

Gonzo's Last Gasp

Hunter S. Thompson's double
whammy from beyond the grave.

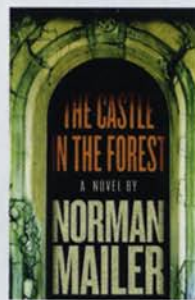
Gonzo by **Hunter S. Thompson** (Ammo Books, \$300), and *The Mutineer* by **Hunter S. Thompson** (Simon & Schuster, \$32)

For 300 bucks you can be one of 3,000 people to get a posthumous Hunter S. Thompson fix in a prissy cloth slipcase. Call it HST porn in the art book equivalent of a brown paper bag. Upstart L.A.-based publisher Ammo Books uncovers the artier side of Thompson in *Gonzo*, a project begun before the Doctor's suicide in early 2005. Fans of Thompson will be happy to learn that the book does not provide a look at an as-yet-undocumented passion for sculpture or oil portraiture. Rather, it serves as a sort of a colorized version of the *Fear & Loathing Letters*, offering biography via the type of self-mythologizing ephemera for which the man is famous: photos of the author passed out amid empty cans of Schlitz beer, a press release on the official Eglin A.F.B. letterhead declaring himself a "morale problem," and Polaroids with trophy marlins, among them.

There are many photographs taken by Thompson—at least one of them is of a naked woman overlooking the Pacific Ocean—and book buyers will also receive a limited edition print of a Thompson photograph.

For all that has been written about him (quite a bit of it excavated by Thompson himself) one does not yet hear the bottom of the barrel scraping. But we must be getting close. In addition to *Gonzo* and a wave of Thomsoniania in recent months comes a third gigantic collection of his letters, *The Mutineer: Rants, Ravings, and Missives From the Mountaintop 1977-2005*, covering dispatches penned from Thompson's Woody Creek, Colorado compound.

An introduction penned by Johnny Depp may not be overly enlightening, but perhaps the last couple of years in the book will shed some insight into Thompson's failing health, and unpleasant, much-speculated-upon demise. —Jeff Johnson

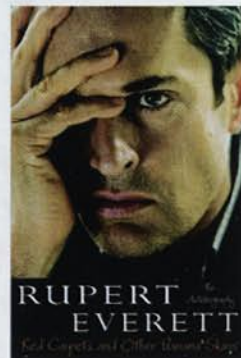


The Castle in the Forest (Random House)
by **Norman Mailer**

The apotheosis of Norman Mailer is complete. With his latest cinder block of a novel, *The Castle in the Forest*, Mailer returns to the scene of his first literary triumph, *The Naked and the Dead*. But where his 1948 debut concerned itself with World War II's bit players, his new novel shows little interest in the rabble. No, Mailer has graduated to decidedly larger prey—in the form of Adolf Hitler. Narrated by an SS officer who later reveals himself as an assistant to the devil, *The Castle in the Forest* tells the epic and soulless tale of three generations of the Hitler family. With the Mailer of old, at least one felt that he wrote for a better reason than satisfying his own ego. Now he moves his players like a ten-year-old boy at a game of Risk, an irritable god among his playthings. —Guy Cimbalo

Red Carpets and Other Banana Skins (Warner Books)
by **Rupert Everett**

Rupert Everett is a rare bird in the Hollywood aviary: a smart actor who's equally adept with a pen. In his new memoir (and fourth book), the star of such pratfall fare as *My Best Friend's Wedding* fixes a refreshingly de-camped gaze on the screaming vortex of "the actor's life." His recollections of a peripatetic existence—from a bucolic childhood in England to the klieg-lights of Hollywood (which he dubs "the lubed desert"), via the steaming streets of Bombay and the meat-grinder nightclubs of pre-SoBe Miami—are practically Proustian. Everett can be wittily acerbic, but his deceptively reserved description of his elderly father could move a reader to tears. In *Red Carpets and Banana Skins*—slippery and dangerous obstacles both—he ultimately concludes that it's not how high you climb that matters, but rather how elegantly you fall. —Marianne Hagan



RUPERT EVERETT