and when they play fetch, you don't have to chase them down to get the ball back. But they have another layer of training too. If you want your dog to check on toddlers in the backyard, they'll do it. Walk them off leash and they will never leave your side unless instructed. When you get home they'll inspect every room in the house, clearing it the way a police dog might, before barking that the coast is clear. They pee and poop on command, and most important, they will attack and disable anybody who breaks in to your house or threatens your family.

The size of the protection-dog market is anybody's guess, as there are no industry groups, nor any state, county or federal certification protocol to meet in order to become a dog trainer. That's true for the folks

who market themselves as simple obedience trainers at the local park or kennel, and it's true for Cinnante and his peers. But according to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the market is growing.

Harrison Prather, 64, has been in business since 1975. Back during the Vietnam War, he was drinking at an enlisted men's club when a vicious brawl broke out. A team of MPs stormed in to restore order and took an ugly beating themselves. "Then the K-9 unit showed up," says Prather. "We're talking one guy with one canine, and that crowd parted like the Red Sea. That's when it hit me. It was like a calling." After the war a friend introduced him to a man who had designed the Department of Defense patrol-dog program. "I paid him \$9,000 to work for him for 18 months," says Prather.

Two years later he was training dogs for police departments and foreign militaries in England, France, Brazil and Colombia, but they were hard to please and paid little. On a lark he ran an ad in the *Robb Report*, and it didn't take him long to realize its readers had money and liked to spend it. For the past 30 years Harrison K-9 has maintained a full-page ad in the magazine that grew his business, which grosses \$4 million annually.

Even John Whitaker, one of Cinnante's mentors and the owner and founder of CPI, Prather's closest rival, concedes that Prather was a pioneer. "Harrison created the industry. He was the first to sell European dogs as protection dogs, and he understood there were affluent clients who didn't want the same old guard dog. They wanted something more."



A town laced with 900 miles of dirt roads lined with single-story brick homes and horse corrals, Aiken, South Carolina is the second-biggest polo destination in America. Prather's clients usually fly in to the local airstrip developed for private jets carrying the polo-loving public. I fly commercial, so I make the long drive from Atlanta and am greeted by Prather's charming facility manager, November Holley. She takes me to the kennel, which is half full with about 30 German shepherds yipping and barking. Patrick Ashley, 28, a staffer with a chiseled jaw and a buzz cut, rips off a hot whistle. Total silence. It is the loudest sound I'll hear out of Ashley all day.

Ashley grew up with animals and spent his high school years mucking horse stalls for \$25 a day. At 21, he came to work for Holley and Prather. He started by cleaning the dogs'

private cages, but within months he was on his way to becoming one of Harrison K-9's best trainers.

For the next hour I watch Ashley and another staffer, wearing only a protective sleeve and playing decoy, work Axel, an athletic 90-pound black sable destined for one of the spectacular mansions in the mountains around Aspen, Colorado, where he'll hike the high country with a new master. Axel is trained to obey English, German and sign language. He charges the decoy's arm and bites down hard. When the dog is set loose a second time, Ashley calls him off before he attacks. The dog obeys.

"You can't recall a bullet," says Holley, "but you can recall a dog." On the rare occasions when Axel fails to listen, Ashley doesn't respond with anger, force or bribery. Unlike other protection-dog trainers, they don't use electric collars at Harrison K-9, and they don't use treats or toys as reward.

"They get rewarded through my praise and my affection," says Ashley.

"There's a lot of love, a lot of hands-on," says Holley. "That's what makes you a better trainer, to have that relationship with the dog, to make it your buddy, your partner." Of course there are penalties too, but the only tool Harrison K-9 uses to modify behavior is a pronged collar, a barbed chain that with a slight tug distributes a pinch evenly around the neck. It looks like a *Game of Thrones* torture device, but Holley claims it's more humane than a choke collar, and most vets agree.

Harrison K-9 sources all its dogs from one man, a top *Schutzhund* trainer in Germany. After the dogs arrive, Ashley or Holley brings them home for days at a time to see if they're fit for a household environment. When they return to the kennel, they're trained once daily for just 30 to 60 minutes.

The rest of the day the dogs relax, and they're rather good at it. After the training session, Ashley and I take Axel to lunch in downtown Aiken, where the leafy streets are dotted with historic stone buildings. He sprawls at our feet as we lunch at a street-side table and Ashley tells war stories about delivering dogs to the superrich – like the time he delivered a dog to a Mexican mogul with questionable friendships and a heavily armed entourage. The dog, which Prather had sold for \$65,000, turned out to be for the family's protection in case their bodyguards turned on them.

Through it all Axel is sweet and approachable, and the gentleman at the next table can't resist his exposed belly. He reaches down and starts to rub it, then notices the harness identifying Axel as a



service dog.

"Are you training him to be a Seeing Eye dog?" he asks. Ashley demurs.

"Axel is a personal protection dog," I say. "A trained killer. You can have him if you want. It'll cost you only about \$60,000." The man laughs and keeps petting Axel, who basks in the attention.

"Please, who on earth would pay that kind of money for a damn dog?"



Imagine for a moment you're a woman in public service. You work at the DMV or the welfare office. Maybe you're a public defender or a mid-level hospital staffer. You're not rich, but you own a home. You're happily married with children, and you're satisfied with your job serving the community. Still, not everyone you deal with gets what they want, because some things are impossible or even illegal. Over the years you've become accustomed to delivering bad news and the negative reaction it inspires. It's never fun, but it hasn't been life altering until you meet him.

He seems so sweet and harmless at first. He wants you to bend the rules, but you aren't going to risk your security for some charmer. You're firm but polite and forget him almost as quickly as you file him away and shut the drawer. But he doesn't forget you.

He becomes fixated and develops a plan to get back at you. He recruits accomplices, sends you a packet of information and leaves lurid and haunting voice mails detailing your rape, torture and murder. They involve electric probes and a slit throat. He'll do the same to your children, he says. And your husband will receive photos and instructions on where to find the bodies.

You call the police and get a restraining order, and soon he's arrested, but he's held for less than four hours. The voice mails keep coming. "A sheet of paper isn't going to stop me," he says. His messages go on to describe your comings and goings. He's watching you. You don't eat or sleep. When you're not at work, you stay home with the doors and windows locked and the security system on. You've become his prisoner.

Then one day a colleague suggests you get a dog, and not just any dog. He slips you the phone number of the trainer who helped him, and soon you meet Cinnante for dinner. He's flown in from Miami to quiz you about your habits and hobbies. "I want to help you," he says, "but I'm not here to sell you a dog. I'm giving you a member of your family."

The price tag is \$65,000.

That night you crunch numbers. You factor in the cost of a security detail, years of therapy and lost liberty. Under the weight of stress and fear, the price shrinks to manageable. By morning, there isn't a question left in your mind.

Over the next several weeks Cinnante emails photos, videos and written updates about the German shepherd he has found for you. You don't know this yet, but unlike other outfits, Cinnante lives with the dogs he sells through Advanced Canine Solutions, the company he launched after leaving CPI. Like a Method actor, Cinnante has molded his life to yours so the dog will become attuned to your habits before it even meets you.

By the time Cinnante delivers Brutus, you're emotionally invested. Cinnante spends four days training you to control the dog, which involves a litany of commands. You start with simple ones – sit, stay, lie down (which the dog obeys in English, French and German) – before you learn how to make

the dog circle and defend you. You order attacks and call them off, then stand outside as Brutus inspects your house and barks to let you know it's safe to come inside. Cinnante is patient and kind, and Brutus is adorable and doting. Wherever you go, he goes. He watches while you bathe and while you sleep. When you make breakfast or water the garden, the dog is there. By day four you feel more like yourself than you have in months.

At the airport, Cinnante offers one more piece of advice. "Unless you're under pressure, don't turn the dog loose. He's not here to attack someone. He's here to defend you."

One afternoon you see your stalker on a city street. He stands 50 feet away and glares at you. You lock eyes with him, then look down at Brutus, and both you and the dog look up at your stalker. Flustered, he disappears, and you never see him again.



That's a true story. Before I met the client and her dog under the condition of anonymity, I'd considered protection dogs to be souvenirs for the one percent. Sure, the surgeon

in Georgia was building his nest egg, but he was still highly compensated. The woman with the stalker wasn't. She was an average, middle-aged, middle-class American who needed help.

Prather tells me a story about a client in Virginia who bought a dog 15 years ago. "She had an estranged husband who said he was going to kill her," says Prather. One week after Prather delivered the dog, the client's ex crawled through the back window in the middle of the night. "He was carrying a big OJ Simpson knife, but that dog got him right square in the middle, if you catch my drift." The would-be attacker went to the hospital first, then state prison.

Such episodes are rare, however. Of the thousands of dogs Prather has sold, that is the most glaring instance of self-defense he can recall. For most clients, a protection dog is simply a deterrent or just another wonderful toy.

Consider Jose E Souto, a Cuban immigrant who, after selling at peak value one of the biggest coffee companies in the United States, moved in to Ray Allen's neighborhood and the mega-yacht tax bracket. Cinnante and I meet Souto at his Italianate villa in

Coral Gables, perched on the lip of Biscayne Bay, where he parks his yacht. His villa is stocked with art from such giants as Fernando Botero and Eugène Boudin, a mentor to Monet. He has a screening room, an Aston Martin, a Ferrari and a Lamborghini, and he has Denzel, a 100-pound German shepherd that may be Souto's favorite plaything.

We are here to put the dog through his paces, and it doesn't take long for Cinnante to see that Denzel, who spends his days lazing on cool marble floors in his south Florida palace, is out of practice. Souto originally bought Denzel from CPI to keep his new wife company while he was away on business. Upon delivery, Souto was shocked to meet a friendly dog without a hint of aggression, but when it came time to show off Denzel's protection skills, Cinnante turned the dog on.

"All of a sudden, he was transformed," says Souto, beaming.

