RACQUET

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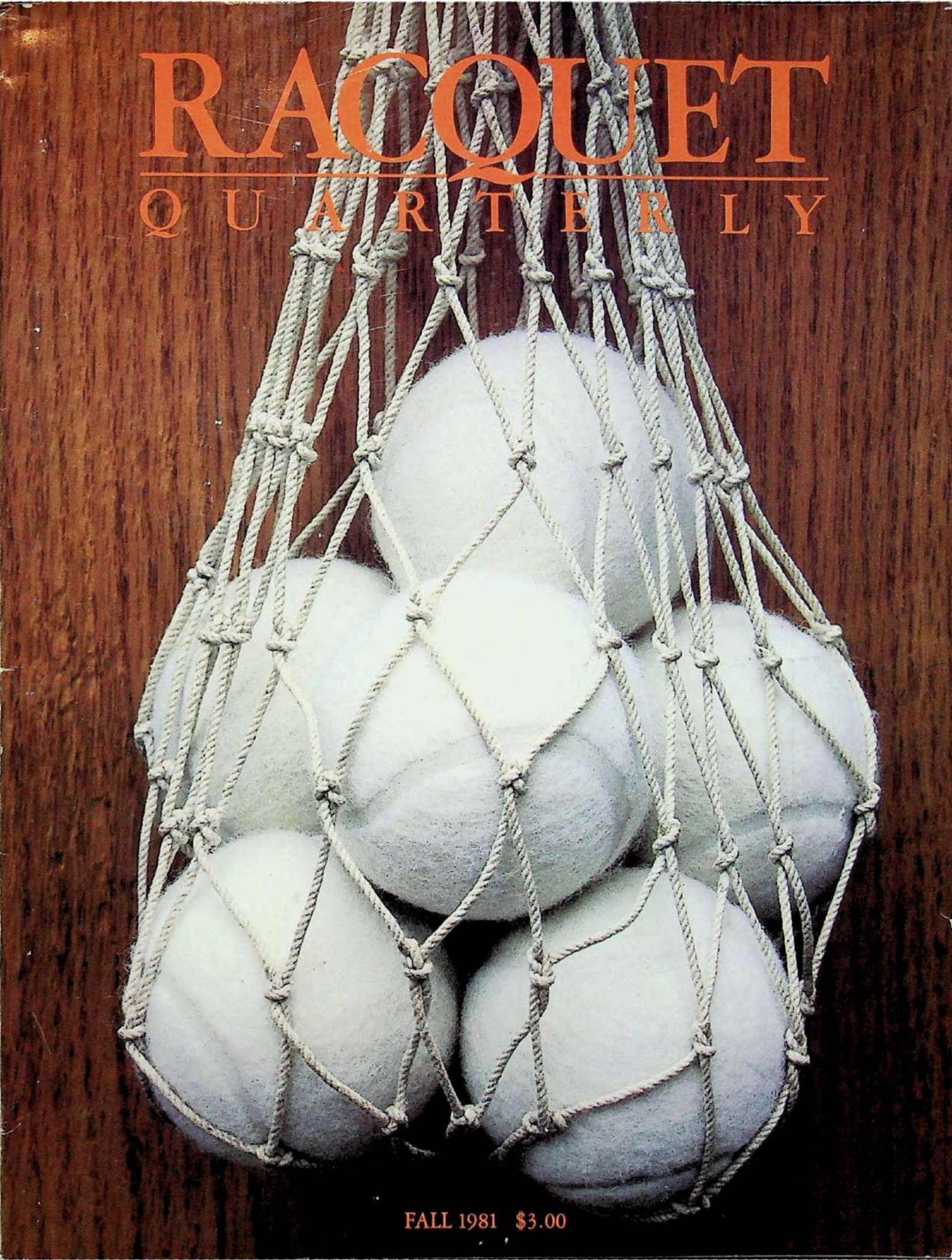

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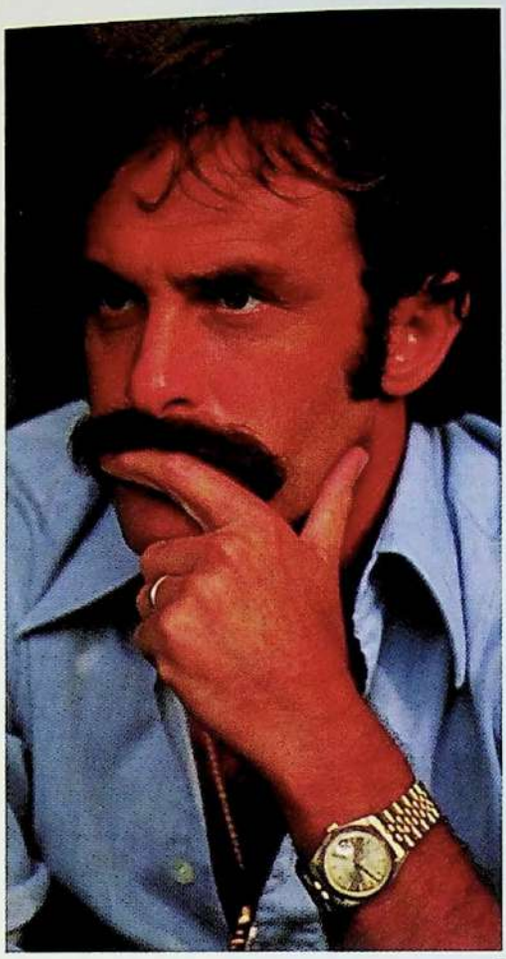
The game, Newk and Rolex.



Consider the physics of tennis. At one hundred forty-seven feet per second, the ball covers the distance from server to receiver in under half a second. One simply doesn't have the time to think. It's a matter of instinct. John Newcombe calls it "preacting." John believes that the game is not really between you and the other guy; it's between you and yourself.

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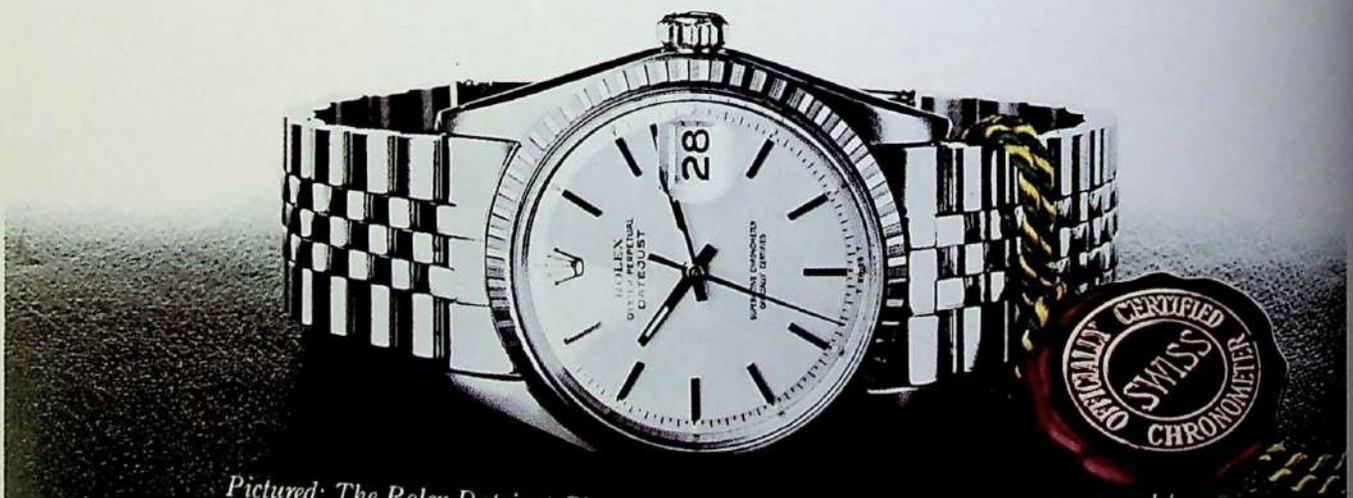

Pictured: The Rolex Datejust Chronometer in stainless steel with matching bracelet. Also available in steel and 14 kt. yellow gold, and 18 kt. yellow gold.

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THE GAME

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in spite of the absence of a coherent order to the game,
almost in spite of itself, tennis has now come of age as a spectator sport.
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pros were perfect gentlemen and audiences a clubby coterie—
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in the minds of American sports fans.
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that the media and their sponsors have caught on to an old secret:
it is the personalities that make the game worth watching.
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The Editors

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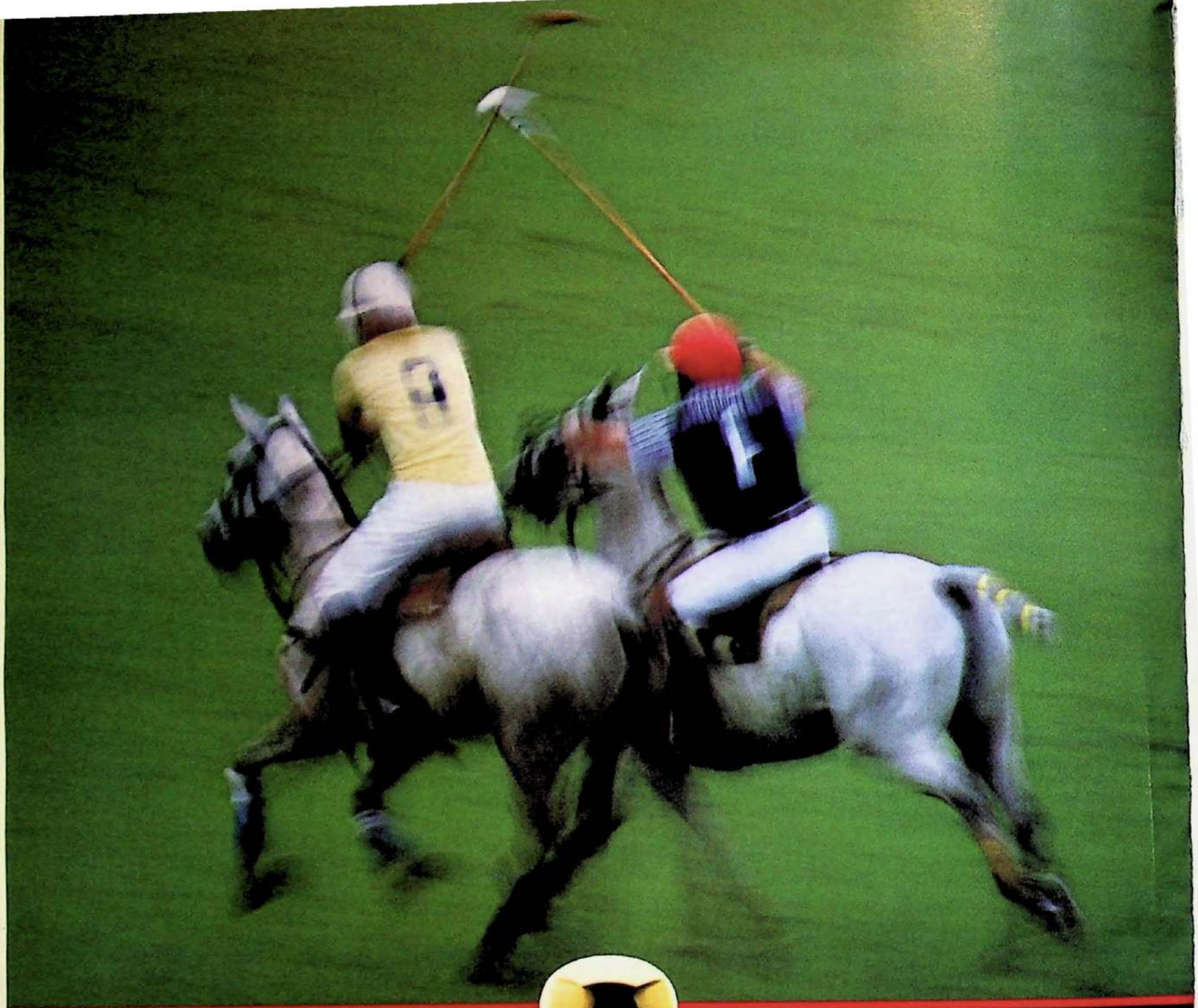

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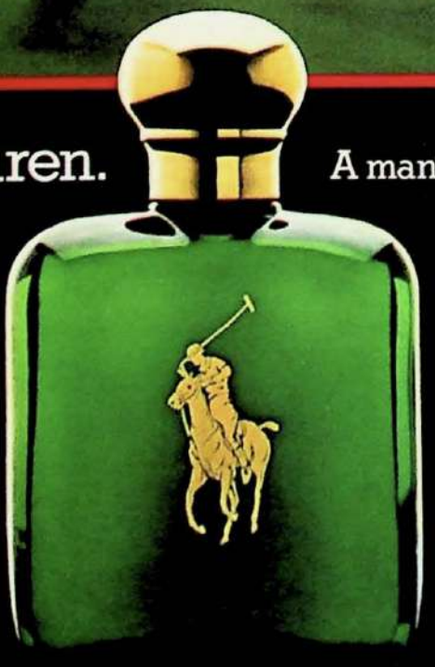

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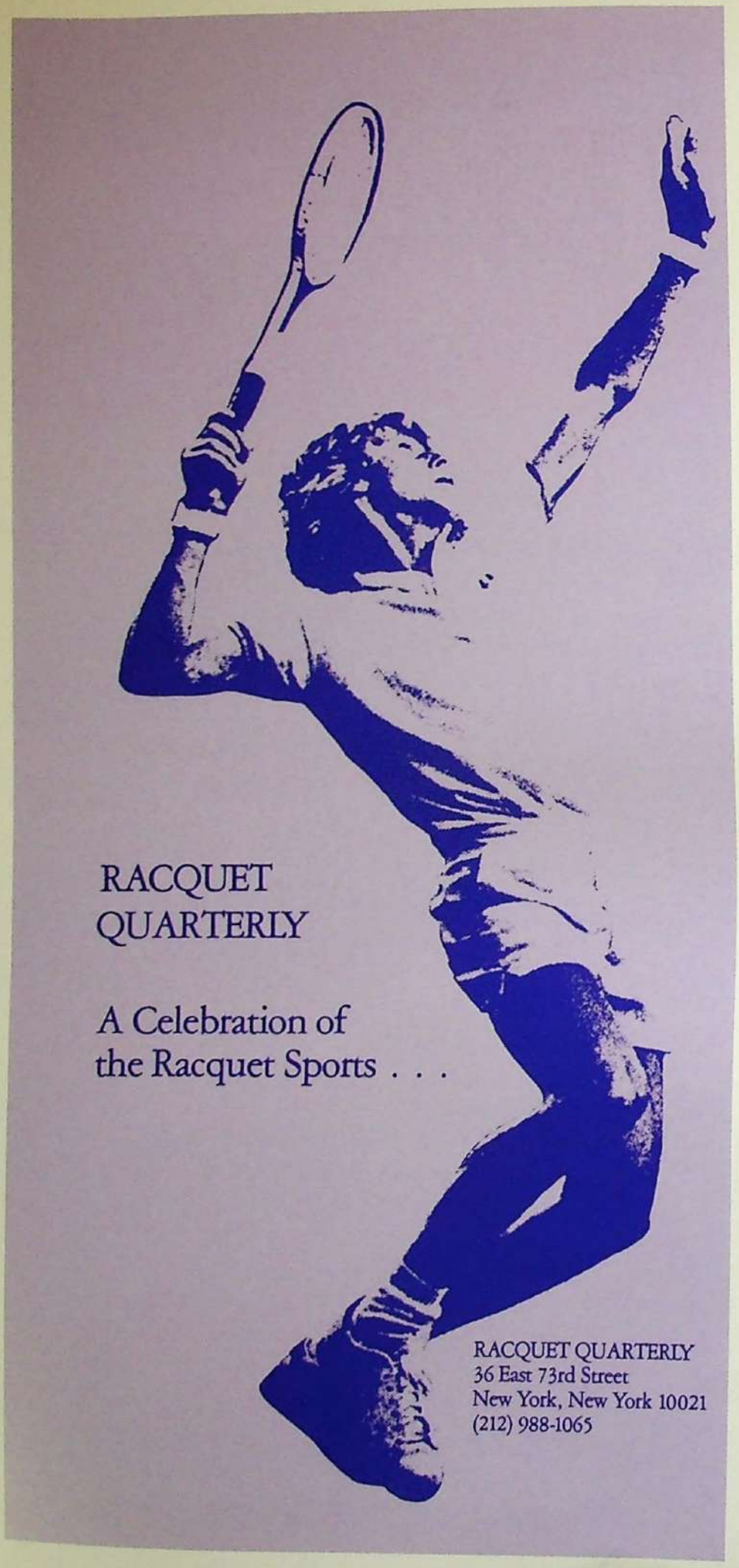

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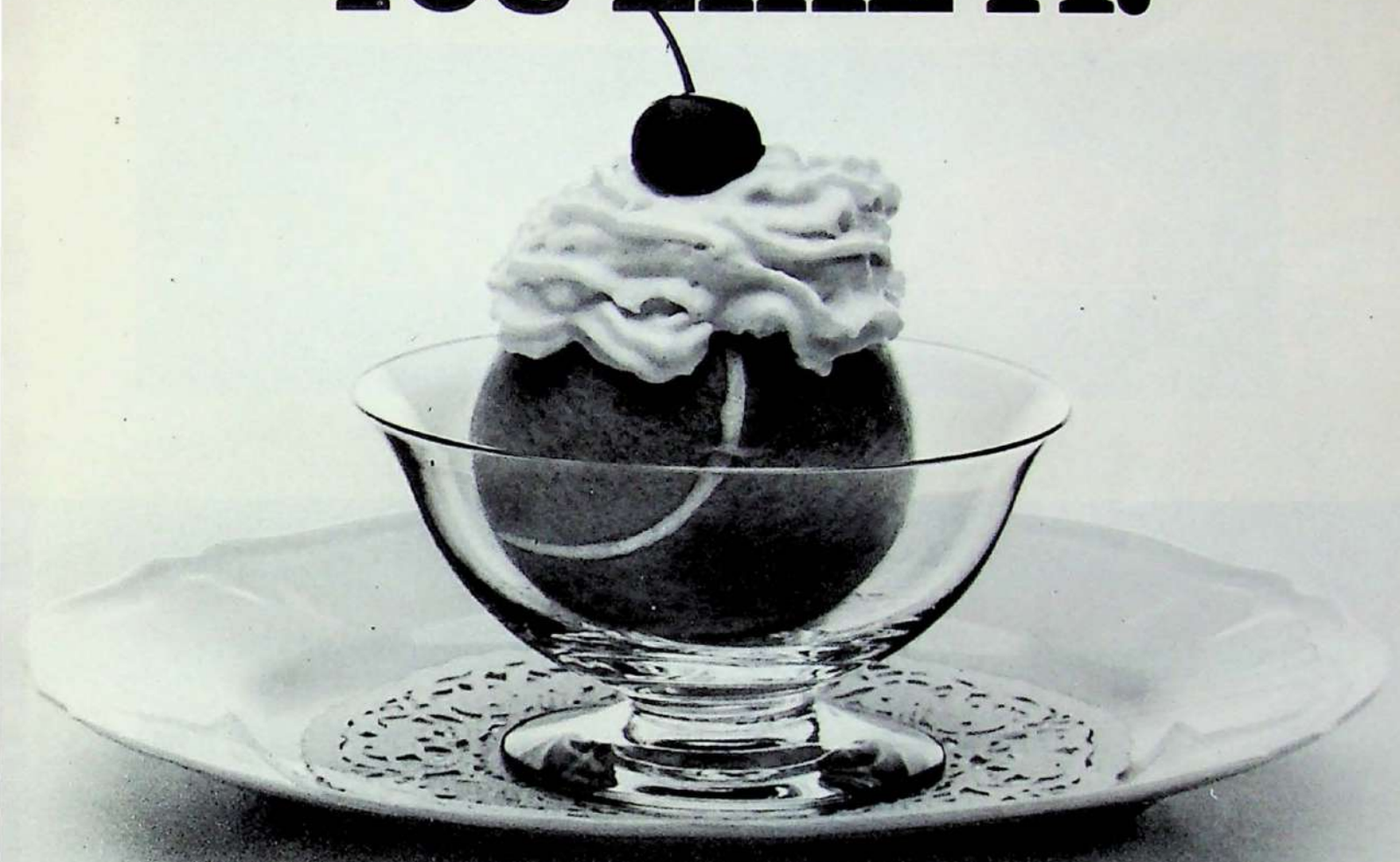

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RESORT

COURTSIDE

The racquet world

A Bird in the Hand

If, in 1941, you were dancing in the Rainbow Room atop Rockefeller Center, at a certain point in the evening the music would have been interrupted to allow a floor show to go on. And what would you see under the lights? A chanteuse? A standup comedian? A fashion parade? Tap dancers?

If you had expected any of these conventional acts, you would have been quite surprised.

The evening's entertainment was an exhibition badminton match between two of the game's finest pros, Ken Davidson and Hugh Forgie, who embellished their world class playing with a magical repertory of stunning trick shots. The Rainbow Room management knew the Davidson-Forgie act would thrill the crowd, since the two athletes had just recently played a series of matches as part of the Radio City Music Hall's stage show, and had brought down the house. Originally scheduled there on a gamble as an unusual stunt, the badminton act had won such thunderous applause that it was held over at the Music Hall week after week, even as the jugglers, acrobats, and trained animals moved on to less prestigious stops.

But how could this be? Badminton in sophisticated New York City at the renowned Radio City Music Hall and then at the Rainbow Room? Wasn't badminton that tame weekend game you played with the children on the lawn or the beach, using plastic equipment bought in the toy section of a department store?

This question can be answered with a qualified "Yes" and a resounding "No!" The family fun-and-games version of badminton, where all the equipment comes neatly packaged in a single box, does indeed involve hitting a light object back and forth over a high net without allowing the projectile to reach the ground, and the scoring is the same as in serious badminton. Other than that, the two versions of the sport are as similar as a pony cart and a racing car.

