

Books for December 2011

Who can resist a list? Gay Porn times columnist JD Adams beguiles us with his top 100 porn stars. There's also a whodunit this month.

Hot ... Off the Press: Erotica in Print
by marq

Gay Porn Heroes: 100 Most Famous Porn Stars
By J.C. Adams
Bruno Gmünder, \$69.99, hard cover with dust jacket
(save \$10 by using the link below)

An enthusiastically recommended new release from the esteemed publisher Bruno Gmünder is Gay Porn Heroes: 100 Most Famous Porn Stars, by porn columnist (gayporntimes.com) and former GayVN editor J.C. Adams. Only a handful of gayporn journalists have the street cred to pull off an undertaking like this one, but Adams puts his cojones on the line and comes up with a memorable collection that will have you flipping pages back and forth and back again. Wait. Stick a Post-it on page 25, where all 100 names are listed in alphabetic order. (By first name — what's with that?)

Adams chose a "divide and conquer" approach by creating ten categories into which to slot ten models each: The Blonds, The Bodybuilders, The Boy Next Door, The Dreamboats, The European Fantasy, The Hairy Men, Them Macho Men, The Specialists, The Superhung and The Top 10 Icons. Some of the categories are no-brainers (The Superhung) but others invite furrowed brows and make one wonder where they came from. I still don't understand "The Specialists," even after reading the explanation three times.

Apart from that, I'm not going to cavil about what categories should have been created or omitted or, more importantly, what stars should have been included or omitted. This is Adams's list. For each person on it, he's written 150 words or so in praise of that guy's work, including bits of personal or biographical information to make it more accessible. There's at least one photo of every hero on the list, as well as a representative box cover or magazine cover.

Adams says in an interview for the Falcon blog that his choices were somewhat circumscribed by the refusal of a couple of studios to cooperate and the lack of availability of high quality images from porn's primordial soup era. One wonders how the list would be different if those obstacles were removed.

Given for how long I've been watching and writing about porn, this was a grand trip down memory lane. But don't be in a hurry to bemoan that "they don't make 'em like that any more," because Adams clearly shows that the present is perfectly capable of producing stars who can compete with the best.

At the end of his introduction, Adams tells his readers, "Viel Spaß" (have fun) and the fun is magnified by ogling all these gorgeous guys and remembering the untold hours of entertainment they brought to the past few decades. For younger readers, the reaction may be less "I remember him" and more "I want to see more of him."

Which brings up another topic Adams pays serious attention to: the shift over the years in the way people view their porn. Almost all the men in Adams's 100 can be seen on VHS tapes or DVDs, but there are a few whose exposure has been chiefly on the Internet. Hard media, like DVDs, are giving way to virtual media. Porn collections of the future may no longer be actual shelves of tapes and discs and … gasp … magazines or 8mm filmstrips. So this nod to the past also acknowledges the future.

In any case, these are the faces that — every one of them — have launched 1,000 cumshots and will continue to do so over the years.

Details: The book has 256 full color pages. Overall dimensions are about 8.5 by 11 inches. It is a hardcover volume with a dust jacket and the text is printed in English and German.

The MacGuffin
By Michael Craft
Questover Press, \$16.95, trade pap.

Alfred Hitchcock popularized the concept of the MacGuffin, a device used to drive the plot of a story but which serves no other purpose, other than perhaps to distract the reader or viewer. In his first novel in six years, master plotter Michael Craft has produced *The MacGuffin*, a taut mystery involving two murders that take place fifteen years apart.

Readers of this publication may best remember Craft as the author of the Mark Manning series of mysteries, in which newspaper editor Manning and his lawyer lover Neil Waite pitted their wits against various nefarious evildoers. In all, they solved seven whodunits characterized by deft plotting and erotic dreams.

The MacGuffin takes place in and around Palm Springs, where octogenarian oil magnate Bix Emery has decided that it's time for his company to go green. What he's really hoping is that his son-in-law, Cooper "Coop" Brant, can help him find something called the "water engine." Brant's father, 1950s TV cowboy idol Ferris Oxhide, later turned to science and won a Nobel prize for his work in thermodynamics. The hallmark of his research was an engine that could run on water. But Dr. Brant was murdered 15 years ago and the engine he allegedly developed disappeared. Over time, it has become a holy grail for the new millennium.

Coop discovered his father's body and was the chief suspect, but the case was never solved. The principal detective on the case, however, like Inspector Javert of *Les Misérables*, refuses to let go. She is about to retire and wants to expunge this one blemish on her record. So like a bad penny, she turns up one more time — and her reappearance triggers another murder.

Craft uses local color to robust advantage, from the ubiquitous golf courses of Palm Springs to Frank Sinatra's grave to the mountains that offer respite from the summer heat (not to mention Bix's getaway, Questover, which shares its name with the book's publisher). There's humor too, much of which comes by way of the antics of Bix's inseparable (insufferable?) Yorkie, Pyrite, and not the least of which is the name Ferris Oxhide. As a guy whose first degree was a B.S. in Chemistry, I thought this riff on Ferrous Oxide was hilarious.

The cast of characters is small enough that the reader has a fair chance of divining the culprit, and Craft does not throw as many red herrings in the reader's way as he did in the Mark Manning books. But while you're preoccupied with the idea of the MacGuffin, prepare for the rug to be pulled out from under you at the end. There are two MacGuffins — and that's not a spoiler.

The MacGuffin can be ordered at Amazon.com and there's a Kindle version available, too.

December 2011