Denzel has never been called into duty, and over the past four years Souto hasn't maintained the dog's skills. But after a few minutes with Cinnante, the dog sharpens up.

Mako, a four-year-old Belgian Malinois, lunges at us from above, tethered to a leash held by Dr Timothy Franklin. The surgeon stands tall, his eyes locked on ours, relaxed yet alert. He shouts commands at Mako, who is foaming at the mouth.

Souto invites me to handle him next.

I take the dog's collar as he sits calmly by my side. When I say "Steck," sweet, pudgy Denzel begins barking with ferocity. Cinnante nods, and I issue my next command: "Attack!" I let go and Denzel barrels toward Cinnante, who's wearing his bite suit and takes the punishment with glee. Souto watches with a giddy smile. Denzel is soon spent and happily collapses on the cool marble of his daydreams.

That night Cinnante and I meet at a swank raw bar in midtown Miami. He laments Denzel's current physical state. "He needs to be worked. Ferraris need to be tuned up," he says. He confesses that many clients let their dogs get out of shape, and sometimes he suggests they put them on treadmills for exercise. Considering the lazy factor inherent in all humans, I wonder if his clients aren't wasting their money.

CPI's website is stocked with video testimonials from rich guys flaunting cuddly killers. Among the videos is one from best-selling romance novelist Nicholas Sparks, author of *The Notebook*. He has two dogs. Another comes from Steven Seagal, who has bought several protection dogs over

the years. Harrison K-9 made international news when it sold a German shepherd to a Minnesota man for \$230,000 after he sold his debt-collection firm for millions in a deal that closed mere weeks before the stock market crash. Souto, for one, is philosophical about his motivation. "I'm not perfect," he says, "so I look for material things."

Cinnante doesn't bother with such questions. "My job is to serve, not to judge clients for why they bought their dogs," he says. "I'm here to bring them something amazing, something they haven't seen before."



Colombian and Cuban by descent, Cinnante was born in Spain to a couple in the upper echelon of the cocaine business. His mother was a 24-year-old flight attendant when she met and married his father. Together they used her knowledge of airlines and airports to become elite drug smugglers.

His parents split when Cinnante was four

years old, and his mother married a rival lieutenant in another cartel. The pair traveled frequently and often left Cinnante to his own devices, which instilled in him an independent

spirit and a strong will. By the time Cinnante was in middle school and his mother had left the drug business, he'd become a young man in a boy's body.

He got his first working dog when he was 16 and enjoyed teaching it tricks. He took it to a dog-club event in Miami to learn more. That's where he met a local K-9 officer with a Belgian Malinois and got attacked for the first time. Soon after that the cop offered Cinnante \$50 to break in to his house to further sharpen the dog's skills. Other dog owners started doing the same, and soon Cinnante had a nice little after-school enterprise breaking in to homes with permission.

It was his ability to test and evade dogs that made him so popular as a fake burglar. By the time he turned 20 he was one of the best decoys in stateside French Ring Sport and was earning clients and star turns at events around the world.

His secret? He loved it. There was something about the attack that thrilled him, and after we broke into the surgeon's house to test Mako, he showed me why. That's when I donned the bite suit for the first time. Cinnante took the leash. I was barefoot, which concerned me, but Cinnante built a

barricade around my lower half to protect my vulnerabilities. He also gave me a last piece of advice: "The dog will lunge for whatever part of the body you offer first."

Mako barked, growled and foamed at the mouth. Then he attacked and headed around the barricade, straight for my bare feet. I lunged forward to defend myself with my elbow, and the dog leapt at my arm, nearly tugging me to the ground. I felt a burn as his teeth dug farther into the material, into my skin. Cinnante called the dog off for a break, then sicced him one more time. This time Mako latched onto my upper arm. I spun, his feet dangling above the ground as he tried to pull me down. Gravity was his friend. By the time Cinnante called him off, I was bent over, gassed and thrilled but also relaxed, as if the dog's adrenaline and endorphin rush had been transferred to me.



Cinnante eventually caught the eye of Ludovic Teurbane, a former professional lightweight boxer who'd become a heavyweight in dog sport. He took Cinnante to Europe, introduced him to breeders all over the continent and showed him how to select

the best dogs available. Cinnante returned from his second trip with four dogs, and his training career was launched.

By the time he was 21 he already had a growing business in south Florida and a reputation to match, but John Whitaker enticed him to Boston with a job offer and a promise to teach him the most advanced protection techniques in the industry.

Whitaker's love affair with canines began when he was a bullied 15-year-old in North Smithfield, Rhode Island. His solution was a Rottweiler. "You don't get bullied as much when you have a protection dog by your side," he says.

He soon began to train German shepherds and found that breeders in East Germany produced the most impressive animals. He was just 21 when he negotiated an exclusive deal with the East German government to import German shepherds into the United States.

After the Berlin Wall crumbled Whitaker hooked up with German SWAT teams that trained dogs to enter hostage situations and attack the gunmen without posing a threat to hostages. The SWAT teams were known to sometimes slice the dogs' vocal cords

to make them stealthier. He also saw the police dogs perfect the *wachen*, or "guard," exercise, in which the animal positions itself between its handler and the threat. It's not just the positioning (in which the dog sticks to the master's side and points in the direction of the threat at all times) but what the dog does next that is intimidating. It turns on, which means it begins to bark with gums raised and canines exposed. It's not a single bark either but a loud, rapid-fire fit that will raise the hair on the arms and stoke fear in the heart of the attacker. Sometimes the dog foams at the mouth, and often this display of strength and ferocity is enough to drive any bad guy toward retreat. Otherwise it may get worse.



Inspired, Whitaker contacted folks he knew in the executive-protection field, including bodyguards for the Saudi royal family, to see where a dog might fit in an overall security

Mako, a four-year-old Belgian Malinois, lunges at us from above, tethered to a leash held by Dr Timothy Franklin. The surgeon stands tall, his eyes locked on ours, relaxed yet alert. He shouts commands at Mako, who is foaming at the mouth.

detail. Next he developed a system of informal and formal commands that enable handlers to speak in a pleasant tone and have the dog obey. At CPI, formal commands must be obeyed without question, and if they aren't, a reprimand is issued in the form of an electric jolt.

Prather has a problem with remote collars. "Our dogs are working because they want to please you," he says. "Those other ones are working because they're scared to death you're gonna fry their ass."

Madeline Bernstein, president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles, agrees. "There is no reason for remote collars," she says. "If you use positive reinforcement, you don't need to use pain to train."

Whitaker dismisses such statements. "The way we train is the most humane," he says, "the most compassionate. The reality is most trainers don't produce functional results. We do, because we link tremendous amounts of pleasure with obedience, and we use stimulation at low levels as a consequence. There are 127 levels on the collar. We start at one, and most dogs begin feeling it at 10. That's exactly the same kind of stimulation

chiropractors use in therapy. Then we increase it to levels that can be unpleasant but not overwhelming, which makes obeying both pleasurable and habitual."

Whitaker believes Prather's dogs lack sound protection skills. "They sell sport animals, and training for dog sport doesn't prepare them for everyday life," he says. "Our dogs have a very high level of long-term performance without further training. Off leash, they obey the first time, every time. If they don't, the dog is not trained." It's true Whitaker's CPI offers maintenance packages, but according to Whitaker the packages "maintain a very high level of training at the highest level" but aren't necessary to preserve the dog's protection skills.

Jim Alloway, president of the United Schutzhund Clubs of America, the largest dog-sport association in the US, isn't buying it. "There's no such thing as a dog that's trained and *boom*, you're done," he says. "You'll always need maintenance."

Bonnie Beaver, a professor at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and

former president of the American Veterinary Medical Association, agrees. She believes if the dogs' training isn't maintained they lose it, which can be

dangerous. "If the owners aren't practicing," she says, "the dogs don't shut off as easily."

"It's really important the dog is constantly maintained by its handler," says Bernstein. "If a dog is trained to be lethal, it can be lethal. It's like having a loaded gun in the house."

Horror stories are hard to find, but they're out there. The worst happened in 1995. California K-9 Academy, a company that still exists under new ownership (it ignored repeated interview requests), sold a dog to a 27-year-old Los Angeles woman. When she took its muzzle off during routine training, the dog mauled her, biting her face several times. She required reconstructive surgery. California K-9 had a poor reputation among its competitors at the time, and dodgy outfits still abound.

"There's no certification for dog trainers," says Beaver. "It's a big problem for the industry, and it's a big problem for the public."

Harrison- and CPI-trained dogs have never harmed anybody in their households or communities, but the dogs I visited weren't as sharp with their owners as they were with trainers. And there are other issues to consider. Mako, the Malinois I met in Georgia, suffered a persistent infection in his foot that had still

not healed when we met, despite frequent visits to the vet. Jose Souto's dog in Miami had a prostate infection at just six years old.

Sandy Bentley, a Harrison K-9 client (and former PLAYBOY model) I met in Westlake Village, California, has two German shepherds and recently made a trip to Aiken to visit a forthcoming addition. One of her animals was in rehab recovering from hip surgery.

Harrison, CPI and Cinnante's Advanced Canine Solutions all claim to incorporate extensive veterinary checks, X-rays and bloodline evaluations before they import a dog from Europe, but if injuries and illness can strike even the highest-caliber and most-vetted animals, what about dogs from lesser breeders and trainers?

Then there's the question: Are protection dogs even necessary at all? Set aside the stalker cases and the surgeon whose house was vandalized and you'll find the vast majority of protection-dog owners are über-wealthy people with no credible threats. Sure, income disparity is at its highest since the Great Depression, but violent crime is at a 42-year low. Why then are so many people adding that extra layer of security? Is it fear bordering on paranoia?

"I don't think it's a matter of paranoia or threat. It's a matter of what-if. Home invasions do take place, and what then?" Whitaker asks. "Our dogs deter crime, they detect crime and they defend."

