

Magazines new ones

Selling Your Work · By Simon Townsend · 3 min read

You MUST keep visiting newsagencies to see what new publications have come onto the market. This recent excellent article by the brilliant writer on popular culture, David Dale, shows that all kinds of publications keep popping up.

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A lot of to-do about nothing but the particular

What's new ... a glossy guide, reading for minutiae buffs, one for big spenders.

The rich are always with us, so if you're thinking of starting a new magazine and looking for a niche, they make a logical target.

Rich lists tend to contain many more men than women, so concentrating on rich people who like footy and fast cars does not narrow your audience too dangerously. And so you end up with ca (note the lower case) aka Connoisseur Australia, which has racing driver Peter Brock on the cover of its first issue.

Editor James McRory devotes his opening message to lavishing praise on Brock, so we are forced to divine ca's philosophy from its content. It begins with a section called "the latest" (note lower case), which discusses a corkscrew costing \$349, pens costing between \$195 and \$535, a humidior (for cigars) costing \$1375, and a turntable (for vinyl discs) costing \$45,000.

Now that you've established the kind of company you're in, you move on to a profile of Brock, who has started a charitable foundation to "help people who have somehow slipped through the bureaucratic net" (not ca readers, we hope). There's also a profile of George Gregan, "the man who will lead Australia's defence" of the rugby union World Cup, who is revealed as "the man behind the By George CBD coffee lounge chain in Sydney".

After that, it becomes a little difficult to tell where ca's articles end and its advertising begins. A full-page story on Tower Estate wines is matched eight pages later by a full page ad for Tower Estate. A report on Trader Yachts in Australia is matched three pages later by a full-page ad for Trader Yachts. A favourable test drive report on a Princess yacht is matched five pages later by a full-page ad for Princess Yachts.

Connoisseurs are supposed to be discriminating purchasers, and some of them may wonder if \$7.70 isn't a high price to pay for advice that may not be utterly impartial.

Price is not likely to be an obstacle for another new Aussie publication, since it is free. And it makes no claim to impartiality - NMag is produced by the Australian Newsagents' Federation with the aim of encouraging people to buy magazines. Although it is subtitled "your free magazine guide and review", a

discouraging word is never heard in any of its reviews. We learn that Vogue Kids is "packed with everything parents need to know for children", while DMag is "Australia's most exciting children's magazine" (which may come as news to K-Zone - though doubtless it will get its turn in NMag's next issue).

There is, however, one piece of breaking news in the first NMag. The editor of Who Weekly, Bruce Guthrie, reveals that his "biggest selling issues to date were the week of the Tom Cruise-Nicole Kidman divorce announcement and the week of September 11". If other editors can be induced to make similar admissions, this column will look forward to NMag.

What this column likes best is discovering mags whose niche is not immediately apparent. This is the case with to-do list, an American six-monthly which makes its Australian debut this week. It is sub-titled - "a magazine of meaningful minutiae". If pressed, we'd say it seems to be aimed at people who procrastinate.

There's a report by a woman who explains why she is not going to write a book about her dead mother, another by a woman who loves being late, and another by a woman who went through a ceremony of marrying herself because "I liked being alone and I had more and more of a desire not to be in a relationship". To-do list boasts it won "the readers' choice award for best new magazine", so somebody has figured out what it's for. At \$15.25 per air-freighted copy (because procrastinators don't want to wait for sea freight), it deserves a place in ca. At the very least, it should get a review in NMag. END

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