Championship badminton, played enthusiastically in New York in the decade before World War II, and in many areas of the world today, can equal any sport in artistry, physical and mental challenge, and, of course, sheer enjoyment. The game is certainly best appreciated by its players, but badminton can also be a marvelous spectator sport when competitors have the expertise of Davidson and Forgie. And, as for subtlety, badminton might very well be the world's true game of inches. Unlike the leisurely family activity on the lawn or beach, serious badminton must be played indoors, since even the most gentle of breezes will wreak havoc with the refined precision and skills that top players bring to the game. As in tennis, the court measurements must be exact, but badminton racquets and shuttlecocks (called "birds" or "birdies") must be manufactured to standards of precision that make the admittedly rigorous guidelines for tennis equipment look comparatively forgiving. For example, you might not like to play tennis with balls that are too lively or somewhat dead, but you can do so and still call the game tennis. You may prefer a 13½ ounce tennis racquet, but if the only one around weights 14½ ounces it probably won't make too much difference in your game once you get used to it. The best badminton racquets, however, have to weigh exactly 5½ ounces to ensure top performance. A difference of half an ounce would be considered enormous. As for the birds, constructed of a half-sphere of cork topped by a crown of

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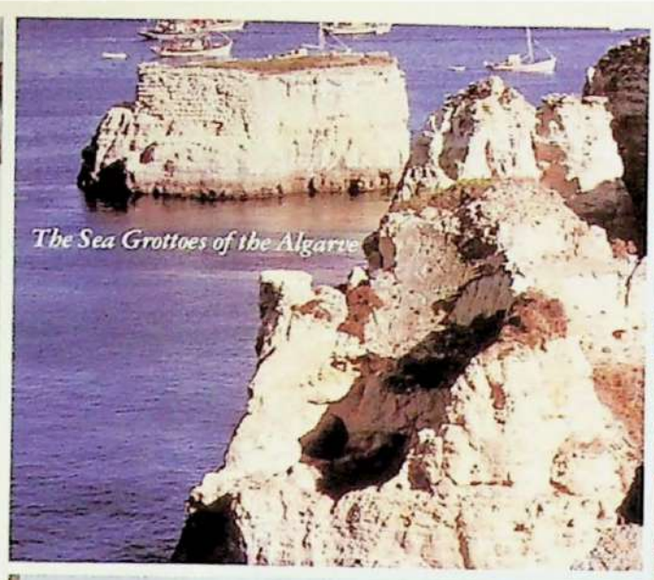
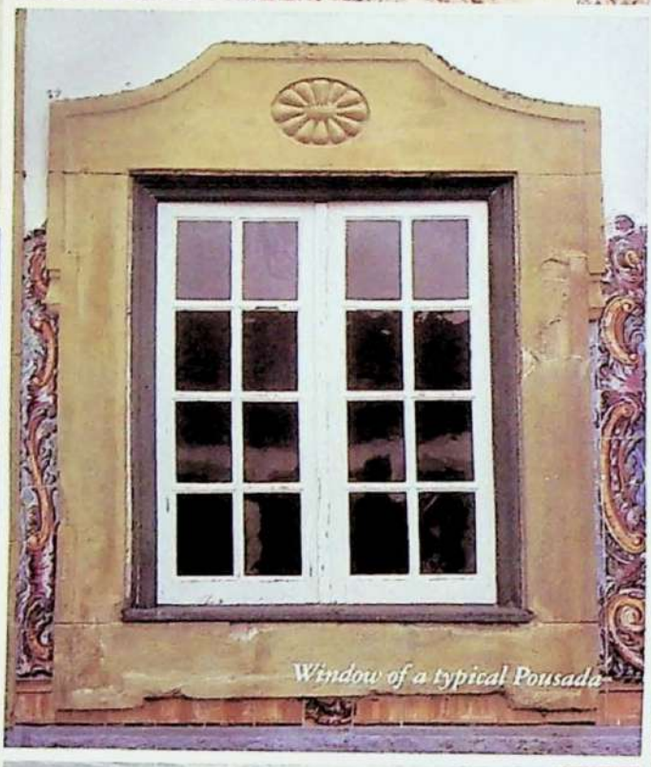


The Sea Grottoes of the Algarve

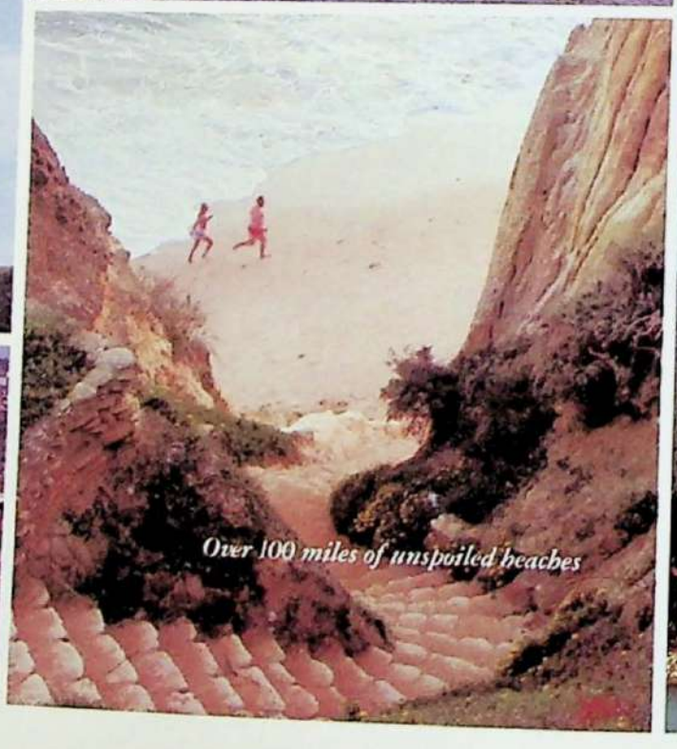


Window of a typical Pousada

Estoril, on the Lisbon Coast

The Gardens of Braga Cathedral

Windmills dot the countryside



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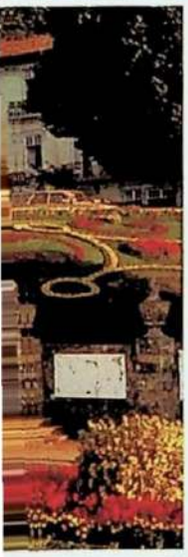

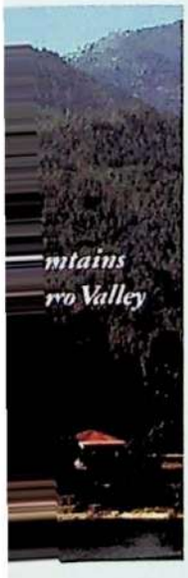

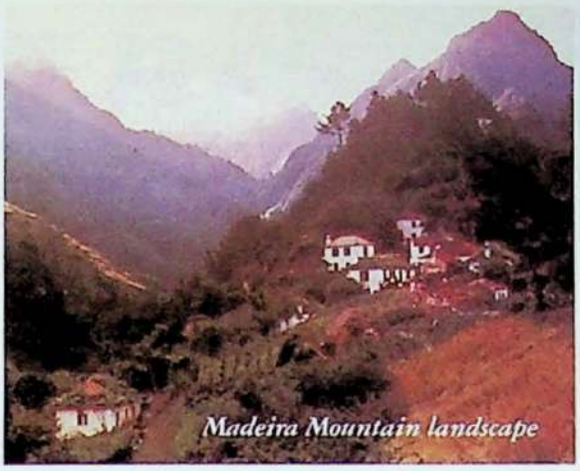

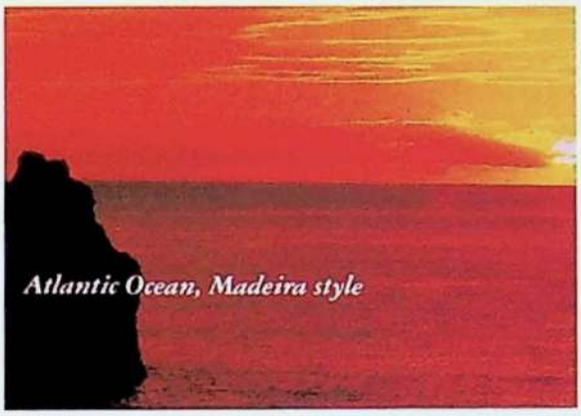

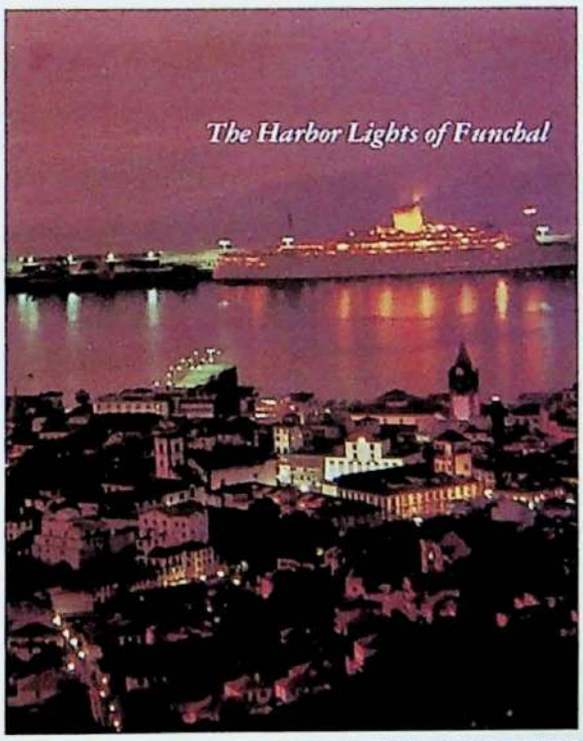

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goosefeathers, each must be 73.85 grains. (For those who don't remember their metrology, and to whom a grain is but a standard unit of sand, 73.85 grains equals roughly 1/6 of an ounce.)

The feathers on a bird will take a tremendous beating in an energetic badminton match, where a hard hit can produce a velocity of better than 160 miles per hour, at very close quarters. Not surprisingly, even in a game of 15 points the chances are good that three or four birds will be used. It should be noted, though, that only championship badminton players perform with this kind of intensity. Fewer birds are sacrificed on lower levels of play.

In any case, badminton is easy to take up, and anyone with some experience in other racquet sports can become proficient at it rather quickly. The history of the game and its current international popularity confirm its enduring attractions, and it's sad that in New York, where badminton first flourished in this country, the sport is now virtually unknown.

Badminton was first played in India in the mid-nineteenth century, and was called Poona after the city near Bombay where the game is said to have originated. British soldiers stationed there took up the sport in the late 1860's, and badminton was introduced to England shortly afterward. The first organized club in this country, the Badminton Club of New York, was formed in 1878.

By 1940 the game was being played throughout the British Commonwealth, particularly in Canada, India, Malaya, South Africa and New Zealand, as well as in such disparate places as Scandinavia and Mexico. Today nearly 50 countries send competitors to the World Championships, an event which draws enormous, enthusiastic crowds. At Wembley Stadium in London a few years ago I had the opportunity to see some of the world's finest players in action. From my observations, the Indonesians in that tournament were clearly the world's strongest team. By most accounts, they still are.

The United States still has some

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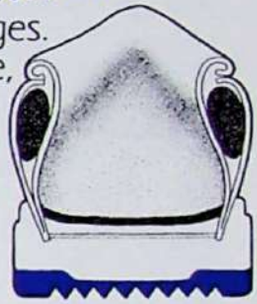

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fine players, however, most of whom come from California and the Midwestern states that border on Canada. But only one American, David G. Freeman of Pasadena, has ever risen to the height of world champion. From 1939 to 1942, Freeman was unbeatable. After the war, he extended his badminton reign into the late 1940's.

With the exception of Freeman and a few others, the best American players from that period were likely to emerge from the Old 69th Badminton Club, named for the armory in which they played in New York. (It was there that I took up badminton, found I had some aptitude for it, and fell in love with the game.) The Old 69th boasted such players as Billy Markham, Clint Stephens, and Mary Hagan, all of national championship calibre. We were also lucky enough to benefit from the teaching of Ken Davidson and Hugh Forgie when the two aces weren't competing or giving exhibitions.

Playing alongside and against such stars, I soon transcended the status of a journeyman badminton player. In my first year in competition I won the Metropolitan Class C championships, and triumphed in the Class B tournament the following season. These victories earned me Class A status, membership (at the bottom, to be sure) in the splendid Old 69th team, and entry into the National Championships held at the Old 69th. For all my prior distinctions, I drew Dave Freeman in the first round. The outcome of the match astonished no one, but I did manage to squeeze out a few points before Freeman, scarcely warmed up, dispatched me with ease. It was glory enough to have been on the same court with him and, even if he didn't have much of a workout, I certainly did. While he just coasted, I fought to extend our rallies as long as possible, that is, until he was ready to end them.

In these years I learned that the strenuous physical demands of badminton should not be underestimated, particularly when you're playing someone who's better than you are. Under those circumstances an hour of singles play can be devastating, even if you're in good condition. And though doubles badminton is considerably less exhausting than singles, I would maintain that it's still much tougher than tennis. To illustrate my position, I would dare anyone to play two hours of doubles badminton without resting.

But why is that the case? The playing area in question doesn't take up much more than half the space of a tennis court, so it doesn't take much running to cover it. But pure running speed, a crucial asset in most sports, is of less importance in this game. Instead, badminton demands an atmosphere of relentless subtlety in which success depends largely upon fooling an opponent with unexpected shots while at the same time foiling his efforts to fool you. Often a sudden move will be followed by an immediate reversal of direction. At the unimaginable speed at which championship badminton is played, that means long strides, intense stretching, tremendous dexterity, and lighting reflexes, particularly in the wrist.

Since the power of a badminton shot derives almost completely from the wrist, a player approaches each shot with his wrist cocked all the way back. This anticipatory motion will look the same whether he's about to clear the bird over your head to the backcourt with a strong overhead stroke, smash it like a tennis ace, or double-cross you at the last moment by gently tapping the bird with an imperceptible turn of the wrist that sends it barely clearing the 5 foot net to drop like a plummet into the far corner of your court, still only inches from the net.

Strategy therefore dictates that a player return to midcourt after every shot, and that he be ready to go forward or back, right or left, once he sees his adversary make contact with the bird. Surprise being the key to any effective badminton offense, anticipation will be of little use if your opponent is any good at all. One predictable result of the game's physical requirements is an inordinately high frequency of pulled muscles. Still, I have never heard of a serious badminton injury.

Any indoor area measuring 25′ by 50′ will accommodate a badminton court, even with alleys for doubles. A few extra feet both ways to give additional side and end space are convenient but not absolutely necessary. Except for smashes and drop shots, which must land in court to be in play, badminton shots are "clears" hit powerfully up in the air which drop almost vertically when the feathers on the bird take effect. That means that there's virtually no rushing outside the boundaries of the court, the way tennis players occasionally must do on angled shots or lobs. The frequent use of "clears" means that a high ceiling is essential for badminton play—25 feet at a minimum. But that sort of requirement is easy to find in almost any armory, gymnasium or, as was so popular in New York around 1940, in the social area spaces in many churches. Dark adhesive tape for boundaries, decent lighting, two posts and a net, and you're in business, without the enormous investment required for other racquet facilities.

So why did so pleasant a game with so many avid practitioners fade out of sight in New York after the war? I think it was basically because the armories and the churches had been the homes for New York badminton and, between 1942 and the end of 1945, they were being used for military and civilian defense purposes. Also, after the war there weren't enough enterprising players around to start over again from scratch and stir up a new enthusiasm. What is more, the veterans from the pre-war years were by that time too old for the physical demands of top-grade badminton. At that level serious competition is really a young man's domain. Like tennis, you can play it forever, particularly doubles, and still enjoy it, but the champions and the near-champions are likely to be over the hill when they pass thirty. These are precisely the types who would have had a passionate enough interest to initiate a new badminton boom.

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The new crop of youngsters had never been exposed to the game's attractions and, indeed, probably never heard that there was such a sport. Consequently, badminton, like so many charms of the city forty years ago—open two-decker busses and the Ziegfeld Follies—faded from view.

Sometimes my wife finds my old Jack Purcell racquet lying high upon a closet shelf and asks politely if *now* she can throw it away. I always respond that it's the closest thing I have to a family heirloom, and what's an extra 5½ ounces of junk in my closest? Yet I'll admit that the last time I ever used it was around noon on Sunday, December 7, 1941. In the middle of a game a fellow came running out of the office screaming to us all to come and listen to the radio—Pearl Harbor was being bombed! Two months later I was in the Army and four years later out of it, and badminton had become part of my past. But I do wish it were still around for my children to enjoy as much as I once did.

—Peter Schwed

Double Jeopardy

We received a further report on the adventures of Gus Grouch and Harry Hinder from a member of the Eastern Tennis Umpires Association. They did follow, albeit obliquely, the advice of their sometime referee and full time arbiter. He had suggested that they might minimize the frequency of their on-court disputes by each finding another opponent, but their reputation for imaginative interpretation of the rules of the game had made it difficult for each of them to find anyone. Somewhat in desperation, therefore, they entered the Club Senior Men's Doubles. Their troubles began in the first set of the first round. Grouch and Hinder won the toss. They chose to start with Hinder serving first. To everyone's amazement, including his own, Harry Hinder let fly with an ace. At least he thought it was an ace, but his opponent said, "Sorry, I wasn't ready. Do it over, please."

"What do you mean, you weren't ready?" Hinder replied. "That was an ace. It's our point."

Prepared for just this kind of dispute, his opponent produced the Rule Book, turned to Rule 14 (b), and quoted, "The service is a let if a service or a fault is delivered when the Receiver is not ready." Grouch and Hinder expostulated to no avail. Apparently so upset by the dispute, Hinder lost his service. At the change-over, he and Grouch had a hushed discussion while perusing the Rule Book. In the second game at Ad In, the server hit a bullet serve past Grouch in the Ad court. Grouch was stunned, but Hinder was ready for the occasion. Before the server could claim the game, Hinder from his position at the net called, "I wasn't ready. Play a let."

The server and his partner were speechless for a moment and then the dispute erupted. "*You* weren't ready?"

"That's right. I wasn't ready."

Now Hinder turned to the Rule Book and Rule 14 (b), pointing out the reference there to Rule 12. "Receiver must be ready. Note: the server must wait until the receiver is ready for the second service as well as the first, and if the receiver claims to be not ready and does not make any effort to return a service, the server *may not claim* the point, even though the service was good."

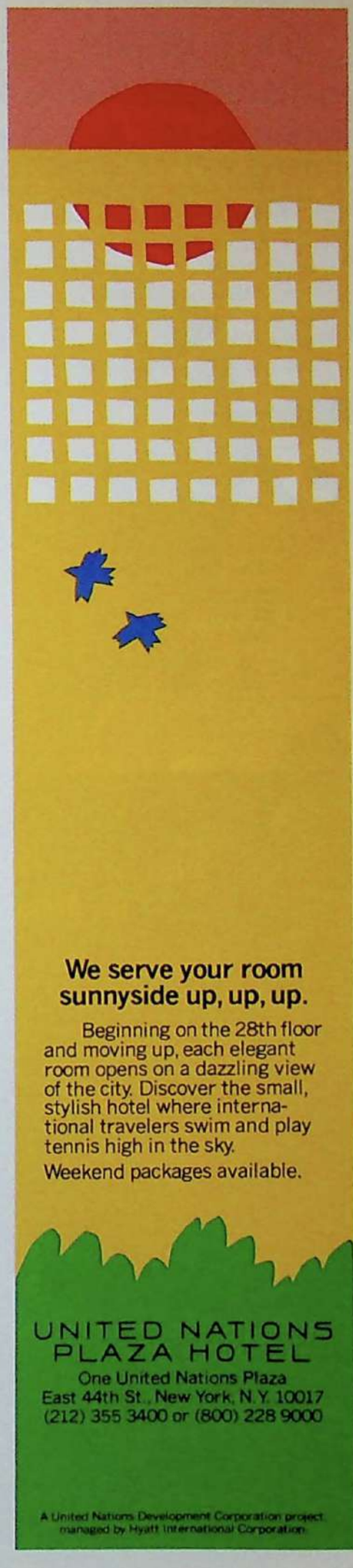
"But you're not the receiver," declared the server. "He is the receiver," he asserted, pointing at Grouch.

"We are the receiving team," said Hinder. "If I'm not ready, then the receiving team is not ready."

The Rule Book passed back and forth without discovery of any reference to the receiving team. After a few minutes of futile argument, Grouch settled the matter by suggesting, "I'll tell you what, fellahs—let's play a let."

That sounded reasonable, as it always does; at least it did to the server's partner. The server returned to his base line, shaking his head, muttering to himself, "But that's no compromise. That's what we were arguing about—whether we should play a let."

A few games later there was another dispute. Grouch was



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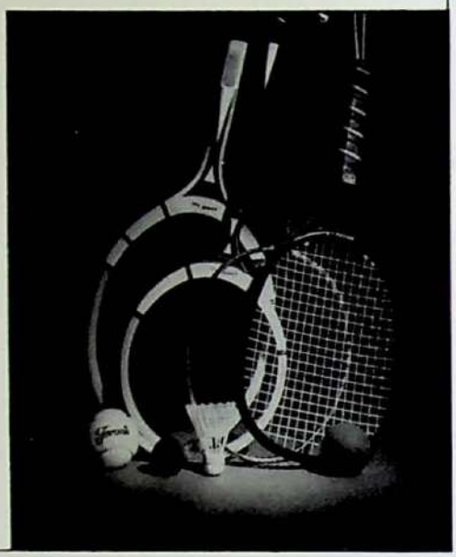

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receiving in the Ad court. The first serve, intended to go down the middle, went astray. Hinder, standing at the service line of the deuce court, caught the ball on the fly and called, "Fault."

The server responded, "No. Our point."

Again some shouts, the race for the Rule Book, and the server read from Rule 40, "The service is a fault . . . if the ball served touches the server's partner or anything which he wears or carries; *but if the ball served touches the partner of the receiver or anything which he wears or carries . . . before it hits the ground, the server wins the point.*"

The words covered the situation all too clearly.

"But it was clearly going to be a fault," Hinder argued.

"But you caught it before it was a fault," replied the server, "and that makes it our point."

"Oh, maybe you're right," said Grouch, trying the same let's-be-reasonable ploy. "Let's play a let."

But the server was ready for this tactic. "Oh, no," he said. "We're right; the point is ours."

There was a distant look in Hinder's eyes. Some wheels were turning.

"All right," he said. "Your point."

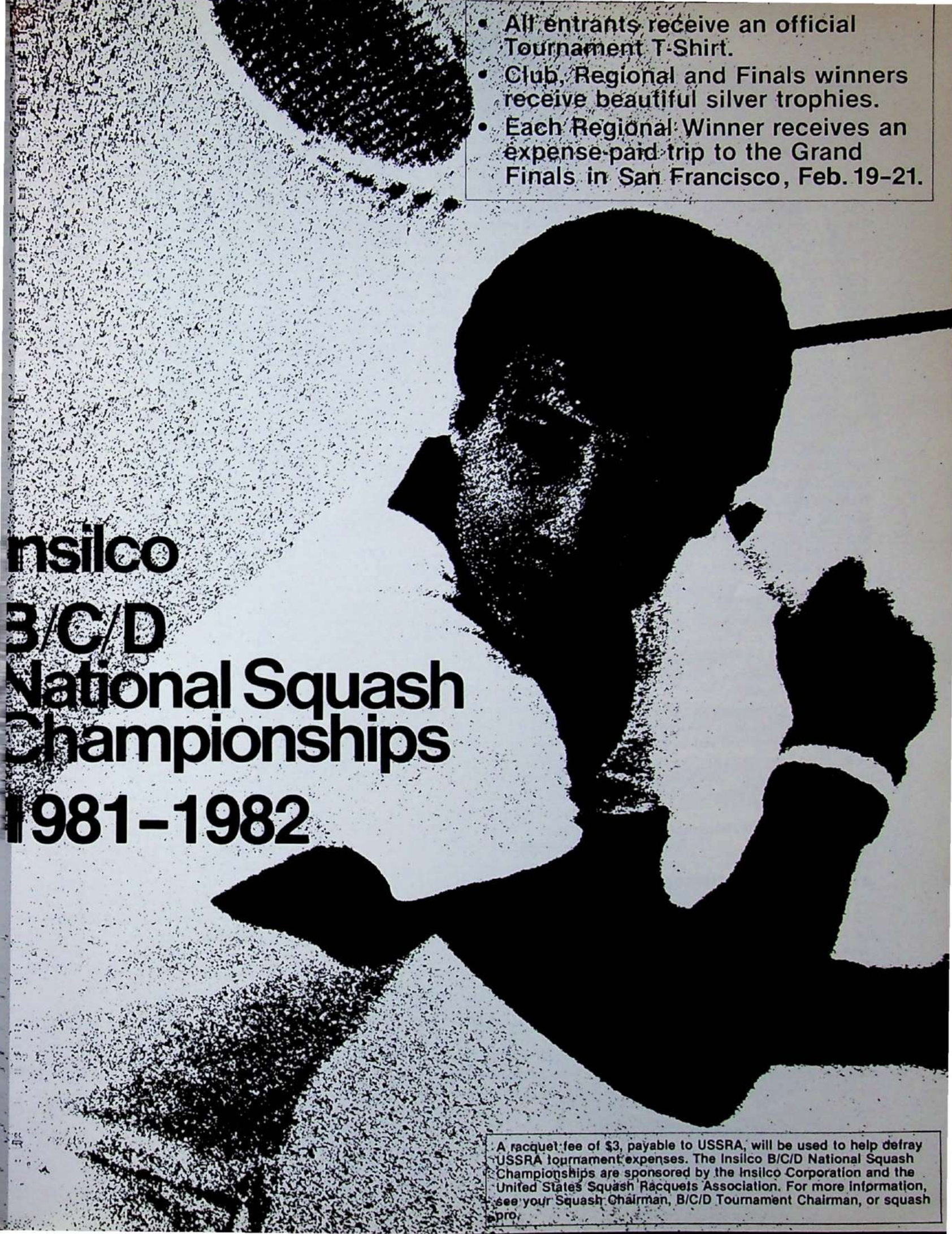
At the next change-over, Hinder and Grouch had another hushed conversation at the side of the court. Grouch looked surprised for a moment, then grinned, and nodded his head.