But Beaver says all dogs deter, detect and defend. "Many dogs will instinctively protect their owners if the owner gets into trouble," she says. "If the owner is emitting fear pheromones, which have an odor humans can't detect, the dog is going to be there. Fear pheromones will drive almost all dogs into attacking an intruder."

Cinnante disagrees that most dogs are equipped to handle serious threats. Many of those he evaluates, including some champion dogs in Europe, don't pass his tests. If a dog passes the medical exams and Cinnante's eye test, he'll examine it in a number of other ways. In one test, Cinnante places the dog in a dark room by itself for 15 minutes before entering, using intimidating eye contact, sharp movements and threatening body language to see how the dog responds.

"Not just any dog is equipped for protection work," he says. "You'd be surprised how many tuck their tail and look for an escape. Some even piss on themselves. But that's okay. I love finding that diamond in the rough."



Alex certainly qualified. On the day before

the summer solstice, I meet Whitaker and Cinnante in a Malibu park to test their latest gem. Alex is a black German shepherd, one of two Whitaker brought to a hedge fund manager who was looking for that extra layer of protection at his beach estate. Cinnante, who just moved to southern California, still works for CPI on a contract basis and is here to help train the client. I'd hoped to witness the dog delivery, but the finance guy nixed it. To assuage my disappointment, the guys promised me another session in the bite suit.

I'd suited up with Mako in Georgia, but that was in a confined space and the dog couldn't get a running start. This time I'm on a vast manicured field on the bluffs above the Pacific. A layer of low clouds obscures the falling sun. Unlike the other protection dogs I've met, Alex is in a surly mood when he arrives and growls

at me as he gets out of the car.

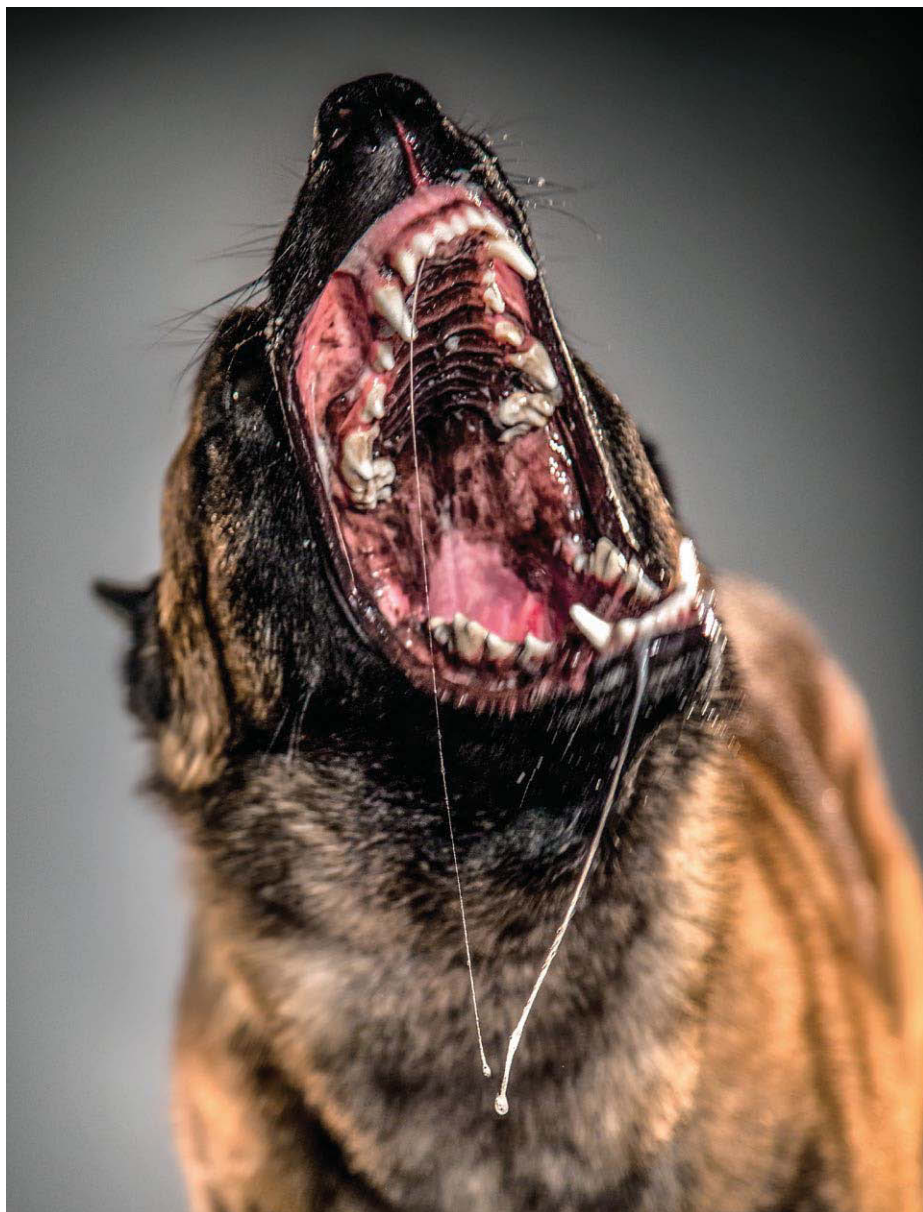
"He's a serious guy," says Cinnante.

He doesn't present the easy charm I've come to expect, but I like that he's angry. Ever since that first session, I haven't been able to forget the feeling of being attacked. There was something primal about it. It made me growl and resist and inspired in me a twisted *Fight Club* impulse to shatter the numbing shell of the day-to-day with the real risk of bodily harm. It turned me into an animal.

This time Cinnante has a camera and Whitaker handles Alex, who is still growling as I take my stance.

"Platz," says Whitaker, and the dog lies down about 30 feet away. We lock eyes for a long beat before Whitaker issues his final command: "Attack!"

The dog comes flying.



ADVISOR

Send your questions to advisor@playboy.co.za. We'll get the best in the field to give you some great advice...

My wife and I made a pact not to give each other presents this Christmas. Our decision was made partly to save money but also because we don't need any extra crap in our lives. We have tried to do this before, but both of us end up breaking down at the last minute and buying the other a gift. Each year I scramble madly and usually end up buying her some really nice jewelry – which she seems happy to receive. She claims this year will be different. We're seriously broke, and I'm thinking of keeping my word and holding her to hers.

Don't you dare show up empty-handed on Christmas morning. You've read the clues correctly in the past and haven't let her down. While we're all for doing away with ritualized conspicuous consumption, this is not the occasion to do it, and your wife is not the person to get coldly principled with. You don't need to break the bank; get her a nice bath soap or a gift certificate to a movie theater where you can go together to relieve the stress of being broke. No matter what she says, she still wants something.

I am a 45-year-old male and have been single my entire adult life. The women I like tell me they take my interest as a compliment but that they aren't interested. My last heartfelt attempt to start a relationship was 20 years ago. While attending college I was attracted to one of the girls in my dorm. We usually talked casually when I came back from class. After a while I decided to ask her out to dinner and a film. She responded by reporting me to the director of the dorm. I have never been able to get past the fact that she reacted this way. Are there any standards regarding how a woman should reject a man and whether it is appropriate for a woman to have someone convey the message for her?

There is no standard practice for how to appropriately reject someone. But lingering too much on an incident that transpired two decades ago isn't going to help you with your current situation. One of the wonderful things about internet dating sites is that they use extensive personality-matching algorithms to pair potential dates, even those who have been perpetually dateless. Additionally, they play the role of dorm director, which is to say they're a go-between that handles the rejection at some distance with minimal embarrassment to either party. Explore these sites. Who knows? You might find someone who dealt with the same type of rejection you did 20 years ago.

Are the duty-free shops inside airports actually good places to find decent deals?

It depends on what you're buying and where you're coming from. Duty-free means tax-free, so you'll find the best bargains on heavily taxed goods such as alcohol and cigarettes. If you're coming from a heavily sin-taxed region of the world, you'll likely find the tax-free smokes at an airport are a deal. You'll probably be able to find a bargain-priced bottle of liquor, but it may not be any cheaper than a bottle you can find discounted at a local store. Don't assume the deep discounts on spirits and cigarettes also apply to the other products you find at duty-free shops, such as electronics, handbags, cosmetics and perfume. As in all retail situations, know what you want, be a comparison shopper and don't let the bargain booze and cigarettes seduce you into thinking everything else is a good deal.

There are a great number of supplements on the market that are designed to increase ejaculate volume. Can you recommend any of them as safe and effective?

You'll find vigorous debates in internet chat rooms about which supplement works best, with men measuring loads and listing volume and distance to an obsessive degree. This strikes us as a coldly clinical version of onanism and lacking in anything approaching sexual pleasure. Unless you're a budding porn star whose career could benefit from a consistently impressive amount of ejaculate, we're not sure what the point is. But if that's your thing, go nuts. We're old-fashioned when it comes to increasing ejaculate. Sexual fitness is like physical fitness, and a balanced diet, plenty of fluids, sleep and stress management do wonders on all fronts.

During an evening at a local swingers club my girlfriend and I met up with a couple we have known for some time. They told us they'd had a threesome with a transvestite. Answering our questions, the man said it was a great experience. His wife said that he'd done "everything" and that we should try it. We did, and indeed we had a great time and have done it many times since. I have not done "everything" with the transvestite – only fondling, kissing and some oral sex. My question is: Am I homosexual? I enjoyed the experiences immensely and want to repeat them. My girlfriend also had a good time and, like me, wants to continue.

Sexual preference is on a continuum, and while most people identify as straight or gay, there's a world of gray out there. Maybe you're bisexual; maybe you have a transvestite fetish but aren't attracted to men. It sounds as though you and your girlfriend are both having fun and for the moment your relationship is going well. The fact that you're comfortably exploring alternative lifestyles together means that whatever you end up doing, you're better prepared than most couples are to handle a definition of sexual preference that isn't stark black or white.



