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It Wasn't Pretty, Folks, But Didn't We Have Fun?: Esquire In The Sixties



Synopsis

A rollicking ride through the Sixties with legendary editor Harold Hayes and the writers and photographers he sent out to record America in uproar. Immense talent poured through the pages of Hayes's Esquire-Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese, Diane Arbus, Garry Wills, Michael Herr, Raymond Carver, John Sack and more. Carol Polsgrove takes us behind the scenes in what Molly Ivins has called "a wonderful book."

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Customer Reviews

Popular culture has become a popular subject for books by academics. Polsgrove (journalism, Indiana Univ.) here writes about a publication that has had marked influence on our times: Esquire magazine. Hugh Merrill's book *Esquire: The Early Years at Esquire* (LJ 5/1/95) gives a picture of the Esquire of the 1930s and 1940s; this book concentrates on the 1960s, when Harold Hayes was editor. It was a time when Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, and James Baldwin were among the contributing writers and the magazine covered politics in Chicago and war in Vietnam. Polsgrove, who had access to the letters of Hayes, here includes a list of sources and copious notes on each chapter. This would be a useful complement to Merrill's book in popular culture or journalism collections. ?Rebecca Wondriska, Trinity Coll. Lib., Hartford, Ct. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

" More than any other medium, magazines companionably track the times," Indiana University

journalism professor Polsgrove maintains in this detailed, fascinating history of the Esquire Harold Hayes built in the 1960s. Insulated to some degree by publisher Arnold Gingrich from the "suits" and supported by a changing but consistently talented editorial and art team, Hayes defined a vision and established a personality for Esquire that made it one of the most exciting, appealing publications of a lively and challenging period. Drawing on the magazine itself, archival research, and dozens of interviews, Polsgrove probes group creativity and the writer-editor relationship as she traces the birth of "the New Journalism" (which Hayes insisted wasn't new) and the superb work Esquire elicited from writers like Mailer, Baldwin, Bellow, and Vidal, Gay Talese, Tom Wolfe, Garry Wills, John Sack, and Michael Herr. Polsgrove's title at first glance seems worthy of an Esquire Dubious Achievement Award; however, after reading her vivid institutional history, its oddity seems altogether appropriate. A useful resource of U.S. cultural and intellectual trends as well as a history of magazine journalism. Mary Carroll

Esquire was the magazine for the epoch known as the 60s. This book tells the story behind the scenes of how and why it was so vibrant and unique; the people who were there tell the tale.

I'm torn between a four star and five star rating. If you are a writer and editor like me, you will definitely love this look behind the curtains at a major mag during its golden era. Super juicy if you know the territory. Otherwise, a nice enough read, but probably not your ticket.

After trying to find any book that could give me an in-depth look at what it's like to edit a great magazine, I finally found this. I can't recommend this book to everyone, but if you LOVE magazines, or are just a fan of 60s Esquire, you'll be very happy with this book.

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