National College of Art and Design
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The Consumption of Masculinity in the Late 20th Century Through Images in Men's Magazines

by

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INTRODUCTION

In the last 14 years there has been a massive upsurge in portrayals of men in advertising. Men have been exposed to the critical eye of society both physically and emotionally. Today there is a range of magazines designed specifically for men, in which there are dozens of images that represent them and their masculinity. The male body is being used by marketeers to sell products to men.

What I intend to achieve in this essay is to assess magazine images of men and the clever messages they portray. By de-coding the imagery I will discuss concepts and constructed masculine identities within the images; such as the "new man", the "new waif", the "new lad" and the "soft lad". I will investigate how the images successfully promote men's products, also examining the magazine images in relation to perceptions of masculinity in modern culture.

The primary source has mostly been taken from current magazines. These include Attitude, Men's Health, Arena and Loaded, which represent trends taking place in the present day. This allows us to see how the marketeers have used lifestyle advertising, to aim different masculinities at different types of men. The images have been carefully selected, some showing how subtle messages can be and others how blatant messages can be.

Masculinity has become widely discussed in literature in the 1990s, however it is only recently that writers have begun to investigate changes in visual representations, of men and masculinity. Having said this some articles had begun to challenge images of men such as Frank Mort's 1988 discussion, "Boys Own?". In recent times literature on the subject has become much broader for example Tim Edward's book Men in the Mirror. In addition I had to look at feminist theory, advertising theory and fashion ideology relevant to masculinity.

Historically the subject of masculinity is exceptionally broad, so arguments will primarily deal with current and recent perceptions of masculinity.

Chapter 1 THE NEW MAN

The "new man" is a term describing commercial representations of men and commercial representations of men that altered significantly during the 1980s. Many images began to portray the male body in relation to both existing perceptions of masculinity and changes in men's lifestyles. Social, political and economic developments all contributed to the introduction of the "new man" persona. Marketing teams had begun to re-evaluate methods of advertising to men, and the environment existed in which these new methods could thrive. The result is that we now have a wide variety of masculine images in modern culture.

This chapter will begin by investigating the historical background that has influenced new images of men, including societal developments and marketing strategies. It will then acknowledge the methodology used to market at men and describe the new man in his various incarnations.

Historical Change

The historical evidence concerning the development of the New Man persona has been investigated widely by Tim Edwards in his book Men in the Mirror (Edwards, 1997). He says of the New Man;

> "I wish to propose that the New Man was not simply the product of the media, or even of responses to second wave feminism; he was rather the crystallisation of consequences in economics, marketing, political ideology, demography and most widely, consumer society in the 1980s".
> (Edwards, 1997, p39)

For the purposes of this essay, where images of masculinity are being discussed, Edwards historical account is highly relevant. However, I feel it is not necessary to fully re-count the broad influences described by Edwards above. Here I propose to briefly describe the relevant factors to relate societal changes to images of men from the 1980s onwards.

Though all of the factors in the above quote are relevant to the changes in image making, I will begin by briefly describing political changes that have effected men's lifestyles, continuing to discuss social issues and, finally, looking at the man's economic situation during the 1980s.

The feminist and gay rights movements both became active in the 1960s, however, their influence really began to change society in the 1970s. These bodies set out to alter opinions and to create equality for women and gay men. As femininity and homosexuality were being evaluated through much discussion in the 1970s, masculinity and heterosexuality were also subject to investigation.

Women's lives began to alter dramatically, many women became more educated and had the same or similar circumstances to their male counterparts. Men, therefore, were more likely to be single as the average age of marriage rose, and men lived alone often into their thirties. As femininity and women's lives had changed, men's lives also had to change to survive in a growing egalitarian world. men had to look after themselves; they had to wash clothes, clean, cook and, most importantly, consume. In this way elements of masculinity were forced into reassessment and had to re-construct. The outcome of this will be discussed in further assessment of the New Man persona in the 1980s.

Images of men in the 1950s were often family based where male models in advertising reflected attitudes to men's family values. Men were often in advertisements within domestic situations with wives and children present. Socially however, masculinity and men in the youth culture of the 1950s had begun to rebel against these values. Young men at the time started to play with image, and male youth culture became physically self aware. This continued into the 1960s social revolution when young men related to "Mods", "Rockers" and the Hippie Movement. During the 1960s clothing, music, art, politics and social values all changed radically. Most of these changes were consolidated during the 1970s.

Edwards asserted that the 1970s was a period of spiritualism inspired by the Hippie Movement. He says that the 1980s, although influenced by Reganite and Conservative governments, was very much reactionary compared with the 1970s. People became self aware and selfish. In the '80s people were interested in themselves far more than in the political concerns of the time. (Edwards, 1997, p.p. 56-71)

This brings us to the mid-1980s where we can assume that in general young men had less financial responsibility to families, that they saw themselves as visually capable of sexuality and that more often than not they were independent. Men had more money; they wanted to indulge themselves and they had to consume for themselves.

Marketing New Man

Marketing people in the 1980s recognised that there was a need to address men through advertising in a much more effective manner. They began to develop strategies based on the potential of men as consumers. Research at this time suggested they should advertise through specific lifestyles; this is how the New Man in his various forms was born. The advertisements were directed at young men with disposable incomes. Essentially making consumption an element of masculinity was the main agenda of new marketing strategies.

The images themselves were developed very quickly during the 1980s. The success of Levi's 1986 advertising campaign proved that new portrayals of masculinity would be successful; the rest of the industry speedily followed[1]. For the first time in modern history men were very important to consumption of clothing and beauty products. Marketeers were going to capitalise.

The fundamental methods of doing this were to sexualise the male body, create various masculine types and introduce style into every area of men's lives. Women had already been confronted with images of themselves in these ways for most of the twentieth century. What was radical in the mid-'80s is that the marketeers recognised that men had begun to have high consuming potential and managed within a couple of years to associate style and the sexualisation of the male body to masculinity. They made consumption and physical self awareness acceptable to one's masculinity.

New Man's Purpose

New Man as a term is used to collectively describe a variety of images that can differ extensively. There is no unique picture of him, however, there are general perceptions. We know him as caring, as nurturing, as emotional, as sexual, and passive. However, he can also be masculine, serious, professional, muscular and active, not to mention vain and aware of his sexual attractiveness. I will de-construct him into three categories to explain how he was adapted to market products for men of different lifestyles. Firstly, as "the professional" he was marketed at the yuppies for the 1980s, where the new man influenced men's fashion in the office. Secondly, as "the sexually aware man" he was designed to relate casual clothing to sexuality for the mass market. Finally, as "the sensitive man", he acknowledged the nurturing and caring potential of men.

Professional Man

The image of men in office environments was marketed toward the yuppie establishment in the mid to late 1980s. They had an interest in culture through their education and they had disposable incomes, ready to be spent. Image and consumption became elements of the working uniform in the 1980s. The industry developed a large and varied range of fashionable formal work wear. The purpose of the advertising campaigns at the time was to associate one's outfit with how professional one was. In Plate 1 two models are present: both are dressed in suits and look serious, confident and professional. Both men are aware that they are being looked at, and their poses indicate that they are comfortable. The model on the right has a stern expression on his face and his hands are placed in his pockets in a casual manner. He is confident and aware of his physicality and he isn't intimidated by the look of the viewer. The viewer is encouraged to associate style and confidence together. Edwards states;

> "The question then of the extent to which appearances do play a part in success is in a sense, irrelevant to the growing feeling that they might".
> (Edwards, 1997, p49)

He recognises that the importance placed on appearance and "image" in the workplace have become a sign of probable success.

In the '80s suits became more than just workwear, they became a fashion statement where people's positions could be determined by the cut of their suits. The marketeers had succeeded in bringing image and lifestyle into offices.

Sexually Conscious Man

This incarnation of the New Man was the most influential, and was widely used by the marketeers to sell everything from drinks to men's adornment products. It was here that they were able to cross market segments and to advertise generally. They used man's sexuality and physical portrayals of semi-nudity to advertise. Plate 2 is an excellent example of this. The young man sitting on the motorbike, embodies a physical beauty and sexuality. He is simultaneously both passive and active. Sitting on the motorbike, his feet are up and he is relaxed. He is non-confrontational, however, the motorbike itself and the physicality of his body portray activity. Although there are

similarities between images of men in the 1980s and images of women throughout the twentieth century, the sexual portrayal of men in the 80s took place within certain confinements. As Suzanne Moore states;

"it now seems possible to represent the male body as a pleasurable object on condition that this pleasure can be contained within a narcissistic / auto-erotic discourse."

(Moore, 1988, p55)

By this she means that image must be translated as only an image and the man present is sexual only to himself and to that image. In this way only the image as opposed to the model can become the object of sexual desire. The important thing to note here is that any sexual scrutiny of men is encouraged not to take place, the images intentionally never portrayed man as being vulnerable.

Sensitive Man

The Sensitive Man is caring, understanding, sensual and responsible. His reason for existing in marketing terms was that he attracted the illusive New Man in society, re-defining men as capable of feminine qualities. He was often portrayed with children, showing the viewer how sensitive and gentle he could be. In Plate 3 we see him as a father, protecting his child and giving him affection. This image is relative at the very least to changing perceptions of fatherhood and masculinity. However the very existence of this image suggests that fatherhood has altered. Rowena Chapman in her article "The Great Pretender" (Chapman, 1988, p. 225-248) discusses her view that sensitive New Men were present in advertising as a counter-reaction to a hard-line feminist view blaming men for,

"everything from nuclear war and pollution, to rape, incest and high heels."

(Chapman, 1988, p. 226)

She also claimed that as men had most of the power in society, they also had the necessity to further themselves from that which was considered bad. She believed in presenting themselves as sensitive and emotional they distanced masculinity from women that had become increasingly masculine in a world where masculine qualities were considered negative. Although there is obviously much substance to Chapman's claims, one must also see sensitive man as a response to feminism and the gender changes that had occurred in men's and women's lives.

New Man in the 1990s

The New Man in the 1990s has mutated into different forms. The marketeers reassessed his values and images and came up with new masculine prototypes i.e. New Lad and New Waif. These conceptual men are perhaps due to the ever expanding importance of lifestyle marketing. These new masculine forms advertise to specific markets more exclusively. However the New Man in his own right hasn't disappeared; we still see him regularly in advertising though often advertisements have merged some of his many values with a new masculine persona.

Chapters 2 and 3 go much further to examine the methods and meanings behind the visual images of the '90s. However, it is important to recognise that the purpose of Chapter 1 was to evaluate why and how the marketeers achieved their aims; of establishing a masculine language in the '80s where consumption and fashion would be acceptable to men, essentially to irradicate the idea that man's physical self awareness was feminine. The New Man concept was designed as the vehicle for marketeers to bring images of men into advertising in the 1980s. The marketeers responded to societal changes and the subsequent potential creation of new markets for male consumption.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 1

1. The Levi's advertisement was the first to expose the male body in a manner that encouraged sexualisation. The model's clothing was objectified through his body. This advertisement entered mass culture in 1986 and was hugely successful, because of it's style and fresh portrayal of masculinity. For further reading see Frank Mort, "Boys Own?", Male Order, 1988.