I'm 32 years old, and until a few months ago I was a hopeless womanizer. I seduced countless women, had threesomes, swapped partners and even made amateur porn. I keep a dresser drawer full of trophy panties. But a few months ago I met a woman I'm so taken with that I have stayed committed and monogamous. I want to propose to her. Should I get rid of the panties and not tell her about my past, or should I come clean and tell her everything?

Congratulations on your wild youth and your newfound love. We suggest you give the relationship at least a few more months before you propose. If you still feel the same way after the relationship has been road-tested and the novelty has subsided, you should come clean so that in your married years you'll be able to come with a clean conscience.

WIZARDS OF OSLO

BY JERALYN GERBA

THE DAYS ARE LONG AND THE NIGHTS ARE HOT IN NORWAY'S COOL CAPITAL CITY



Norway's cosmopolitan capital, Oslo – one of the fastest-growing cities in Europe – is glamorous, famously pricey and literally buzzing with a new coffee obsession. Where it once lagged behind Scandinavian sister cities, Oslo is making up for lost time with fine art acquisitions, New Nordic cooking and shiny new architectural landmarks. Go in early summer, when the sun lingers late into the evening.

1. CULTURE SHOPPING

The trendy Tjuvholmen neighborhood (a.k.a. Thief Island), sitting on a peninsula that juts into the Oslo Fjord inlet, is an oasis of contemporary art and design on the newly revitalized waterfront. Renzo Piano designed the building that

hosts the new district's pièce de résistance, Astrup Fearnley Museet (A). Once centered on American art, its collection has transformed into an international who's-who of the modern art scene: Damien Hirst, Matthew Barney, Maurizio Cattelan, Takashi Murakami. Next door, the impeccably appointed boutique hotel The Thief (B,C), opened by an art-collecting billionaire, showcases famous designers along with up-and-coming Norwegian talent – not to mention the views from room balconies that open up to the lapping waves of the Oslo Fjord.



2. SCANDI SAMPLING

New Scandinavian cuisine collides with European market-hall tradition at Mathallen, where you weave your way through a series of high-end specialty shops, cafés and tasting stations to order baskets of reker (peel-and-eat shrimp) and bottles of micro-brew. The much-lauded, Michelin-starred Maaemo has sprouted the casual restaurant Kolonihagen (D) and, with its locally procured menu, more effortless Scandinavian minimalism – bare floorboards, bricks and bulbs. Locals gather at Pjøltergeist for Asian-Icelandic bites served on china bearing the Scandi cartoon character Mumin. Number 19 is the unequivocal cocktail spot for well-



mixed drinks such as the inverted vesper. Pace yourself, though, as young Scandinavians drink like fish and the Norwegian currency (the krone) is going strong.



3. ROASTING FRENZY

Blame the midnight sun, but Oslo's inhabitants have coffee coursing through their veins. The 1960s-era coffee shop Fuglen (E,F) tipped off a kaffe frenzy when it was reimagined as a midcentury furniture store offering exquisite coffee by day and craft cocktails by night. Microroaster and former world barista champion Tim Wendelboe sources sustainable beans from all over the world and serves new flavor profiles at his slender espresso bar in Grünerløkka. The beautifully branded Jacu Coffee Roastery best expresses the New Nordic style of light roasts. Sample their smooth style at the coffee bar within Scotch & Soda, a super-cool retail shop in Aker Brygge. Order a short kaffe at Java Espresso Bar & Kaffeorretning and drink it black to get the jolt you need to power through the next 24 hours.





"Here comes Santa Claus, here comes Santa Claus, right down Santa Claus Lane...!"

STRUT YOUR STACHE

IF YOU'VE BEEN GROWING A MUSTACHE FOR NOVEMBER AND PLAN ON KEEPING IT, YOU MAY AS WELL DO IT WITH STYLE.

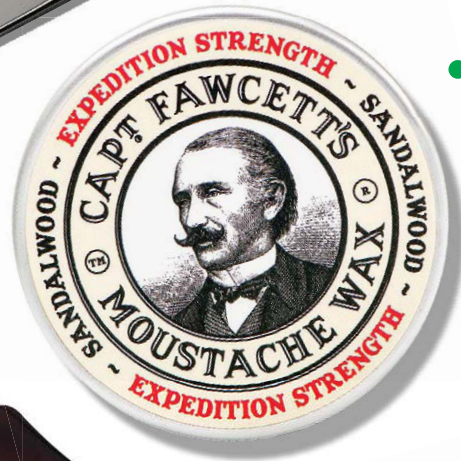
Did you end up with an unkempt face caterpillar this November? If you decided to go hirsute to raise awareness for men's health issues and are now considering keeping this new look, or enjoying the way it inspires conversation (or behind-the-back-ridicule), here are some ways to cultivate your Mo with a flattering or funky style. Set yourself up with the proper gear and keep your activist mustache well-groomed into the new year.



THE PORN STACHE
Orange Is the New Black revived the kinky-cop look. Grow it big, trim it square and keep it neatly combed.

THE RAP STACHE
A tightly trimmed mustache à la Puff Daddy or Frank Ocean looks dashing dressed up with a suit.

THE NEW MANCHU
Steve Aoki rocks a shorter version of the Fu Manchu. It depends on careful trimming rather than months of growing.



- **Clip Art**
Trim your mustache from November; keep these in your dresser drawer for cutting stray threads the rest of the year.
www.tweezerman.com
- **Wax On**
Capt. Fawcett's Expedition Strength Moustache Wax will keep your handlebars up and at the ready.
www.westcoastshaving.com
- **Comb Alone**
Small enough to keep in your pocket, this classic comb from Kent is handmade in England.
www.groominglounge.com

BY ROBERT HARKNESS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT HARKNESS



"Ride 'em, cowboy...!"



DEFGACCU

BY JUSTINE LOOTS

If you think only women don't like being seen naked from behind, you haven't met Dirk Van Hengel. Coco finds it quaint, the way he strips off in the bathroom, emerging in a bathrobe which he shrugs off under the sheets. She's tried undressing him in the bedroom, but no tequila. And if her hands meander down his spine, he steers them away from his business-class backside. Coco wouldn't insist on being on top – not if she weighed a hundred and eighty kilograms like he does. But for Dirk, it's nonnegotiable. So here Coco lies, his sweat dripping onto her face in sync with his grunting. She should tell him the sheet's knotted, that she can see the lumpy planets of his butt in the mirrored ceiling. That'd teach him for never looking up.

The sisters like his Dutch accent but it's phlegm-in-the-throat to Coco. Still, he asks for her each time. It must be his taste for brown girls, which he shares with his forefathers. When they settled in

South Africa, they took Khoisan women as wives on account of their shortage of women. Well, that's their story and they should know: they wrote the history books, right? There's no shortage of women now: Dirk has no wife because of his eating plan, or lack thereof.

Coco chose her hooker name because being brown is her USP. That's Unique Selling Point if you aren't business-minded. Black might be beautiful but brown is beautifulicious. Put that one in the history books. It beats Basters, what the Dutch-Khoisan children were called – as if you can't be a bastard because you're unicoloured. Other words came later: Bushman, Hotnot, Coloured. Not that Coco cares. One client calls her Liza Minnelli because she straightens her kroes hair. As long as they pay, they can call her what they like. But no pillow talk. She's no shrink; she makes men grow. Besides, what must she do with the stories they leave scattered behind them like entrails? There's no washing out those stains. Coco's a hit-and-run girl so Dirk Van Hengel isn't a bad fit. He finishes quickly, and after sex he doesn't chat, he eats.

Right now, he's lifting her hips up towards him. It's not so easy with one hand. He's propping himself up with the other.

That's when it happens. Instead of the fleshy mounds of his fingertips, Coco feels two blunt spikes jabbing into her, under her hip. She arches her back, inching away from the... prongs? Does Dirk have a Taser? She'd never have suspected he likes his women comatose. If that's what this is, she has seconds before he stuns her into whatever story he's reliving: the dead mother; the date that went wrong – the

one he drowned in the Rhine or the Danube or whatever the hell river runs through Holland. She rolls over slightly, checking for the Taser in the mirror – but no surprise, her sightline's blocked by his nether end.

She sees something else: in the reflection, Dirk's derrière throws down... a rope? A curly tail? A helix of DNA? Maybe this is what happens when women conceive. The ancestors slide down a spirit baby to earth. Coco freaks out about the rubber. *Take back the spirit baby!* she wants to yell. But the rubber's in place. Dirk's good like that. She needs to limit herself to one panic attack at a time. She strains to look under her hips. She can't see a Taser... but there's no hand either. Before she can identify what it is, the image fades.

Coco chose her hooker name because being brown is her USP. That's Unique Selling Point if you aren't business-minded. Black might be beautiful but brown is beautifulicious.

The sound of Dirk's ecstasy should be part of that *Exorcist* film. It's a horrible, strangled squealing. Coco's still conscious though. She reminds herself this is a good thing.

After Dirk's gone, Coco examines her hip in the early morning light. What exactly is she looking for? She finds nothing. Dirk's flattened her, that's all – not just literally. His day's had a kick-start since he's an early riser, as it were, but she can't even muster her usual irritation with the pigeons for not tearing themselves from the bins to croon about her end-of-shift.

On his next visit, they're in a room without mirrors. Again Dirk's hand becomes hard and blunt beneath her. She feels the same two... what are they? Claws? He's lost in rapture so Coco snakes her hand around him, touching his untouchable. There, coiled in her fingers, is a tail! At the same time, a blunt hand grasps for her breast. It isn't human. Coco is staring at a cloven hoof.

Dirk makes the same sound, as if he's being choked after inhaling helium. The trotters disappear as he rolls off her, not noticing her horror.

Should she say something? She watches him (robed again, naturally) guzzling down a quattro formaggi deluxe pizza. And if so, what could she say?

She speaks to the house manager, Madame Monroe, instead. Black lady, blonde wig but hey, no-one comes here for realism. "If Dirk calls again, I'm out. Okay?"