Hinder, getting ready to serve, called out, "All set? Are you fellows ready?"

The receiver at the base line and his partner at the net both nodded. Hinder served quickly, aiming at the net man. The ball hit him squarely in the middle of the forehead.

"Hah," exclaimed Hinder gleefully, "our point. Ball hits receiver's partner."

When Hinder saw his victim climb over the net, his racquet raised threateningly, he started to run for the Rule Book, but quickly changed his mind, and kept running right to the Club House and the Tournament Director.



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Bloodshed was averted. The Director refunded to Grouch and Hinder their tournament entry fee, let them withdraw from the tournament, and agreed that they could keep the balls.

—Ted Powell

The Unsung Hero

Doing research on the 100th Anniversary of the U.S. Men's Tennis Championships, I came across the draw sheet for the very first Nationals, held in Newport in 1881. Tennis devotees will recall that R.D. Sears won this historic event over a Mr. Glyn in straight sets, 6-0, 6-3, 6-2. Of the 26 men who entered that year, players with names like Coggswell, Newbold, Rathbone, and Nightingale, 24 of them actually took part in Major Wingfield's new game. There was one recorded default, this by a Mr. Eldridge, known among the Newport nabobs as Porky. It seems that his white flannels, to be worn in the first-rounder against a Mr. Smith, suffered a trial-run mishap of embarrassing proportions during a knock-up, forcing Porky to withdraw due to sartorial distress.

The other person not to show was a Mr. bye, who had been scheduled to face a Mr. Shaw. As an amateur tennis historian, I had already learned that the seemingly ubiquitous bye was a most difficult man to trace. But who was this bye fellow anyway? Where did he come from? And how on earth had he managed to compile what was surely the poorest match play record in the history of tennis?

I assumed that some of Newport's old-timers might point me in bye's direction. "Never heard of him," said Ernie "Sawgrass" McCoy, chief groundskeeper at Newport Casino for over 65 years, "but Tilden was the best I ever saw. He could eat anybody's lunch without their knowing."

Then Sam, the octogenarian head tonsor at the Tonsorial Emporium, volunteered, "bye? Sure, I remember him. What a forehand that kid had. Could knock the short hairs off a ball." Sam seemed no less sure when I informed him that bye had never competed at Newport, so I soon concluded that the Newport gerontocracy would be of little help in this search, and I feared that the shifting sands of time had blown over bye's tracks.

Still thirsty for leads, I desperately fought the impulse to panic, and found a glimmer of hope in the words of a former English professor: "Look beyond the constricting prisons of words themselves to see their meaning and their intent.

Looking at the 1881 draw, I noticed that bye's name was purposely left uncapitalized. This dramatic clue led me to suspect that our phantom might very well have been an actor, or an artist, possibly an American epigone of the revolutionary European Impressionists of that period. I went so far as to link him to the great e. e. cummings.

But the fundamental question remained: Why did bye fail to appear at his first match against Shaw?

A look at bye's next entry into the Nationals, this time in 1883, might provide an answer. That year bye was placed opposite the legendary R.D. Sears and, again, he failed to appear. The imperturbable Sears reacted predictably. "It scarcely matters," he commented. "Had he presented himself on court, I would have thrashed the bounder's hide and eaten his lunch without his knowledge." (see Ernie McKoy, *The Quotable Newport,* New York, 1922.)

Now it was clear: bye, who recognized Sears' digestive kleptomania in the form of stolen box lunches, preferred default to starvation.

Or the answer might be far less complicated. In 1881, Shaw was a semifinalist and, by 1883, Sears was already twice champion. It's quite possible that bye might have snuck into town for the tournament, checked his draw and, sensing the utter hopelessness of defeating such powerful opponents, departed as quietly and secretly as he had entered.

But whatever the reason for his sudden egress, bye was not to return to Newport for many years.

Nor was I. Rather than dredge through the dusty tennis archieves o the Golden Age, I chose to pursue my quarry in the records of recent modern tournaments.

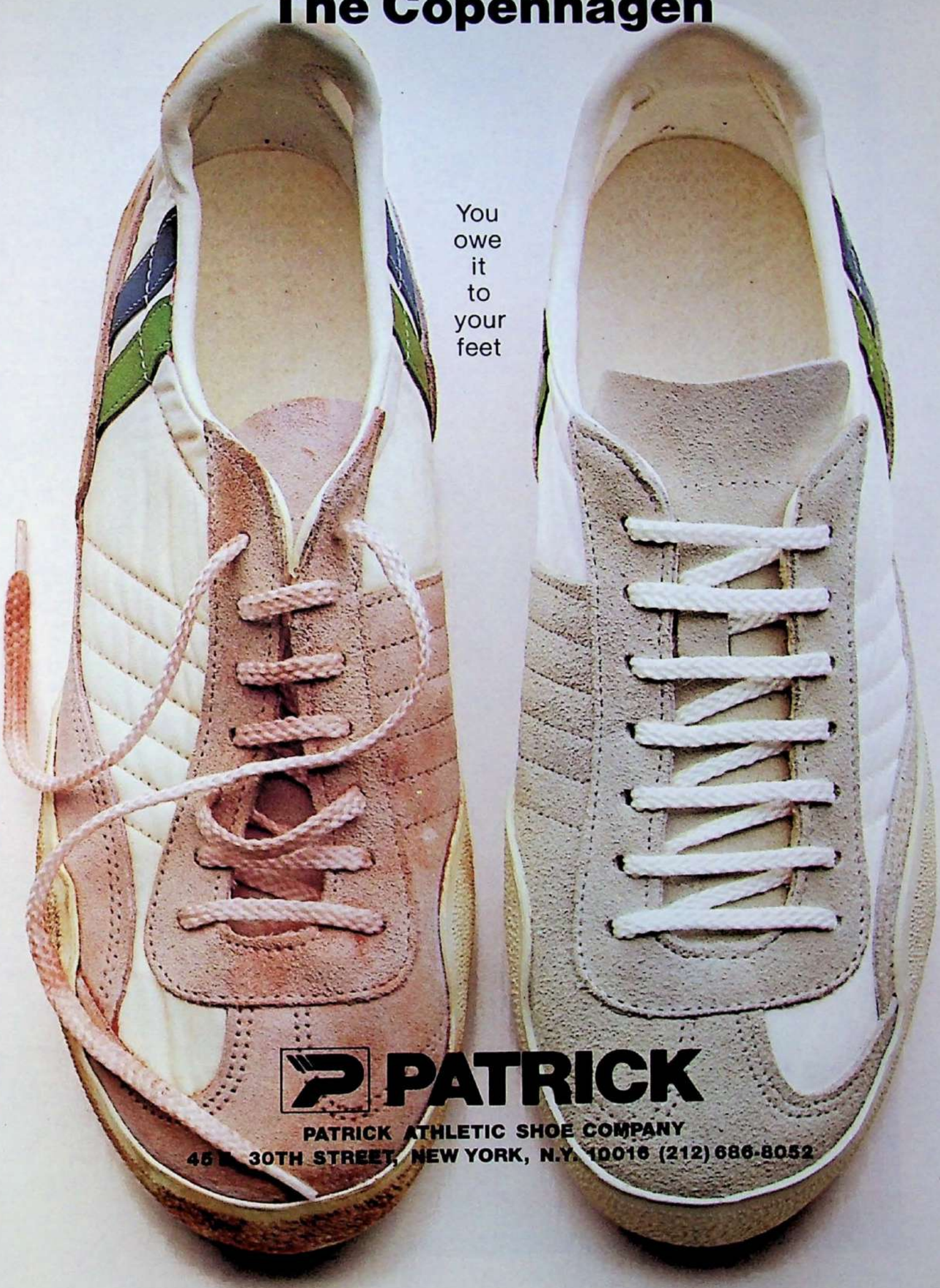
As I searched for his later appearance, the 1979 U.S. Open draw suddenly dropped to the floor from the innumerable papers on my desk. I was astonished at what I saw Of the 128 entrants in the Women's Singles division, exactly one quarter of them went by the name of "bye." This number indicated a substantial increase in the bye population within the space of only three generations. (Perhaps my original quarry had failed to appear for his matches because he was a devoted family man.) But more shocking than the sheer volume of bye participants was the disturbing fact that not one of these unfortunate ladies was able to win her match. Thus, according to my information, the historic bye tradition, dating from the initial 1881 default, stood unadulterated by a single victory.

What accounts for this miserable record? How, given such an extensive succession of losses, could the bye women have been permitted to enter any major tournament?

As I sought to unravel this dilemma, I heard cruel remarks on the subject. "Oh, you're lucky, you've got a buy in the first round," seemed to reflect the prevailing attitude. It was clear that the players, at least those who were named anything other than bye, didn't entertain the possibility of ever losing to a bye. More frightening, perhaps, was the common practice of the scoreboard attendants, who callously advanced anyone facing bye to the second round before the first round match had even taken place.

Given these systematic prejudices, it's no surprise that byes are so infrequently sighted. From the players I interviewed, I learned that byes carefully avoided eating in the players' lounge. Could it be that they feared having their lunches eaten by ruthless competitors? Was it a mere coincidence that no bye

The Copenhagen



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with Rod Humphries

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had ever shown for a post-game interview? Probably not, since no bye had ever shown up for a match.

Those players venturesome enough to look for their bye opponents often returned with harrowing tales. One woman pro recalls that she had once waited ten minutes on the court for a bye to arrive. When this bye, in true character, failed to show, the woman set out in search of her. Entering the ladies' locker room, the pro loudly inquired, "Is anyone in here bye?" and only miraculously avoided being trampled in the rush, although she never did find her opponent.

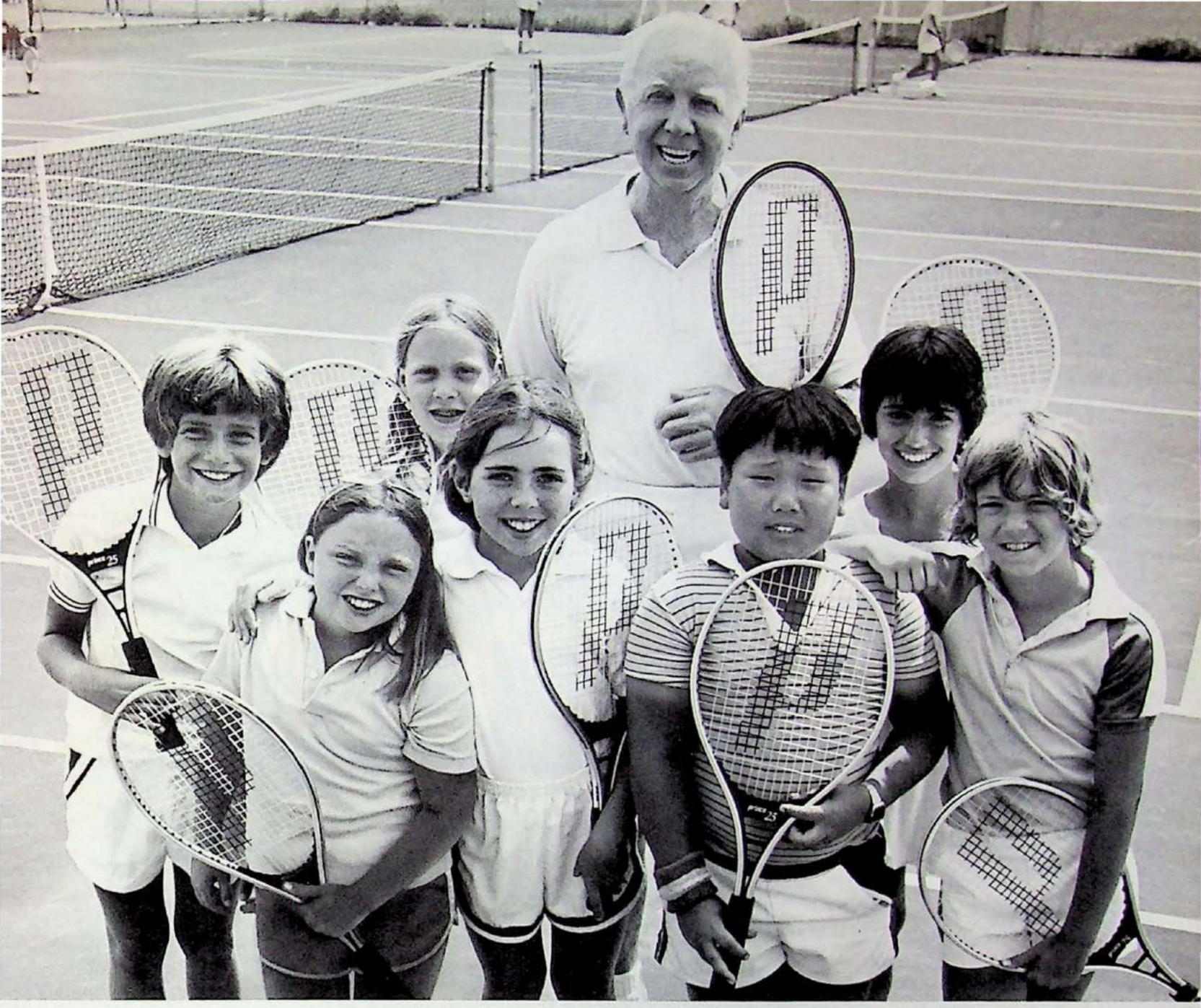
Other efforts to find bye yielded similar stories of horror. Following my most acute archaeological instincts, I persisted in digging for traces of bye, and after months of determined exploration I finally discovered the proverbial writing on the wall. Scrawled next to an abandoned Tartufo concession booth under Louis Armstrong Stadium, the key inscription read: "Hoard not incompetence, but spread it throughout the land." There, in that single sentence, lay the crux of the bye conspiracy.

All available evidence showed that byes throughout the country were following these instructions. Now they've gone so far as to take up other sports, and today we can see whole teams of byes scheduled to take part in the NFL and NBA playoffs. Needless to say, they lose.

But not for a moment would I dare discourage these tenacious byes from competing. I'd be delighted to see them enter the Olympics under the byean banner, a criss-crossed pattern of forget-me-nots emblazoned on a gold field with an unstrung racquet in the lower left corner, and the quotation: "nolo contendere ergo omnia vici." I heartily endorse their efforts to pay endless tribute to human ineffectuality, but I do warn them never to compete among themselves.

The more I learn about these byes, the more I like them. If I keep playing local tourneys, I'm bound to run into one of them on the court. I hope so.

—Peter Talbert



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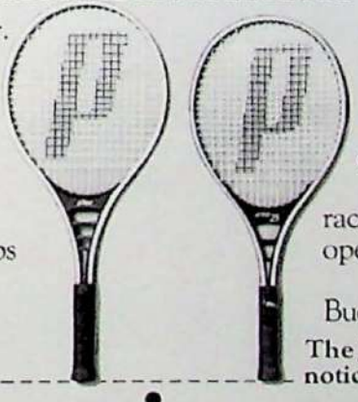

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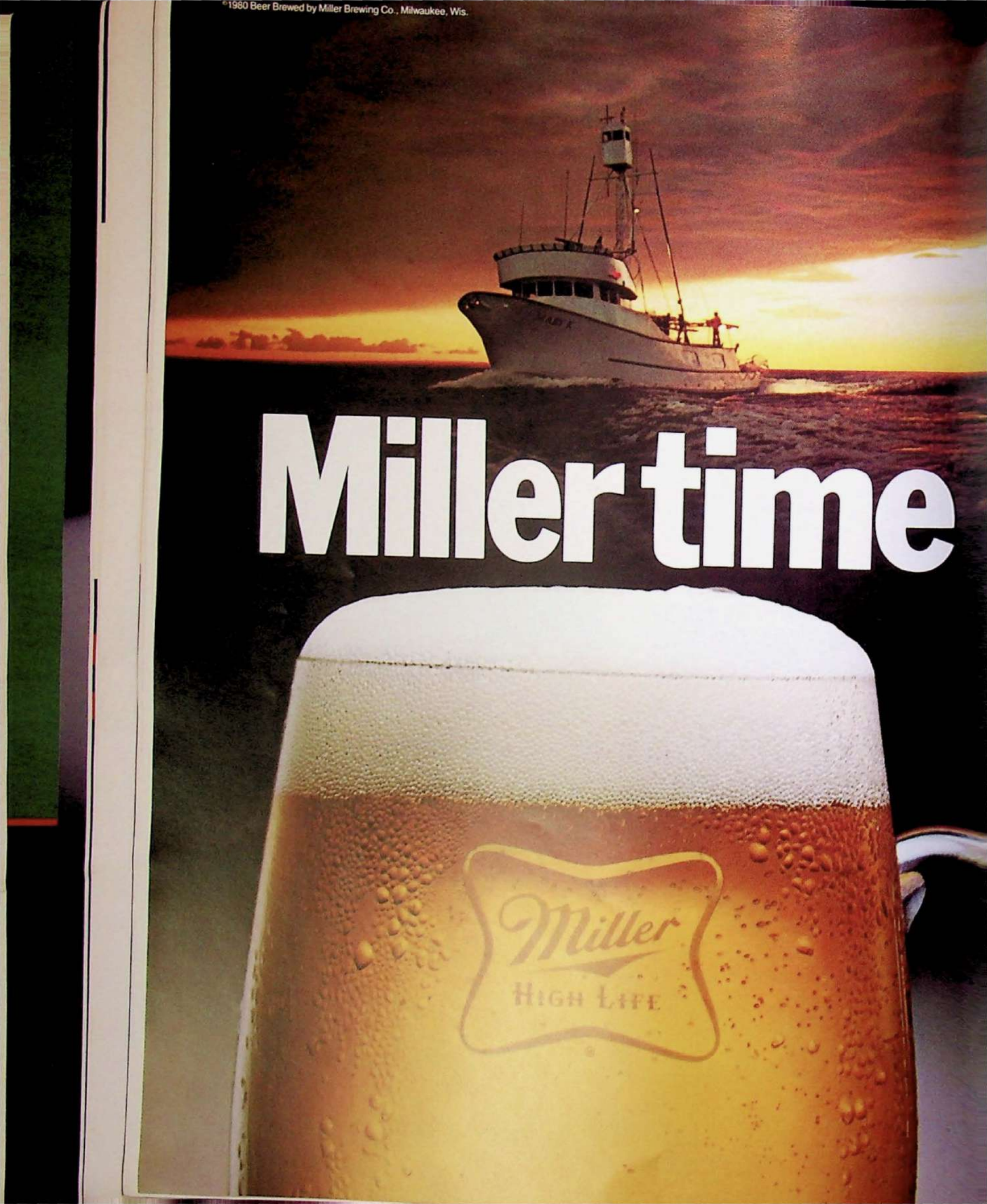


A TOAST TO TRADITION

THE LAST GREAT AMERICAN TENNIS TOURNAMENT

by S.L. Weingart

It began as a series of ups and downs. First I-95 sloped through Connecticut farmland dotted by mill towns each one wearing a Holiday Inn, much as a child might wear a plastic ring. As the interstate began its gradual ascent into Kingston, these mirror images gave way to the red brick facade of the University of Rhode Island. The names suggested a medieval morality play, with Mystic to the south and Providence ahead, as I made my way to the Miller Hall of Fame Tennis Championships at Newport—the last great tennis tournament in America.

I began another long climb up the first of the two bridges that lead to Newport. The route swung east on to the Jamestown Bridge, descended, and, almost at once, came to the bridge over Narragansett Bay.

From the bridge I could see Newport's wharf area, where buildings of weathered lumber repeat a New England saltbox architecture and life abounds: restaurants, salt water taffy, hotels and *(continued)*

"The winner at any pro tournament has not only demonstrated superlative skill but has survived inordinate punishment."

ship chandlers, tourists, residents, miniature schnauzers, tennis players and sailors. The ferry had just left its slip for Block Island.

Nearby, the Sheraton Islander Inn squats on tiny Goat Island like a saltbox Alcatraz. Most of the inn's guests seemed uninspired by the resort's two outdoor tennis courts and indifferent to the remarkable tournament in progress, but the inn was also filled with reporters, like myself, who had come to Newport to cover the tournament.

Unlike those reporters, I would be scheduled to hit with one or two of the pros—perhaps Roscoe Tanner, or possibly Johan Kriek, who had battled so ferociously against Borg in the 1980 U.S. Open semifinal. For a fortnight I had prepared for this occasion, running at least two miles a day under a sun that dripped butter down my chest, hitting with anybody who aspired to drive a tennis ball in my direction. I whined about the training to all those within earshot. "I'm too fat," I repeated to anyone who would listen. "Nobody is forceing you to go," they would answer. But I knew I would go, for, though I'm an amateur, tennis is more than a game to me, and the punishment I was sure to receive would not be too much to pay.

Unless the amateur walks on court in excellent physical condition, the tennis professional will murder him. Each ball hit by a pro hurtles so flat it blurs, fast and low, so that the opponent must bend and bend and bend his knees. A good amateur hits the ball at around 40 miles per hour. Hit by a pro, each ball flies at around 75, creating a lightning pizzicato of vibration. Shock and exhaustion grind the receiver who, in my case, comes replete with bourbon belly.

Among others, Rod Laver, Owen Davidson and Colin Dibley have hit with me, or, more accurately, punished my sweet body. *Punished*—there lies the crux of the matter, for few amateurs grasp the punishment that pros inflict on each other. The winner at any professional tennis tournament has not only demonstrated superlative skill, but also survived inordinate punishment. In fact, each player undergoes purgation; he or she is purged of the mundane by pain and punishment, and the game becomes more than a game. I remember Laver objecting to players who tape themselves into a game, or warm up by fastening assorted braces, ace bandages and trusses. "If you've got to patch yourself together to hobble onto the court," he said, "then you're not at your best and so shouldn't be there." Playing against Owen Davidson in the "Legends of Tennis" at Sacramento this year, Laver had pulled a muscle so badly in his left arm that he defaulted the match, yet he did not even mention the injury to his agent the next day over the telephone. Injury is not part of tennis somehow. The game itself is Laver's true concern, which sheds light on his induction into the Tennis Hall of Fame at the Newport Casino.

Johan Kriek checked in at the Harbor Treadway Inn with his wife Tish, as did Laver and his family five days later. The induction of Laver into the Hall of Fame was scheduled for the break between semifinal matches. On the Stadium Court during the ceremony, Laver would stand near Jack Kramer and Don Budge, both over six feet tall, so that the Australian seemed slight, almost delicate by comparison. In Brooks Brothers jackets, the three athletes resembled bankers on holiday.

Among the three, Budge, the oldest, won the Grand Slam in the same year Laver was born. By modern standards, Budge's racquet had been primitive, little more than a chunk of wood, without even a leather grip. He turned that into a weapon of precision, pulling it into his backhand with the motion of a cavalier drawing a rapier. He, in 1938, and Laver, in 1962 and 1969, are among the four players ever to win the Grand Slam. (Most persons will bet that only two players have ever won the Grand Slam, yet they chauvinistically forget Maureen Connolly in 1953 and Margaret Smith Court in 1970.) At age 65, Budge retains the flatfooted gait of the athlete. During a break in the Erik van Dillen-Johan Kriek match I entered his box to express my admiration for his Grand Slam. Like Newport itself, where he had once played, and so became part of its ambiance, Budge displayed style—he chatted graciously, and I confess that I asked for his autograph, almost expecting him to sign backhand.

