



ROCK-CRITICALLY CORRECT

"The Fader": Prettying Up A Coffee Table Near You



And now it's time for another installment of *Rock-Critically Correct*, in which the most recent issues of *Rolling Stone*, *Blender*, *Vibe*, and *Spin* are given a once-over by an anonymous writer who's contributed to several of those titles--or maybe even all of them! After the click-through, he/she goes off the beaten path to look at the new issue of *The Fader*:

Before a few days ago, your correspondent had never read an issue of--or for that matter, an article in--*The Fader*. He had from time to time glanced at the mag while over at his friend's homes; it tended to be front and center, alongside *Wallpaper*, on the coffee table.

Not to get all David Brooks upside your head, but YC did not have to read the mag in detail to understand that *Fader* is A Beautiful Thing that a certain kind of person likes to have around to signify something about himself or herself to visitors.

This kind of person used to do rather a lot of drugs and go to clubs to dance (and may still do occasionally), and was evangelistic about club music, but his or her tastes have since broadened. He or she is likely crazy about Panda Bear's solo album and is quite proud of the "screwed up" hip-hop remixes that grace their iTunes playlists. If these folks live in NYC, they are counting the days to next month's Brooklyn appearance by Daft Punk (who are profiled in this issue) and maybe checked out the Roky Erickson show in the same borough, which is briefly noted as well. Hell, they probably live in Greenpoint! Being spotted with the other **magazines** that YC normally considers in this space would send the wrong message to onlookers.

This speaks well of *Fader's* chances in the collapsing magazine market, and YC would guess that's exactly how the mag's financier's have played it. There's an almost *Vanity Fair*-ish heft to *Fader*: It's perfect-bound, it covers all the artists that groove-oriented hipsters need to be familiar with, the design is clean and elegant, and man, them pitchers are mighty purty--so purty that they shame the mainstream music mags.

Anyway, the July/August edition is alternately designated the "Summer Blockbuster" and the "Summer Music" issue. Seems fairly arbitrary, as

the issues your boy has seen were pretty much focused upon music. The two centerpiece artists each take covers--Brazil's Bonde do Role on the front, Miami-by-way-of-New Orleans' Lil' Wayne on the back.

YC has enjoyed Lil' Wayne since he was in his early teens tearing shit up in Juvenile and Hot Boys videos, so he's pleased to report that Nick Barat has extracted YC's favorite quote from a recording artist in 2007 in his Wayne story. While shadowing Wayne, Barat asks him whether his astounding work rate (ceaselessly contributing verses to tons of records, making his own music) ever tires him.

"I wake up," says Wayne, "smoke weed, fuck bitches, get my dick sucked...and do this shit...What am I supposed to do, take a vacation? You got a job, but this the vacation right here. I can't front, though--I took that line from the nigga from Kiss." This is kind of quote that can make a hack almost weep with gratitude when it leaves an interviewee's mouth.

As for the Bonde do Role piece, YC recently only became aware of the "Beastie Boys of Baile-funk," so he appreciates that Edwin "Stats" Houghton goes into great detail detailing how the trio are not, as popularly assumed, "barefoot badasses from a Rio shantytown but 20-something smart-ass suburbanites," how they make music that Brazilian hipsters associate with their housekeepers, and how Philadelphia beat impresario Diplo discovered them.

However, Houghton doesn't seem to have elicited much participation, interview-wise, from BdR themselves. He presents two fragments from conversations with the evidently easily distracted band. He also notes that Marina Vello flashes her bra onstage--but does not every Brazilian female between the ages of 15 and 35 do the same? So, while there's

color aplenty in the piece, there's little evidence that substantial conversation between interviewer and cover subject took place. Lots of artsy pictures of the band horsing around, though!

Similarly, in a quick "new artist" story in the mag's FOB (called Gen F), we learn that one Jason Isbell has left the Drive-By Truckers and has a new album, *Sirens of the Ditch*. But writer Will Welch's text includes no quotes from Isbell (unless a quick reference to having "parted ways" with the Truckers comes from Isbell and not, as it would be more likely, from press-release boilerplate). There is a nice, noirish photo of Isbell though! And a preview of Kanye West's *Graduation* consists of artist Vania Zouravilov depicting "the dominant themes in West's new work in a similarly bold and culturally-clashing manner." What follows are six pages of "hyperstylized Japanese visual art"; West's visage is on the sixth.

For you see, you can read lotsa shit about any of these people using the device you currently gazing at. But *Fader* is a Beautiful Thing with Beautiful Pictures on nice paper; this is something your guests can look at briefly while you're occupied in the kitchen. (The issue is also available [as a PDF](#), but in no way can you truly appreciate the loveliness of the magazine's aesthetic in that format.) There's insight to be gleaned from this issue of *Fader* (and past issues, I'm sure). But insight ain't the point.

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