Madam Monroe blinks her glittery lashes. "Did he try something funny, baby?"

"He's a bit heavy for me, that's all."

She reaches for her cigarettes. "This isn't a supermarket. You can't pick and choose."

"I know. But we'll lose clients if I turn into Plank Girl."

Coco parks her battered car with its missing front bumper outside her apartment. She's

rammed too hard into life, that's the problem. Now she's a clause without a bracket. Maybe if she replaces the bumper, she'll seal up the problem; stop sensing things that aren't there.

The paint on the apartment block is peeling and some of the windows have cardboard instead of glass. Why anyone called the place Château Belle is beyond her. The suburb is

BIOGRAPHY

Justine Loots works as an independent writer and filmmaker, and teaches a Masters' course in screenwriting at the National Film and Video Foundation. She wrote the script, in the form of dub poetry, for the award-winning documentary film *Surfing Soweto* and has written for the television series *High Rollers*, *Erfsondes* and *When We Were Black*, among others. She has also made documentaries for Carte Blanche and Carte Blanche Africa. Through her work, she has spent time with war-zone surgeons, con artists, ex child-soldiers, flying doctors, rabbis, imams, swamis, priests, traditional healers, Buddhist monks, struggle heroes and members of the extreme right wing.

Of "Uncaged", she says, "For me it's only possible to venture into dark terrains with a sturdy set of wings. It might sound contrary but I find magic realism, of which there is an element in my story, a very truthful way of writing. You can include those dimensions we're taught to shut out growing up; you can return to where the boundaries between the seen and unseen are fluid. I sometimes feel cheated when stories don't give me that, which is absurd really since not all stories set out to do that."

Bellevue East so someone must've thought it was genius. As for the mosaicked castle-on-the-lake on the foyer's walls, someone had too much time on their hands, making water swirl out of stone like that.

Coco stops to listen for her neighbours, ready to step under the stairs or head back to her car. What other people call neighbourliness she calls prying. But the place is a morgue. She makes it past two apartment doors when the door before hers opens. It's the new guy. He's brown like she is and wears beach shorts. If he's from Cape Town, he'd better not scheme he's her homeboy. He limps over. Not a good omen on two counts: one, he'll need help with something, and two, Ted Bundy wore his arm in a sling to get women's sympathy.

She could make a run for it; slam her front door in his face. But if Beach Boy's a Bundy, he'll reach her door first. She'll only beat him if his limp's legit. Then, if she had any social decorum, she'd reopen the door – 'Congratulations! You've just passed the not-a-serial-killer test' – and invite him in for coffee.

But whoring's sharpened Coco's instincts. He's gay surfer, not slasher. These are only the games she plays to put distance between herself and others. She's reached her front door without catching his eye.

"Howzit. I'm Devon."

"Ja? Who d'you kick, Devon?"

That winds him.

"Okay. Who kicked you then?"

"No-one. I –"

She slams her door shut. When she steps into the shower the night slides off her, through the drain, to wherever stains go. This is the best part of her day. Well, it would have been if the shock on Devon's face didn't muddy the water.

Coco buries herself in her only book: *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, if you must know. At first, the *harks*, *how nows* and *wherefores* were a foreign language. But lately it's soothing that, no matter what the night washes in, Shylock always wants news on the Rialto. She's read the histories, now she's putting a dent in the tragedies. It's the love stories she avoids. The problem is the font's so small she'll be squint by sunset. Then her clients will demand a discount.



Madam Monroe reassigns Dirk to Genie, who's bigger and browner than Coco. 'More bounce for your buck,' is how Genie puts it. Dirk doesn't complain.

So much for USP, thinks Coco.

She gets a new client: a slight man from

Djibouti. His name is Nazir. That's all he tells her, and she doesn't question him. He can't look her in the eyes: not before sex, not during, not after. While he focuses on their pelvic dance, it happens again. The skin of Nazir's back becomes furry under Coco's hands. She checks his face – what she can see of it – when large triangular ears push out of his head. They disappear just as quickly. She has to make sense of this, to close the bracket. She unlatches herself and turns Nazir over. He moans when she kisses his sides, and the skin on his waist changes to short, grey-brown fur. From here she can see his back. The fur reappears, thick and black. A ghostly cry, it contains its own echo, escapes from him. Finished, he turns away from her. His back shows nothing but flesh but Coco suspects his eyes, if he'd look at her, would be lupine.

Back at home, Coco can't stop thinking about the ears that pushed out of Nazir's head. They were too long for a wolf. She remembers something, a documentary she saw when she owned a television. It followed a pair of black-backed jackals that hunted and scavenged together. They were inseparable. You'd believe in monogamy after watching that, seriously.

She's rammed too hard into life, that's the problem. Now she's a clause without a bracket.

It was only when one of the jackals died that their bond was broken.

The fragments piece themselves together: the black fur on Nazir's back, the way he couldn't look into her eyes... Nazir has lost his partner.

Coco did *not* ask for a backstage pass to Jackal Man's soul. If this is the Khoisan elders gunning at her through visions, they can pick on someone else. She'd like to point out to the elders, not that she believes in them, that – hello! – animal visions are only helpful if you're going to track down an animal. In case they hadn't noticed, she's not hunting here. She's *prey* to the desires of men.

The walls of Coco's apartment are closing in on her. She heads out, not stopping to listen for footsteps first and, for this, life punishes her. She almost walks right into Devon. She should remind him he's renting the flat, not the landing. He's less pleased to see her so that's an improvement.

"The answer's no," he squawks.

Coco looks at him blankly.

"I didn't kick anyone. And no-one kicked me."

"Great. Good to know."

"So? You going to ask what happened?"

Her silence doesn't stop him.

"There was an accident. I could probably sue but –"

"I'm late. For work."

"I thought you work nights? That's what Xolani from downstairs said."

"Xolani should rock his screaming baby instead of stalking me!"

"He calls you Knight Rider." Devon's smiling.

"Ja? Well bad eighties television is before my time. And if you're one of those not-gay-on-Thursdays johns, don't come here looking for a freebie."

Devon's lips go thin. "It's not Thursday."

Coco sniggers. Big mistake: it lifts the tension, clearing the passage for the inevitable.

"Look, I'm new in town. I can't drive since the accident. And my back's killing me. D'you know what'll stop me screaming louder than Xolani's baby? Painkillers. Can I ask you to cash in my rings and get me some? Please? For the peace of the neighbourhood?"

A pill junkie. Great.

"I have a doctor's script."

"From where?"

Devon is stung. "A doctor."

Coco sighs. It's not a no, which is enough for Devon to fish out the script and two gold rings

from his pocket. She notices the smaller one is engraved with a name, 'Marvin.'

"This'll fly off the shelf," she heads for her car, "with all those Marvins

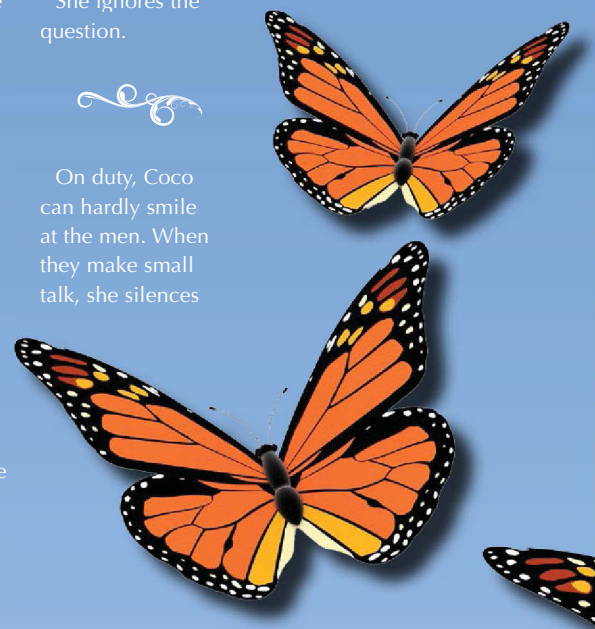
looking for a pinkie ring."

"When are you coming home?"

She ignores the question.



On duty, Coco can hardly smile at the men. When they make small talk, she silences



them with grand mal seduction. Something scorches her from the inside. Not lust but rage. She should cash in Devon's rings and go on holiday. Or fix her car's bumper. She owes him *nothing*. Her mind is in Cape Town with her runt of an ex-boyfriend. You'd swear *she'd* been on crystal meth, the way *she'd* believed he'd cleaned up. Meantime he'd found her debit card pin number and cleaned her out. Coco had sold her furniture and bought a train ticket to Joburg, bringing nothing but her ID book, the clothes on her back and *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. The book is all she has of her mother who died when Coco was a child. She'd allowed herself that sentimentality. In Joburg Coco had had no history. She'd had no present either but that didn't worry her. She'd slept on the streets with Shakespeare as her pillow. The first person to really speak to her was Philane with his salamander tattoo over the scar on his shoulder. She'd liked the way he'd turned an injury into art and had gone with him to the house.

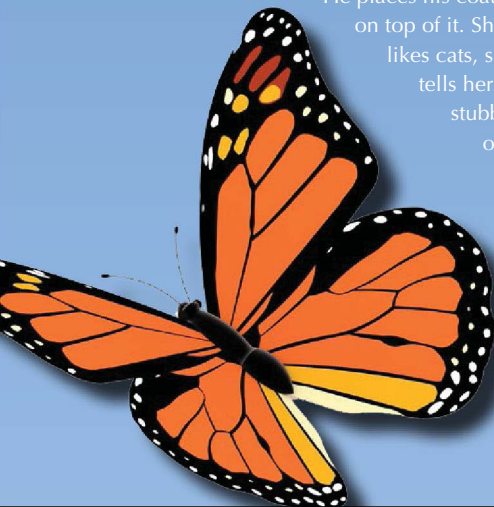
When her mind spins like this, she retreats, letting her body do its job. The men are commuters on journeys elsewhere. Now and again they pull her back, except it's not them exactly. It's their talons, tails, tusks. The images fade and so do the hours. In this way, the night is good to her.

