

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Andrea Burnett
Chronicle Books
(415) 537-4258
andrea_burnett@chroniclebooks.com
www.chroniclebooks.com

**CHRONICLE BOOKS PUBLISHES *PLAYBOY: 50 YEARS, THE PHOTOGRAPHS*
New Coffee-Table Book Celebrates 50 Years of *Playboy* Photography**

SAN FRANCISCO (May XX, 2003): Just in time for the 50th anniversary celebration of *Playboy*, Hugh Hefner's groundbreaking magazine, Chronicle Books is proud to announce the release of *Playboy: 50 Years, The Photographs*, a full-color coffee-table book that showcases over 250 of the magazine's best photographic images taken over the magazine's past 50 years.

"We're seeing a resurgence of interest in the retro-chic appeal of Playboy products," says Christie Hefner, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Playboy Enterprises, Inc. "The combined power of the enduring Playboy brand and Chronicle's reputation for quality publishing promises a book that deserves mandatory placement on every bachelor's bookshelf."

Playboy: 50 Years, The Photographs features a book introduction and chapter text by longtime *Playboy* insider Jim Peterson, with photographs selected by Dana Arnette and Sarah Malarkey. In six chapters, *Playboy: 50 Years, The Photographs* shows how the magazine evolved and how styles and mores have changed throughout the past half century.

- **The Celebrities:** Begin with a bang with this collected depiction of the most ravishing beauties of the past five decades, from Marilyn Monroe to Cindy Crawford, Betty Page and Raquel Welch to Madonna.
- **The Personalities:** Revisit the diverse range of exotic personalities *Playboy* has interviewed since 1954 with the selected luminaries featured, including Sean Connery, Muhammad Ali, Miles Davis and Salvador Dali.
- **The Playmates:** The best of the Bunnies are collected in this chapter, devoted to fifty years of the pin-up dream girl, Misses January through December.
- **The Lifestyle:** Track the lifestyle of the stylish "*Playboy* man's" through fifty years of photographs: dining, drinking, dressing, driving, mixing martinis, and stepping out on the town in the latest fashions.
- **The Art of *Playboy*:** Celebrate fifty years of exquisite nude photography commissioned from top photographers Bruce Weber, Andy Warhol, Helmut Newton, and more.
- **The Covers:** From the coy covers of the early 60s to the racy covers of the 90s, this collection of photographs features the best *Playboy* Magazine covers.

The only *Playboy*-licensed publication this fall, *Playboy: 50 Years, The Photographs* will have full-page advertising in *Playboy*'s January 2004 anniversary issue. A national print media campaign will focus on popular culture, general interest, weekly, men's, entertainment & design

—MORE—

periodicals and newspapers. Other marketing initiatives include major web promotion on *Playboy* website for six months prior to publication, national radio contests, giveaways and major online features at *Playboy.com* and *chroniclebooks.com*.

"We're looking forward to featuring *Playboy: Fifty Years of Cartoons* in Chronicle's Spring 2004 catalog," says Jack Jensen, president of Chronicle Books. "The release of *Playboy: 50 Years, The Photographs* is an excellent prelude to that much-anticipated release. The combined value of the *Playboy* and Chronicle Books brands ensures consumers will embrace both titles."

With an elegant, art book presentation, this anniversary volume captures five decades of sex, art and American culture. Packaged handsomely with a gorgeous gift cover, *Playboy: 50 Years, The Photographs* the best nude photography from the past five decades of *Playboy*.

About *Playboy*

Playboy is the world's bestselling men's magazine. Almost 10 million American adults read *Playboy* every month, and the magazine's U.S. total paid circulation of 3.15 million is larger than that of *Esquire*, *GQ*, and *Rolling Stone* combined. Additionally, an estimated 5 million adults read the 19 international editions of the magazine, bringing *Playboy's* global readership to almost 15 million.

