

# Snapshot of the mind

COLIN McDOWELL sets his sights on the most beautiful illustrated volumes of 2003

Even those of us who live neatly ordered, trim little lives are occasionally gripped by the need to be somewhere other. Illustrated books fulfil that need. Leaping over space and time, they engage us with different attitudes and ways of life and can stimulate the mind as well as the imagination. At their best, they are an education.

They don't come much better than **Henri Cartier-Bresson** (Thames & Hudson £48), a retrospective of the work of the photographer from whom posterity will learn about people, their lives and the way that cities and landscapes once were. Classic images from around the world make this volume indispensable. Less personal, but as stunning, **Wilderness: Earth's Last Wild Places** (Chicago UP £40) combines truly fabulous pictures of the world's last untouched places with essays by a variety of authorities that explain that if the wildernesses are to survive, positive action is necessary now. I cannot imagine anyone who would not be moved by this marvellous book.

By no means a wilderness, but subject to dangers of its own, India and its culture attract thousands of visitors each year. **Rajasthan** by Pauline van Lynden (Assouline £39.95) makes it clear why so many head straight for India's second largest state. As the author points out, Rajasthan is about visual splendour, and the sumptuous pictures in this evocative book reflect the colour and magnificence of even everyday life there.

In more familiar territory, **Photographing Italy** edited by Giovanna Calvenzi (Thames & Hudson £36), documents the past 60 years of Europe's most stylish

country as seen through the eyes of photographers of the calibre of Robert Capa, Ernst Haas and Sebastiao Salgado. As with Cartier-Bresson, the most memorable images are in black and white. From villages to the Vatican, asylums to Cinecitta, the Italian spirit is all here, lovingly and sometimes harshly revealed.

**Locations** by David Bailey (Thames & Hudson £39.95) is also revealing for anyone who thinks of him as the fashion snapper who made his name with shots of Jean Shrimpton, Marie Helvin and the like. This book shows his breadth in a way that will surprise many. Of course, the fashion work and the pop portraits are here, but they are enriched by photographs taken in the Caribbean and India that shed a different light on his talent.

Coming from a quite different angle, Slim Aarons's **Once upon a Time** (Abrams £52) is a chronicle of the rich, famous and only intermittently beautiful people from the post-war years up to the 1980s. Although a must for Hello! readers, it is a fascinating, if bizarre catalogue of how the privileged lived until quite recently. More generally interesting is **The Luminous Years: Portraits at Mid-century** by Karl Bissinger (Abrams £24.95), which contains portraits of the now old or dead when they were young, including a cadaverous Marlon Brando.

Some of Aaron and Bissinger's subjects pop up in **Sellebrity** (Phaidon £24.95), a catalogue of the seminal advertising campaigns and trail-blazing magazine covers of George Lois, the pioneer American communicator, who was one of the first to use the famous as

Top five

## THE COMPLETE COSTUME HISTORY by Auguste Racinet



Taschen £100  
The essential volume for anyone interested in dress

## HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

Thames & Hudson £48



Indispensable volume of the master's classic images from around the world

## RAJASTHAN by Pauline van Lynden

Assouline £35



Sumptuous, evocative pictures reflecting the colour of life in Rajasthan

## SELLEBRITY

Phaidon £24.95



Brilliant catalogue of George Lois's seminal advertising campaigns

## MOTOR CARS OF THE CLASSIC ERA

by Michael Furnam



Abrams £34  
Packed with beautiful images of luxury cars; not just for buffs