She's jolted to her senses when a new client, small and bald, gives her his name: Tybalt.

"Like 'the King of Cats'?" So she lied. She has read *Romeo and Juliet*.

He doesn't answer. Maybe Tybalt can't read. He folds his coat into neat quarters. Or maybe he doesn't want to talk. He's right. It slows down the machine. It's just that Coco is curious, or is it uneasy? Tybalt heads for the light, then changes course and scuttles towards the bedside table.

He places his coat on top of it. She likes cats, she tells herself, stubbing out her



concern.

Tybalt pulls out early. Biology's failed him. Men like him visit the house to escape shame or disappointment from their wives. Coco will have to coax and encourage him, for no top-up fee either. An image hits her as she sits up: Tybalt's arms turn red, like signal flares. Is it a call for help? A warning? She sees his hands hook, fingers fusing into claws. A red tail rises up behind him, more than double his height, punctuated by a tungsten-black sting.

Tybalt is no cat. He's a scorpion.

He reaches for his coat pocket then turns to her, knife in hand. But she's already at the far side of the room, a sheet around her. She screams for help, opening the door. She's seen violence but never focused into a blade. Weapons don't usually make it past the security check.

Tybalt lunges for her, naked, aroused by her fear. She sidesteps, stumbling over the sheet. His knife just misses her. Junked-up on power, he slams the door shut. He bends down low and corners her. Coco's eyes beg. Jagged words (is that her voice?) do the same. Tybalt's laugh is sickening.

He wilts when Philane crashes through the

crackhead. After that, it's finish and klaar.

She knocks on Devon's door. When he opens it his movements are strained. Coco ignores this. "Your poison," she hands over the pills. Then, to avoid asking how he is, "Don't take all of them at once."

"Cheers." He pops two pills out of their capsules and swallows them dry.

She moves to her door.

"I made you breakfast."

The word ignites the hunger that's been lying dormant. Resisting is an effort of will. "I'm not... I need to shower."

"Perfect. I'll finish the mushrooms. Fifteen minutes?" Devon shuffles to his kitchen. It's not a question.

It's a trap, thinks Coco. Behind the lure of food is a trigger and two metal jaws. That's friendship for you. Even though her fridge contains nothing but sour milk and carrots hunched with age, she will not go. She'll wait out her hunger, sneak out later and buy a pie.

Inside her flat, the aroma from next door hits her taste buds. Browning onions with... ginger?

After her shower, Coco knocks on Devon's door. She will eat but not converse; inch the

bait out of the trap with a stick. And what bait it is: coffee with cream, not milk; fresh orange juice. He concocts an omelette with tomato, onions, dhania and garam masala;

mushrooms on the side. He winces each time he places something on his small dining table. The painkillers haven't kicked in.

The thought of Devon cooking in this state makes Coco feel unworthy of his generosity. "Can I help you?"

"No, you eat. Don't let it get cold." He disappears into the kitchen.

She looks around the entrance-hall-slash-dining-room-slash-lounge. There is a valet stand in the corner. Draped over it is a feather boa and something small made of white, glittery fabric. So he's a crossdresser. Coco's meanness returns like a well-worn coat: she'll have to keep an eye out for him when she hangs her metallic spandex miniskirts on the apartment's washing line. He'll pluck off those four-way stretch numbers like it's Christmas. She cuts up her omelette.

Devon returns with a plate of his own. "Just so you know I won't crush 'n snort the rest of the pills, I should tell you I had a cage accident."

"What cage?" Despite herself, Coco is curious.

"I'm a cage dancer," Devon is surprised she doesn't know. "I moved to Joburg to work at Glitterati."

He limps over. Not a good omen on two counts: one, he'll need help with something, and two, Ted Bundy wore his arm in a sling to get women's sympathy.

door. Philane confiscates the knife as if Tybalt's been caught mid-prank, not pre-murder. He lands two punches in Tybalt's face and escorts him out.

Coco drops to the floor. Her lunatic heart pounds as if someone's listening. If this were *Oprah*, gratitude would be expressed round about now. "Turn your wounds into wisdom," Oprah would encourage. "Live from the heart of yourself." The survivor's friend or family member would be announced. The audience would clap, straining their necks in anticipation... but there's nobody to come in from the wings for Coco.

This is *stuffed up*. Coco hates herself for crying. Your life isn't a talk show. You're not a talker. And *Oprah* is off air!



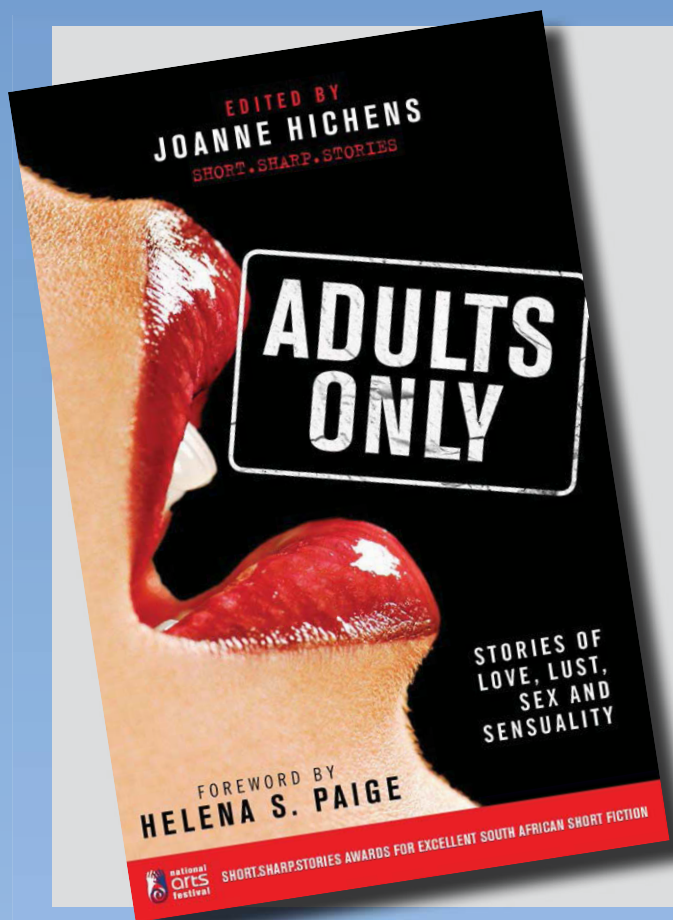
Coco is not about to go soft over some arthropod. She has not stolen Devon's money, and will *not* sample his painkillers in a bid to feel better. She'll deliver them like he asked her to because weird shit happened today that saved her life. For that she owes somebody something – even if it's pills for a closet

Coco looks at him blankly.
 "It's a new club."
 "Where you strip? In a cage?"
 "I'm a dancer. Sometimes I strip – down to my jocks."
 That explains the glitzy bantam on the valet stand.
 "They suspended me from the ceiling, in my cage, for opening night.
 I was shaking it to Cher's *Take It Like A Man* when a hook between the cage and one of the chains snapped. The cage tilted. Threw me against the metal bars like a vicious lover. I fractured two ribs and did God-knows-what to my back. The owner told me to take it like a man... Hilarious." Devon isn't smiling. "Then he fired my battered ass." He pushes some straggling mushrooms to the side of his plate.
 "Welcome to the City of Gold."
 "Thanks a lot."
 "What's with the cage anyway?"
 Devon shrugs. "Whatever's inside a cage is desirable. Exotic. I like to think cages keep out the crowds," Devon's smile is choirboy devilish, "but they don't. They draw them in."
 Suddenly, the room feels too bright. The sun dazzles Coco's night eyes as it creeps across the room. "I need to sleep."
 "Do you have another name besides Coco?"
 "Not any more."

In her single bed, Coco snaps out of sleep. Her heart lurches into its cage of ribs. Devon's right, the bars she's so carefully constructed around herself aren't locking anything out. Her clients are seeping into her, fur and all. There were warning signs with Tybalt: the unpredictability of his movements, the fact that the "King of Cats" killed Mercutio. With a sword! She pushed out these warnings, not wanting to slow down the night. But the images – Tybalt's claws, his tail – force their way in. The cage is her protection but it's also dangerous. It's made her believe it's safe to lock herself away.
 She thinks of Jackal Man. Nazir. If he returns, she could open the door of her cage, talk to him. But he must know that scavenging in warehouses won't bring back what he's lost? Then again, why speak to these predators? It's easier to give them what they came for and watch them leave. For every one of them she'll put up another bar in her cage, locking them out, locking herself in – except this doesn't make her feel safe. Not any more.

Insomnia is no barricade; night rushes in. Jackal Man doesn't return. From behind her cage door, Coco watches the men pass through her. Philane brings in a young man –

a boy, really. He scans her from beneath a dark flick of hair. When her hand touches his back, he flinches.
 "So how does this work? We have an hour?"
 "Uh-huh. But don't feel rushed. I pull long shifts if I need to."
 "Okay. Can we... wait a bit then?"
 Coco shrugs. It's all the same to her.
 The boy sits on the edge of the bed and hugs his pale arms around his legs. They're too long for his slim body.
 "What's your name?"
 "Michael."
 She nudges open her cage door. "Who brought you here, Michael?"
 The question's accuracy pains him but it's a surface cut.
 She waits for the truth.
 "My father. He says I need some practice before I "tame the varsity girls". He frowns at the floor. "I'm eighteen today."
 "Happy birthday."
 His eyes flit from floor to wall to ceiling to Coco. "Do we... I mean, if my father's paid already... do we have to have sex?"
 "Not if you don't want to, no."
 "And you won't... he doesn't" – the boy's eyes won't settle on anything – "have to know?"
 "What happens here is our business."
 He looks at her fleetingly. His eyes reflect colours too bright to name. Coco envies his



ADULTS ONLY
Stories of Love, Lust, Sex and Sexuality
 Curated by Joanne Hichens
 Published by Jacana (R190)



Within the pages of Adults Only lies a wonderful range of modern sex writing; stories that are raw, dangerous and powerful, as well as those that are delicate, sensitive and poignant. This book will expose you to provocative and erotic stories that titillate the senses, as well as perverse stories that are riotously funny (but not quite pornography).

