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Jim French Diaries: The Creator Of Colt Studio



Synopsis

One thing is certain: The world of gay adult entertainment would not be what it is today without Jim French, the founder of the legendary COLT Studio. The multi-faced styles of his movies and photo works influenced many directors and photographers. Jim French Diaries illuminates the many faces of COLT Studio not only with a wide range of photos but also with a lot of informative interviews revealing the exciting history behind the label.

Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: Bruno Gmuender (March 1, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 3867878390

ISBN-13: 978-3867878395

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 1.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 16 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #296,077 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #58 in [Books > Arts & Photography](#)

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Customer Reviews

JIM FRENCH DIARIES is a stunning book, and a welcome addition to the library of anyone who not only enjoys male nude photography, but -- perhaps more important -- wants to understand its genesis and evolution. Although the work in this book is uniquely Jim French's, much of the credit for this handsome volume must go to Robert Mainardi, who labored over this project for many years before it finally came to fruition. Like Mainardi's other contributions to our photographic and cultural heritage (STRONGMAN and THE NAKED HEARTLAND come immediately to mind), JIM FRENCH DIARIES was a true labor of love for Mainardi, and it shows in every respect -- the care with which the images were selected; the truly illuminating text; the beautiful packaging and production; and the sheer size and heft of this book. All those attributes are combined in an attempt to do justice to one of the most important photographers of our time. We're fortunate Jim French is still alive (and willing) to share his reminiscences with us, because who better is there to tell us his story? No amount of research and after-the-fact digging is ever as valuable as an artist's firsthand account of his own

development. Seldom has a photographer (and I do not qualify this statement with "of the male nude) been able to capture both the humanity and sheer erotic frisson of his subjects. The evolution of Colt from its early beginnings in New York in the 1960s through its legendary years in California is laid out here in color and black and white, magnificently reproduced. Additionally, a number of French's Polaroid studies and his original artworks (attributed in those days to Arion, Luger and later to Rip Colt) are reproduced and are a welcome reference, reminding us of French's fine art background and his brilliance not only as a photographer, but also as an illustrator. And while I've long been a fan of Mr. French's books -- seeking out even those early, rare volumes that are often so difficult to find -- this volume will stand as the comprehensive overview of this artist's work. Its sheer length and heft (350 pages and nearly eight pounds) allow room for some unexpected delights: a grinning Byron Hawkwood lifting what looks like a chamois cloth to reveal the goods; occasional behind-the-scenes photos that indicate what a true production a Colt shoot could be; Doug Perry in all his lick-able vascularity. What's truly wonderful is that despite its breadth and depth, the reader and viewer are left wanting more -- more of the story, more of the photographs, more of the remarkable Jim French. Perhaps a Volume 2 is in order sometime soon?

This book is the best! As I have previously mentioned in reviews, Colt studios has had fantastic photographers over the years and Jim French has always been my favorite for taking sexy but not necessary provocative photos of men in great shape and blessed with great features physically speaking. Out of all my photo/tabletop style books, and I do have closing in on 75, this is my all time favorite.

Breathtaking photographs!!! Truly a book of art suitable for any library.

....wow! Not only absolutely beautiful men but a unique insight on Jim French and the whole "nude male" photo world and it's background from the sixties. No one will be disappointed with this purchase!

This book has been a long time in the making, and obsessive Colt Studio fans have been waiting for it for years. Was it worth the wait? Absolutely! Do I wish there were more. Of course! First up, the photographs, which is what many will be wanting. The book is packed with many of Jim French's most iconic and beautiful photographs. The majority of photos are from the late 1980s through the 1990s, but there are some photos from Colt's earliest days and through the 1970s. There are also a

good number of reproductions of French's illustrations as Kurt LÃ¶ffler (LÃ¶ffler Studios, Colt's predecessor) and a smaller number his Rip Colt illustrations for Colt. What I'm loving from the book is the text. Colt fans know that Jim French has always been an enigmatic figure. We never heard from him in the press, we didn't hear stories about his models, and finally that is changed here. Guided by editor Robert Mainardi (one half of the couple who owns San Francisco's beloved store, The Magazine) in interviews, French takes us on a tour of his and Colt's history, detailing how he got into illustration and then photography, how LÃ¶ffler came to be formed and quickly fell apart, how Colt Studio started and continued. And there are the memories about the models. The title of the book is The Jim French Diaries, and in the interviews, French frequently consults his diaries to give stories about iconic Colt men like Bruno, Dakota, Carl Hardwick, and on and on. There's even the text of a delightful reunion between French and the model known as Ledermeister in 2002, when they hadn't seen each other for decades. The interviews appear to have taken place years ago (early to mid-2000s), so you aren't going to get much contemporary information, but that's fine with me. If there are two things I'd like more of from this book it would be more stories about the models and shoots, and more reproductions of photos and outtakes from Colt's first ten years. But those are small quibbles. This book is very much worth its price.

This is beautifully constructed and printed book. The photography is outstanding.

When it comes to physique photography, Jim French is THE TOP. Nobody, but nobody outdoes him, and no connoisseur of Gay-themed male photography can do without this book. How can you resist: The content is fabulous (the photos of Chris Dickerson, Ledermeister and Bruno will leave you speechless); it's just the right size (not immense like so many photo books out today); and just the right price, too. And the text is just as significant and historic as the photos: French was part of an underground celebrity world that included people like writer William Inge and director George Cukor, as you'll learn when you read (yes, READ) this excellent collection.

The selected images are different than the usual, but are definitely not rejects. The text is fascinating and illuminating. Beautifully printed and edited. I liked it so much I immediately bought another copy for a friend. Highly recommended! If you ever wanted to know what went on behind the scenes at Colt, this is for you.

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