It seemed ironic that one of Budge's assets has tarnished the sheen of his game: so often is the truism about the brilliance of his backhand cited that we forget a backhand cannot exist in isolation. Budge's backhand was brilliant *because* it was integrated with astute court sense and unusually flat passing shots. By current standards—according to which Laver became the first of the "tennis millionaires" and Borg, through tennis and related endorsements, earns $10 million per year—Budge earned relatively little from tennis. Even today only top players make top money. Those men who climbed to the top 20 will each earn over $100,000 from tournaments this year. But figures begin a sharp decline at number 30. A male ranked number 60, for example, will earn about a third of that $100,000 figure, and must pay all his expenses from those earnings. Thus, most

"This ambience exudes that particular entity called style—a commingling of timeless elegance, quality and grace."

of the young pros who played in the Miller Hall of Fame Tennis Championships did not register at the big resort hotels, but in motels in nearby Middletown, where the rates fit the travel budget of a player who is earning an average salary. The glamour of tennis seems a fiction to players who tour with a rank below number 30. Like friars, they must budget with austerity.

News reports can also be deceptive about earnings. The UPI story about Newport, announced, "Second-seeded Johan Kriek defeated Hank Pfister, 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 today to win the $100,000 Miller Hall of Fame Tennis Championships." The $100,000 in prizes from the Miller Brewing Company, which has been noted for its generous commitment to athletic excellence, denotes *total* prize money. Kriek earned $20,000 as the singles champion, while Hank Pfister won $10,000 for second place. With 32 players in the draw, the reward for most of them was relatively modest.

On the grass of Newport Casino agile men struck over and over at tennis balls. Why, I found myself wondering as I watched, do those players who rarely win first or second place devote themselves to the tennis rites? Not for the modest cash reward, not for glamour. Two days before checking in at the Islander, as part of my regimen I had hit in New Jersey at the Lakewood Country Club. I smacked volleys onto the green clay court, where the thick humidity overwhelmed me. What I earned that afternoon was heat prostration, and two days later I still felt weaker than a mixed drink in a tourist trap. Mortals fall down from the heat, I learned. Yet at Newport the pros ran like bulls, ran and hit on a green anvil where the sun hammered. How do they? Why do they? Certainly not for the loser's purse. Recounting Erik van Dillen's quarterfinal win over Tim Wilkison, the *Providence Journal-Bulletin* cited the temperature as "128 degrees on the grass surface at the start of play and 97 in the shade an hour later." The pros at Newport did not so much refuse the grace of heat prostration as they ignored its very possiility, much as a young matador turns his back to the furious horns of the bull.

The arena at Newport Casino is grass—nurtured and rolled, it glints like green fire. The stately ambiance of the Casino, inseparable from the competition provides an elegant contrast to Flushing's Louis Armstong Stadium, where almost 20,000 spectators gather at the U.S. Open to breathe the fumes from the Grand Central Parkway, endure the howls of jets from LaGuardia Airport and suffer the brays from the vehicles on the Van Wyck Expressway. At Flushing the crowd is raucous, its manners as unruly as John McEnroe's hair.

Within a mile or two of the Casino portals, to the east along Bellevue Avenue, fabulous estates of Newport back up to Narragansett Bay. One estate, the Elms, extends over 11 prime acres, and both its gray facade and its stylized lawns, replete with French bronzes and Italian fountains, are patterned after the Chateau d'Asnieres near Paris. A visitor of this tournament may find himself transported to the France of the Renaissance, or to Victorian England at the stucco Chateau-sur-Mer, completed in 1852. At the Casino I was to see blue-blooded ladies in their long white dresses playing croquet on the grass.

This ambiance exudes that peculiar entity called style, a commingling of timeless elegance, quality, and grace. It is no accident that Newport has provided the site for such a stylish historic event as the America's Cup, as well as the Miller Hall of Fame Tennis Championships. What the Newport Casino calls to mind is Wimbledon, but without the stridency of Wimbledon. Frequently we are reminded that the Casino is the last American site where championship tennis is played on grass courts.

At the Casino entrance I showed my media pass to the security guard. Not only would he remember me on subsequent days, but this first time he smiled a greeting, adding that he hoped I enjoyed the games.

I entered through the south portal. A glance over my left sholder to the gilt hands of the prominent castellated clock confirmed that I needn't rush to my seat. I turned north along a semicircular path that demarcated the croquet court. The path continued, bounded by the Hall of Fame itself. A not unpleasant sense of irreality there takes hold of the perceptions—for one thing, all traffic sounds cease once the portal is crossed. A new sonority arises from the shrubbery and the pansies which attract bees, who, like Gregorian monks in the afternoon, chant *orare laborare* to passersby. The entire Casino style prints itself upon sensibility, upon memory. And that style has scarcely changed since 1881 when Dickie Sears in his baggy flannels and starched shirt won the first U.S. Open on the same grass courts.

Then I approached the court area—on the left a series of courts as bright as an Irish fiddlers' green, on the right the boxes that surround the Stadium Court, where the games for quarterfinals and upwards would be played. Finally, the north is bounded by an executive area that includes the players' dressing rooms and the media section. The dressing rooms, rife with sweat and linament, carried the green and white colors of Volvo's Grand Prix circuit;

"Frequently we are reminded that is is the last American site where championship tennis is played on grass courts."

ballboys ran about requesting their assignments for the day, throwing water at each other, and replicating the Grand Prix colors with their green shorts, white hats and T-shirts.

Another court area occupies an eastern pocket, between the executive area and the Stadium Court. These public courts were actually put to use by players throughout the tournament. This provided a curious juxtaposition to the semifinals. On a public court an old man and his wife played a set. They wore tennis whites, his shorts a big longer than current fashion dictates. Juxtaposed to the old man's *fin de siecle* look was the modernity of his racquet, the twin to that used by van Dillen, the composite Prince "Woodie." On legs lambent and creamy white, the old couple held long rallies and approved each other's passing shots. Simultaneously, thirty yards to the south, Kriek rushed to the net to punish one of van Dillen's ground strokes.

The semifinal between Kriek and van Dillen was similarly juxtapositive—a clash between opposites—van Dillen slender and aristocratic, in a dance from foot to foot as he awaited service, and Kriek bullish and angry on his serve, ferocious in his rush to the net.

Van Dillen lost the semifinal in straight sets, but the surprise was that he had made it so far. The Miller Hall of Fame Tennis Championships was only his second Grand Prix singles match of the tour year, yet with Brad Drewett of Australia he won the tournament doubles championship. Occupied with both his MBA at San Francisco State and his wife's delivery of their first child, van Dillen did not resume the circuit until April. After his quarterfinals win, he told a group of reporters that he had been using his Woodie for only three months, but added, "I love it."

In any event, van Dillen played gallantly. He made some implausible gets and generously applauded the best of Kriek's shotmaking.

Kriek played from a locus somewhere between intensity and anger, intensity generated as much by the quality of his opponent as from the uniqueness of grass. His anger was at the heat (his blue outfit was sweat-soaked), his own mistakes (low percentage of accurate first serves), and the umpire (although only Kriek had trouble with him). Frequently he muttered contemptuously to the linesmen, and once reacted to an adverse call by hammering his own right foot with his Rossignol R-40. Watching Don Budge at the moment, I thought how alien such an outburst would have been to him or to Laver or to Big Bill Tilden, who had played on the Stadium Court in the thirties. Again, it came as a matter of style.

Characteristically, the Championships' officiating permitted no impropriety on court. The assumption at Newport Casino is that *gentleman* is no superannuated term. Queues for admission and food were orderly, stewards were polite, and not a single shirtless person was beheld all week. Of the ambiance, one reporter noted, "This is the only tournament where you can expect the pros to bring their sweethearts." Kriek came in on his bye day to watch some hitting. He strolled around, holding hands with is wife. Somebody said he had seen Tom and Julie Gullikson in a shop on the wharfs, helping daughter Petra pick out a fudge flavor.

During the match in which Wittus-Hightower upset Pfister-Amaya, a long-legged blonde turned to a man the color of chocolate to share some of her racquet wisdom. They chatted together, then both returned their attention to the match. It had been Anand Armitraj to whom she had spoken, and the point of this digression is that at Newport Casino the players mingle with the fans. The participants are amused, ready to chat, and this warmth shapes the Newport style.

The ambiance of Newport deceives the memory—although this doubles match between the Wittus and Pfister teams occured a day earlier, it stood in contrast to both the baseline game of the old couple and the semifinal between Kriek and van Dillen. I had never seen Victor Amaya in person, and I am invariably surprised when one of those tiny figures from the TV screen materializes at six foot seven. Wittus and Hightower seemed as young as those ten year olds with whom I played stickball on macadam avenues lined by railroad flats so long ago. From those flats I recall the ubiquitous aroma of cabbage, as the Polish women from the neighborhood prepared endless pots of *halupchas* or sometimes boiled it with many potatoes and scanty corned beef. I then found myself cheerfully transported to the appetizing aroma of boiled frankfruters from the Casino food counters.

The Wittus team seemed frail compared to the Pfister combination. Hulking Victor Amaya surprised the audience with a reversal of stereotype: he played a game based not on power but on touch, and functioned as playmaker for the team. Pfister at one point tried to bait the umpire. The outburst cost him his concentration, and when play resumed the big men fell to the small. This again proves that anger can be dangerous on the courts. Ken Rosewall has spoken of having learned to control his own out-

John Corbett © 1981

The timeless style of the Newport Casino.

"At the Casino I was to see blue-blooded ladies in their long white dresses playing croquet on the grass."

bursts; they had invariably resulted in points for his opponents.

Although a spectator dubbed the Wittus team "the giant killers," that partnership later would lose to Billy Martin and Kevin Curren in the doubles semifinal, 6-2, 6-4. This day the Wittus team made few errors, yet after the game they were uncertain exactly how they had managed the upset. They were slow to shower, as though the hot spray might somehow wash away some residue of victory. On the uncomfortably loud radio in the dressing room, Johnny Cash proclaimed that he walked the line.

Moving through the dressing room, I noticed that most of the touring pros use quite ordinary racquets: conventional-sized woods that cost no more than $65. Kriek won the championship with an R-40 that sells for under $100. For that matter, Borg's Donnay Pro costs $79.95, while Dunlop Maxply Fort—used by Rod Laver, Owen Davidson and John McEnroe—costs $47. What the pro spends his money on is the "tuning" of his equipment, which involves both owning a case that provides efficient protection for several racquets and attending to the complex craft of stringing. Some day somebody will explain types, tensions and patterns of stringing, so that I may grasp why, for example, Laver's racquet is strung at 58-62 pounds, depending upon the situation, while McEnroe has the same racquet always strung at an exact 49 pounds.

What I knew when I walked on to the court to hit with Kriek was that he was in for trouble—my Wilson Ultra lists for $200, so I could expect to hit twice as well as he. Phenotypically, at age 23 Kriek seems to combine the attributes of two players: his head, which resembles Roscoe Tanner's, is joined to what looks like the torso of Jimmy Connors. Kriek is chunkier than Connors, and so much more muscular that his knees are almost hidden by the thrusting muscles of his thighs. This musculature conspires with sharp reflexes to make his serve far bigger than his five foot eight inch frame would suggest. His short service toss is much like Tanner's motion. Righthanded, with a conventional backhand, he resembles Connors in both intensity and quickness.

His grasp of the game is embodied in a single word, *ATTACK!* And his quickness permits him to translate that word into a viable strategy during each match, based on the serve and volley tactic. But when Kriek speaks of Bjorn Borg, it is ironic that he expresses admiration *because* the Swede can shift from one game tactic to another, as a situation dictates. Said Kriek. "You've go to do something spectacular to beat Borg."

I was not about to admit that the Kriek's power intimidated me. "My racquet cost twice as much as yours. But don't be afraid," I said, "I won't make you look too bad." For some reason, he seemed bemused.

"I'm not fussy about my racquets or my stringing," said Kriek. "I think the fussier you get, the more chances there are for jinks." (Derived from a Germanic root that appears in both Old English and the Afrikaans of Kriek's native South Africa, *jinks* means "unexpected trouble.")

As we began to hit, I discoverd that grass holds jinks. For one thing, I soon lost faith in my own traction. More disconcerting, the balls tended to skid sharply, unpredictably. To hit with precision on grass struck me much like trying to eat linguine with a knife. Yet with some astonishment I learned that the pros do sustain precision.

On the court it was remarkable how Kriek ran down everything, ran and ran. His speed gives him confidence. "I beat McEnroe once last year, and he beat me five or six times. McEnroe I like to play because I think we play the same kind of game."

Unlike McEnroe, I held the baseline. I slammed a passing shot beyond Kriek, who held the net. But even as I hit he did not so much chase as, instead, materialize in front of the ball, poised to strike.

I mean no disrespect when I suggest Kriek will not become another Laver or Borg. Though quicker afoot than the young Laver or even the Borg of today, Kriek lacks Laver's precision in his strokes. But even that is not the reason for my suggestion. Rather, the reason is temperamental, or perhaps based on temperament tinged with mysticism. The great player enters a match convinced he is the best, and leaves baffled and angry with himself if he does not win. When I asked Kriek, "When do you expect to become ranked number one?" his answer was, "I don't know—if it is going to happen, it will happen." I remembered the trip up, and thought of Mystic and Providence again—it may be that great players may be mystic, the others may trust in providence.

We left the court at the blaze of noon, the grass glinting. A group of spectators had gathered to watch us hit, and a couple of them applauded. One of them shouted, "Good show." Clearly, it was not the caliber of my performance that won approval. Rather, the approval was a matter of politeness, a form consistent with the tradition of the Newport Casino.

It was a matter of style, the style of the last great tennis tournament in America.

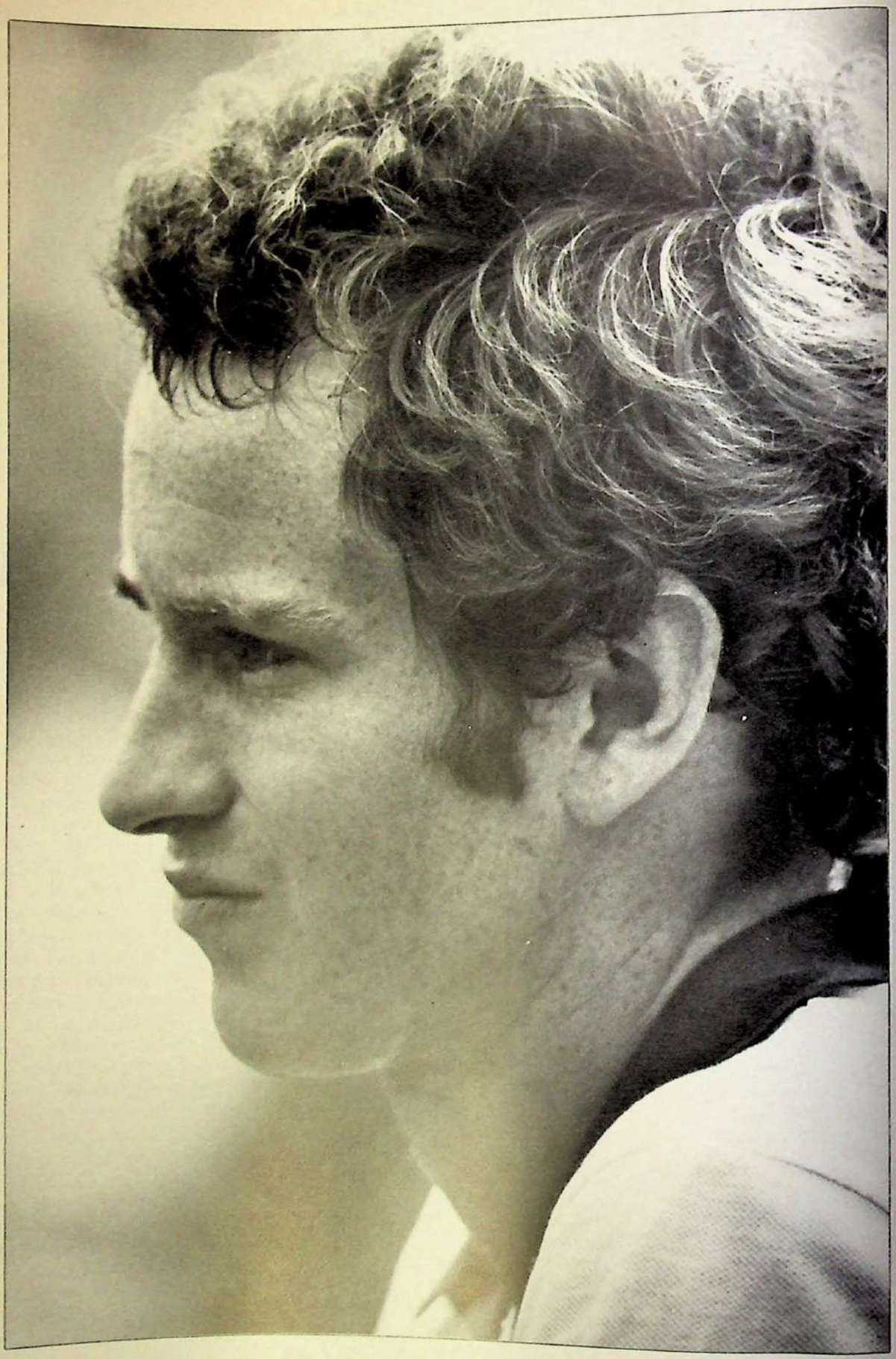
PROFILES

"IF YOU CAN MEET
WITH TRIUMPH AND DISASTER
AND TREAT THOSE TWO IMPOSTERS
JUST THE SAME."

—Rudyard Kipling

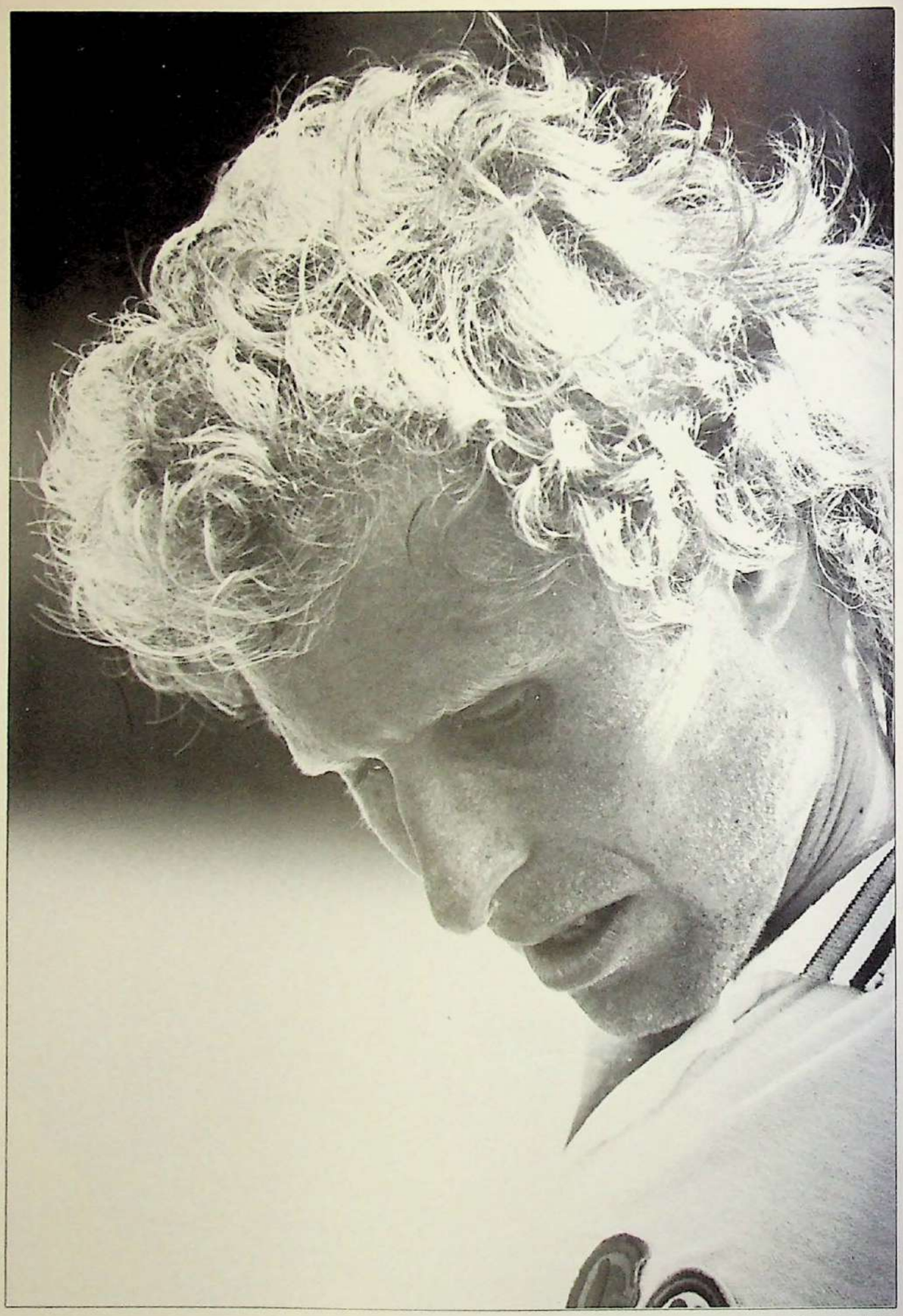
The U.S. Open

photographs by Jay B. Siegel



John McEnroe

Jose Luis Clerc



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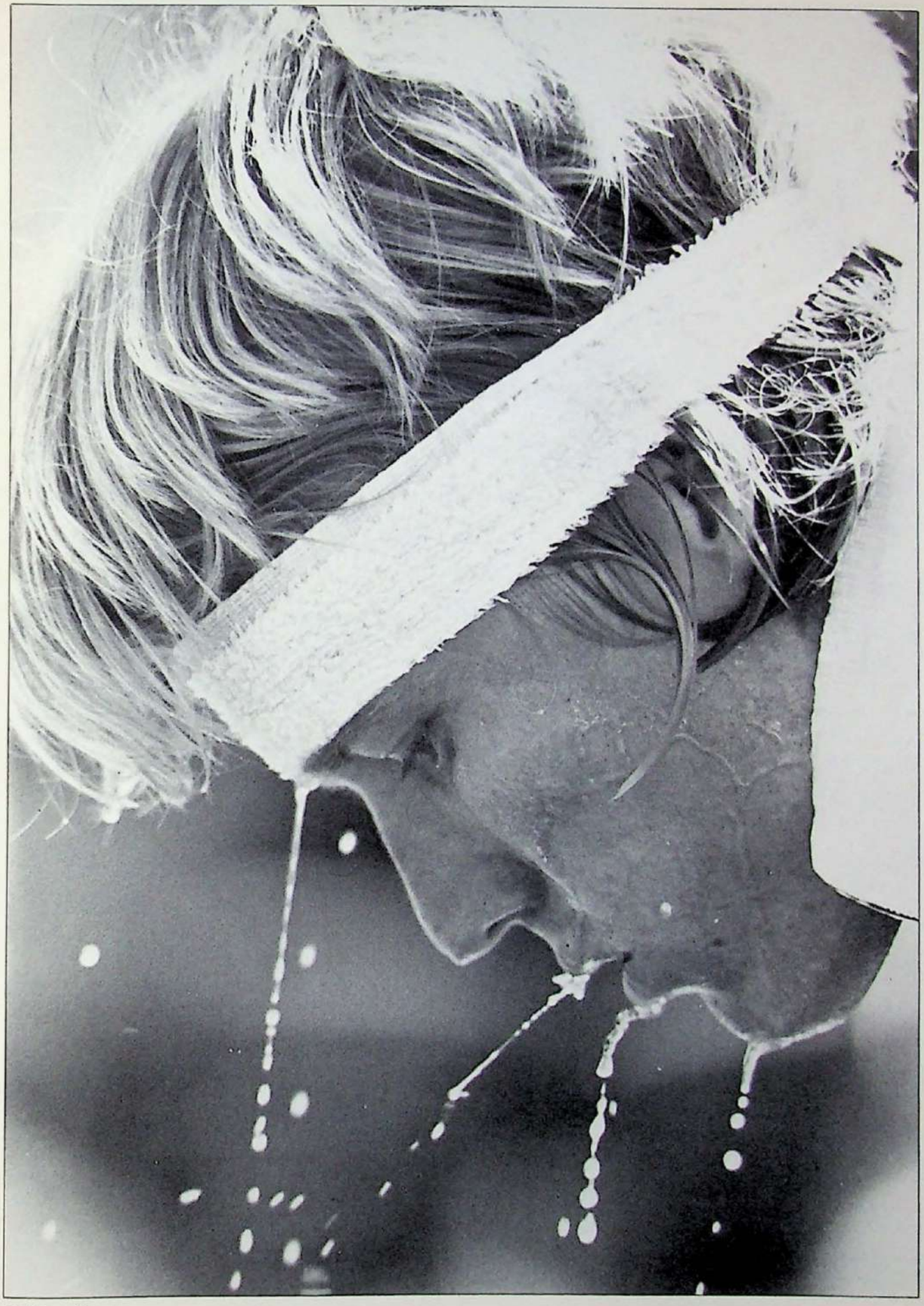