Title: *Playboy: 50 Years, The Photographs*

Author: Dana Arnette and Sarah Malarkey (photo editors), Jim Peterson (text)

Illustrations/Photos: 250 color photos

ISBN: 0-8118-3978-8

Publisher: Chronicle Books

Trim Size: 9 x 12 inches

Price: \$50.00

Print run: 30,000

Release Date: 9/26/03

Excerpt: Introduction

"Scientists at the Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard affiliate, said they wanted to see how the brain responded when heterosexual men were exposed to photographs of women of varying degrees of attractiveness.. The researcher found, among other things, that the part of the brain that responds to facial beauty is the same area that is activated by food, recreational drugs and money. " --*New York Times*, February 19, 2002

The experiment was simple. Men looked at and evaluated pictures of attractive women. Not surprisingly, they lingered over the beautiful. As they did, brain scans showed the "reward circuitry" of their brains lighting up like a pinball machine. It took scientists fifty years to figure out what Hugh Hefner knew from day one. Beauty is its own reward. It's in the hard wiring.

The publisher of *Playboy* grew up with two competing visions. Hollywood films of the thirties filled the young man's mind with opulent dreams, with visions of glamour and the good life. But it was the newsstand that gave him a tactile sense of the world. Hefner devoured *Life*, *Look*, *Esquire*, *True*, and *Park East*; he papered his bedroom with Petty girls and Vargas art. During WWII he kept a pinup in his footlocker. In those days pinups were "morale boosters" (which is another way of saying they ignited those reward circuits).

To understand the revolution represented by *Playboy*, one has to look at the newsstand of the fifties. There were the "sweaty armpit" men's magazines, full of grizzled rogues "thrashing through thorny thickets or splashing about in fast-flowing streams." Nudity was practically nonexistent; at best it was non-sensual, more likely to strike the funny bone than the reward circuits.

There were the coarse and grainy pictures in *Focus* and *Foto*, naughty picture stories with lots of cleavage in titles like *Titter* and *Whisper*, and plenty of native nudity in *National Geographic*. By the fifties, *Esquire* had abandoned testosterone, purging the Petty girls, the sexy cartoons, backing away from the glory days of the WWII pinups, to become an effete, tweedy, neutered publication.

Arnold Gingrich, the publisher, actually called for a New Puritanism. When that magazine moved to New York in 1953, Hefner, stayed in Chicago to work on his own magazine. He'd been in training for the moment all his life. Hefner's bold stroke: to publish nudes of Marilyn Monroe in full color on the best paper he could afford in the very first issue. And to never back down from that promise.

Playboy would be a visual feast. Hefner worked with illustration, cartoons and pictorials, pacing the magazine with the care of a film director. The early issues, put together with "scotch tape and paper clips," were a blueprint for all that followed. For the first issues Hefner made do with pick-up images, pictorial features of women bought from Graphic House, the same stock agency that supplied Art Photography with figure studies. But he had a vision of something much different.

He has explained the genesis of the Playmate this way: "Always guiding my instincts were my fond memories of the pinup art of my youth. Just as the pinups of the past have been referred to as American Good Girl, the Playmates have reflected my own romantic view of the opposite sex. From the very first, I was looking for the girl next door as part of a positive, life-affirming attitude toward human sexuality. In a real sense, the Playmate of the Month was as much a political statement as the *Playboy* Philosophy, and it had much more to do with female emancipation than exploitation, although I didn't think in those terms in the magazine's early days. I was simply trying to get across the message that good girls liked sex, too."

Hefner has always been the magazine's photo editor. Almost every article on his empire shows him at work, crouched over a light box looking at transparencies, color separations spread out on his round bed or across the floor of an office. The Schneider-Kreuznach lupe is almost as much a part of his anatomy as the pipe or a can of Coke.

At the height of the mythmaking, when Hefner was touted as America's most eligible bachelor, a man whose job brought him into contact with the world's most beautiful women, Hefner would tell a reporter as he labored over a pictorial, "Wouldn't the world be surprised if they knew this is what I did for a living."

Forty, sixty, eighty hours a week, for fifty years. Sure, the job was a great way to meet girls, but there's an anecdote, possibly apocryphal, about the priorities in the man's life. Hefner had made a date for an assignation with a ravishing young model (he planned to meet her at the Ambassador East), but he picked up the lupe and started looking at transparencies of her photo layout, lost track of time, and missed the date.

Hefner hired Vince Tajiri, a former editor of *Art Photography*, to help out with the fledgling magazine. Tajiri liked to joke that there wasn't enough work for a photography editor. This book shows how mistaken he was. As *Playboy* grew, it educated American tastes, inspired camera clubs, and sold more Nikons and Polaroids than Amazon.com has sold books.