Adults Only offers a sense of real characters caught in tangled webs of love and lust; the stories included run the gamut from raw and dangerous to sensitive and reserved.

Adults Only is the second of the SHORT.SHARP.STORIES annual anthologies, produced in conjunction with the National Arts Festival to showcase South African fiction-writing talent. The contributors are established authors and journalists as well as previously unpublished writers. They are: Ken Barris, Efemia Chela, Christine Coates, Anthony Ehlers, Chantelle Gray van Heerden, Bobby Jordan, Aryan Kaganof, Donvé Lee, Carla Lever, Justine Loots, Alexander Matthews, Sean Mayne, Wamuwi Mbao, Dudumalingani Mqombothi, Tiffany Kagure Mugo, Nick Mulgrew, Gillian Rennie, Arja Salafanra, Alex Smith, Jo Stielau, Alan Walters, Eugene Yiga.

The book features a foreword by Helena S Paige and an introduction by Makhosazana Xaba.



lack of guile: whatever deception he will accrue is not there yet.

"I just want the first time to be special, you know?"

Special. The word is mass-produced in white cursive on red satin hearts.

He thinks she's quiet because she's hurt; that he could hurt her. "I mean you're special to someone, maybe to a few people. What I mean is, we're... strangers."

"Sweetie," Coco smiles, "strangers are just friends you haven't met."

"Do you get a lot of..."

"First-timers?"

He's relieved she bypassed the word "virgin".

"They're my speciality."

"Really?"

"That's probably why your dad brought you to me."

The boy meditates on this, earnest, fragile. She doesn't need her night visions to know he's a butterfly. He'd rather be out somewhere, in the sun. But with a few light caresses, his young body responds. She envelops him like netting. She could drift off, retreat back into her cage, but she doesn't. She wants to see the colour of his wings.

It's strange to Coco that there are no flutters. No stained glass orange. No iridescent blues. He is just a boy trying to be a man even though he'd rather not.

He thanks her when it's over. Not all of them do. She does what her clients are so good at: she clothes herself methodically,

pretending there's been no intimacy. One of his wings, if he has wings at all, is torn at the edge. It won't affect his flight much, you won't even see it, but it's there all the same.



When he leaves, emptiness sweeps in and settles between Coco's ribs. Places that contained life feel more vacant afterwards.

Climbing the stairs to her apartment, she finds Devon on the halfway landing. He's trying to contain his lower back pain with his hand; his grocery bags are on the floor next to him.

"What's a queen without cavalry?" he laughs. The eternal go-go boy, gloom bounces right off him. "Do me a favour and get these?"

She should walk right past him; leave a dent in his sunshine – except he'd want to talk it through. Better to do this one last thing. Then she'll become super-vigilant about leaving and returning when he's not around.

Coco scoops up the bags. His chitchat eddies

around her, through his front door and into the kitchen. He's snubbed by her getaway. He'd imagined tea, biscuits, congenial conversation.

In bed, she stares at the ceiling. She imagines her feet walking on its blankness, an untouched land where she has another name and a tribe that isn't dying out. She can't hide from the truth. It wasn't bravery that prompted her to step out of her cage; she was enticed by the hunt. She's seen it so often, this predatory impulse, in the men that come to her house; in her meth-head ex who'd do anything for a hit; and now here, in herself. She should have left Butterfly Boy untouched. She should never have disturbed the powder on his wings.

So she's not just prey in the end. Something's been in the cage with her all along: her own predatory self. It catches her breath. She may not know the colour of its eyes, but she hears it now: breathing while she cannot.

Coco used to lock people out to protect herself. Now she does it to remain hidden, to conceal the predator's heart that's been buried inside her waiting to bare its fangs.



That evening, Coco finds a paper packet outside her door. This is Devon's work, it has

Coco had sold her furniture and bought a train ticket to Joburg, bringing nothing but her ID book, the clothes on her back and *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*.

to be. Inside is an elegant copper-coloured dress with dangling sequins. It's gorgeous. She wants to add: for a transvestite – but that would be mean. A note is attached: "Pilfered from Glitterati. Not entirely my style but you could use some of your old sparkle. Devon."

Who is this stranger and why the kindness? He's right, though: Coco hasn't felt any sparkle in a long time. She's surprised he saw it in her at all. She knocks on his door. When he opens it, his eyes are bleary and a sleep mask is perched on his head.

"Thanks for the dress."

"Oh. Sure. Give it away if it doesn't fit."

She shakes her head. She's uncomfortably moved and fights to contain it. This is worse than incontinence. "It's perfect. I don't know where I'll wear it... it's too good for the house." She laughs to let out some of the emotion.

"Get the garment and the occasion will arrive." The motion of his hand summons courtiers.

"Were you sleeping?"

"No, just resting."

Coco appreciates the lie. "The other day, you

asked me my real name?"

For a moment it hangs between them, unspoken.

"It's Viola."

Devon pumps up his Cape Coloured accent. "Vi-ou-la? *Fênsie!*" He grins at her.

"My ma must've smaaked Shakespeare – the names anyway. It's from *Twelfth Night*."

"We did that at school. That's the one where nobody knows who Viola really is till the end of the play?"

"Ja." She wants to run but digs for the impulse buried beneath that, "I've got the night off tomorrow. Would you like to come for supper?"

"I hope the dress code's formal. You must check the tux I rehomed along with that frock of yours."

She almost falls to the floor laughing. "Well then, formal it is."



It's been so long since she cooked she can hardly tell leeks from celery. Who would have thought buying groceries could make the ground fall away beneath her? "Coming out" is what Devon would call it except she's coming out of her cage. It's both frightening and

exhilarating.

In the supermarket, the visions return; something that's never happened outside of the house. They don't crowd in or unravel her. They are simply and quietly there: some gentle, some

vicious, most of them the two things together. And yet these are just everyday people on an ordinary day.

Like them, Coco has been hurt and she has hurt. And like her elders – let's be specific here because there's no shortage of bloodlines running through her veins – like her Khoisan elders, she has the gift of the hunter. That doesn't mean that is what she'll become, but she can recognise the hunter and the hunted – in herself and in others. There'll be times she'll miss the confines of her cage, when open spaces will overwhelm her, but old habits can be cast off.

Tonight, the city spreads out in front of her, the sky large above it. And she is hostess at a feast for two – a girl in a twinkling dress filched by a chatty magpie with lumbago who saw something inside her that sparkled even though it was coated in dust. She sees it too. It's impossible not to – when something catches the light, it can no longer stay hidden – but only the night knows what shape she will take.



ILLUSTRATION BY SKIP STERLING

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

BY JOEL STEIN

THE NSA IS THE LEAST OF YOUR PROBLEMS. YOUR GIRLFRIEND ALREADY KNOWS ALL

There's no need to worry about the NSA collecting your emails or Facebook collecting your data, unless you have something to hide. Or have a penis. Because if you have a penis and haven't done something wrong, you're not thinking hard enough about all the things you've ever done. Now you remember. And so does the internet.

The new surveillance state is a disaster for men. Yes, all that NSA snooping is probably helping the government stop terrorists. And Google selling our web history to advertisers undoubtedly keeps us from seeing ads for things we don't need, such as tampons and John Mayer albums. But this massive data collection is also a digital bread-crumbs trail for our girlfriends to follow.

I'm not even talking about cheating. Or sneaking out to drink. Or to gamble. Or to smoke crack cocaine while we're supposed to be mayoring Toronto. We do horrible things all day long that mean so little to us we don't even remember them. Cardinal Richelieu said, "If one would give me six lines written by the hand of the most honest man, I would find something in them to have him hanged." And Cardinal Richelieu was a dude. A woman would need only one line.

When I started dating my now wife in the digital innocence of the late 1990s, I left her in my office with my computer on and my email program open. Because I'd never cheated, I was fine with her looking at my emails. Until she did.

She found an email I'd sent to an ex-girlfriend, and she was furious. This confused me since I hadn't written anything bad. Except I had and didn't even know it. I wrote about how I'd read the class-notes section of our college alumni magazine to see if she'd gotten married. Which, I came to realize after hours of fighting and crying with my now wife, was indeed

deeply flirty. Also deeply pathetic.

Even medical records have been stolen and posted online. Yes, it's happening mostly to celebrities, but we're next. And when we talk about medical records, what we're really talking about is women finding out we have herpes before we find the right moment to tell them, which is when we're fake crying over the story of our cheating, herpes-ridden ex-girlfriend, who may or may not exist.

Here's everything your girlfriend could know: If you have an alarm system that provides a website or an app, she has a record of every time you leave and enter your house and what door you used, so there's no more being a backdoor man. She can find out from a quick search the price of any houses you've owned, how much you owe on them, if you've been divorced, your political donations and your criminal record. If she suspects you're cheating, she can ask you to install the Find My Friends app on your phone so she can always see exactly where you are. Turning the Find My Friends app off is way more suspicious than just letting it show that you're at the Mustang Ranch. You can at least claim you were driving through the middle of Nevada when your car broke down on a pile of herpes.

This isn't just paranoia: Women really are using technology to compile dossiers on us. The Lulu app allows women to numerically score men they've dated and assign them hashtags such as #NeverSleepsOver, #FuckedMeAndChuckedMe and #AlwaysPays. It's turning the world into a small liberal arts college where if you mess up once, you never get the chance to mess up all over someone else. Though if I know anything about women, the guys who are going to get the most action are the ones hashtagged "FuckedMeAndChuckedMe."