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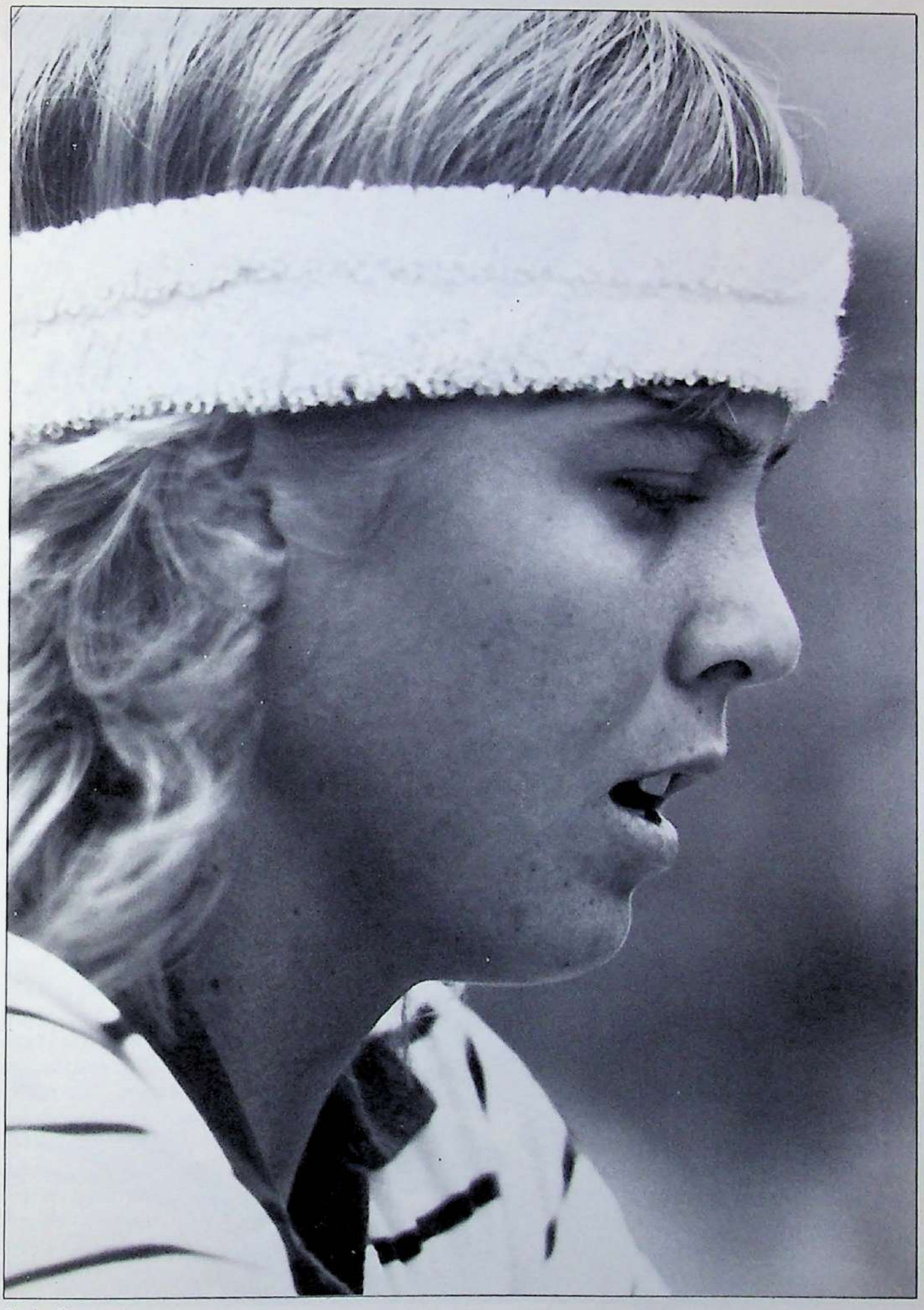
Chris Lewis



Bettina Bunge

Tracy Austin

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

A RACQUET BESTIARY

by David McCarty

drawings by Andrzej Dudzinski

To most observers, tennis stands out as a gentlemanly game played on the manicured courts of sedate country clubs and luxurious racquet resorts. Yet the game's overseers carefully cultivate this veneer of courtesy and urbanity to conceal the sport's true nature. In fact, tennis is a game of mental and physical survival, a struggle for self-preservation, graced and plagued by more odd types than any sport this side of Saturday Night Wrestling. And to assist the unitiated in the identification of these mutant species, a tennis bestiary detailing the creatures' salient outward traits, as well as their habitats, mating calls and common behavior patterns, is presented for close scrutiny. Your very survival may depend on instant recognition of these dangerous types the moment they appear on the court.

THE HACKER (*inepticus performitor*)

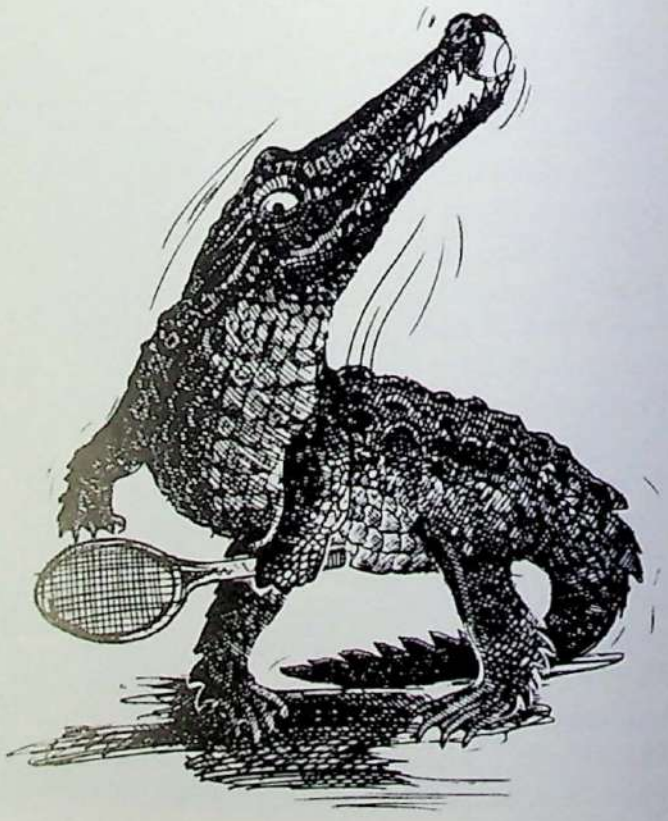
The most common of tennis creatures, Hackers range, in most cases uncontrollably, from Greenland to Tierra del Fuego. They are said to be equally abundant in the Eastern Hemisphere. Easily recognized by its plaid Bermuda shorts, warped racquet, black nylon knee hose and magenta T-shirt, *inepticus* can usually be found engaging in its favorite activity, extricating balls from the net. On the full moon, *inepticus* can be heard howling arcane mystical incantations in tribute to its deity, Bud Collins. Careful listeners will also detect the Hacker's characteristic distress call, "Zatgood?" Hackers come in innumerable subspecies, including the Happy Hacker, the Overdressed Hacker, and a wild Northern tribe, the Green Bay Hackers.

THE RABBIT (*returnicus infiniti*)

The Rabbit has ascended the evolutionary challenge ladder to the point that it often reaches the upper rounds of major tournaments and celebrity pro-am events. The astonishing result of an unholy recombinant DNA experiment which fused the body of a jackrabbit with the instincts of a duckhound and the shameless guile of Bobby Riggs, *returnicus* will chase down and return any ball on any continent. This species should not be confused with The Dinker *(returnicus enragium)*, also a universal scourge of club tournaments, which bases its game on the gravity serve and the net cord, and is betrayed by its ubiquitous mating signal, "Tennisanyone?"

THE POACHER (*interceptum shoticus*)

Of all tennis court inhabitants, the Poacher exhibits a singular disregard for territoriality. Recognized on five continents by its raucous warning cry, "MINE!", *interceptum* will viciously trample partners, officials, spectators and photographers to poach a shot. Although most commonly found playing doubles, Poachers, particularly rabid ones, have been known to choose singles for the perverse pleasure of poaching their own shots. Excited poachers have been observed invading neighboring courts to dust off volleys during lulls in their own sets, so caution should be exercised whenever a poacher is nearby. As a rule, one should approach *interceptum* only after the scavenger has consumed a full meal and, needless to say, this beast should never be hand-fed.



THE PRO (*courtopithecus dominati*)

Highly visible, adorned with a sweeping mane and matching bags by Ellesse, Pros collect only at the poshest watering holes. Usually surrounded by a gaggle of admiring Hackers and trailing a bevy of flittering tennis birds *(tennis courtesani)*, this species releases the endless growl, "Wanna few pointers?" Observers have noted that a true Pro will never appear on court without a collection of open-throat graphite racquets, with a combined value greater than the GNP of almost any developing nation. The principal predator of *courtopithecus*, the Tennis Elbow *(excruciatus backhandius)*, can invariably be sighted lurking in the shadows at courtside.

THE UMPIRE (*docilecus officium*)

Once a proud and flourishing species, the Umpire is now nearing extinction, owing to the unchecked spread of its arch-predator, the Poor Sport *(nastasius mcenroeium)*. Consequently, *docilecus* is faintly heard from its tournament perch as it hoots the distinctive cry, "Play twooo, play twooo." Umpires can also be identified by the peculiarly abrupt maneuvers they perform when dodging tennis balls fired by enraged tournament competitors. Echoing the Sermon on the Mount, a noted 16th Century sportswriter declared: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will inherit the earth." This wisdom notwithstanding, the Umpire might well retort that when it comes to overruling a linesman at match point, "To see or not to see, that is the question."

The Court Hog (*usurpico yourcourti*)

Heralded by its distinctive reedy call, "Just one more game," *usurpico* instinctively delays anything short of Davis Cup events to finish grudge matches with C players. After its game, however, the Court Hog will ordinarily spend 15 minutes toweling off racquet handles, removing sweatbands and finishing an electrolyte-enhanced lemonade solution while initiating mating rituals with girls playing on the next court. The heavy cobwebs on those individuals waiting for *usurpico* to abandon the court are not uncommon, but should be distinguished from those that form on opponents of the Lob Goblin *(moonballum insufferabli)* with its throaty, distracting call, "That must be the Goodyear blimp!"

The Server (*cannonballium doublefaulticus*)

Most Servers would have been classified as NBA forwards but for their hopeless inability to control any ball below knee-level. These tall, slender creatures are practitioners of a non-Euclidean religion which dictates that the shortest distance from the baseline to the service box is a flat serve, thus limiting *cannonballium's* first-serve percentage to a mere .117 average. Its cunning survival cry, "Let," is recognized by tennis biologists worldwide. But beware. Allow a Server to resort to this tactic and you'll see more aces than a crooked poker game. Cursed to spend its entire life without bending its knees, *cannonballium* most frequently falls victim to a single predator: the widely-feared Drop Shot *(subterranius returnitum)*.

THE BANDEAU AND THE EYESHADE

THE TRIBULATIONS AND TRIUMPHS OF SUZANNE LENGLEN

by Ted Tinling

For the high-life seekers of the '20s, whether they were kings or commoners, the French Riviera provided a wonderful and apparently unending honeymoon. The sheer physical beauty of that magic coastline, beginning at Cannes and ending forty miles to the east at the Italian frontier, has never failed to cast an extraordinary, magnetic spell.

Two thousand years ago the Romans aptly named this strip the Azure Coast, and they called the bay that frames the proud city of Nice the Bay of Angels. Today's playground resorts of Cannes, Nice, Monaco, Monte Carlo, and Menton still shimmer at the base of the Maritime Alps like glittering jewels of the hot haze of the day or the particularly intense blue of Mediterranean nights.

Along the countless promontories and inlets of this coastline, dark cypresses and parasol pines blend almost imperceptibly into the edges of the royal blue water. In places, towering cliffs rise directly out of the sea to a height of over 3,000 feet, giving the whole seaboard a natural shield against the rain clouds that come traditionally from the north.

The parched lower levels of these cliffs are covered with an effusion of drab olive and locust trees. The English, more accustomed to fresh northern greenery, are often disappointed at their first sight of the Riviera, but it does not take long before its muted tapestry captures everyone with its own particular beauty.

Behind Nice is a stark hillside. Scorched by centuries of burning sun to a bald and arid dome, it gave Mussorgsky the inspiration for his famous orchestral piece *Night on Bald Mountain*.

Further along the coast the olives and cypresses shade into a more lush and exotic mixture. Tall date-palms tangle with acres of wild figs. Aloes and prickly pear make protective hedges around profusions of tuberoses, freesias, and mimosa. From first spring through late summer the scents of blossom and overripe fruit mingle to give off a heady fragrance that is the essence of Provence.

Queen Victoria, seeking refuge from the London fogs, was the first of the European monarchs to journey by horse carriage to this "fragrant haven," as she described it in her private letters. Although invariably surrounded by her German relatives and her court ladies, a host of foreign ambassadors, anxious to report her every innovative movement to their own masters, closely followed her royal progress to the sunshine.

With Queen Victoria's presence acting like a magnet to the other royal courts of Europe, elaborate places and villas were built in exotically laid-out gardens. Eventually there was hardly a crowned head nor a royal courtier who did not spend his winter and spring days established in this sybaritic paradise.

Queen Victoria's middle and old age was the heyday of such French masters as Mistral, Cezanne, and van Gogh. Mistral gives a wonderfully impressionist word picture of Provence. The shimmering light of southern France inspired Cezanne and van Gogh to change the whole course of modern painting.

Lawn Tennis took its grasp of England in that same era, but the rich English found their garden lawns survived only a few summer months. They were deprived of their novel pastime by the cold and wet of the English winters. Although there were probably more indoor facilities in London then than there are today, they succumbed readily to the

"Suzanne Lenglen was the Queen of Art-Deco."

pleasanter prospect of chasing tennis balls under Mediterranean skies.

The first tennis courts in France were accordingly laid out by the English in the 1880s, amid the eucalyptus trees, the palms, and the flower beds of the Beau Site Hotel in Cannes. The name was appropriate because the beautiful gardens and the tennis courts remained there, unchanged for sixty years, from the days of the Renshaws, tennis's earliest idols, until World War II.

From the 1880s on there was an annual migration to the South of France of tennis players from America and almost every country in Europe. Every famous name in the game's history is inscribed somewhere on the rolls of honor of the clubs that still survive there. The records show that on the old Monaco courts the Doherty Brothers won many early championships, and in Nice, there are still records, salvaged from the old club, of the first Central European masters of the game.

The settings were all extraordinarily beautiful because the courts everywhere were sited in a natural milieu of palms, oleanders, frangipanis, and mimosa, with the ubiquitous bougainvillea often climbing up the backstops. The surroundings were as typical of Provence as the gum-tree creeks are of Australia and the bayous of old colonial American plantations.

In the early part of this century palatial hotels, the first in Europe to include three-or four-hundred rooms, were built in strategic view-points in all the main Riviera centers. These were invariably crammed from Christmas through Easter with the complete *Almanach de Gotha.*

Also in those early days, Monaco, the tiny independent enclave in southern France now hereditarily ruled by Prince Rainier and Princess Grace, saw the commercial possibilities of organized gambling. The gilded enthusiasts were already there and searching for additional excitements.

Eventually, with the aid of Francois Blanc, who had already made Hamburg the gambling center of northern Europe, an ornate Casino was built on the rocky plateau neighboring Monaco. This plateau was dedicated with great ceremony on June 1, 1866, by the reigning prince Charles III, and given the name Monte Carlo.

In turn, Cannes and Nice decided that if they did not follow suit they would be losing out. So, piece by piece, this whole coastline was linked into the

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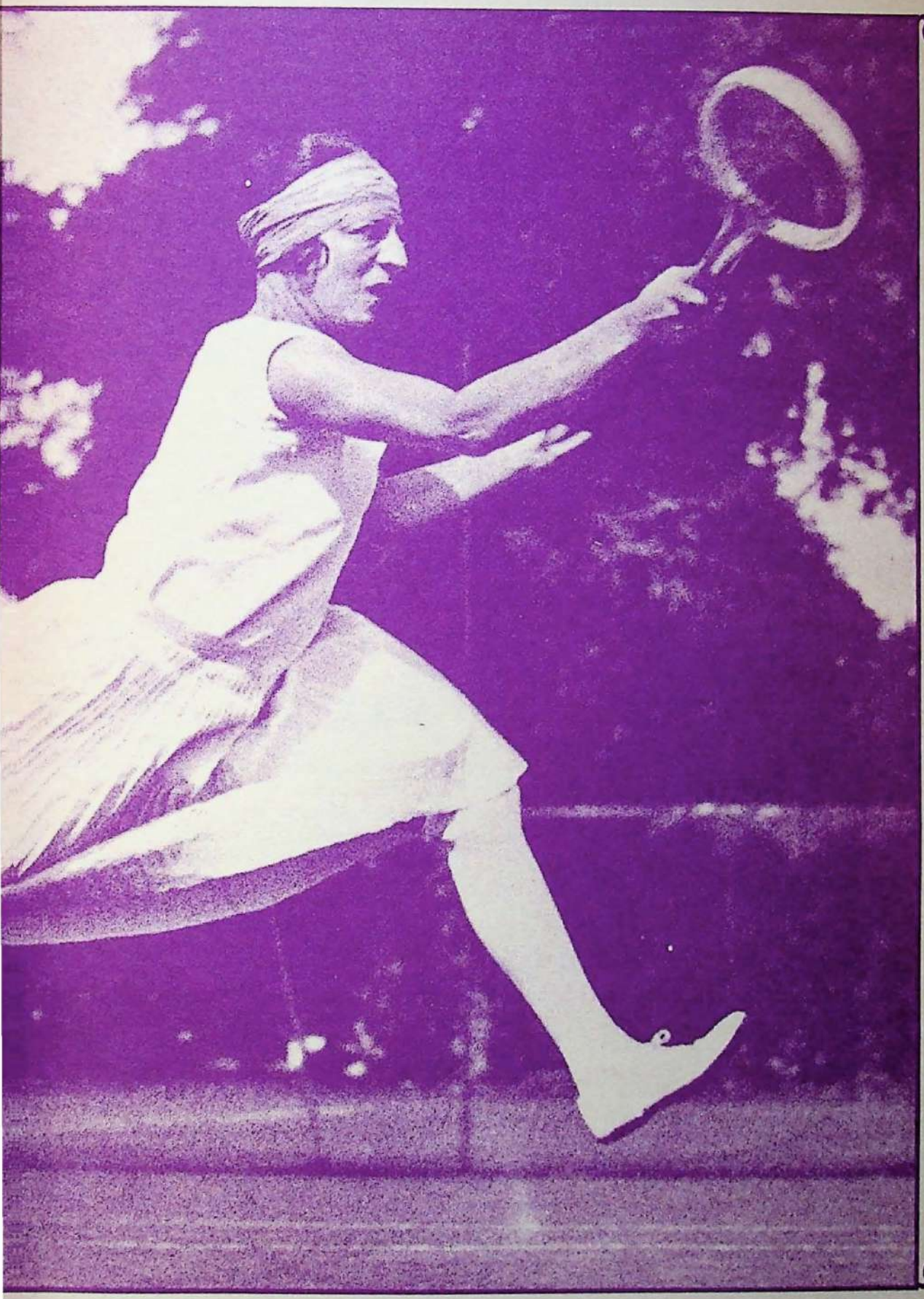
Suzanne Lenglen was the empress of tennis during the 1920's.



"Suzanne's matches were invariably concluded in forty-five minutes, and everyone would then head for the hotel bars."

most luxurious and cosmopolitan playground ever recorded in history.

And it was there, on the coastline, surrounded by beauty and immersed in the crazy luxury-age of jazz and the Charleston, that I spent my formative years.

Probably the first tennis story I ever heard derived from my mother, reading in the newspaper, that Papa Lenglen had refused to bring Suzanne to Eastbourne because he was not satisfied with the terms offered. In tennis, the word "terms" had a horrendous significance in those amateur days.

After the Armistice of World War I my parents took my two brothers and me on a tour of the Flanders battlefields. "Glory" had been the feeling of millions of young bloods, who went, cheering, to their death for King and Country before 1918. My parents were intent on impressing us that there was no glory in war.

Later we settled for awhile in Switzerland in an effort to resolve my chest problem. But my breathing never came to terms with cold air and it was then decided we should experiment with the winter sunshine of the South of France.

First we migrated *en famille* to one of the palatial hotels in Cimiez, behind Nice. Then, when my father's postwar finances showed signs of failing, we were forced to separate, my mother renting an apartment where I lived with her until a few months before her death.

In those teenage years I found it difficult to know what to believe: difficult to know right from wrong. My father was a God-fearing Victorian, the son of a clergyman and a staunch believer in the "Vengeance-of-Heaven" gospel. My mother was a progressive freethinker, always exploring the most newly conceived cults. In her youth she had been an ardent follower of Madame Blavatsky and Annie Besant, and later, of Rudolf Steiner.

Meanwhile our friends, the English and American leisured classes, took off on the wild joyride of the '20s. The world turned upside down, and many of the sacred beliefs we were taught at my Catholic day school were tossed recklessly to the wind by the grownups.

Adolescence hit me just when Hollywood scenes were spilling into everyday life. The rich and famous were finding, on the sundrenched Mediterranean, whatever stimulus they needed to recover from the hangovers of war.

Suddenly saxophones, cocktails, and shiny silk-stockinged legs became the new religion. Cole Porter and the Model T Ford were the new high-priests. Josephine Baker and Mistinguett became Queens of Paris overnight.

Then, of course, there was Tennis.

By the '20s the earlier aristocratic game had already taken its first downward steps toward being the plaything of the well-to-do middle classes. But from Christmas through Easter, the Riviera remained the in place for the stars and all the rich who surrounded them.

Tennis, dancing, and gambling were the catalysts of the high-fashion winter calendar, and Suzanne Lenglen, the unquestioned Queen of Art Deco, was the Pied Piper who had only to appear on a peal of laughter to have crowds flocking to see her play tennis between the cocktail hour and the the-dansants.

"Prime time" for Suzanne's matches was always arranged to coincide with these rituals. Her matches were invariably concluded in forty-five minutes and everyone would then head for the hotel bars only to reappear at 4 p.m., rebeautified and regarbed for tea and dancing at the casinos. After that the women would ride back to their hotels for a Mah-Jongg session while the men gambled until it was time to change to their white-vested tuxedos for the gala dinners.

Every nationality and every type of person met up at the casinos. There were kings, famous financiers, demimondaines with their lovers, crooks, Hollywood silent stars, and the aristocracy of half-a-dozen countries, all mixed in with the old crones who needed twelve hours of daily good luck at the tables for the price of their hotel bills.

Many of the elegant women preferred to show off their Paris creations and their jewels while dancing rather than standing behind their husbands or lovers in the gaming rooms.

At the back tables round the dance floors, the good-looking professional gigolos sat alone, perusing the scene with unfailing instinct. For them, protocol involved the ultimate in formality, bowing low to the husband of any obviously married couple and saying, "May I have permission to invite Madame to dance?"