It would not be overstatement to say that the magazine changed the way we look at women, and changed the way women look at themselves. The numbers give part of the picture: monthly circulation climbed from one million in 1960 to a high of seven million in 1972. At the height of the sexual revolution, one out of four college men purchased the magazine every month. And the premiere men's magazine endures-despite competition from videos, DVDs, the Internet, and cable-though the newsstand has lost a little of its hold on male curiosity. Nowadays, almost three million men have *Playboy* delivered to their door by the same U.S. Post Office that offered such resistance to Hefner's magazine in the fifties, when Uncle Sam delayed giving *Playboy* second-class mailing privileges.

At the time, Hefner was defiant. "I planned on publishing a sophisticated men's magazine, and I didn't think the post office had the right to stop me. This was the revolutionary thought on which *Playboy* was based, because no other magazine containing nudity was being sent through the mail at the time."

Hefner's gift, or obsession, is quality control. He invited the world to share in his dreams, and he has protected that vision relentlessly. In fifty years there have been just three photo editors, two art directors, and two editorial directors. All speak of the laser eye, Hefner's obsession with detail, and of having to learn to work at a higher level.

Vince Tajiri said that, from the start, perfection was measured in millimeters. Hefner could tell if a model's left breast was larger than her right. "Hef had a very discerning eye, very acute. One time I was sitting out in my backyard enjoying a nice afternoon and looking at a tree, seeing the tree in its totality against a blue sky. I thought, if Hef was looking at that tree, he'd study every leaf and find a few he thought were out of place. That's the way he would look at pictures, with a magnifying glass."

Arthur Kretchmer, the magazine's current editorial director, tells how Hefner would come into a meeting and toss ten seemingly identical photos on the table. As a test for his editors, he would ask them which one was best. "Invariably," says Kretchmer, "it would be the one containing the most information."

Tom Staebler, executive art director, says, "Hefner never believed *Playboy* was an art magazine. It had to make sense, to communicate. He can look at a picture and articulate what is missing, an expression that should be there, a mood that should be present, or he can tell you what doesn't belong, a gesture that is inappropriate. He can see a color that shouldn't be there."

Despite Hef's obsession with detail, he managed to foster an environment on the new magazine that was also very permissive. Unhindered by propriety, photographers got to explore, to work without limits or the censor's fig leaf. Hefner's willingness to publish quality work that was sexual inspired such artists as Salvador Dali, Federico Fellini, Helmut Newton, and Andy Warhol. Works that might have existed in private collections or portfolios for an audience of one instead reached millions.

Despite Hefner's initial worries about being an art magazine, the images rose to the level of fine art. The startling nature of the photography left America speechless. A generation of males

would explain that they read *Playboy* for the articles. Now it can be said that they read the magazine for the photographs, and what they read when they saw these images was the American dream made real.

What you hold in your hand is a unique retrospective. *Playboy* has published collections before—of Playmates, of lingerie models, of redheads, of wet-and-wild women, of fantasies. Anniversary books have charted the progress of the magazine, decade by decade. This time, outsiders Dana Arnette and Sarah Malarkey got to play in the magazine's archives, reviewing photographs without knowing the editorial context for the shots. Instead, they evaluated six million images on their visual merit alone. Some of them are provocative, some of them are wonderfully period, some are even touching.

The volume that Arnette and Malarkey have created includes the obvious (celebrity pictorials and girl features) and the overlooked (the fine art of the personality photo); it samples the stylish (the gear and good-living pictorials) and the fantastic (experiments in erotic photography). Gathered together, these photographs are a testament to fifty years of Hef's unerring eye for detail and the unerring ability of his staff to bring that vision to the printed page.

Jeff Cohen, publisher of *Playboy's* Special Editions, still marvels at the power of the magazine. "Whether it's the texture of the paper, the glossiness, the tactile quality of the page, a photo in the magazine has an impact that will never be matched by the Internet. There's something about holding an image in your hand. You can study it, return to it."

We hope that these printed pages will demonstrate *Playboy's* lasting contribution to the art of photography.