Technology is a cage keeping us from being

our natural outlaw selves. We can't drive through tollbooths when we discover we don't have exact change, because cameras are shooting our license plates. If you mouth off to a cop, he can't even beat you silly with a club without being videotaped. Thanks to that rewards program card, your drugstore knows everything you buy there, as does your credit card company, which sells it to huge data-mining firms. We are on electronic leashes, and that is not a very masculine look.

We're just a few years from a world where everyone wears Google Glass, allowing people to look at us while our photos pop up in the corner of their eyes like mug shots, listing all the horrible things we've done: tried to convince a girlfriend to have a threesome she clearly didn't want; added an extra day in Las Vegas to a business trip that wasn't in Las Vegas; worked as a theater director in college. All the data will lead to so much shaming that we'll be aware of every impure instinct, sweating to tame each one. All this civilizing will take the Tom Sawyer out of us, and we'll slowly transmogrify into soft, unattractive Stepford men. Our species will die out as we drink nonfat lattes and ask each other how our day was.

Sure, you can hide your email through a Hushmail account, pay with Bitcoins and surf the deep web, but that's like telling everyone you're doing something majorly shady when you're doing something just a tiny bit shady. Instead, we all need to roll back our digital dependency and reclaim a little mystery. Get in the habit of turning off our phones for a couple of hours every day. Keep the GPS off unless we're lost. Don't post everything we do on Twitter and Facebook because then it looks weird when we don't. It's either that or we behave ourselves. And that's not going to happen.



"If by wassailing you mean looking to get laid, then yes, I'm wassailing."

“LET ME EAT CAKE”

BY HILARY WINSTON

IT'S THE HOLIDAYS. RULE NO. 1: NEVER STAND BETWEEN YOUR GIRLFRIEND AND DESSERT

Hooray! It's the holiday season! Deck the halls! Joy to the world! And hark! The herald angel... food cake! I love the holidays. I look forward to them the entire year. And to me, like a lot of women, the holidays are about food. They start with Halloween candy that creeps onto the shelves right after the back-to-school stuff comes down. Three-ring binders are replaced with candy corn and miniature boxes of Milk Duds (there are only three in a box, so we women can eat a dozen boxes and still feel okay about ourselves). But we can weather the tiny candy storm knowing the really good holiday stuff is coming. So we resist temptation (except on the actual day of Halloween – we're only human) and start preparing.

We are determined females. We are focused. In October and early November we tirelessly count calories, points, fat, carbs-pick your poison/mathematical-deprivation method. We set our alarms an hour earlier to give ourselves time to run. We actually get up when our alarms go off, and run. We pretend that fruit can be a dessert. We go to the movies and “treat” ourselves to a Diet Coke. We “mix it up” at dinner by making grilled fish instead of grilled chicken. We are incredible. We are the embodiment of self-control. And as the men in our life, you start to really respect us. All that talk the rest of the year about wanting to “eat healthy” and “finally take those extra pounds off” is happening right before your very eyes. No more talk, all walk. It's miraculous. We stop at five ounces of wine (which, sadly, is one serving) and we're actually Zen about it. We know everything is for the greater good. That's why I'm sure it's a shock to you when

it all comes to an abrupt end.

Thanksgiving! It's a holiday. It's a celebration. It's a family tradition. With a delicious meal. A carb-filled, fatty, caloric meal. It seems to fly in the face of everything you've seen us working for over the past six-plus weeks. But it comes and we don't even try to resist. You watch us pile our plates high with stuffing, marshmallow-covered sweet potatoes, buttered bread and Jell-O and then cover it all with gravy, even the Jell-O (don't knock it until you've tried it). And then you think we're done, but we go back for seconds. And you think, Oh, maybe she's going to skip dessert. And you are wrong, dead wrong. We go straight for that pumpkin-pecan-apple-pie sampler plate with some fudge to grow on. Then you think maybe it's just one cheat day. But it doesn't stop. The day after Thanksgiving is leftover city. And the day after that we want to get a pumpkin spice latte at Starbucks and make Christmas cookies. It's confusing, because you've just seen us be our best selves. You saw us have one chip and then put that Chip Clip back on with the self-righteousness of a Victoria's Secret model. And now it's all gone and you want to say something. You do. Really really badly. Because you think we've fallen off the wagon we were so proudly on. And I get it. You just want to help.

One time my boyfriend just wanted to help. He leaned into me at a Christmas party when I was scarfing down some tortilla chips and dip after months of dieting and said, “Hey, don't fill up on chips.” That was of course code, which I cracked. I knew

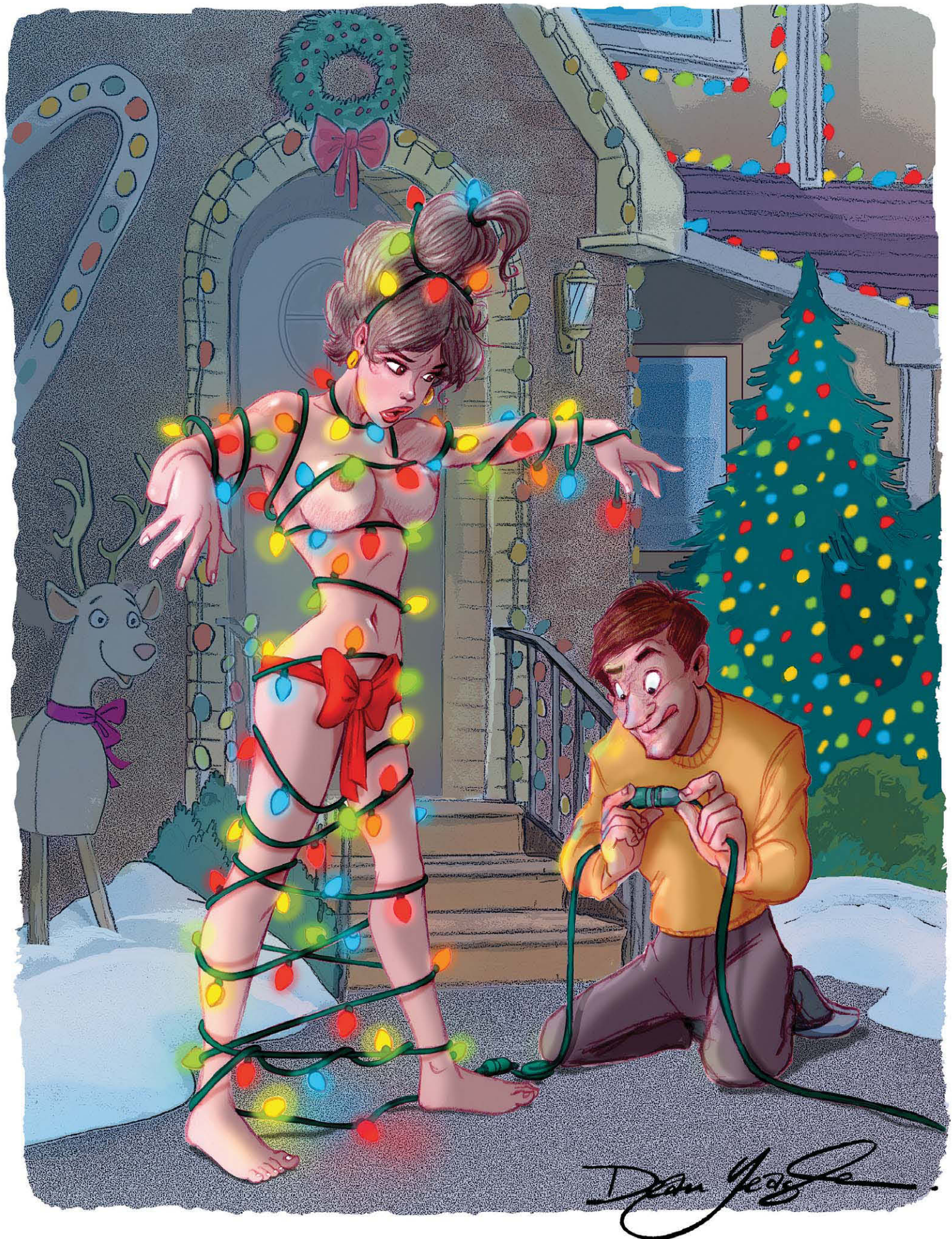
what he really meant was “Stop pigging out.” I learned something about myself in that moment: that I was capable of murder. I wanted to grab the scruff of the beard I'd begged him to shave off and slam his face into the salsa and let him drown in it. I was furious, furious because he didn't understand me at all. He didn't understand that I'd worked so hard for those six to eight weeks so I could fill the fuck up on chips. The wagon I was on was built to fall apart just before the holidays.

The truth is that women lose weight to gain it back. When we look at that scale the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and we see we've lost seven pounds, it doesn't mean it's bathing-suit-shopping time. It means it's freedom time. We're free to gain back seven pounds. Seven whole pounds! It means we don't have to say no to our co-worker's Chex Reindeer Poop (if you haven't had it, have it) or that yummy...ish Hanukkah gelt. We can have that ambrosia salad (can we really call it a salad?) and not worry about how we're going to calculate the Weight Watchers points later. It doesn't matter. We're just getting back to where we were in October. No harm, no foul.

There is a method to our fatness. But don't worry; it's temporary. It's just for the holiday season. It too shall pass and soon enough it'll be January and we'll be trying to drag you on a walk or trick you into a jog (“Let's speed up; the light's about to change”) and feeding you pureed frozen bananas and calling it ice cream. So for now, enjoy the holidays with your lady. Let it go and please just let her eat pie.



ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE BERTINO



"Okay, this 'outdoing the neighbors with the decorations' thing has finally gone too far."

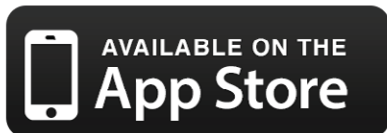


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WHAT TO WEAR.
WHERE TO GO.**



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