PLATE 1 **"Estate 90", L'Uomo Vogue, Vol. 198, July/August, 1989**

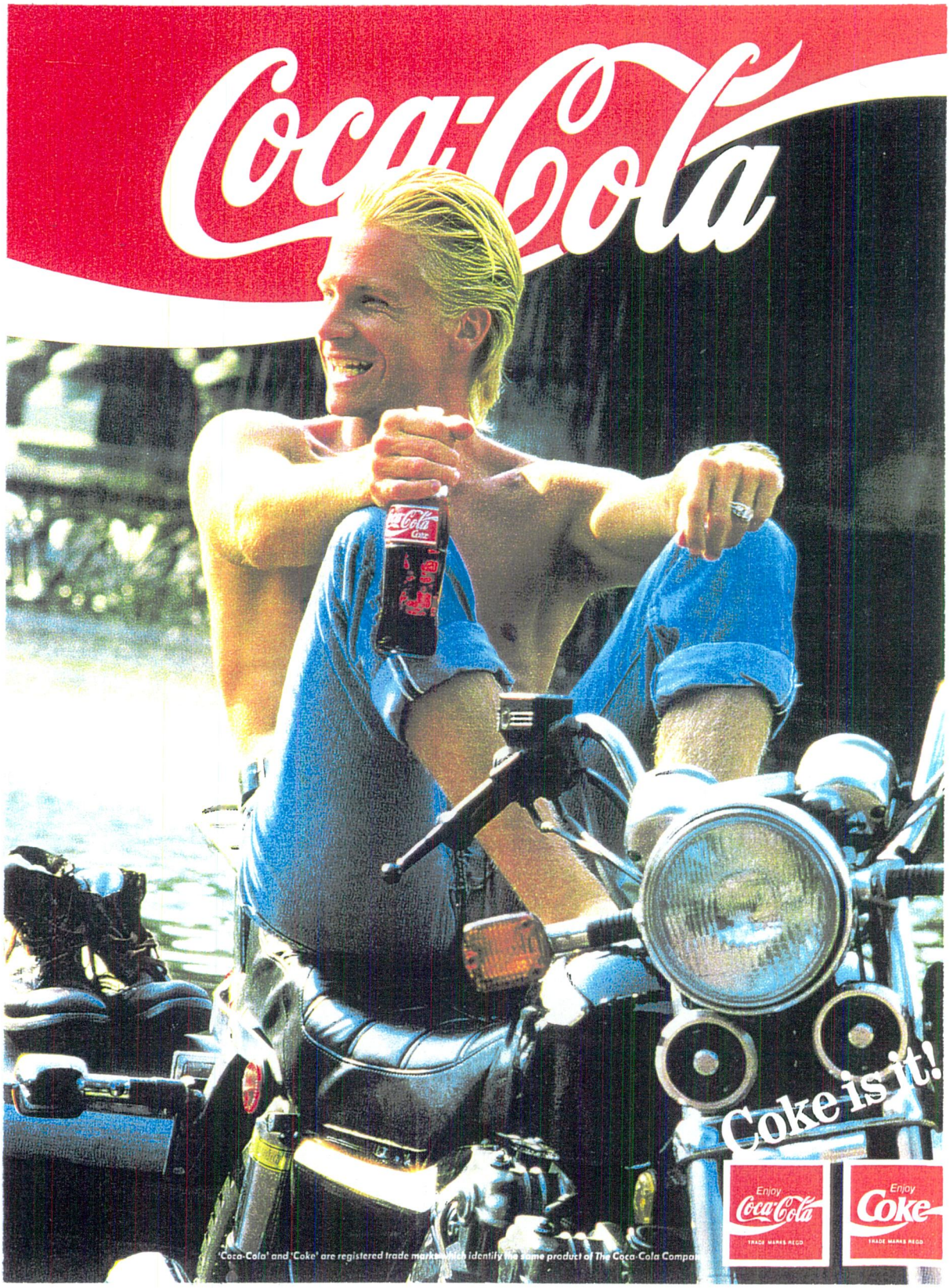


PLATE 2 **"Coca-Cola", <u>The Face</u>, Vol. 99, July/August, 1988**

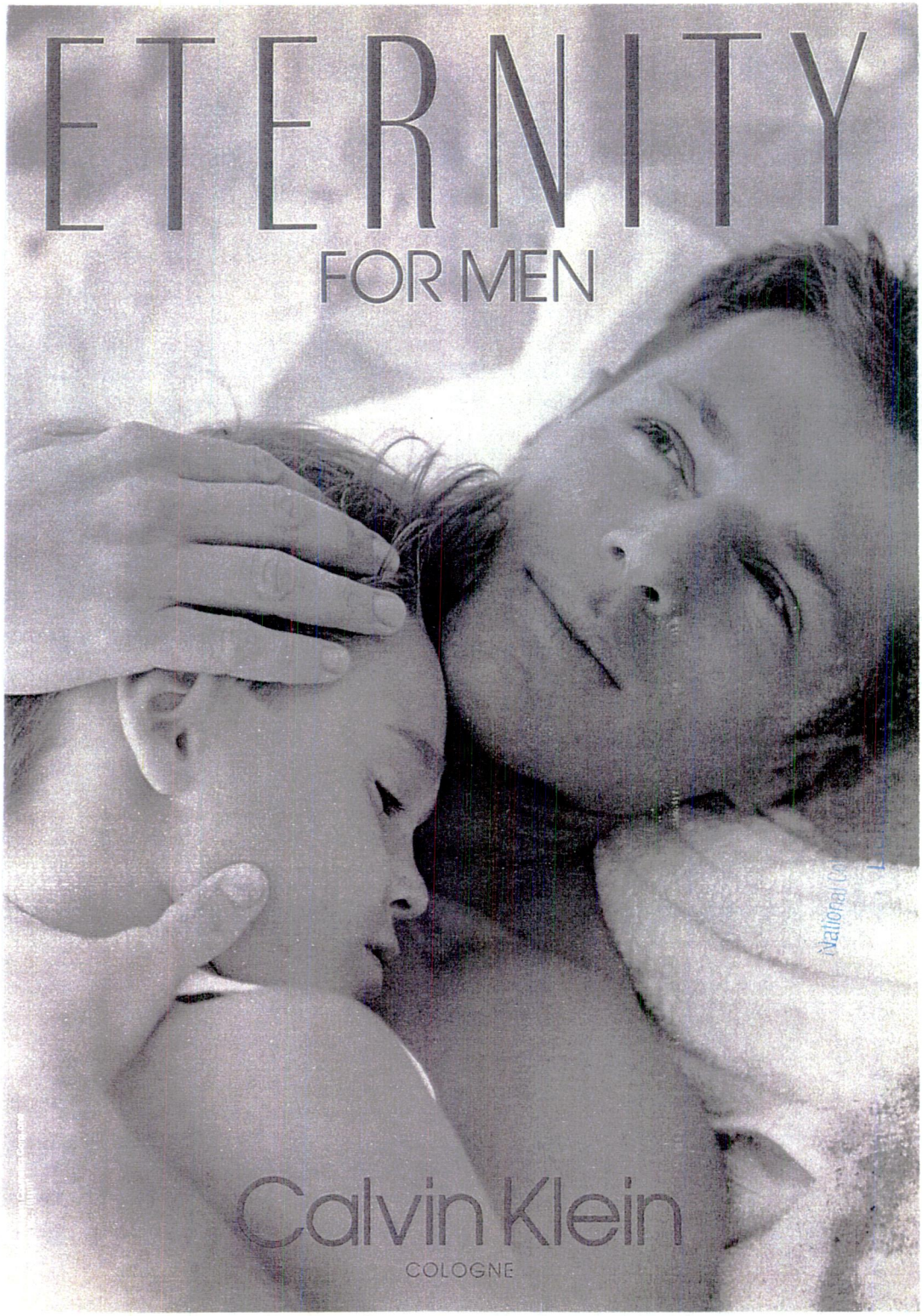


PLATE 3 **"Eternity, by Calvin Klein", Gentlemen's Quarterly (American version), Vol. 61, No. 2, February, 1991**

Chapter 2 NARCISSISM AND HOMO-EROTICISM

Narcissism and homo-eroticism have been important elements in the development of the imagery over the last decade and a half.[1] The concept of narcissism is based in Greek mythology, where Narcissus, a Greek youth, fell in love with his own self image. Pictures of men in narcissistic poses have been continually used to encourage men to have greater self-awareness of their bodies. The public have acknowledged physical self-consciousness amongst men so today there is social importance attached to man's appearance. Homo-eroticism has also been used frequently to depict the male body. Initially when marketeers and photographers began to change the marketing of men's products, they looked to homo-erotic images of men. Developing these images they re-coded them with the intent to attract primarily heterosexual consumers. Narcissism and homo-eroticism contributed to the creation of "The New Man", allowing the marketeers to portray the male body as sexually desirable and self-conscious.

This chapter will begin by investigating the economic benefits of male image awareness, continuing by deconstructing magazine images involving homo-erotica. Men's physical self-awareness and the implications of narcissistic images will then be examined. The chapter will culminate with an assessment of current visual trends through recent narcissistic and homo-erotic images.

Manipulating Homo-Erotica

Developments in marketing in the 1980s and economic and social changes provided an environment where radical changes in commercial images of men could take place. For most of the twentieth century women were the main consuming group in society and therefore marketing was mostly directed toward females. Women were targeted in a manner that reflected society, they were encouraged to look good for themselves and for the benefit of other people. Until the 1980s men were not encouraged to be physically self-aware; they were usually present in advertising to look at women. Practicality was sold to men through advertising. (Werwick, 1991, p49)[2]. Social changes caused by the women's movement, gay liberation and the '60s youth movement are most relevant to the shift in use of narcissistic images in men's marketing. The social construct of masculinity had changed exposing it to different interpretations. Men were beginning to care what they looked like and the clever use of narcissism in "the new man" capitalised on man's self-image. The success of Levi's advertising campaign in 1985 gave

the industry confidence with the use of the semi-nude male image which has been continually used since, (Mort, 1988, p.p. 193-224).

The advertisers wanted to give men something to which they could aspire and relate. They didn't want to upset heterosexual fear of homosexuality. Clever visual codes are present in the imagery to both attract the viewer and to suggest heterosexuality. However, as discussed further in this chapter, some images have precariously ventured toward homosexual meaning. It is important to note that the marketers avoided alienating the homosexual market segment.

By the mid-1980s gay men had become a recognised minority in society and their presumed financially comfortable lifestyles came to the attention of the marketers. Traditionally they had less social taboos than their heterosexual counterparts and were considered to be more physically self-aware. This allowed marketing people to use suggestive imagery of narcissistic young male bodies. Tim Edwards confirms that gay men were an unacknowledged factor in the development of men's marketing. Due to social changes in masculinity and men's lifestyles, and a growing recognition of male beauty the advertisers were able to market heterosexual men in a similar manner to homosexual men. [3] The advertisers adapted imagery to become hetero-friendly, quickly cashing in on men's public acceptance of their self-images.

To capitalise on physical self-awareness in men through advertising, the marketers had to use visual images of the male body. It was necessary for men to perceive masculinity as something visually related to sexuality and capable of sensual qualities. Most existing images of men portraying these qualities were for the sexual benefit of gay men. The advertisers took homo-erotica and altered it to appeal to heterosexual men. Conveniently these new images of men, due to the revealing nature of the male body, were still attractive to homosexual men. Upon investigating photographers such as Robert Maplethorpe and George Platt Lynes, one can see similarities in the representation of the male body between art photography and commercial photography. Comparing Plate 4 and Plate 5 these similarities become obvious. Plate 4 is an art photograph by George Platt Lynes which is intentionally homo-erotic. Plate 5 shows the sexualised image of a male torso and head; the model's sexuality is emphasised by the positioning of light on areas of skin. Although we don't see below his waist, our eye is drawn in that direction and in this way the image becomes sexualised. His neck is also visible increasing his vulnerability. Plate 5, although highly sexualised, contrasts by the illumination of different body parts. The arms and legs of the model are emphasised so as the viewer notices the strength of the model. By clever use of mood lighting the images, both black and white and of male torsos, attract different ways of looking. Plate 4 allows the viewer to sexualise the model through the vulnerability of his neck and the absence of eye contact. Plate 5, although open to some level of

sexualisation, confronts this. The model intimidates the viewer with direct eye contact (the whites of his eyes are intentionally clear) and darkness over most of his body decreases his vulnerability. These images show two men in nearly identical poses, however due to clever manipulation of lighting and subtleties within the pose, the mainstream image (Plate 5) derived from images similar to Plate 4 encourages viewing the male body in a non-sexual manner.

Comforting Heterosexual Fear

Historically in advertising men have not been the object of physical desire, nor have their bodies been exposed to the camera. Women in comparison have been constantly exposed to sexual images of themselves in advertising this century. Beginning to expose men's bodies was a radical step for the marketeers to take and in doing so they didn't want to intimidate men. For this reason they employed many references to traditional masculinity to reaffirm man's place in society. However as masculinity had changed dramatically in the 60s and 70s the marketeers were able to be selective with what elements of maleness they used. For this reason many of the images vary widely but most of them will in some way respond to stereotypical masculinity.

There are many subtle methods used to confirm heterosexuality and at the same time appeal to men's perceptions of themselves and other men. As narcissism had been associated with homosexual men the concept of men being semi-nude in advertising and taking an interest in their appearance threatened many men. As Andrew Wernick put it:

> "The very act of enticing men into shops can raise emasculating fears".
> (Wernick, 1991, p49)

Examining the visual evidence, the methods used become obvious. This section will investigate further how the marketeers maintained heterosexual identification through images of the male body as an object.

Eye contact (or lack of eye contact) is the most blatant way the marketeers control how the model is viewed. A model's face or facial expression can suggest many messages. The model in Plate 6, for example, looks slightly sideways at the viewer, although he is looking, he is non-confrontational and open for consumption. In comparison, Plate 5 shows the model in direct confrontation with the viewer, his eye contact is designed to deter sexual interest in his body. Plate 6 ambiguously suggests that any sexual interest in his body is optional. Plate 5 assumes that any male viewing this image won't

perception that masculinity can allow traditional male values and narcissism to co-exist. [4]

Suzanne Moore discusses the existence of passivity in her essay "Here's Looking at You Kid" and explains another way of dispelling the male model as an object of desire. She writes:

"The striking thing about contemporary images of men is that at least some of them seem to acknowledge and even embrace a passivity that was once symbolically outlawed".

(Moore, 1988, p54)

By this she suggests that the images of men that one is able to objectify would have been unacceptable a decade previous. How has such a dramatic change taken place? Moore's explanation is that a subtle use of lighting and the widely used black and white photograph allow the model to be viewed as only an image as opposed to a person. This is evident in Plate 6 where the young man is open to sexualisation. However the image is black and white, which persuades the viewer that any sexual reading is referential to only the image and not to the model himself.