Following the nightly gala dinners, there would often be fireworks displays to amuse the bejeweled women while some of the richest men in the world puffed at their cigars. A second migration to the gaming tables would take place about 11:30, when millions of francs would change hands until sunrise. Then the whole round would begin again with mid-

"Suzanne generated excitement and electricity. She had a special joy and abandon just from hitting the ball."

morning champagne and Suzanne's daily match.

As some boys collect photogaphs of film stars, or nowadays rock idols, I would adorn my bedroom wall with pictures of tennis greats. Actually living in the same city, playing the same tennis club as the Empress herself, was very heady stuff in my teens.

Even now I can sense the excitement and electricity Suzanne generated in me the first time I saw her play. She had a special joy and abandon just from hitting the ball, with her perfect coordination making the opportunity for her ballet leaps and a projection that suggested complete sexual fulfillment from her own flowing movements.

At the time I was one of the youngest rookies of the club and I was soon to sympathize with the slaves of ancient Egypt for whom a mere glimpse of Cleopatra became a compulsive and rewarding ritual.

Destiny finally put it all together in '24. Lenglen was ready and waiting to make her entrance to the center court. But no one had thought to arrange an umpire ahead of time.

January 4 was the moment of confrontation when I was unsuspectingly recruited as a tennis umpire, five months before my fourteenth birthday. I was well and truly baptized by fire, as my first-ever experience of officiating in tennis was to call a match for the Incomparable Lenglen herself. I was to earn my living in tennis administration on the Riviera for the following eight years.

On that fateful day I was just standing around hoping for a single glance from Suzanne as she passed through the exotic, flower-lined setting of the Nice club, when a voice said, "Have you ever called a match?"

I felt an immediate electric tremor as I spun round to find myself face-to-face with the Empress herself. I had hardly noticed the speaker had been Mrs. Wollaston Richards, the well-meaning but ineffectual British director of the tournament.

"I have never umpired," I told Mrs. Richards, my gaze still riveted on Suzanne. Before I could say another word, Mrs. Richards asked Suzanne. "Would you mind this young man calling your match?"

Awaiting her reply, I somehow knew the years ahead would be affected. At that moment I was already convinced that if Suzanne rejected me the whole course of my future would be different.

Instead, Suzanne flashed a radiant smile and said, "*Mais avec plaisir,* I would be delighted!" This had to be on a Thursday because funny things, like being born, always happen to me on Thursdays.

Thereafter I was incorporated straightaway into Suzanne's close entourage, which consisted of Papa and Mama Lenglen backed by the handsome escorts with whom Suzanne invariably made her entrances, and most often on a contrived peal of laughter.

The escorts were dismissed to front-row seats in the stands for the duration of the match while Papa and Mama Lenglen sat on a court-side bench beneath the umpire's chair. On Mama's lap, perched rather belligerently on a rug, was her pet Belgian Griffon, Gyp.

As Suzanne removed her luxurious winter coat, revealing a brilliantly colored cardigan over a white silk pleated dress, I stood hypnotized until I realized I should already be climbing the steps of the umpire's chair. Suzanne's opponent of the day was quite capable of rallying with her, but, like me, was overawed by the occasion.

Naturally, I had never before experienced any situation like this. Papa and Mama Lenglen chattered incessantly on the bench below me. At that age I spoke better French than English and my thoughts wandered repeatedly as I overheard, fascinated, their running commentary on Suzanne's every movement.

"She's not arching her back on her serve today," from Papa Lenglen.

"I liked last year's cardigans without sleeves much better," from Mama.

With Gyp yapping with every rising intonation of the Lenglens' voices, it was probably excusable that I became distracted.

The match had started when I realized I had not marked the umpire's blank and did not remember the score. Now, more than fifty years later, I still recall the stage fright and apprehension I felt, with beads of frozen perspiration falling inside my shirt.

Fortunately, the club's head ball-boy, Victor, who was also the friendly assistant pro, had been keeping an eye on the whole proceedings. Realizing my problem, he maneuvered himself beside my chair. This gave me the chance to ask his help. He prompted me, and I was saved.

Suzanne was very friendly after the match and introduced me to her parents with the customary French formality of the era.

The next day Mrs. Richards told me Papa Lenglen had suggested that I call all Suzanne's matches. The organizers, accustomed to being scared to death by

"If he could not win the main prize, Papa Lenglen thought it practical to conserve his energies and give up the fight."

Suzanne's tantrums, were greatly relieved at this prospect.

There is always one lad in every stable who, by some unaccountable bond of telepathic sympathy, can hold the bridle of the star in peace and calm.

For two teenage years I was that "stableboy" to the greatest tennis star ever known.

From 1919 to 1926, Europe, as well as the Lotusland of the Riviera, belonged to Lenglen. She was the Southern Empress, as unique herself as the capital cities of Europe and the sun-drenched coastline over which she reigned supreme.

Somehow her star personality and the stage colorings of the settings combined to make her matches into gala appearances. Rich hostesses might have taken a party of guests to see Pavlova dance the previous night in Monte Carlo; they may have been to hear Galli-Curci in Cannes, or on an extravagant spending spree at Chanel's, but everybody would head for the midday tennis to see Suzanne play. She was the ultimate "diva" of sports, and she contrived to bring a taste of highly sophisticated theater to a world previously centered only on a leisurely pastime.

Suzanne was born at Compiegne, in northern France, on May 24, 1899. Papa Lenglen had been a pioneer racing bicyclist during the sudden Victorian fascination for speed, when ice-skating and bicycling first made possible for everybody the excitement of fast independent movement without the aid and expense of a horse.

Six-day bicycle races became a major attraction of the '80s and '90s, and the competitors, coming for the most part from a proletarian background, were professionals. They were not hypocritically shy like the gentlemen sportsmen, but proud of their moneymaking aptitude.

So Papa Lenglen generated early on a fixed and unbreakable habit of going after the main prize. On the other hand, if he could not win, he thought it more practical to conserve his energies by giving up the fight.

In the French language, to give up is to "abandon." The few times in Suzanne's life when her eventual victory may have been in question from whatever circumstance, Papa Lenglen, from years of practical French logic and uninhibited by any upper-class sporting code, would command his daughter, from the courtside or the stands, "*Abandonne.*"

The introduction of this attitude to the Edwardian code of ethics, which was still law to many of Suzanne's opponents, gave her critics a head start for the repeated accusations of quitter that she endured to the bitter end of her amateur career.

From Suzanne's earliest childhood Papa Lenglen was determined to find, in his only offspring, the world supremacy that eluded his own performances. In Suzanne, destiny gave him the material to fulfill this ambition to the ultimate degree. From Suzanne's nursery days, the only question in Papa Lenglen's mind was at which sport she could excell the most easily.

As a growing child, Suzanne's natural effervescence and grace were such that when the Lenglens moved to the Riviera, strollers on the Promenade des Anglais, the seafront of Nice, would stop to admire her as she tossed and caught her toy diabolo on a string. Her capacity to entrance an audience, even at the age of eight or nine, was such that the visitors would inquire of the Lenglens what time Suzanne was likely to be there the next day.

In the context of women's tennis, transatlantic traffic had been one-way since the beginning. Several American ladies had tried their luck at Wimbledon, May Sutton with spectacular success in 1905 and 1907, but no European woman of standing, other than Molla Mallory, had ever challenged an American on her home soil.

Soon after Suzanne's first Wimbledon win '19, she received a letter from Wallis Merrihew, asking when she was coming to the United States. "I have no plans for doing so," she replied, "*because my tennis is only a pastime.*"

Suzanne's close friend Pierre Albarran has written-in his memoirs of a marked change in Suzanne's character that seemed to occur after her second Wimbledon win in '20 when she was worshipped by British men and hailed by British women at their liberating heroine.

Her attitude certainly appears to have somersaulted dramatically as, from then on, her "pastime" became a compulsion. Suddenly she was determined on an American visit to conquer the New World as she had now conquered the Old.

The opportunity came in the late summer of '21, when Anne Morgan, whose father had been one of the pioneers of American tennis, invited Suzanne to play a series of exhibition games in the States for the

"After a shaky start Suzanne began coughing conspicuously. She was mentally and physically unfit for Molla's onslaught."

benefit of French areas that had been devastated by World War I.

The proposed trip, and Suzanne's determination to accept the Morgan invitation, led to the fiercest of disagreements within the Lenglen household. Papa Lenglen had always refused to go on any long boat journey and one great objection was that Suzanne would be separated from Papa on an important occasion for the first time in her life.

Tennis politics then played, for once, into Suzanne's hands.

For the previous seven years the all-European International Federation had been frantically wooing the American tennis administrators to join with them. They wanted to consolidate a truly world-powerful organization, but for reasons of their own, the Americans were still refusing to play ball.

In '21 the French felt that the participation of their very own Suzanne in the forthcoming American national championships could greatly improve their chances of success. But Papa Lenglen adamantly refused to agree to Suzanne's participation on the grounds that she was not being prepared. He had acted on this belief when he refused to let her participate at Wimbledon before World War I. In his view, exhibitions were a different matter.

There was also a reason the American authorities wanted Suzanne in their championships. The women's U.S. national title had been fought out for thirty-three successive years in Philadelphia. That year the event was captured for the first time by Forest Hills. The New York authorities decided to celebrate the occasion by assembling the most impressive possible parade of champions, past and present.

Anne Morgan always accepted that Suzanne would play only in exhibitions, but Suzanne clearly saw wider horizons ahead of her, in defiance of Papa. She had beaten Molla Mallory in Europe. She had also seen Molla decisively beaten by players whom she herself could beat with the utmost ease. Suzanne felt it her right to beat Molla's record as the only European to become the American national champion.

Papa Lenglen's agreement to the journey was extracted only on the absolute condition that Suzanne would not compete in the national championships at Forest Hills. The French Federation was informed, but it seems the message was never transmitted to the right people. Possibly, this was an intentional omission. In the final arrangement, Suzanne was to be accompanied by the vice-president of the French Federation, M. A. R. de Johannis, Mme de Johannis, and Mama Lenglen. For the first time in such circumstances, Papa Lenglen would not be along.

To begin with, soon after Suzanne won her third Wimbledon in July, she contracted a summer cold that developed into bronchitis.

Her departure for America was postponed twice. Each time Anne Morgan patiently rearranged the exhibition scheduled. Then the ship, *Paris*, which was due to sail from Le Havre with the Lenglen party on board, was delayed for two days by bad weather. As the gangways were eventually pulled up, Papa Lenglen yelled to Suzanne from the dockside: "Whatever else, do *not* play the championships."

The Forest Hills Championships were scheduled to begin on Monday, August 12. Suzanne docked in New York on the previous Friday, August 9. Mama Lenglen claimed later she did not think this mattered as, in her understanding, Suzanne had no official commitments until the championships finished.

It seems likely that for their own different reasons, Suzanne and de Johannis plotted privately that she would play the Championships, because, on arrival, Suzanne "discovered" she had been officially entered. In addition, the draw had already been made, making it diplomatically impossible for her to withdraw. From three thousand miles away, Papa never had a chance to enforce his advice.

The draw itself had a fatalistic quality. Seeding, or the separation of the top players from one another in the preliminary stages, was not in force in those days, and by another stroke of perverse chance, no fewer than eight of the top-ranking players came out of the hat in the same half as Suzanne.

Then came the rain that prevented Suzanne from even going to practice on the courts on either the Saturday or Sunday. Finally, her first-round match, against Eleanor Goss, the fifth ranking American, had to be postponed from Monday until Tuesday to allow Suzanne a few hours for her first warmup since landing.

Tuesday, the thirteenth of August, 1921, must have combined some of the worst vibes of Suzanne's life.

First, Miss Goss called to say she was sick and could not appear. Then the committee, seeing the chance of making up the day lost by rain, scheduled Suzanne's second-round match against Molla Mallory. Eventually, late in the afternoon and before 8,000 expectant spectators, Molla played the game of her life and humiliated Suzanne to an ignominious retirement in the middle of a match she was clearly going to lose anyway.

After a shaky start Suzanne began coughing con-

"As Suzanne left the court sobbing, supported by the umpire, hissing was heard from the several sections of the crowd."

spicuously. She was mentally unprepared and physically unfit for Molla's unexpected onslaught. This time Papa's command "Abandonne" was not forthcoming. It would have seemed totally appropriate to Suzanne in the circumstances, so she made the decision herself.

As Suzanne left the court sobbing, supported by de Johannis, the match umpire, Edward C. Conlin, and the referee, J.M. Jennings, hissing was heard from the several sections of the crowd, and the national press coined the bitterly appropriate barb "Cough and Quit."

Suzanne never again wore the peacock-blue bandeau she had chosen for that match.

When their rematch became inevitable, in the '22 Wimbledon final, such was the surrounding climate that Molla's husband bet $10,000 on his wife's renewed victory, and Mike Myrick, on behalf of the American authorities, felt himself obliged to issue a formal statement denying the derogatory remarks about Suzanne that were being attributed to his close friend Mrs. Mallory.

In the eventual match, Suzanne took exactly twenty-seven minutes to revenge herself with a 6-2, 6-0 victory.

Suzanne met Molla again six months later in Nice. There she took only twenty-six minutes to repeat the execution by 6-0, 6-0. The umpire's blank for the match is still framed on the wall of the Nice Club, whose members were justifiably proud of their Empress's achievement.

One of the most beautiful girls in the world watched Molla's humiliation of Suzanne at Forest Hills in '21. Hours later she won the Junior National Title. This was Helen Wills.

In '22-'23 Helen climbed the ladder of tennis fame very quickly, and in the '23 she was already considered good enough to lead the American women's team—ahead of Mrs. Mallory—in the first-ever international match between English and American women. Wimbledon in '24 was the occasion of Helen Wills's first trip to Europe, and the fact she had been so recently rated above Mrs. Mallory gave rise to the usual sensational speculations about the meeting with Lenglen.

In April '24 Suzanne contracted jaundice during a visit to Spain with Alain Gerbault. Wimbledon was to begin on June 23, yet her doctors refused her permission to pick up a racquet before June 5. All went well in the first week of Wimbledon when she scored three successive 6-0, 6-0 victories in the opening rounds. This in itself was a record, but her very short convalescence medically validated her subsequent claim that she was still unfit and should never have entered an event as demanding as Wimbledon.

At the start of the second week, Elizabeth Ryan, playing the game of her life, came within six points of beating Suzanne. A questionable line call, given the other way, would have put her even closer. The set lost to Miss Ryan in this match was one of only three sets Suzanne lost in singles in the seven years of her star reign.

The shock, and the effort of survival, proved too much for her nerves, and once again she decided to abandon the whole tournament.

Her emotional resources may have been exhausted, but her physical reserves were still sufficiently intact for her to ask Miss Ryan to go shopping with her the next day, adding insult to injury and certainly giving renewed fuel to her critics.

Needless to say, the critics lost no time in accusing Suzanne of running scared from her first risk of a meeting with Helen Wills. It was a complete replay of the "Cough and Quit" episode three years earlier, they said. The "aftermath of jaundice" was the reason quoted in the formal club bulletins. Then Papa Lenglen himself went on record saying, "Next year my daughter will play better than ever." This unusual intervention proved, I think, his remarkable understanding of Suzanne's nature, his mastery of what is now known as public relations, and the confidence he had in his own extraordinary influence on his daughter's game.

The year '25 was to become the very zenith of Suzanne's life. She won the French Championships with the loss of only seven games, and won six rounds of Wimbledon with the total loss of five games. Her opposition included at least three players, Diddie Vlasto, Kitty McKane, and Elizabeth Ryan, who would certainly win some of today's $100,000 tournaments, yet Suzanne's financial rewards from these triumphs totaled just two week's hospitality, a medal, and less than one hundred dollars in nonnegotiable prize vouchers.

For a hundred years the names Ritz and Carlton have been synonymous with everything that is luxurious and grand in hotel life. The Carlton Hotel in Cannes is no exception, but by some

"The critics lost no time in accusing Suzanne of running scared from her first risk of a meeting with Helen Wills."

quirk of fate, it reached an unlikely summit of its fame on February 16, 1926. On this Tuesday, the small, rather inconspicuous tennis club, which faces a side-street entrance of the Carlton and shares its famous name, staged one of the most dramatic encounters ever seen in the history of tennis.

There were two closely intertwined aspects of this extraordinary saga: the tennis, of course, but also the way this particular event lit up, like a klieg light, the insidious innovations of a sport that was beginning to transform itself into a spectacle.

After World War I tennis was ceasing to be the prerogative of the rich. The natural habitues of the palace hotels were finding, with sometimes painful surprise, that their dining-room neighbors could now be just tennis-playing people who were obvious newcomers to this luxury life-style. The "doggy" British set even questioned quite bluntly how they got there without being better "house-trained."

For three years Papa Lenglen's immediate response to any tournament invitation involving Suzanne was already "What is the proposition?" The implications of this question were endless, and his inquiry became increasingly logical as more and more spectators wanted to pay more and more money to see his daughter perform.

Suzanne's Grand Tour of the royal palaces of Europe a few months previously led to the initial question as to how she maintained her exotic plumage and her luxurious modes of travel. At the summit of the men's game, Tilden's extravagances were also posing some searching questions back home in America. For the first time the financial aspects of star tennis began to assume worldwide public interest.

Since '23 Helen Wills, now twenty years old, had climbed the top rungs of the tennis ladder by several victories over Molla Mallory, by coming to within a few points of winning the '24 Wimbledon after Suzanne's withdrawal, and by winning the American championships three years in succession, in '23, '24, and '25.

In announcing that she would play the Riviera spring circuit in '26, her instinct must have told her the time had come to challenge Suzanne's reign and that she was ready to do so on Suzanne's own territory. Henceforth, a showdown somewhere along the Lenglen coast was inevitable.

Probably, from San Francisco six thousand miles away, Helen Wills and her mother, being quiet, dignified people, had no opportunity to appreciate the absolute pride of place Suzanne occupied in French national prestige. Had they done so they might have foreseen the woldwide interest Helen's invasion of the Riviera would arouse.

In the minds of sports editors, memories of Lenglen's "Cough and Quit" incident in '21 made this new encounter, betwen the French Empress of tennis and the American successor to Molla Mallory, potentially big news, and they sent countless hard-nosed journalists who had never previously seen a tennis match, hot-foot to the south of France.

In January 15, 1926, Helen Wills, accompanied by her mother and fifteen unstrung tennis racquets, arrived at Le Havre in France on a liner called the *De Grasse*. Somewhat to their astonishment, the two ladies were met on their arrival in Paris by the president of the French Tennis Federation, Pierre Gillou, accompanied by Jean Borotra and an unusually large muster of sensation-seeking journalists.

Later they boarded the Blue Train for Cannes, and on arrival, were again surprised by another welcoming crowd. Among these was Charles Aeschliman, probably the best player Switzerland ever produced. He had been married to a delightful American girl, Lesley Bancroft, at one time ranked No. 2 in this country ahead of Helen Wills herself. This apparently gave him the feeling he should have a part in the arrangements for the Wills's visit. No one could have forseen that he would soon play the most controversial of all roles at the climax of the forthcoming drama.

Helen told the welcoming part she planned a nine-week scheduled of singles and doubles on the Riviera, beginning with the Metropole tournament in Cannes. She said she intended to play every week; so the burning question was which week would the Empress Lenglen submit herself in singles to the Wills challenge.

They had never played against each other so their first meeting would be interesting, even in doubles. But what all the newsmen in the world were waiting for was their first fact-to-face confrontation in singles.

In the first week of Helen's schedule, she won the singles of the Hotel Metropole event, but was disappointed to find Suzanne had entered only in doubles.

The Lenglen parents, however, wasted no time in making a microscopic inspection of the newcomer's form. They sat, wrapped in rugs in the honor seat.

"Wills' instinct must have told her the time had come to challenge Suzanne's reign, on the champion's own territory."

These overlooked the Metropole courts from a high escarpment, and Helen recalls that while playing below she felt very self-conscious under the combined scrutiny of the Lenglen trio.

Helen scheduled her first tournament immediately on arrival to accustom herself to the slow, French clay surface and was far from showing the peak form she reached three weeks later.

Conversely, Suzanne, determined to impress Helen to the utmost, put on one of her most dazzling displays and lost only seven games in winning the eight matches of the two doubles events partnered by Diddie Vlasto and Toto Brugnon.

Meanwhile, all types of writers from tough newsmen to best-selling authors, were swarming to the Riviera to a point where regular sports-aces like Al Laney could not find a room in an appropriate hotel.

Blasco Ibanez, famous Spanish author of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,* was commissioned by a South American newspaper to report the anticipated Lenglen-Wills singles match for today's equivalent of $15,000, although he had never seen a tennis game in his life.

This kind of atmosphere was one previously only associated with million-dollar prizefights. It was the era when men like Tex Rickard were injecting a measure of ballyhoo never previously conceived in a sport. Within months, Jack Dempsey would square off with Gene Tunney before 135,000 fans, paying an unbelievable $2 million at the box office of the Philadelphia Stadium. The names of Babe Ruth and Bobby Jones strode the sports pages like colossi. Al Capone made daily headlines.

Yet on the faraway Rivera, two girls were attracting as much, if not more attention to what would normally have been "just a tennis match," and with its actual venue still undecided.

The second week of Helen's visit coincided with the Galla tournament. That week Papa Lenglen became ill and was unable to attend. The significance of this fact did not emerge until later because, as it turned out, he never again saw Helen Wills play singles. I always thought his appraisal of her at the Metropole before she had found her land legs after six days on the Atlantic, gave him an inaccurate picture of her true potential.

Moreover, Suzanne announced that because of Papa's illness she would not play any events at the Gallia tournament became a signal for the impatient newsmen to start saying this was a deliberate cop-out from a possible final against Helen Wills.

Suzanne's "aftermath of jaundice" had caused her to pull out of Helen Wills's first Wimbledon and also the '24 Olympics. These were their only previous opportunities of meeting. The old accusation of "quitter" was quickly revived and the specter of Molla Mallory loomed in almost every tennis report from the Riviera.

The tournament in Helen's third week was in Nice. Suzanne responded sharply to the bad press image she was getting by entering the singles before Helen even had time to do so. But now it was Helen's turn to play catch-as-catch-can.

On arrival Helen had said she would play every week. Her entry blank for Nice was received, but at the last moment she said she intended to play doubles only. The tournament director, George Simond, inquistioned by all the reporters, said that Charles Aeschliman, in entering the mixed doubles with Helen Wills, had also listed her in the singles. But George conceded that this may have been without Helen's authority.

The reason Helen did not play the Nice singles when it was known that Suzanne would play, is still only partly answered in her own statement that said, "I may *or may not* have entered." In her memoirs she adds, significantly, that she may *also* have thought, Why play Suzanne on the one court she knows best in the whole world? The likely answer seems to be in her additional thoughts.

From the journalists' point of view, the Nice week was a near fiasco. By entering the singles before she knew Helen was not playing the Nice singles event. Suzanne refuted all the "quitter" accusations and successfully spoiled their stories.

Suzanne, too, went to great lengths to disprove theories that she was antagonistic toward Helen. Helen stayed in her Cannes hotel during the Nice week but drove to Nice for the doubles. On her arrival, Suzanne was seen to wave gaily to Helen from the Villa Ariem, across the street from the club.

Later she went to the club to greet Helen personally, playing to perfection the role of gracious Empress receiving an honored guest in her own palace. Suzanne and Helen met together on the flat terrace roof of the Nice club and many picture captions described this as their "first social meeting." This

"The atmosphere of this waiting game built to a fever pitch during the tournament, as the world awaited the showdown."

The atmosphere of this waiting game built to fever pitch during the week of the Nice tournament. The whole world was now asking whether the showdown might come the next week at the Carlton in Cannes. Helen Wills signified early on that she would play singles there, but Suzanne gave no hint of her intentions.

Researchers discovered that she had not played the Carlton singles for the past three years, though she had won the second tournament of her life there at the age of fourteen.

Tex Rickard could not have planned a better promotional buildup. Meanwhile more than two hundred frustrated journalists drowned their anger daily in bars the whole length of the Riviera. And the world waited.

Some small consolation was derived in Nice from the possibility that Suzanne and Helen might find themselves on opposite sides of the net for the first time in the mixed doubles final. Suzanne was again in dazzling form, winning five rounds of singles with identical scores of 6-0, 6-0. Sixty games won to none lost must have impressed Helen Wills.

Helen Wills won the ladies' doubles in which Suzanne did not play. But at last they met in the mixed final. Suzanne and her partner, the Italian Hubert de Morpurgo, inflicted a crushing defeat on Helen Wills and Charles Aeschliman and I had the privilege of umpiring the match.

The crowd of newsmen were frantically calling their editors for instructions. They had no story and still did not know if and when they would get one. Should they stay or go? It was even thought for a time that Suzanne and Helen would never play each other in singles. But since Suzanne's unparalleled triumphs of '25 she had been considering several professional offers for exhibition tours of the United States, so it was obvious she must play—and beat—Helen somewhere if she was to push up the pro offers.

Two dominant personalities in the complex situation were Lady Wavertree and F. M. B. Fisher. The Riviera had been the natural winter habitat of this pair and it was more than coincidental that their presence greatly enhanced the promotion of Dunlop tournaments and the adoption of the Dunlop brand

three Burke brothers, Suzanne's lifelong sparring partners and friends. Still another consideration was that all three Burkes, Albert, Tommy, and Edmond, were also friends of the Dunlop executive.

Toward the end of the Nice week, George Simond at long last announced that both Lenglen and Wills had entered the Carlton Club singles.

From that moment on, the Dunlop people were publicly involved and this placed "F. M. B." in the spotlight of full center-stage.

Many of the newsmen sent to the Riviera were being initiated in the brittle veneer of the tennis scene and thought it clever to demand answers to basic money questions that had been tactfully, and purposely, avoided in the past.

John Tunis, a tough, ace reporter for Wallis Merrihew's *American Lawn Tennis*, and also a good player who had access to the Riviera locker rooms, was already terrifying many of the stars with his bloodhound professionalism.

"How can you afford to live here?" Tunis asked the perennial English finalist Phyllis Satterthwaite, who was, in fact, on the payroll of an important chain of Riviera palace hotels. The circumstances surrounding the Lenglen-Wills confrontation seemed likely to present the greatest stimulus for his probing character.

With Tunis leading the pack, the journalists immediately attacked Fisher in strength. Every awkward question conceivable was asked about the finances of the match.

Tunis had done his homework with great care. He calculated the gross receipts would approximate half-a-million francs, the equivalent of almost $200,000 at the time. He was prepared to allow 350,000 francs (almost $140,000) for expenses and taxes, already a generous calculation. But these were "amateur" days according to the establishment, and Tunis wanted to know "what the hell" was going to happen to the balance of the money.

So the whole question of under-the-table payments to "amateur" stars, and the then dirty word "shamateurism," was first publicly aired in the discussions about the Lenglen-Wills match. The arguments were reproted in newspapers across the world. Was Suzanne making a personal profit out of the match? And what was to be Helen Wills's benefit? Were the Burke brothers and the Dunlop company, by virtue of providing a few dozen balls, going to make it rich at the expense of two girls?

"The whole question of under-the-table payments was first publicly aired in discussions about the Lenglen-Wills match."

into luxury accommodation at the Carlton Hotel and how Helen, meanwhile, had been outfitted by a leading Paris couturier with a wardrobe said to have cost 25,000 francs (about $2,000).

Father Lenglen, having got up too soon from his illness in order to see Suzanne's matches in Nice, was again sick at home. From the Villa Ariem, however, he told George Simond there must be no Americans officiating when his daughter played Helen Wills. The American press (without involving the Willses because this was not their way) made a public demand that there should be no Frenchmen either.

At that time I had in two years called 104 of Suzanne's matches. The question of my umpiring this match was very tactfully broached by my boss, George Simond, immediately after Helen's arrival in France. I was only fifteen and he foresaw that the eventual clash of these two stars would be of such importance that my age would preclude me from the all-important role of umpire.

Very sensibly, he also said that if any questionable incident should arise, my close association with Suzanne would immediately be raised and could create embarrassments for all concerned. For sixty minutes I was heartbroken. But then a great sense of relief set in. In retrospect, and since the full drama has become history, I have been very glad of Simond's decision.

Some years after women were first allowed to take part in the early Wimbledon championships, Commander George Hillyard, then the Wimbledon secretary, decided he would convey to the ladies' singles what he considered the honor of having the club secretary umpire their final. This set up a long precedent by which he umpired all the Wimbledon ladies' singles finals for over thirty years and many other important women's finals in Europe.

As a player Hillyard won an Olympic Gold Medal for Britain in 1908 and, by strange coincidence, finished his playing career winning the handicap mixed, at well over sixty years of age, in the Gallia tournament while Helen was playing there in the second week of her Riviera visit.

So it was not only inevitable, but a natural choice for George Simond to ask Hillyard to take charge of the Lenglen-Wills match. Simond was also faced with finding a crew of linesmen who were all British or, at least, of non-French and non-American nationality. I was British, but again Simond took into account my close association with Suzanne and we agreed that I should not be included.

The importance of the event made Simond feel that staunch supporters of tennis, well-known people who had been faithful to the Riviera tournament, should be rewarded by involvement in this historic event.

A rather strange cast of characters therefore became line judges for this match. Some of these were to play, as is usual in climate events, unsuspecting but leading parts.

The first of these was Lord Charles Hope, a brother of the Viceroy of India, who made the most controversial call of the match. The second most controversial call was made by Cyril Tolley, one of England's top golfers. Another line judge was Sir Francis Towle, president of the hotel chain that employed Phyllis Satterthwaite and in whose gardens many of the top Riviera tournaments were staged.

Among the remainder were Victor Cazalet, a famous English horse trainer whose family had been involved in tennis for years. A German, a Russian, and four others whose names I have forgotten, were involved only in routine calls. No foot-fault judge was considered necessary.

Suzanne's favorite Nice club, and almost every other Riviera club or casino, held a *the-dansant* on Saturday afternoons. I can still see Suzanne returning from Cannes on this particular day looking drawn and deathly pale.

I remember her standing by the bar of the club with only a ghost of her customary public smile, even this made with an effort. She also had the dry, tickle cough that normally only came on when she was tensed up on court.

Everyone around me commented on how ill she looked. One of her close friends even whispered to me. "She looks to me like she's not going to play that match." This was just three days before the final.

On February 15, the day of the semis, the two Greek cousins Helen Contostavlos and Diddie Vlasto played Suzanne and Helen Wills respectively.

Even in Suzanne's obvious state of high tension, Contostavlos was unable to take more than two games from her. Helen's comparable domination was demonstrated against Diddie Vlasto. Diddie had been champion of France in '24, the year of Suzanne's jaundice, and in that year was runner-up for France against Helen Wills in the Paris Olympics. On this day in Cannes Vlasto was lucky to take five

"Some of the strange characters who became line judges for this match were to play unsuspecting but leading parts."

games from Helen Wills. Suzanne and Helen Wills were head-and-shoulders better than any other girls in the world.

So February 16, the day of the "all-time" confrontation, came at last.

One of the distinctive features of the Riviera is that a heavy spell of rain nearly always lasts for four days. It is a sort of purging of the whole coast, and afterwards the scene looks even more beautiful than before.

This Tuesday was one of those peerless days that seem, in one's memory, only associated with the French Riviera and Lenglen.

The six courts of the Carlton Club were sandwiched into a small square of ground beside the Carlton Hotel. There was an arena court with a permanent stand down one side that could accommodate about fifteen hundred spectators. Behind this was a garage with a sharply pointed tin roof. The Carlton Hotel towered over one end of the arena court, while at the opposite end was a street edged with small villas. These were all roofed with red tiles. Growing astride the street and the backstop of the court by the little villas, was a tall eucalyptus tree.

In those days Riviera finals usually drew five or six hundred spectators, maybe a couple of thousand when Suzanne played in singles. The unprecedented interest in the match against Helen Wills meant the seating accommodation around the Carlton arena court had to be doubled. A temporary stand for two thousand more people was hurriedly erected on what was normally the second court. How well I remember the carpenters still hammering long after the start of the match. We sat there and the temporary structure rocked alarmingly.

As I was not to take an official part in the match Simond said to me, "Enter the tournament and you will then have a competitor's pass." My mother rarely went to tournaments outside Nice, but she, too, was caught up in the wild enthusiasm of the occasion and also took Simond's advice.

I took the train from Nice with my mother in time to reach the Carlton by 10 a.m., a good hour before the appointed time of the match.

We were confronted with total chaos. Both streets beside the club were already jammed with jostling crowds trying to squeeze through a single gate where Albert Burke was attempting, in vain, to check the tickets and prevent a total invasion of the club.

Albert told me later that the waiting lines had been five abreast since early dawn, and dozens of the leading journalists, who had been waiting for weeks for this moment, seemed likely not to see it at all. One group of twenty tough writers switched tactics and formed a flying wedge, forcing an entry on the other side of the club, partly by pushing through the indignant crowd, and partly by demolishing the fence behind the unfinished stand.

This was one of the times in my life I was glad of being 6 feet 5 inches tall. With my mother right behind me and with some encouragement from Albert Burke, we managed to reach our seats on the temporary stand between the hammering carpenters.

By this time, about twenty people were precariously perched on the summit of the pointed roof of the garage opposite, and when they attemped the perilous maneuver of moving along to allow even more friends to join them, they received a loud ovation from everyone, glad to have some comic relief from the growing tensions.

About 10:30, there was a crash of tiles in the street of the small villas and two heads suddenly appeared through a hole in one of the roofs. Thereafter, the operation was repeated at about two-minute intervals until the sidewalk below was a sea of red tiledust and the roof of each villa looked like some cocktail-party centerpiece from which dark olives and toothpicks protrude from cubes of red cheese. As the minutes went by, the holes in the roof were progressively enlarged to allow arms with flags and handkerchiefs to wave to their neighbors and indicate their support for Suzanne.

The next invasion was of the tall eucalyptus tree. Some ten local boys climbed to the highest branches and were about to settle for their front-row view when a squad of police went after them. A pitched battle took place in the branches until the police dismissed the original occupants. Then all six policemen decided to remain in the tree themselves to cheer their French heroine.

Another ovation greeted "F. M. B." Fisher when he walked onto the court, solemnly carrying three boxes of six Dunlop tennis balls as piously as any acolyte approching an altar. As I recall, he was then joined on the courtside bench by the faithful Lady Wavertree and Charles Aeschliman.

The most expensive reserved seats, costing $12 compared to $3 for the best seats at Forest Hills at the time, were located immediately behind the umpire and the courtside benches.

"The moment the razzmatazz died, Suzanne's face changed. At last she was confronted with the moment of truth."

At about 10:45, the front row began to fill with some of the world's best-known faces. There were the former King Manoel and Portugal, Grand Duke Michael of Russia, Prince George of Greece, the Rajah and Ranee of Pudukota, and among many other celebrities, the Duke of Westminster, whose family still owns half of London.

The tycoons were represented by Gordon Selfridge, Britain's answer to Marshall Field of Chicago. Selfridge escorted as usual that season by the Dolly Sisters, laden with diamonds, with everyone asking which was Rosie and which was Jenny.

From beyond the barricades of the club, murmurs and shouts of the seething mass of people still outside the gate suddenly changed to loud cries of "Suzanne! Suzanne! Voila Suzanne!" All the flags and handkerchiefs from the roofs across the street started to wave frantically like mechanical toys in a store display at Christmas.

To those who were outside the club as Suzanne's car inched through the still hopeful fans, she blew kisses right and left, and was obviously deeply moved by the fervor and patriotism of their greeting.

Helen's memoirs recount that the night before the match she dined on filet mignon, ice cream and cake, and also recall that although the Carlton Hotel orchestra blared out the song of the hour, "Valencia," she very soon went to sleep.

Superstition always forms a large part in a game-player's thinking. In Suzanne's earlier years she would not play a match without a particular gold bangle worn on her left arm. Mrs. Mallory would never play without the triangle of diamonds that surrounded her monogram. As previously mentioned. Suzanne never again wore, at any time—day or night—the peacock blue color of the bandeau in which she defaulted to Mrs. Mallory.

In '26 her "lucky" ensemble was the delicate shrimp-colored bandeau and cardigan that she chose for the vital match.

A moment before 11 a.m., the two champions appeared. Suzanne's entrance was that of the complete prima donna with full war-paint, a long white coat with white fur collar and fur cuffs. Her confidence seemed to be unimpaired, and she acknowledged graciously the marvelous ovation she received.

Helen looked the clean, uninhibited all-American college girl in starched cotton, with the cerise cardigan she invariably wore, and the "Wills eyeshade."

Suzanne stood bowing and posing while Helen Wills, possibly out of some sense of respect, kept slightly behind the Empress. There was a battery of photographers already on the court, and the first pictures show Suzanne with her full-stage smile and in the ballet pose she always assumed on such occasions.

But the moment the razzmatazz died down, Suzanne' face changed. At last she was confronted with the moment of truth. Being the extraordinary professional she was, her whole image altered. It seemed as if the change transformed the outward facade to the revelation of the inner soul. Suddenly the circles under her eyes were much darker and her expression showed a degree of apprehension that was quite unnatural for her in normal circumstances.

There was still a great deal of noise from the crowd as well as continued hammering in the temporary stand. One official addressed the crowd asking for quiet in English and in French. He received a public brush-off for his trouble. There were too many Frenchmen new to tennis, and more importantly, they had come to applaud their heroine, La Grande Suzanne.

Eventually, the Empress herself spoke. *"Un peu de silence, s'il vous plait."* Later she repeated this on a more pleading note and finally reproved her subjects harshly for not acceding to her requests.

Tommy Burke spent many hours of his later life recalling the famous eighty minutes he spent next to Mama Lenglen during the match.

It seems Mama Lenglen also had totally misread Helen's real ability and repeatedly reproved Suzanne for not winning more easily. How different things would have been for Suzanne had Papa Lenglen been able to observe Helen Wills's improvement in the past weeks and had been present with his hypnotic influence over his daughter.

Papa's absence must also have told heavily on Mama Lenglen. It is said the frayed nerves of both mother and daughter gave rise to a bitter argument that endured late into the night before the match. Tommy Burke recalls that he repeatedly implored Mama Lenglen to calm herself as her nervous state was communicating to Suzanne at each change.

The first set took about twenty-five minutes, and I think the score of 6-3 to Suzanne was predictable from the girls' form on the day. What came as a shock was the second set, when

"The last, the most contentious, and the most dramatic moment came when Suzanne finally reached match point."

Helen managed to speed up her shots, and on two or three occasions, Suzanne seemed close to physical collapse.

There were several crisis points in that second set, the first when Suzanne trailed 1-3. Then it appeared that Helen "let her off the hook" by changing from an attacking strategy to an attempt to slow down the pace.

The many instructional manuals written by Suzanne all put great emphasis on the importance of winning the seventh game of any set. She always referred to this as the "gateway to victory." So she must have been deeply discouraged to lose the vital seventh game after a struggle that involved fourteen points.

After this it became increasingly apparent that Suzanne would face almost certain defeat if forced to a third set because her strength was ebbing fast. She was having spasms of the famous dry, tickle cough, and was also clutching sporadically at her heart between points.

Suzanne's silver flask of cognac was never more in evidence than in this match. During the first set she took liberal sips during each change of ends. In the second she took swigs between every game. I wondered what Helen Wills thought of this procedure, so far removed from anything she might do herself.

The next crisis occurred when Helen led 4-3 with Suzanne at 3-all on her own serve. Suzanne hit a shot to Helen's forehand line that Helen clearly thought was out.

As the umpire called "40-30," Helen asked the linesman, Cyril Tolley, "How did you call that?" When he told her he had called the shot "good" in Suzanne's favor, Helen exhibited probably the greatest degree of expression her "poker face" ever allowed in her career, an expression of total disgust.

If Cyril Tolley had given this ball out—as Helen obviously thought—she would have had a point for 5-3. With Suzanne clearly at the end of her resources, this advantage could have changed the whole outcome.

The last, the most contentious, and the most dramatic moment of all came when Suzanne finally reached 6-5, 40-15, match point on her service.

Helen, who had resumed her hard-hitting tactics, hit a blazing cross-court forehand, which landed either just on the sideline in front of Suzanne, or just in the alley, as I myself thought.

There was a cry of "out." Suzanne threw the two spare balls from her left hand into the air, then ran to the net to shake hands. Helen accepted Suzanne's hand rather ruefully, and Commander Hillyard announced, "Game, set, and match." Although the match took place in France, his calls were in English throughout.

With the invasion of photographers about to take place, and an accompanying army of bellmen and delivery boys carrying floral tributes for the heroine. I recall seeing Charles Aeschliman go toward the foot of the umpire's chair as if to take control, once again, of the situation.

He would soon have had to move in order to allow Hillyard to leave the chair, but while still standing at the base of the steps, he noticed the side-linesman, Lord Charles Hope, making a semaphore with his arms as he came across the court toward George Hillyard. I played Aeschliman many times in my life, and always felt that he had an exaggerated sense of the dramatic, which many other players considered an ego trip. He was an extremely imposing figure of a man, outstandingly good-looking with the rugged aura of a Swiss Alpine guide.

Aeschliman, from the foot of the umpire's chair, then made what was probably one of the most incredible utterances ever made on a tennis court. *"Attention, le match n'est pas termine,"* he said in French. The nearest equivalent to this in English would be, "Just a moment, the match is not over."

Lord Charles Hope had made Aeschliman understand he had not called Helen's shot out. He had seen the ball "good," and the cry of "out" had come from the crowd behind where he was sitting.

By this time Suzanne had sunk onto the courtside bench, and was already disappearing behind six-foot floral tributes and an army of photographers and bellmen.

Hearing Aeschliman's statement, Suzanne tensed and her face framed the largest question mark in the world. *"Alors il faut continuer?"* she asked blankly. Again, the sense of this can be expressed only in English as "Then, must we go on?"

Hillyard, taking his cue either from Charles Hope's frantic gestures or Aeschliman's incredible statement, or both, resumed his seat. To everyone's amazement he announced that Helen's shot had been good and the match would continue at 40-30.

Aeschliman's intervention must remain one of the most incredible in the game's history, particularly coming from an international player who would be—or should have been—immediately conscious of the implications of his action.

Hillyard, being over sixty and a Victorian gentleman, was probably too taken aback to react as he might.

"From the foot of his chair, the umpire uttered one of the most incredible declarations ever made on a tennis court."

In fact, the match had positively and formally ended. Helen had accepted the umpire's announcement, right or wrong, and the players had shaken hands. There was no reason on earth why Hillyard could not have told this to Charles Hope, and particularly to Charles Aeschliman, and left things as they were.

There cannot be a player today who would not claim that such a point should at least be replayed.

Suzanne, instead, after her initial amazement, removed her coat. Looking straight ahead and without a word or a gesture, she went back to serve at 40-30 from the left court.

She lost the point, lost the game, and was in obvious danger of losing the set, which in everybody's observation would have meant losing the match because she was so close to total collapse. But she fought back and, a good ten minutes after having thought she had won the first time, she stood at match point again, with the scores at 7-6, 40-15.

Double fault!

In all Suzanne's years of supremacy, she was known to have served only six double faults. Then the game went to deuce and it was almost unbelievable that after such traumatic setbacks, she was able to win the match for the second time, with two blazing winners. The final score was 6-3, 8-6.

Once again, all was total chaos on the court. This time Suzanne collapsed sobbing on the bench. Blinded with tears, she avoided the hundred hands proferred in congratulation. Even the immense floral tributes seemed unnoticed until, as she recovered, a French army officer offered the miraculous compliment that she had really won "two matches in one morning." This brought a faint smile to her lips, and she even managed to pull a rose from one of the bouquets and pin it to his tunic.

By then the area was so surrounded with a clogging mass of photographers and admirers, Helen hardly had room to raise her arms to put on the cerise cardigan.

Helen left the court alone and unnoticed; nobody even seemed to care that she had gone.

Suzanne was assisted from the court. She was taken to the small wooden clubhouse that revealed, when unlocked, a scene of wild disorder, because the thousands of francs in paper money that had been taken at the gate had yet to be counted and checked.

Once in private, Suzanne's nerves finally gave way, and her friends recount a bout of terrible hysterics in which Suzanne lay on the floor screaming and clutching fists full of notes. It has often occurred to me that the sight of the piles of money, when she was making so much for everybody else and so little for herself, may have unconsciously set off these hysterics.

Meanwhile, the crowds below her sixth-floor Carlton suite were shouting and calling for her to appear. This, she was quite unable to do, and all the victory celebrations that had been planned for that evening were firmly canceled by Mama Lenglen.

It is perhaps difficult to recall that these were days before immediately relayed radio news of events, and that Mama Lenglen had to telephone the result to Papa's bedside. Hopefully, she did not tell him, as she had told Suzanne at the moment of her greatest triumph, *"Mon dieu, how badly you played!"*

Helen's comment was, "There will be other tennis matches, other years." This was essentially the remark of a young aspirant at the sunrise of her career. She could not know that she would never again meet Suzanne in singles.

That afternoon Helen was to lose once more in doubles to Suzanne.

Suzanne had changed to a brand-new bandeau-and-cardigan ensemble in rose pink, but she was so exhausted that she was almost carried through the match by her partner, Diddie Vlasto.

After the match, Helen shook hands with Diddie but appeared to ignore Suzanne altogether.

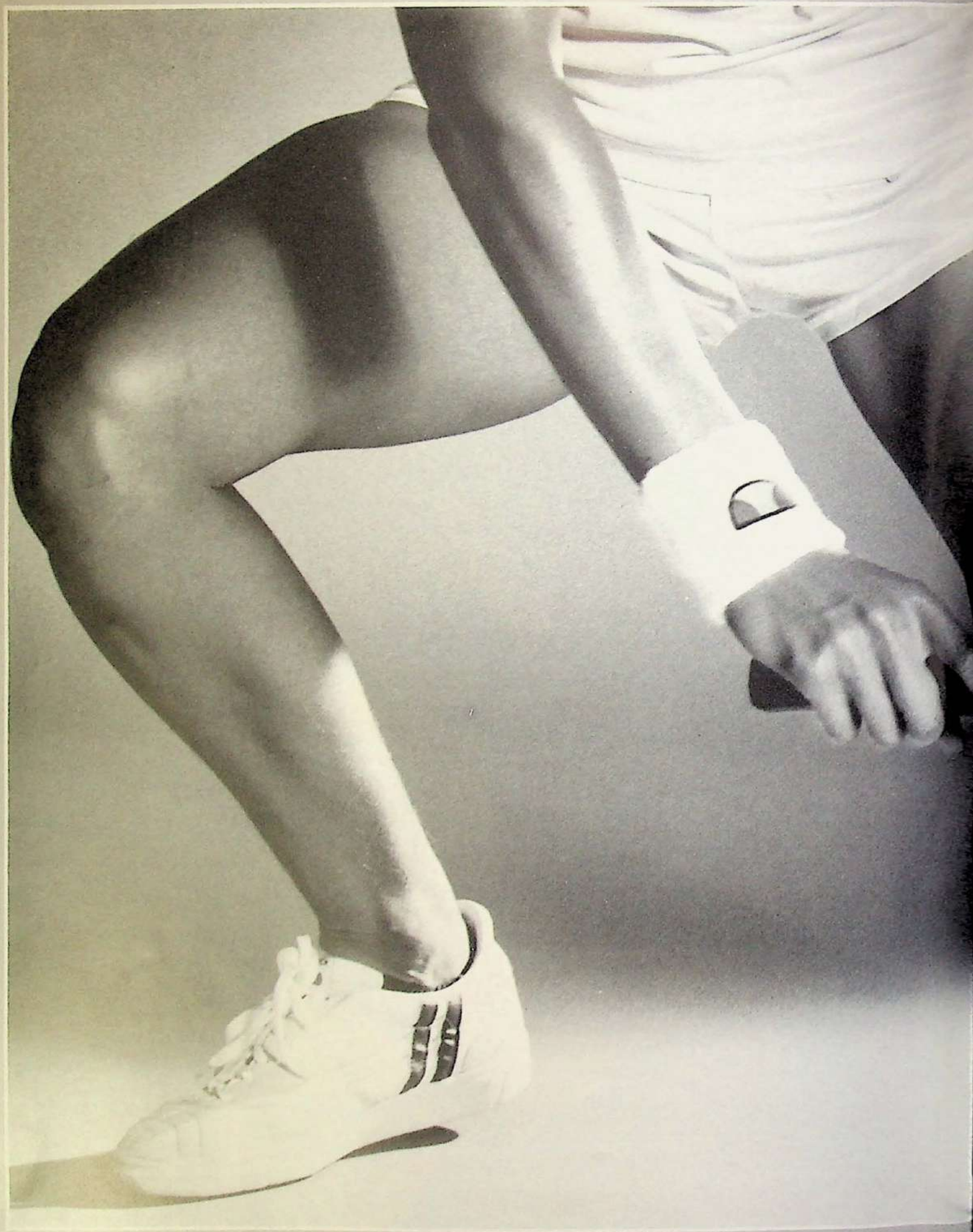
Between 1914 and 1938 Suzanne's and Helen's careers as Queens of Tennis overlapped for three years from '24 to '26. Everyone expected that in these years they would meet many times. Extraordinary sets of circumstances, which could have been decreed only by destiny, allowed them only three meetings in which Suzanne won all three—one in singles, one in doubles, and their first-ever clash in mixed doubles in Nice.