Colour and clarity are also relevant in either rejecting or encouraging a sexual viewpoint towards an image. Colder colours, such as blues, greys and greens make images appear more serious and less sexual. Clarity can be manipulated to limit or extend the amount of visual information given to the viewer. For example in Plate 7 the skin tones of the model evoke a solemn atmosphere and the photograph lacks definition. The viewer can not react sexually, thus the image is only of value in an aesthetic manner. In contrast Plate 8 clearly encourages sexual interest in the image. This photograph is taken from a fashion shoot for Attitude magazine, so it is intended to be sexually attractive to gay men. The model's body is graphically described and his chest is realistically portrayed. The colours of skin tones are warm and intentionally sexually inviting, thus this image openly invites objectification. These examples highlight once again how the marketeers can manipulate visual codes so as to control how the viewer perceives an image.

The primary purpose of these intelligent codes, is to de-homsexualise the image of man as an object, yet to allow images to evoke a narcissistic position for the viewer to relate to. This is true of most images, however, these codes also allow the advertisers to relate to masculine sensitivity. If a man sees the male body as only an image he can be sold any product. For example Plate 6 advertises underwear. The viewer translates the model into an image and relates to the model's sexual presence; the underwear can make our male viewer sensual too.

Masculine Narcissism

Some men have welcomed narcissistic values and some have not, but nearly everyone is involved in practising it. Most will wear aftershave or eau-de-toilette and at least comply with public opinion that everyone should look their best and material objects can make men look better. Fashion awareness has infiltrated nearly every corner of the men's clothing and toiletries markets. Have social changes in gender roles and masculinity caused this to occur or is it due to the existence of new marketing strategies involving narcissism?

As we have already ascertained, there have been changes in masculinity or at least men's attitudes to gender issues in society. Alterations in men's lifestyles such as independence from the family role of parent and social acceptance of infidelity have at the very least inspired the marketeers. From evidence of a time before lifestyle advertising (male self-image in pre-1980s youth cultures) it is true to say that male narcissism existed already.[5] The marketing people didn't invent men's physical self awareness, however they appealed to men's vanity and attempted to make this publicly acceptable. Their success is evident in the streets of modern society and saturates the male lifestyle magazines.

The marketing men wanted to alter masculinity so that man's physical self awareness or narcissism became an unquestioned element of masculinity. Tim Edwards cynically presents this point of view;

" you are the man you are due to the cut of your suit, the cost of your hi-fi or the car you own."

(Edwards, 1997, p. 76)

This statement proclaims that the advertisers endeavoured to change perceptions of masculinity so that materialism and self-image become a measure of masculinity. These perceptions mirror values of femininity that had been developed through marketing this century. The marketeers had simply turned their narcissistic strategies from women to men.

What we can assume is that men now find it socially acceptable to look at themselves and to have an interest in their appearance. They now aspire to or ridicule how other men look, as they would have with other elements of people's lives in the past, such as financial situations or material objects. Today it is acceptable and even normal to express an opinion on the male body and representations of men.

Beautiful Man

Marketing representations of men have not remained static since the radical changes of the mid 1980s. The 1990s have seen the New Man fragment so we now have two masculine extremes. Here we are concerned with a selection of advertising images that came close to rejecting traditional masculine values; however, in Chapter 3 the other masculine extreme will be discussed, whereby stereotypical male qualities are embraced.

Homo-eroticism and narcissism are now employed to flirt with our perceptions. Although this is not a recent development, it has only occurred in mainstream advertising in recent years. Frank Mort discusses this point in relation to Ray Petri (the stylist for The Face magazine in the 1980s) in his essay "A Homosocial Gaze" (Plate 9). He writes that Petri uses "a visual narrative which moved from initial deflection and evasion of reader contact to its full consumption", (Mort, 1996, p. 59), in his fashion shoots for The Face. By this he means that Petri manipulated the images to either reject objectification or to welcome sexualisation of the model's body, or for both to occur simultaneously. In this way Petri challenged the perceptions of the viewer. Designers such as Gianni Versace and Jean Paul Gaultier have also challenged perceptions of masculinity using narcissism and homo-eroticism. Plate 10, a Versace advertisement is conventional at first but under investigation becomes less typical. One's eye is directed toward the gaze of the model; his stare is flirtatious and objectifies the viewer. In this way the model alters the gaze. Although one looks back at him, he presents himself as more than an object by involving the viewer. The photographer has achieved this by the model's sideward stare and his forefingers joined pointed up to his eyes.

The image makers have also begun to use androgyny, both in the appearance and dress of the models and in poses that suggest passivity. Plates 11 and 12 highlight androgyny and passivity. Both models are kneeling, thus potential activity is restricted rendering them vulnerable. Both also have their chests part-exposed, fetishing their upper bodies. However despite these similarities in pose, the images do convey different messages. Plate 12 is masochistic, as the model here doesn't kneel on sand; he kneels on an elevator floor. His shiny black clothing, his tight trousers and the glimpse at his stomach eroticises his groin. He is exceptionally self conscious and his relationship with the viewer suggests he is intimidated by sexualisation, though he allows it to take place. Plate 11 has a subtle colour scheme which clashes with the warm, sexually suggestive skin tones of the model. The image is relaxed and comfortable and the model intentionally

appears casual yet highly sexual. Importantly Plate 12 is taken from a fashion shoot in Attitude magazine, so it is very intentionally sexual, in contrast Plate 11 is present to advertise Christian Dior's "Dune" eau de toilette in Men's Health magazine. This image though less suggestive than Plate 12 is for a mainly heterosexual market, the marketeers are challenging the viewer. This image is intended for men who care greatly about their physical appearance, and are not threatened by objectification of their bodies; perhaps they even encourage it.

Masculinity has started to reflect changes in femininity, men have followed women's androgyny to create their own version of gender-bending deliberately evoking sensitivity. The term given to these developments "the new waif" is too specific though, as the images reflect many elements through different masculine persona's. Elizabeth Badinter explains the potential of androgyny:

> " males and females become fully human only in androgyny".
> (Badinter, 1995, p.162)

By this she means masculine and feminine elements exist in everyone. Although men and women are still exceptionally different socially and mentally our representations and physical appearances are slowly entering androgyny. These images reflect this however they still adhere to masculine ideals.

The marketeers developed male self-awareness in the mid-1980s, by introducing images of men intended for male consumption. Using altered homo-erotic images with highly suggestive codes, they developed a way of advertising to men which allowed them to influence men's lifestyles, and encourage narcissism for commercial gain. They appealed to the importance of physical beauty in society, making men's body image and men's clothing, part of masculinity. The boundaries of physical portrayals of masculinity and men have continually been pushed outwards. Public acknowledgement of male beauty and body perfection has allowed men to sometimes become objects of desire.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 2

1. See Chapter 1, "Historical Background" for a description of economic and social changes.

2. Andrew Wernick discussed in full how men had been marketed at in the 1950s. He said they were usually present to reflect the masculine values at that time, showing family, business, military and science images, where man was portrayed as the ruler and power on earth and in society. See "(Re-) Imaging Gender: The Case of Men", (Wernick, 1991, p.p. 48-56)

3. (Edwards, 1997, p.p. 73-74) Edwards relates the importance of gay men's consuming trends as a model for masculine consumerism in general.

4. See Chapter 1 where I discuss the objectives of the marketing teams to relate consumption and physical self awareness to masculinity in "Marketing New Man".

5. For evidence of a male narcissism one looks to the youth cultures of the 50s, 60s and 70s, this has been widely discussed by Andrew Wernick. (See Wernick, 1991, p.p. 48-53)

PLATE 4 George Platt Lynes, "Untitled", ELLENZWEIG, Allen, The Homoerotic Photograph, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992

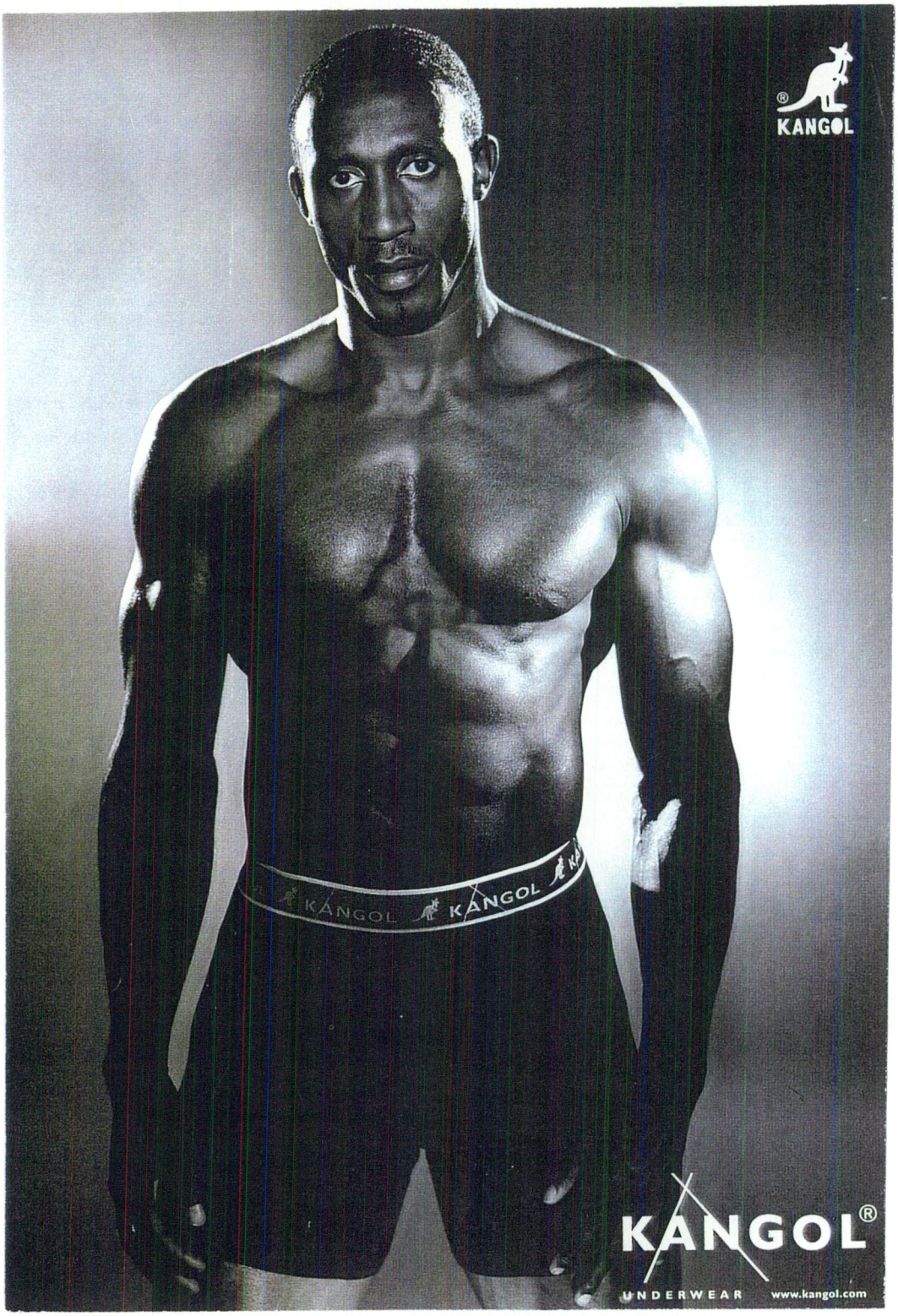


PLATE 5 **"Kangol Underwear", Loaded, Vol. 44, December, 1997**

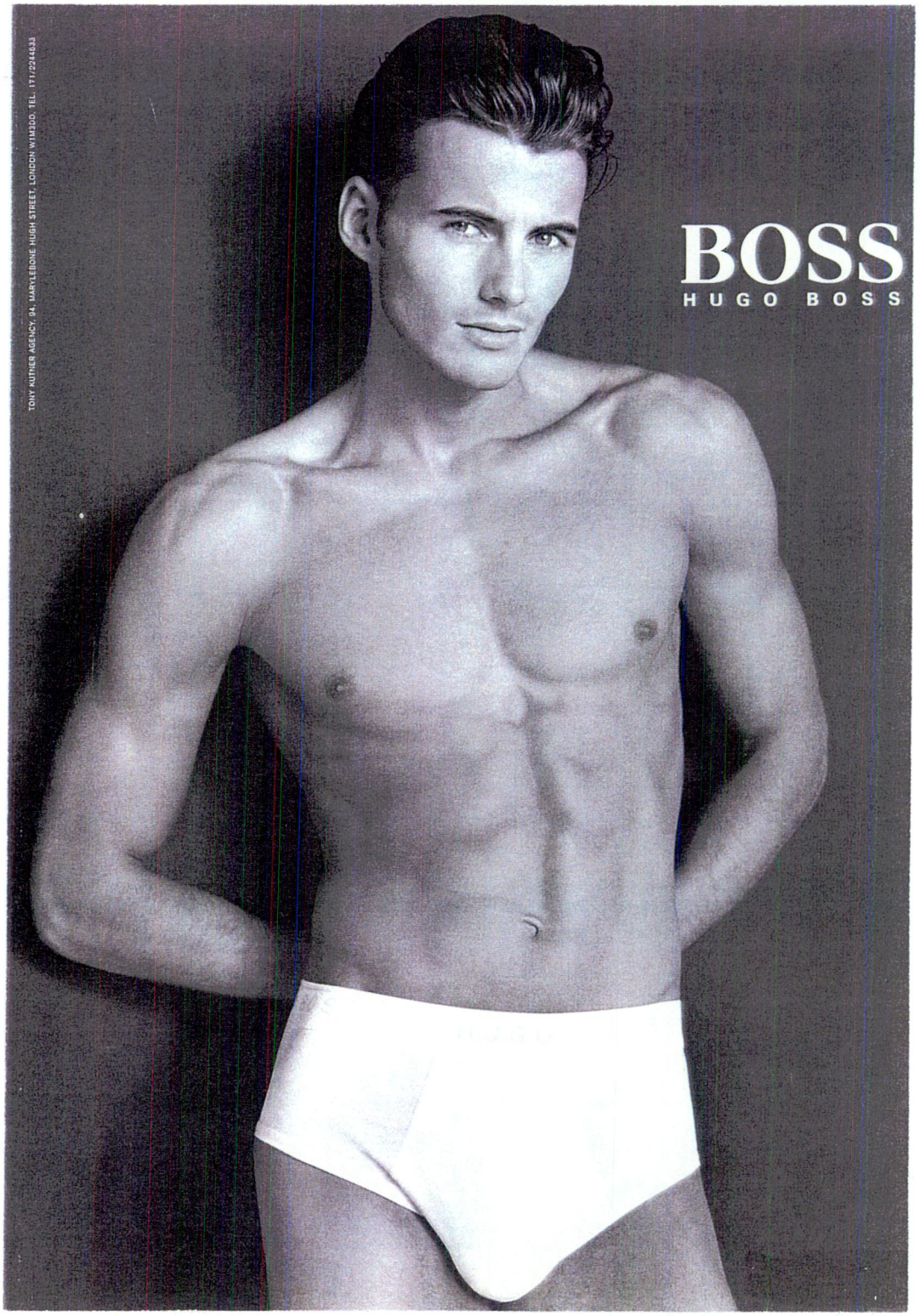


PLATE 6 **"Hugo Boss", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, Dec., 1997**

PLATE 7 **"Cerruti", Arena, Vol. 75, January/February, 1998**

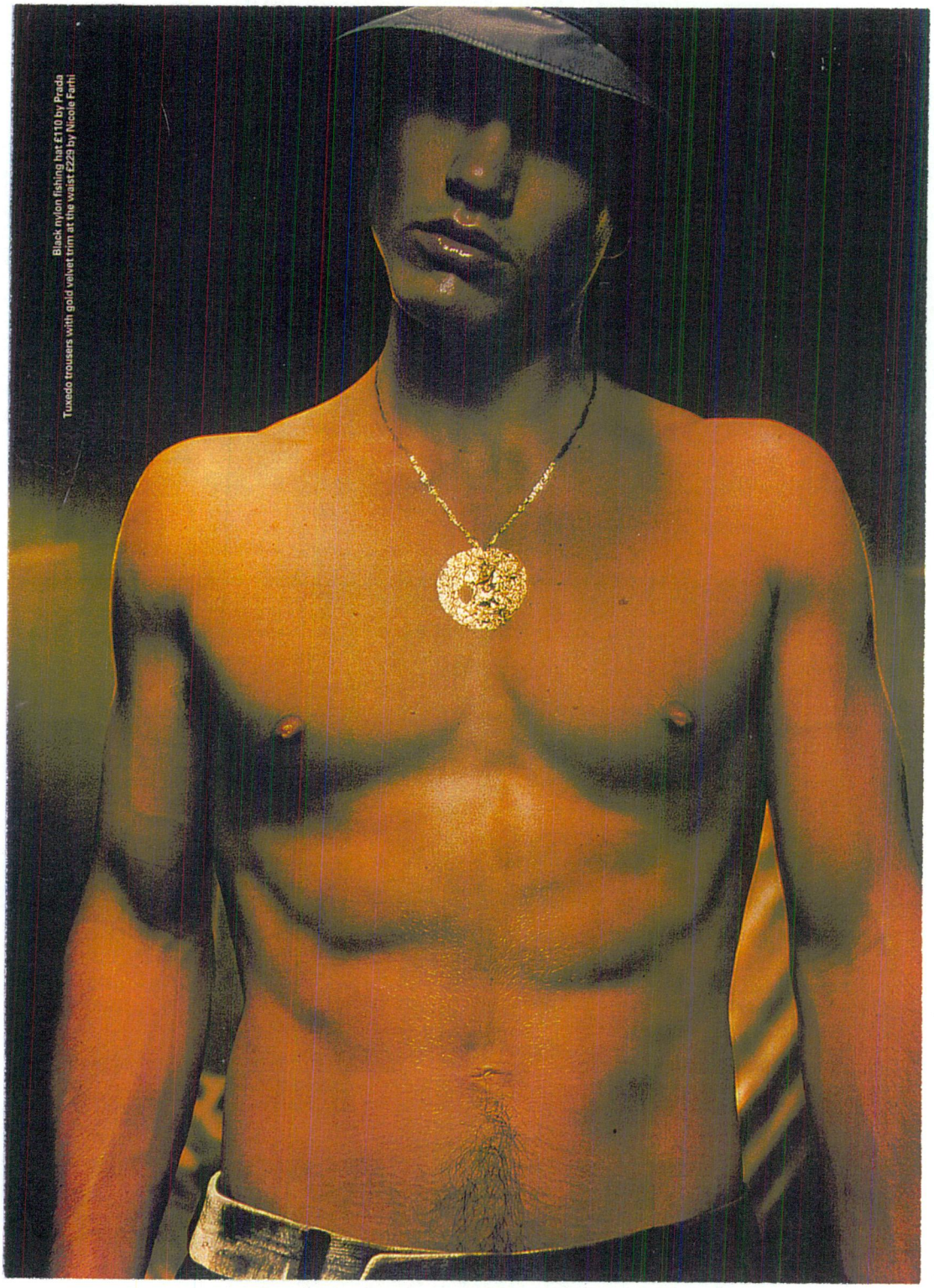


PLATE 8 **"Fashion Shoot", Attitude, Vol. 44, December, 1997**

PLATE 9 **"Ray Petri, Fashion Shoot", The Face, Vol. 99, July/August, 1988**

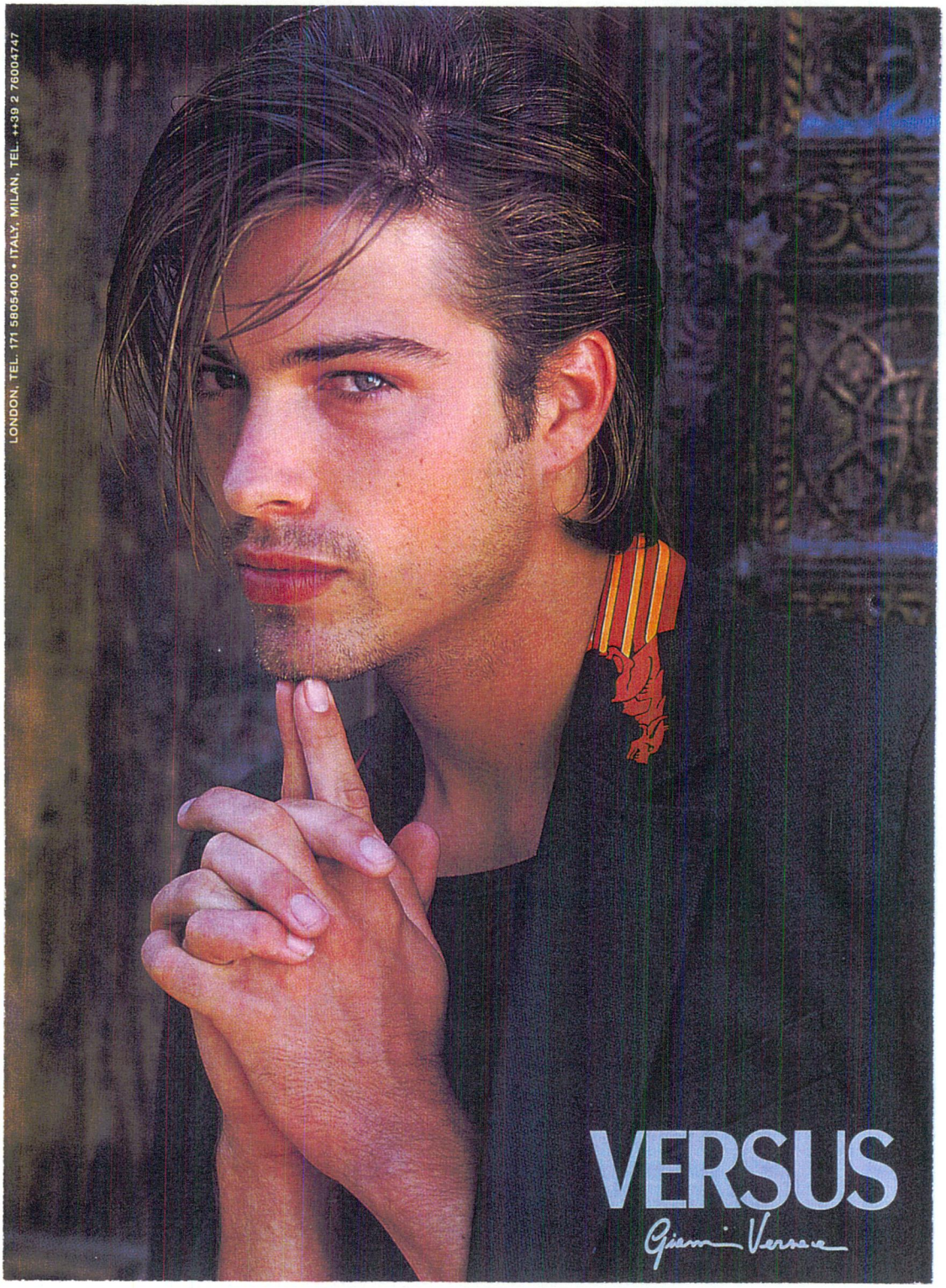


PLATE 10 **"Versus, Versace", Arena, Vol. 75, Jan./Feb., 1998**

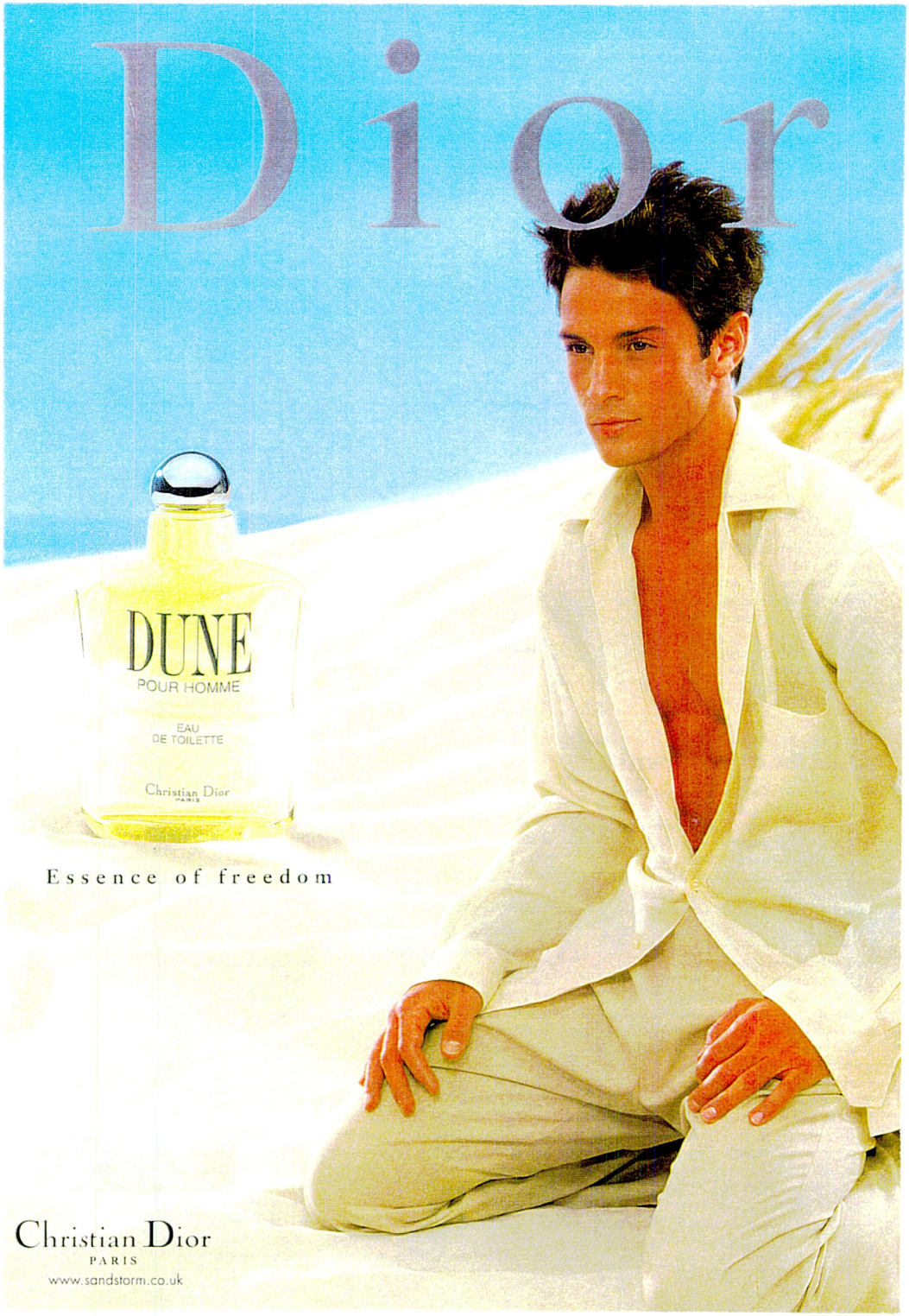


PLATE 11 "Christian Dior", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997

PLATE 12 "Fashion Shoot", Attitude, Vol. 44, December, 1997

Chapter 3 HYPERMASCULINITY AND HOMOSOCIALITY

Hyper-masculinity and homosociality are traits of masculinity that have co-existed with the influence of narcissism, to further influence how the consumer is effected by advertising images. They are both sociological concepts that describe masculine behaviour. Hypermasculinity represents stereotypical masculine characteristics that have been exaggerated, for example, the leading male character in a Hollywood action film, such as Sylvestor Stallone's portrayal of Rambo. Homosociality is a term used to describe men's relationship with other men in group situations, that exclude women. Homosociality is relevant here not only in visual images of it's existence, but as a method the advertisers use to allow male viewers to relate to portrayals of masculinity.

In this chapter, both hypermasculinity and homosociality in magazine images will be discussed in detail. Furthering this homo-eroticism implied by hypermasculinity and homosociality will be addressed. Concluding this chapter will be a discussion on the New Lad, a recent masculine persona that brings hypermasculinity and homosociality to new extremes.

Hypermasculinity

The marketeers had two primary intentions in their use of hypermasculinity for the making of male images: firstly, by appealing to men's concepts of traditional masculinity and, secondly, by representing a masculinity that attempts to re-affirm heterosexuality. These images presented maleness as a construct to induce admiration as opposed to visual pleasure. The images were designed to conform with the concept of an extreme masculinity that links maleness to aggression, strength, power and heterosexuality. Jonathan Rutherford writes about this idealistic manhood in his essay "Who's that Man?":

> "The myth of masculinity is its attempt to pass itself off as natural and universal, free of problems."
>
> (Rutherford, 1988, p. 23)

He indicates that masculinity is devised by society, and that it its recognised as something evolved and unquestionable. The marketeers have invoked this myth of masculinity so the viewer relates to the established qualities of manliness. Thus the viewer is relieved of any possible homosexual fear and he can understand and aspire to the image of another man.

In Plate 13 the glare of the model threatens the viewer and one is persuaded to admire the physical perfection of his body. The model's eyes are directed straight at the viewer allowing him to make contact; therefore through intimidation he responds to any possible objectification. His muscles suggest he works hard to keep his body toned and faultless. This machine-like image embodies an extreme and perfect masculinity. The viewer comprehends and aspires to these universal values of hypermasculinity.

Teal Triggs' essay "Framing Masculinity" (Triggs, 1992) discusses modern representations of the male body in relation to Greek mythology. She maintained that the body perfection of the Greek athlete or statue is highly evident in modern culture. In Plate 14 we see how Yves Saint Laurent took this a step further by actually producing an eau de toilette inspired by ancient Greece. Even the name of the product "Kouros", is Greek and the image reflects an idealised masculinity. The model's body and pose have statuesque qualities insinuating reference to ancient Greek sculpture. This is achieved also by the camera angle; the model looks above the viewers head to give the appearance of being elevated. The consumer is intended to aspire to a god-like complete masculinity and the product (deliberately taking up half the space) will allow him to obtain such dominance.

Both Plate 13 and Plate 14 only convey hypermasculinity. Plate 15, however, doesn't just employ hypermasculinity; it also suggests homo-eroticism. The model is passive, he doesn't try to obtain eye contact and his body is in natural motion. This form of hypermasculinity is intentionally highly sexualised. The model's body is distorted by a mass of moving water, and his facial expression is ecstatic insinuating the male orgasm. The bottle of eau de toilette is placed erect on top of the photograph, it is also wet and is obviously a phallic representation. The suggestion of both phallic representation and orgasm render this image hypermasculine. Although homo-erotic qualities exist heterosexuality is assumed through hypermasculinity.

Heterosexuality is formed by hypermasculinity in the images, but as we see in Plate 15, erotification can still take place. Homo-erotification of hypermasculinity and hypermasculine images will be discussed later in this chapter.

Homosociality

Sedgewick's concept of homosociality describes a relationship between men in all male environments. Examples would include boys in an all male private school or men at the front line during wars. For our purpose we will look at modern homosocial experiences. The men's magazine is a prime example, especially Loaded. Through its hypermasculinity and misogyny it ignores women's existence as anything but an object of sexual desire. Homosociality is often portrayed to men in visual imagery. Men are made aware of other men in similar situations; it allows men to look at other men without the fear of sexualisation.

In Plate 16 the model's eyes are not threatening to the viewer; his is not confrontational. He accepts that the viewer is looking at him and responds by looking back at him. We notice by his clothing, his tool belt and the background that he is at work and associate his image with physical work. By using mutual acceptance between viewer and model and placing the model in a heterosexually associated environment (the building site) the marketeers create a homosocial reaction by the viewer. The image is designed to allow the viewer to recognise themselves or their potential in it.

The Sam Walker advertisement (Plate 17) uses a group photograph in a way that appeals to homosocial values. The poses of the three men describe hypermasculinity and narcissism; relating the brand name to masculinity. By using hypermasculine and narcissistic characteristics together, this image seeks to portray the message that physical self awareness can allow the viewer to embody masculinity. The facial expression of the model to the right of the photograph is confrontational, as is the eye contact of the model on the left. The model in the centre avoids viewer acknowledgement, however he rejects any passivity by his parted legs, suggesting a secure and confident position. The models are obviously intended to be secure and hyper-conscious of their masculinity. The photograph attempts to place the models above the viewer to induce aspiration. This is highlighted further by perspective. The photographer took the photograph from close to the ground making the models seem much taller than the viewer from the viewing position. Homosociality is often expressed to men as a communally accepted construct of a masculinity. This explains why they use group pictures, the presence of three men with the same characteristics magnifies the image.

Ironic Homo-Eroticism

Historically there are homo-erotic perceptions of hypermasculinity and homosociality in gay culture. This is ironic considering hypermasculinity and homosociality represent heterosexual concerns. In this section the homosexual interest in both will be examined. As we have identified already, although most of these images are marketed toward heterosexual men, the marketeers are naturally happy that they appeal to homosexual men as well.

Hypermasculinity has always been an element of gay culture, however it came to surface publicly in the 1970s. Gay men began to mimic stereotypical masculine identities, such as sailors, builders and skinheads. This altered perceptions of these masculine stereotypes, permanently. These identities were imitated so much, they were considered clones. Tim Edwards discussed this fully in "The Politics of Dressing Up".[1] He writes of the 1970s gay clone,

" (he) was epitome of masculinity and of sexuality in concept and in practice".
(Edwards, 1996, p. 108)

He goes on to say that in either challenging or conforming to heterosexual concepts of maleness, gays re-evaluated masculine identity. Our concern is that some hypermasculine images, attract homosexual meaning when viewed by gay men. This is due to the portrayal of excessive physical masculinity and the existence of the gay clone persona.

Plates 18 and 19 are hypermasculine images that comply with perceptions of perfect male bodies. They explicitly describe a hypermasculine male body, and attract sexualisation. The model's muscles through activity, motivate sexual interest. Plate 18 doesn't include the model's head, and his torso takes up the entire page. Consequently his body is highly fetishised. Fetishisation occurs when an object or an image of an object, comes to represent an emotion or a concept. In this example the model's torso can represent sexual desire. Plate 19 is a series of images of a body builder in action. As his purpose is to display the product, we are viewing him performing. Every shot shows the model, stressed, oiled, active and aspiring to hypermasculinity. The image doesn't challenge the viewer and the model refrains from acknowledging the viewer's existence. As this is an advertisement for gym equipment it assumes that the viewer sees the image as informative. However the model's body is portrayed five times and is open to sexualisation by a gay man.

Frank Mort explains the idea of hypermasculinity and homo-erotification co-existing in the same image when he discusses Ray Petri's stylistics.[2] Mort recognises his use of,

> " combining strength and virility with more unstable meaning".
> (Mort, 1996, p. 57)

Petri used hypermasculine and homosocial qualities in his imagery but he was also able to play with the visual interpretations of his viewers. We still find much evidence of integrated messages in today's images where the image presents itself as hypermasculine on the surface yet it can be sensitive to homo-erotic perceptions.

Plate 20 has multiple qualities; one can read it as hypermasculine, homosocial and with possible homo-erotic overtones. The image is of three men actively involved in fishing. The mood of the advertisement is relaxed and casual and the men are involved in male bonding. Ambiguity occurs where the three men touch one another. The model holding the fishing rod is being touched by the other two men; one hand is on his shoulder and the other is clenched touching his arm. Even though both of these physical contacts are considered socially acceptable ways of men touching without homosexual insinuation, the message becomes vague where their pleasure is evident. The three men are present to represent a group, in this way sexual connotation is reduced substantially. However if one covers either the man in the middle or the man on the left, the image reads as a couple. This is because of the physical contact displayed, and comfort between the men, suggesting a sexual relationship. This advertisement is rich with possible interpretations however the point is that homo-eroticism can be drawn from many images, and Plate 20 can be translated in this manner.

Jean Paul Gaultier toys with using all constructed forms of masculinity in Plate 21. Gaultier is renowned for humorously investigating gender issues and sexuality in contemporary culture. In this image he manages to combine hypermasculinity, homosociality, narcissism and homo-eroticism. The two men in the image are hypermasculine, they arm wrestle each other, with their flexed muscles and both of them have masculine tattoos. Their identity is that of sailors (notoriously a gay clone identity); and they gaze at each other in an aggressive but highly sexual manner. The men are contained within a porthole, giving an impression of looking in on them. The joke here is that the same model is used for each man, indicating man's desire for himself, and associating homo-eroticism and masculinity with narcissism. The Gaultier advertisement intelligently plays with the ironic gay overtones within hypermasculinity and homosociality.

The marketeer's do not always deliberately try to suggest ambiguity; because they are often using images of the semi-nude male body it would be

impossible to completely stop sexualisation occurring. However, this as we've already confirmed is not their primary concern. The important thing is that heterosexual men can understand that the image represents straight masculinity. The sexualisation by gay men of hypermasculine images acts as a double purpose for the benefit of marketeers because they also reassure heterosexual men.

New Lad, Soft Lad

A recent development in advertising has moved away from representations of hypermasculinity that use the male body. In contrast with the trends discusses in Chapter 2 these new developments identify with hypermasculine concepts. This new persona has been given the name of he "new lad" and, although this definition crosses visual boundaries, there are more specific examples of it than there are of the "new waif" concept. For the purpose of establishing a persona; the "new lad", identifies with a heterosexual homosociality; he is willing to purchase and consume men's products himself and cares what he looks like, not just for the sake of himself but to express his hypermasculinity to society.

Rowena Chapman's article "The Great Pretender - Variations on the New Man Theme" (Chapman, 1988, p. 225-248) is relevant to the "new lad" movement. She emphasised a belief that men had mutated masculinity to try and remain the powerful sex in society. She also said that masculinity had adapted its representations so they appeared more passive and suggested understanding. Chapman compared this to the presence of more aggressive images of femininity, and concluded that men had attempted to make this new masculinity normal and to suggest femininity was unbalanced. What's interesting in relation to Chapman's argument now is that this new masculine form is far more realistic of a stereotypical masculinity than the "new man" ever was. The "new lad" has all the characteristics that Chapman said masculinity was avoiding in 1988. This would mean advertising now reflects society more honestly, or that elements of masculinity such as dominance and virility have risen in images of men to counter react equality based social change.

It is important to note that these hypermasculine images are aimed at the middle and working classes, altering the types of images and messages employed by the marketing teams. There is much evidence of the readers' hypermasculinity displayed in Loaded magazine. Plate 22 is a hypermasculine image: the model is portraying a confident attitude to the viewer. His physical presence is there, not to be sexualised by a male or a female viewer, but as a symbol of his masculinity welcoming only admiration.

The evil eyes at the bottom of Plate 22 indicate that interpreting this image as sexual is unacceptable. The eyes intimidate the viewer as he glances upward to the catchphrase and the model. Rowena Chapman noted that the display of a model's back rendered an image anti-social.[3] This occurs here when the model turns away to distance himself, from the viewer and to further reject scrutiny of his body. This image gives us a different hypermasculinity to that of Plates 13 and 14[4], here hypermasculinity presents itself as an attitude. The image is not concerned with a perfect masculine body, rather it uses clothing and characteristics to suggest superiority and aggression.

In Richard Benson's article "Soft Lad" ("Arena", January/February 1998, p.p. 72-76) yet another masculinity is described. Benson portrays the "soft lad" as a balanced human being who doesn't represent extremes of masculine identity. He is not sexist or hypermasculine and he is sensitive though he isn't passive or feminine. Benson discusses "soft lad" in relation to society in general, using men in the public arena as role models, however there is evidence of his existence in male magazine culture also.

In Plate 23 these elements are apparent. The model is relaxed and confident. The image doesn't try to intimidate the viewer and the model's masculinity appears to be very natural and unconstrained. As viewers we see him as sophisticated and fashionable. His hair is ruffled but his suit is crisp against his skin. He is soft yet he is masculine and the advertisers hope that our subtle admiration will inspire us to buy the product. The marketeers have produced yet another way of selling to men; the viewer has been encouraged to relate to the image through it's style. Homosocially one acknowledges this as a more rational presentation of masculinity, that many men associate with.

The primary point to recognise in Plates 22 and 23, although they are very different images, is that the marketeers have put greater emphasis on the consumption of style. Obviously the viewer can't buy a perfect body however he can easily acquire a product that allows him to portray an image and ultimately his masculinity.

Hypermasculinity and homosociality are constructs employed by marketeers to increase men's association to other men and to the importance of masculine identity in society. In doing this they have appealed to traditional interpretations of what perfect masculinity represents. Hypermasculinity is a ridiculous exaggeration of how men perceive stereotypical masculine values. It has been exploited through images of men and has proved by its success, especially in the 1990s that masculine values in society are fundamentally conservative. If men can't have complete power in society they can at least

portray their superiority through dress and image. Homosociality is present to persuade heterosexual men into both, acceptance of the image and to reaffirm masculinity as a universally accepted construct. As I have already confirmed, hypermasculinity can be interpreted as homo-erotic, however this does not dispel its foremost intention, as the fact that the images are attractive to everyone, gay or straight only assists the advertisers purpose. New images of men presented by the Soft Lad persona are intentionally asexual so the viewers sexual orientation becomes irrelevant. The primary purpose is to allow the viewer to associate natural masculine values to constructed styles and images.

FOOTNOTES - CHAPTER 3

1. See Chapter 1, for discussion on public existence of gay clone's hypermasculinity.

2. Mort explains graphically Petri's influences on images of men and changing perceptions of masculinity, he describes specifically how Petri achieved his aims, "combining strength and virility with ambiguity". ("A Guide to Modern Living or, I Bet You Haven't Heard of The Face", 1996, p.p. 45-73)

3. This is in reference to Rowena Chapman's essay "The Great Pretender, Variations on the New Man Theme", Male Order, 1988, p.p. 225-248.

4. In Plate 13 and 14 hypermasculinity is displayed through physical perfection and the presence of the body, here hypermasculinity is represented through style and suggestion.

FITNESS LINE BY RALPH LAUREN

PLATE 13 **"Ralph Lauren", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997**

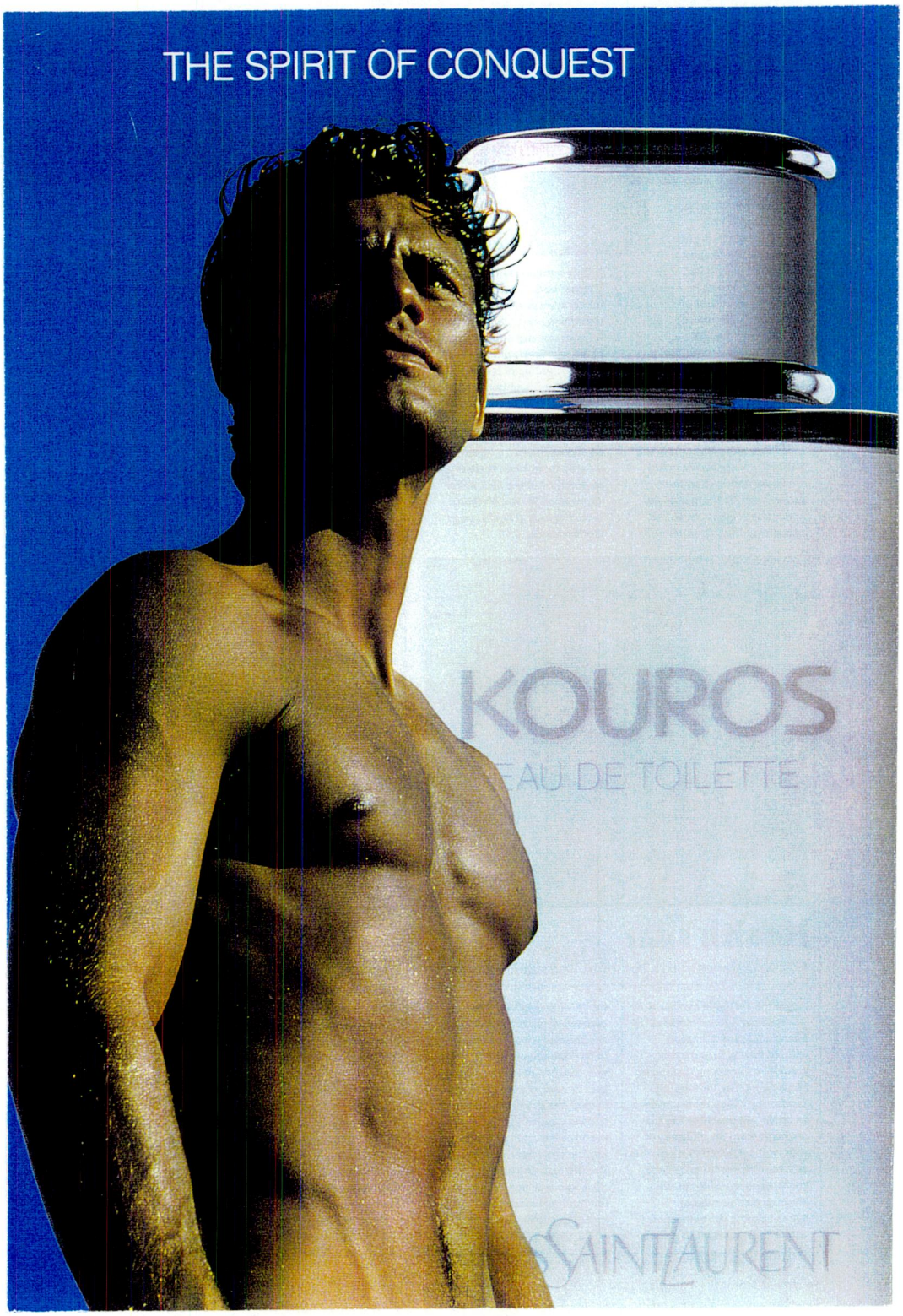


PLATE 14 **"Kouros, Yves Saint Laurent", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997**

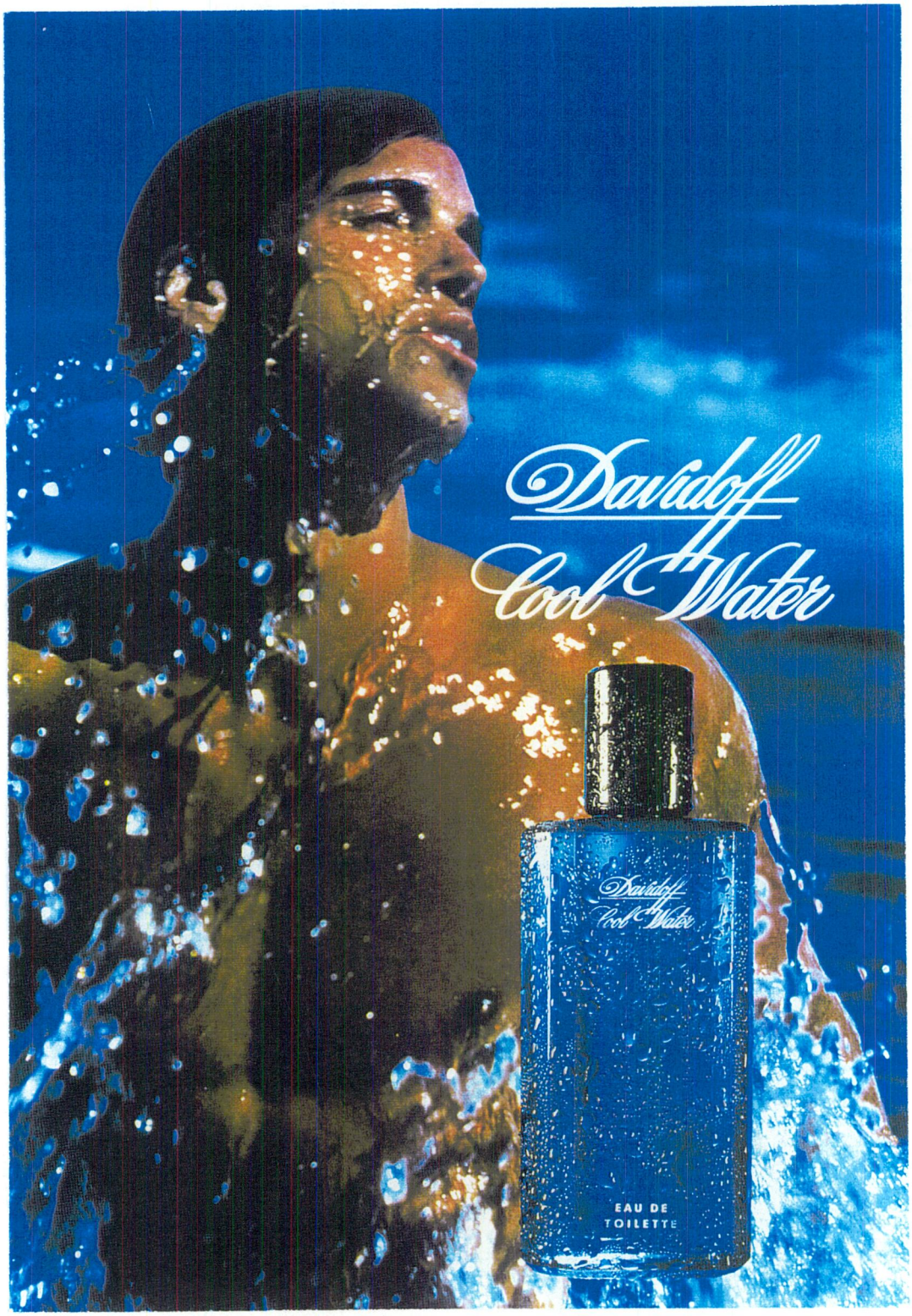


PLATE 15 **"Davidoff, Cool Water", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997**

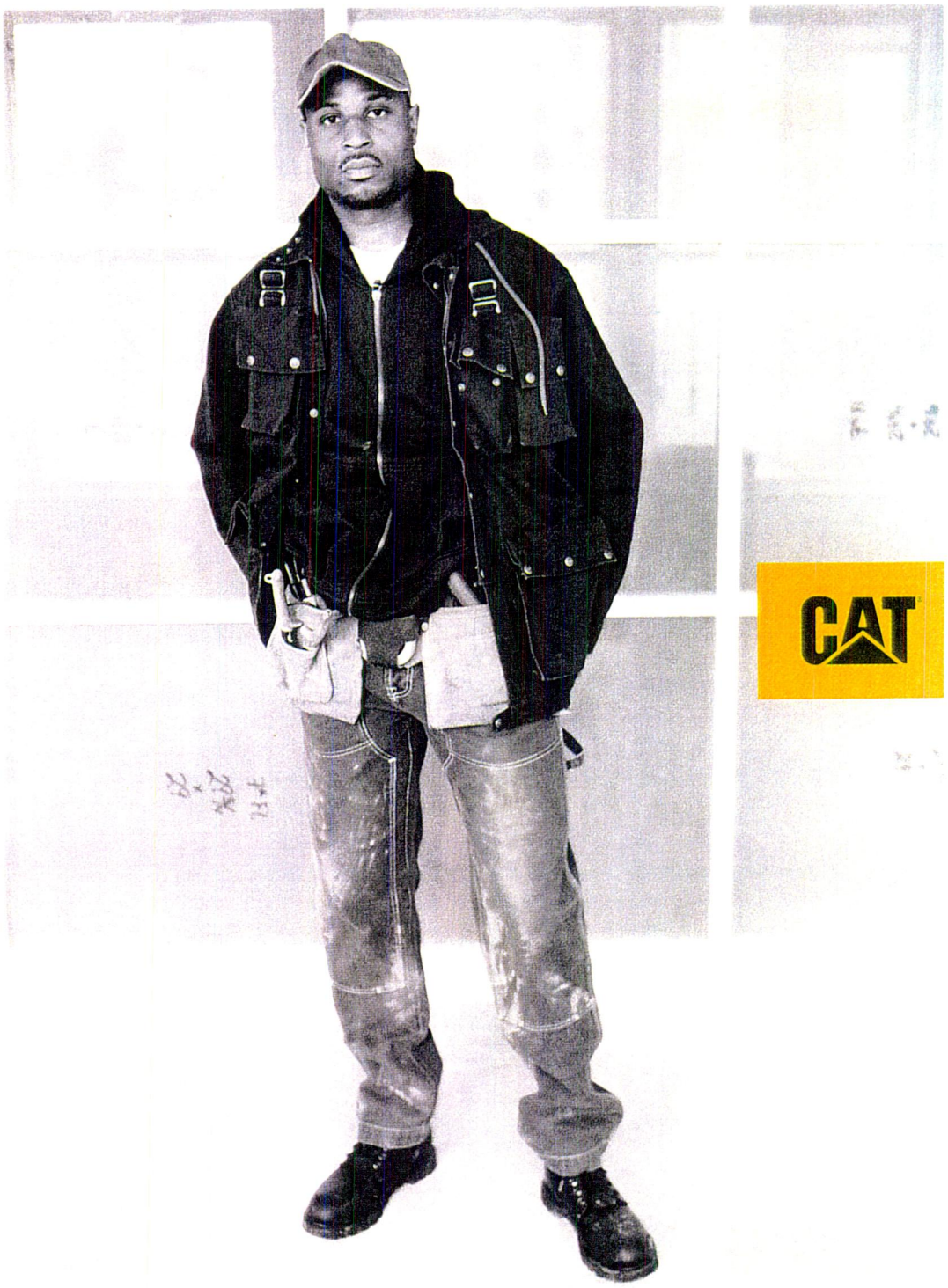


PLATE 16 "Cat", Loaded, Vol. 44, December, 1997

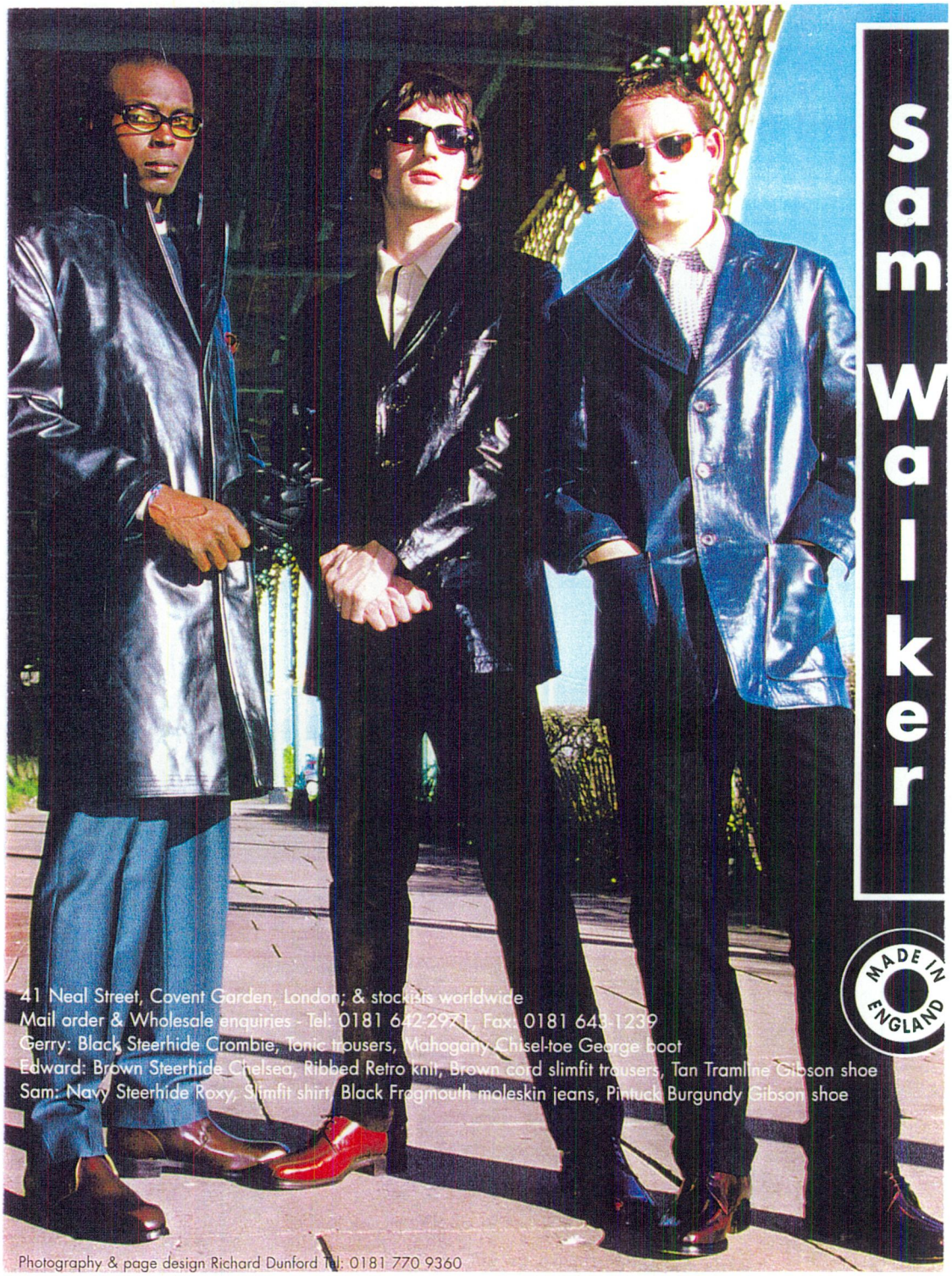


PLATE 17 **"Sam Walker", Arena, Vol. 75, January/February, 1998**

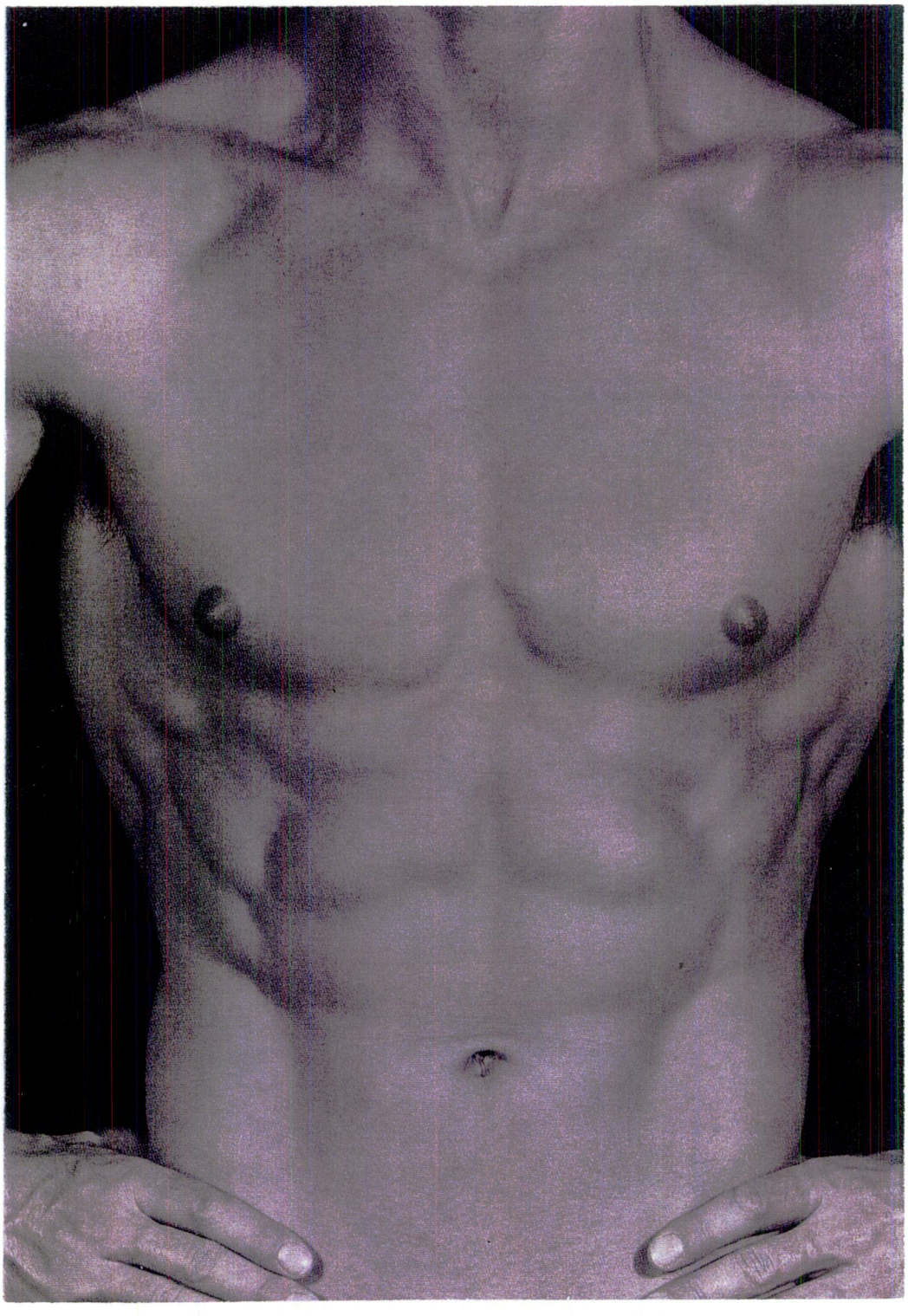
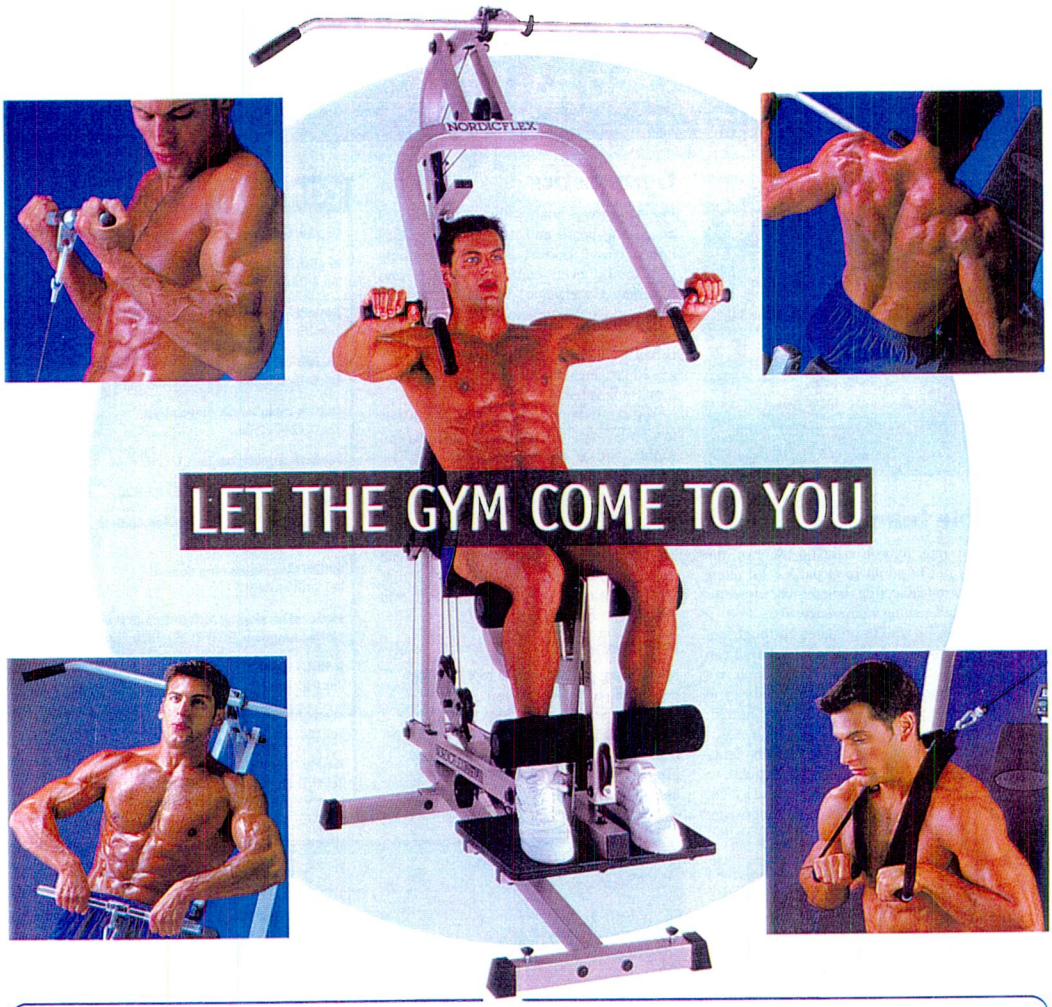


PLATE 18 "Exercise", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997



LET THE GYM COME TO YOU

To feel fitter and stronger, to tone up and look leaner, you probably think two or three weekly sessions at the gym is better than anything you can do at home. Not any more.

The UltraLift is the new, gym-standard, in-home strength trainer from NordicTrack.

It's effective, it's convenient and it does away with the need for weight stacks and dumbbells. That's because the UltraLift actually transfers your own body weight into resistance to help improve muscle definition and strength.

With 35 exercises to build, enhance and define every muscle group in the body, the UltraLift has been proven to increase muscle performance by 40%* in just 6 weeks.*

- Smooth, non-jarring motion
- Customised workout for your body and fitness goals
- 15 resistance settings variable from 8 to 120% of your own body weight
- Encourages good exercise position for minimum muscle strain
- Compact design fits into a 4' x 4' space

What's more, with a range of easy payment plans available, a regular session on the UltraLift is as effective as the gym – and as affordable. Ask for details.

UltraLift™ BY NordicTrack

*Statistics based on independent research carried out in the USA.

It costs nothing to find out more

With our 30 day in-home trial, you can see the results for yourself – or get a refund. Call now or clip the coupon to receive your free brochure without obligation.

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*Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat 9.30am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm
If you're dialling from outside the UK please call +44 (0) 1926 410 060.

PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE MH1K7

Name

Address

Postcode

Daytime tel no:

Evening tel no:

Please send to: NordicTrack (UK) Ltd, Dept MH1K7, FREEPOST (CV2617), WARWICK CV34 4BR. No stamp is required.

PLATE 19 **"Ultra Lift", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, Dec., 1997**

PLATE 20 **"Camel", Loaded, Vol. 44, December, 1997**

PLATE 21 **"Le Male, Jean Paul Gaultier", Gentlemens Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 2, June 1996**

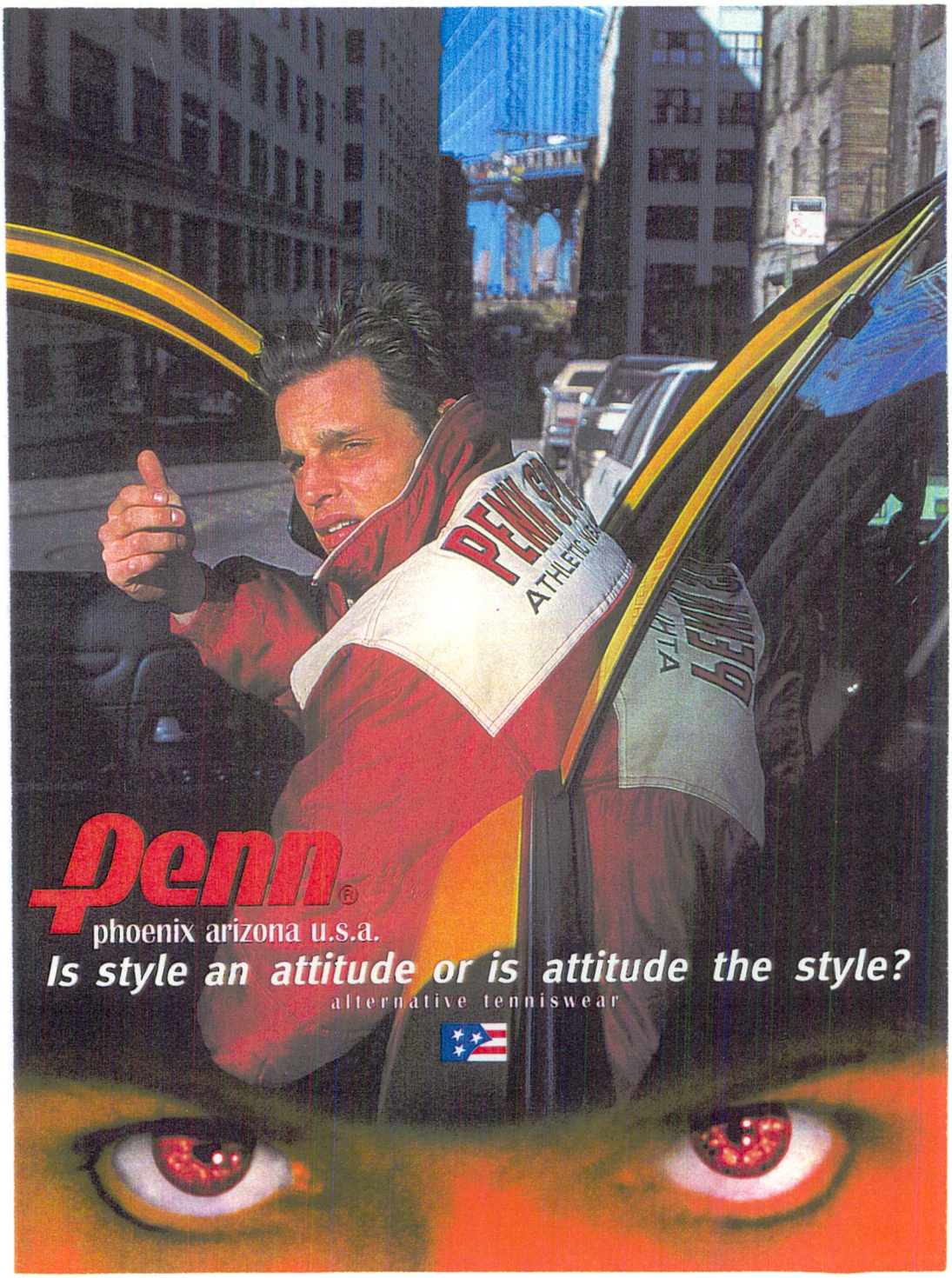

PLATE 22 **"Penn", Loaded, Vol. 44, December, 1997**

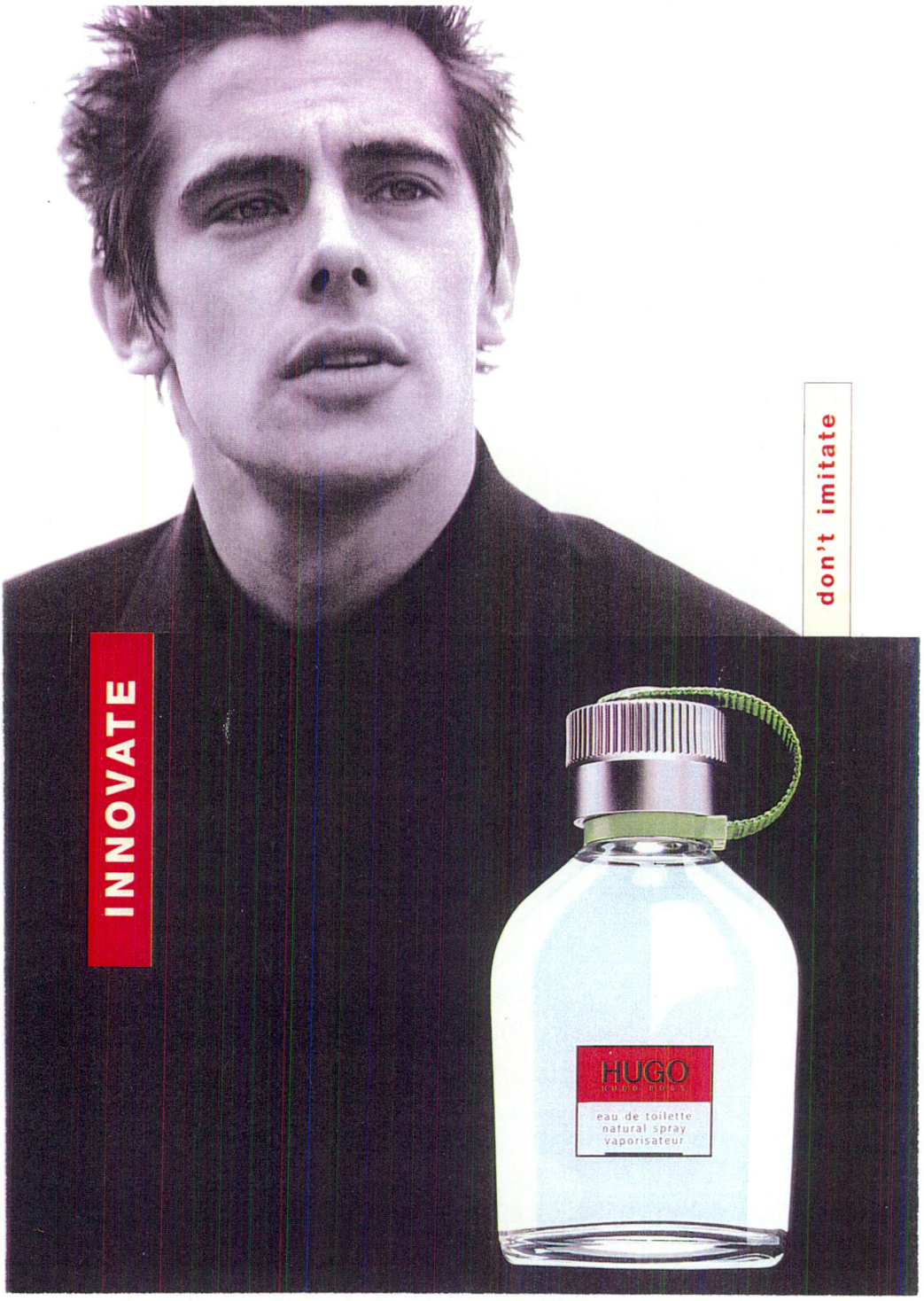

PLATE 23 **"Hugo, Hugo Boss", Loaded, Vol. 44, December, 1997**

CONCLUSION

Masculinity is a construct, it implies a universally accepted set of values to which men associate. These values differentiate it from stereotypical femininity. As there are many elements represented in masculinity, it can vary dramatically from one masculine identity to another. The new images of men represent different perceptions of masculinity.

Society had changed radically by the mid-1980s, and the advertisers took inspiration from these social changes to broaden the framework of images they were using, and to create an environment in which perceptions of men could change to facilitate marketing.

The marketeers wanted to use masculinity in order to motivate consumer purchases. To do this they used images of men, altering elements of stereotypical masculinity to manipulate men's perceptions of manhood.

Through the evidence of the success of lifestyle theory, we can see that men were fragmented into sub-sections. This allowed the advertisers to be more effective with the imagery and the masculine traits used to market specific male markets and specific target groups.

As I have demonstrated in the thesis there are two key concerns in relation to the success of male marketing. The first concern of advertisers was to convince men that one's physical appearance was important in how one expressed one's masculinity. It also suggested that physical self awareness or narcissism was elemental to a measure of masculinity.

The advertisers exaggerated masculine qualities so they became hypermasculine, thus highlighting specific masculine traits for men, to which men could aspire. Homosociality allowed men to relate to these hypermasculine values in a heterosexual context as well as a homosexual one, making them acceptable to all men, thus universal.

Images of men have not changed masculinity, however they have responded to changes in men's lifestyles. What have altered are perceptions of masculinity. Possibly more importantly consumerism has now become as masculine as it is feminine.

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1. "Estate 90", L'Uomo Vogue, Vol. 198, July/August, 1989
2. "Coca-Cola", The Face, Vol. 99, July/August, 1988
3. "Eternity, by Calvin Klein", Gentlemen's Quarterly (American version), Vol. 61, No. 2, February, 1991
4. George Platt Lynes, "Untitled", ELLENZWEIG, Allen, The Homoerotic Photograph, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992
5. "Kangol Underwear", Loaded, Vol. 44, December, 1997
6. "Hugo Boss", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997
7. "Cerruti", Arena, Vol. 75, January/February, 1998
8. "Fashion Shoot", Attitude, Vol. 44, December, 1997
9. "Ray Petri, Fashion Shoot", The Face, Vol. 99, July/August, 1988
10. "Versus, Versace", Arena, Vol. 75, January/February, 1998
11. "Christian Dior", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997
12. "Fashion Shoot", Attitude, Vol. 44, December, 1997
13. "Ralph Lauren", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997
14. "Kouros, Yves Saint Laurent", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997

15. "Davidoff, Cool Water", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997

16. "Cat", Loaded, Vol. 44, December, 1997

17. "Sam Walker", Arena, Vol. 75, January/February, 1998

18. "Exercise", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997

19. "Ultra Lift", Men's Health, Vol. 3, Issue 10, December, 1997

20. "Camel", Loaded, Vol. 44, December, 1997

21. "Le Male, Jean Paul Gaultier", Gentlemens Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 6, June 1996

22. "Penn", Loaded, Vol. 44, December, 1997

23. "Hugo, Hugo Boss", Loaded, Vol. 44, December, 1997