Later that evening, with the victory celebrations all canceled, Suzanne withdrew to the lone company of her most intimate confidant, Coco Gentien. Coco recalls that they dined at a restaurant near the old Nice port. During the evening some guests at the neighboring table, recognizing Suzanne, commented proudly, "Out Suzanne is still Queen."

It was tragic that Suzanne should overhear this remark for the moment seemed to reveal her innermost soul. She whispered almost inaudibly, as she looked into the far recesses of the restaurant, "Yes, but not for much longer now."●

GYPSY

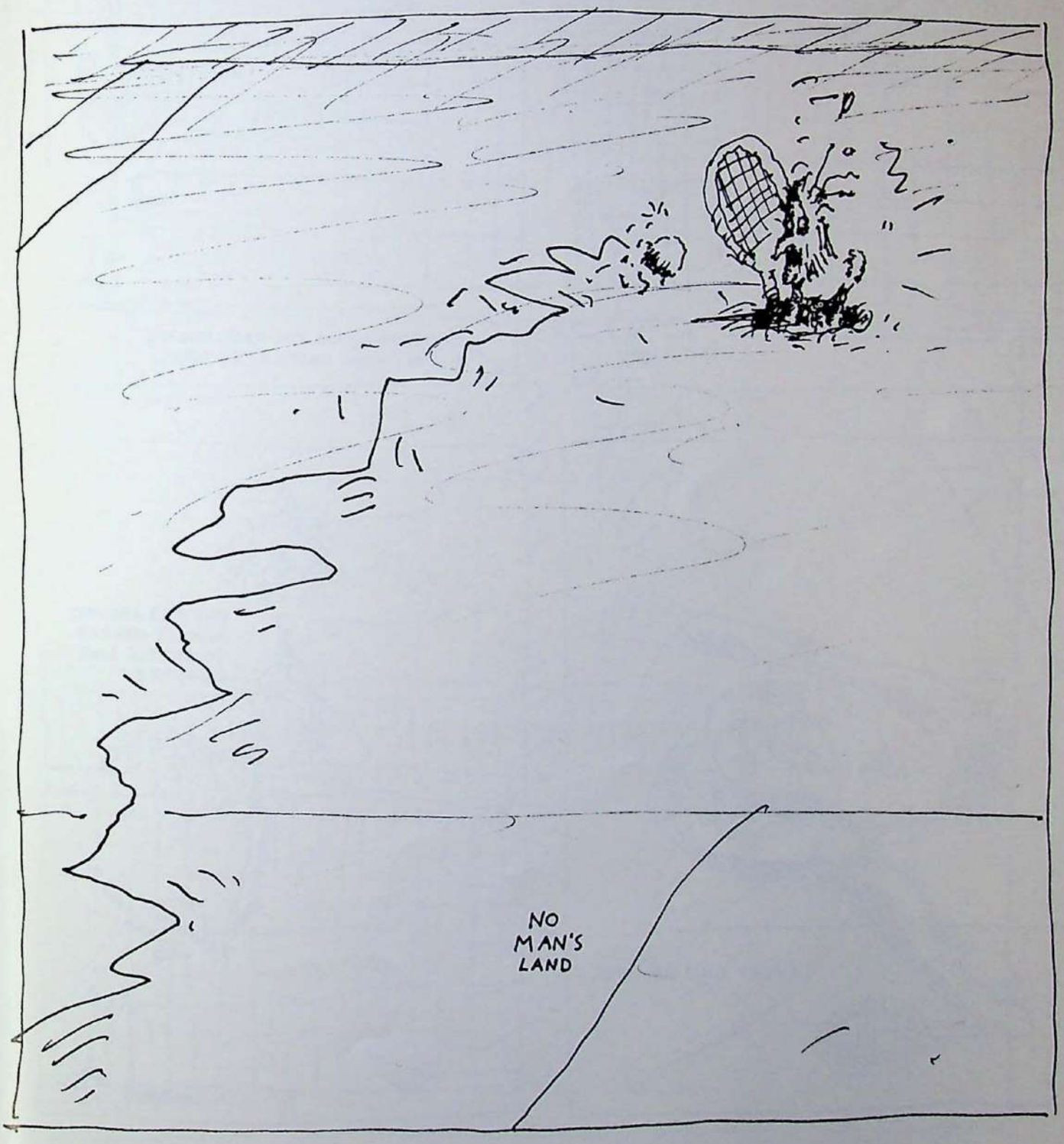
ROGER PRIGENT FOCUSES ON VIRGINIA RUZICI

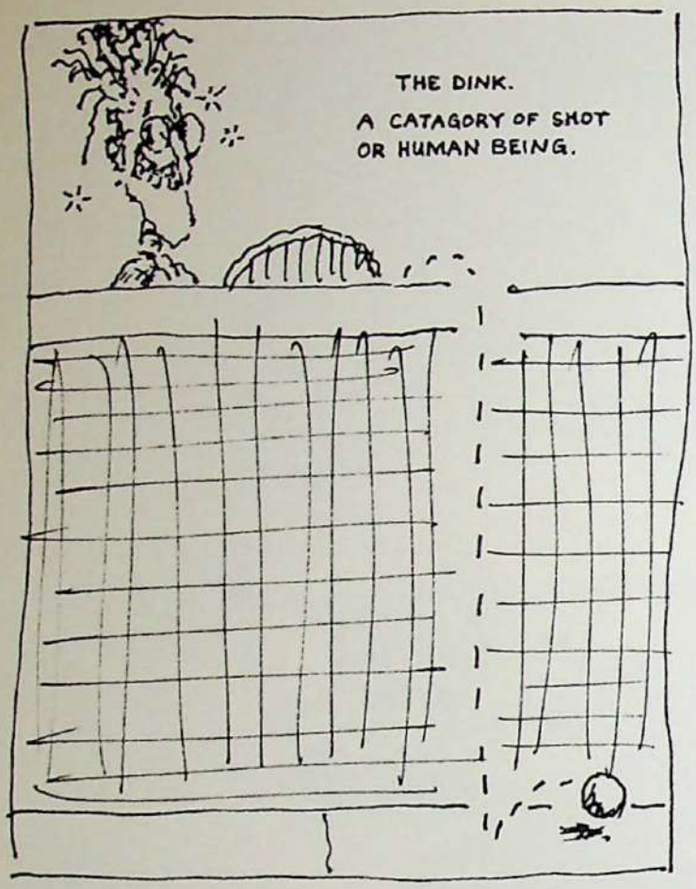


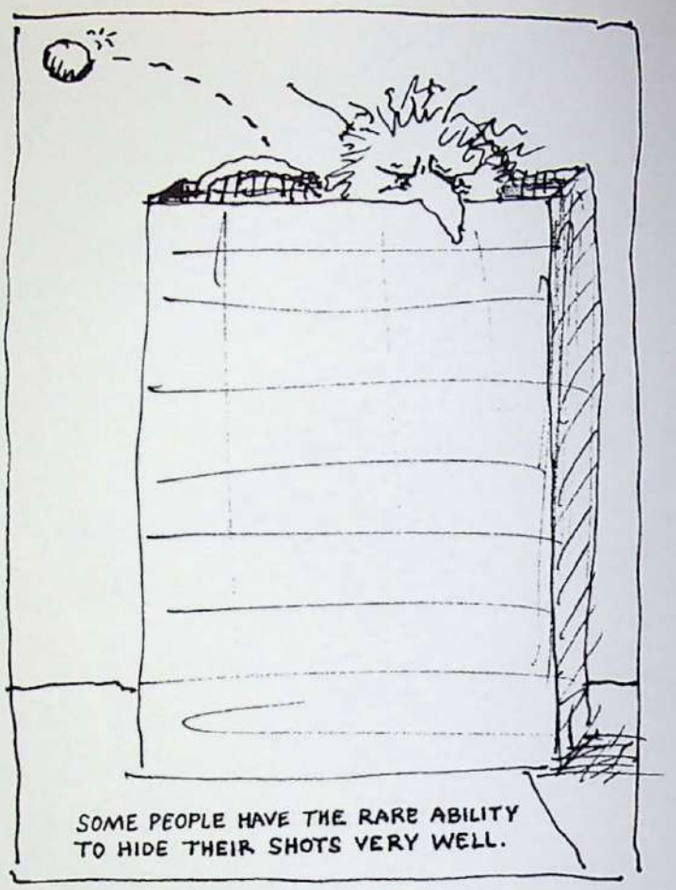
Rumanian tennis star Virginia Ruzici is a picture of grace and virtuosity on the court. Nicknamed "Gypsy" for her sultry good looks, she exerts a strong magnetism on the crowd. She is charming, intelligent, and fluent in five languages—and also possesses a sly sense of humor. Recently, when asked what sparked the riot at Wimbledon during her doubles match, she replied, "It had to be either my diamond earrings or my legs."

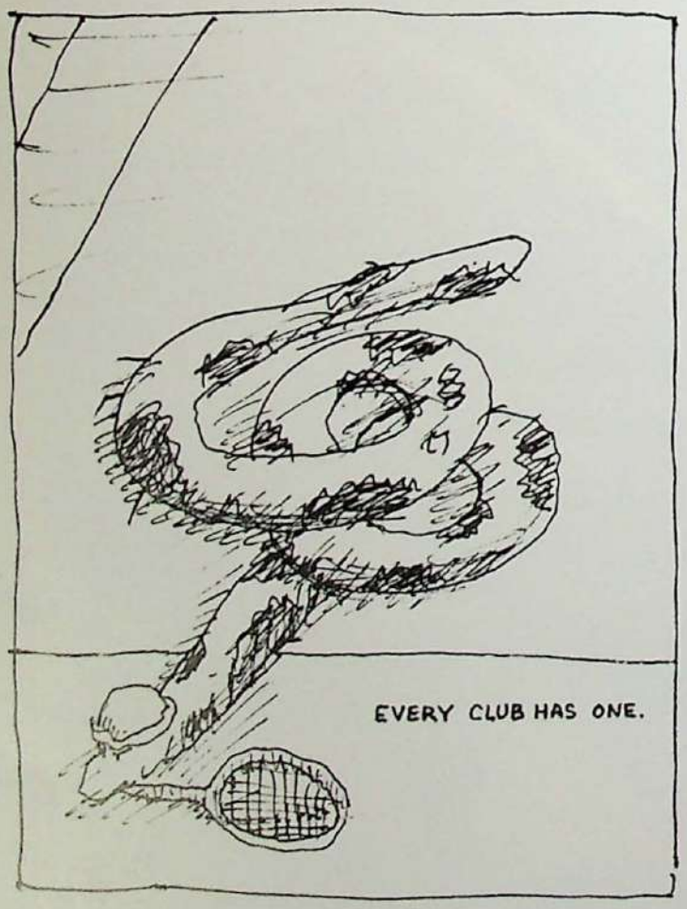
Tennis Ruminations

by Jerry McLaughlin

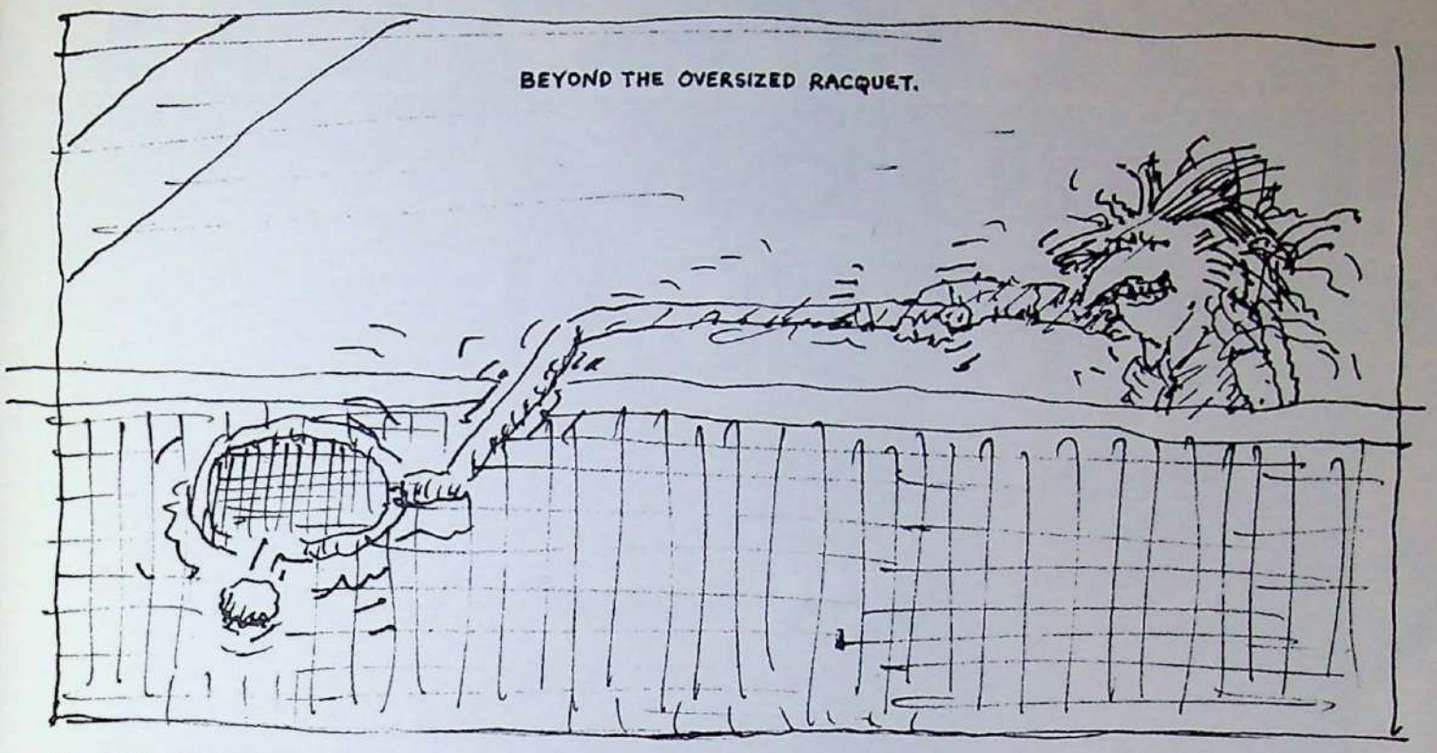


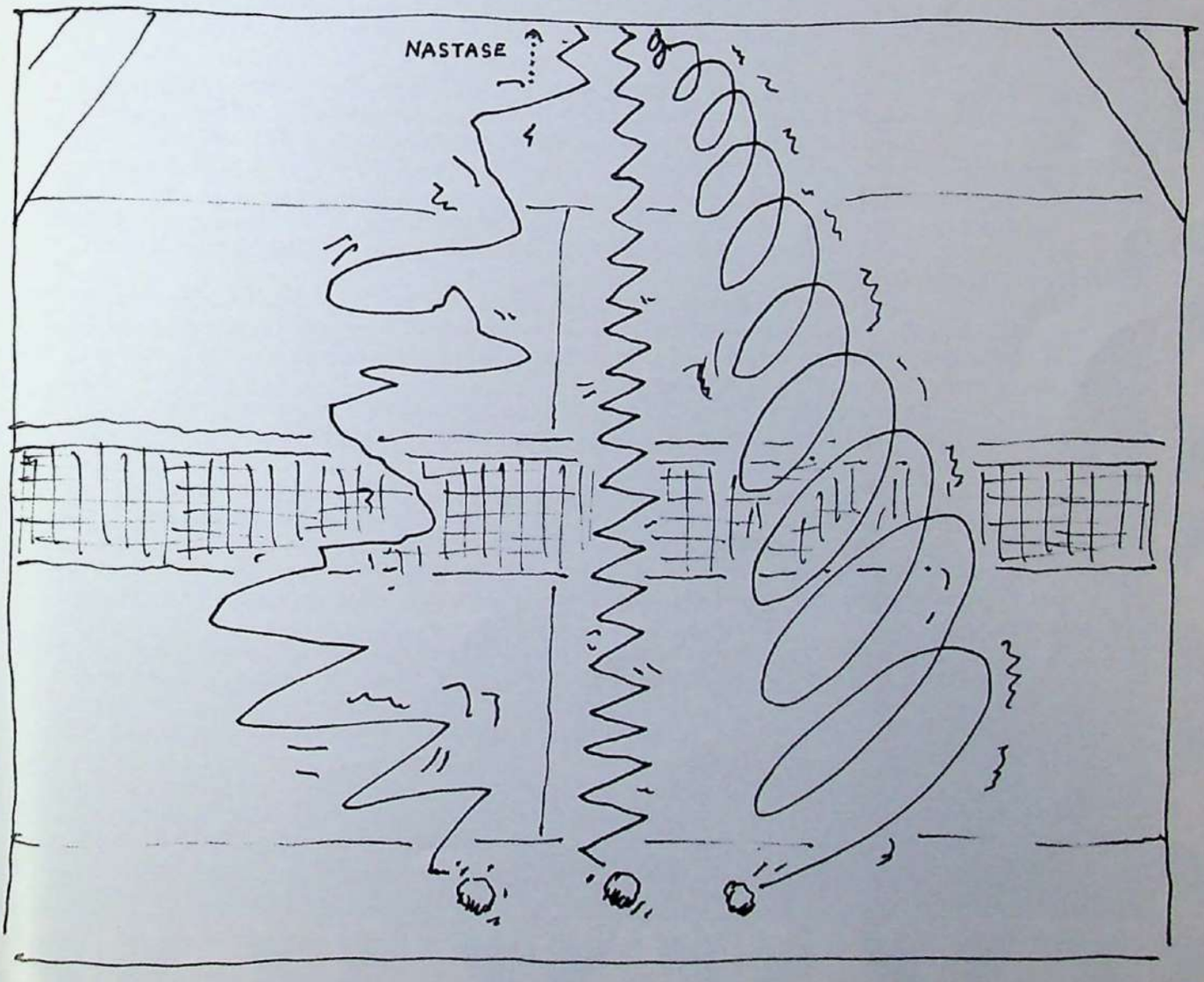

THE DINK.
A CATAGORY OF SHOT
OR HUMAN BEING.


SOME PEOPLE HAVE THE RARE ABILITY
TO HIDE THEIR SHOTS VERY WELL.


EVERY CLUB HAS ONE.

UMPIRES ARE NOT
ALWAYS NEEDED
TO SETTLE LINE
DISPUTES.


BEYOND THE OVERSIZED RACQUET.


NASTASE

NOTES FROM PORTUGAL

EUROPE'S LAST FOREIGN COUNTRY

by H.K. Pickens
drawings by Andrea Da Rif

I am advising Tony Madeira of our Lisbon office that you will be arriving in Lisbon from New York on TAP Air Portugal on Friday and will be driving down to the Algarve for a week of tennis.

Little did he know that on Friday I would be sitting in a cafe on the Left Bank in Paris eating a *crepe au chocolat.* But now Portugal was intriguing as I read about its sights and sounds: windmills clacking in the Atlantic wind, the plaintive sound of *fado* echoing through the narrow streets of Lisbon's Alfama, purple wisteria cascading over the walls of mosaic courtyards, plodding oxen pulling carts along ribbon roads, fields of cork trees, the singsong litany of a fish auction.

I was to discover a country whose irresistible charm remains an utter mystery to most Americans. In that respect, this land was the last foreign country in Europe. Glorious Portugal, complete with a villa and three sets of tennis a day.

At the airport the bad news came suddenly—I was not going to wake up in Lisbon. An equipment change had magically transformed my 747 into a 727 and, along with 22 other misfits, my only alternative was to catch a flight to Paris, then try for Lisbon the following day. But why complain in the light of a delightful interlude. TAP had come to the rescue.

Nor did I regret the delay. Approaching Lisbon the next day, our plane was greeted by a most magnificent sunset. And an hour later, as I drove along the Costa do Sol to the Palacio Hotel in Estoril, a full moon leapt out of the Tagus to welcome me.

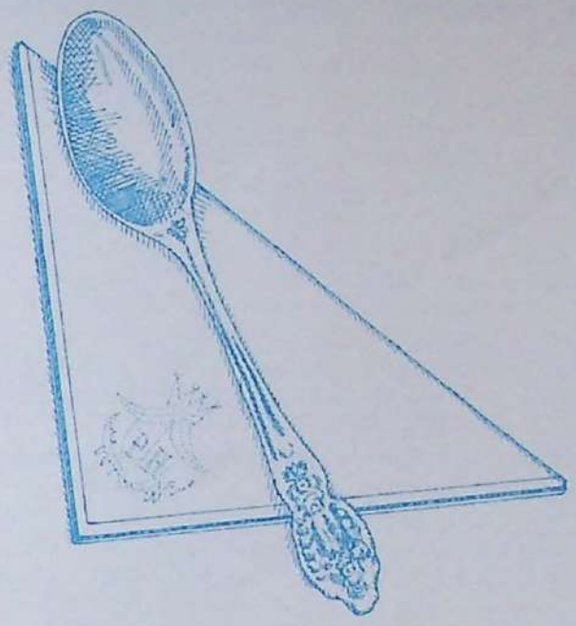
There's a strip of shoreline just outside of Lisbon where vacationers can enjoy the best of both worlds—the cultural offerings and nightlife of Portugal's capital or the calm, sunswept beaches that line the Costa do Sol. Facing south over the Atlantic, Estoril and Cascais seem typically Mediterranean. Their clustered houses are of pastel shades embroidered with red tile roofs, and the hills rise up gently from the sparkling shoreline.

Cascais dates from Roman times, and although fishermen still haul their boats up on the beach by hand and repair their nets just as they've always done, the town's narrow winding streets are now sprinkled with fine shops, high fashion boutiques, cafes, *fado* clubs, and elegant restaurants like Pescador or Joao Padeiro. Estoril has also burgeoned into a fashionable riviera resort with seaside cafes, championship golf, tennis, a multimillion dollar casino, and deluxe hotels.

The most elegant of these is the Palacio Hotel, a legendary retreat for exiled royalty, a playground for kings. Countesses once arrived there by railway. Deposed monarchs dropped in regularly for dinner. Umberto of Italy and Don Juan, the Count of Barcelona, were frequent guests. In World War II, when families fled their native lands with a small case of jewels and the clothes on their back, diamonds and

rubies were accepted instead of money.

Yet even now the Palacio faithfully retains its old world elegance while providing every imaginable modern service. Its pompeian reception rooms with sienna marble pillars lead to intimate salons graced with wedgewood blue and white friezes and crystal chandeliers. My room, a stately duplex blending marble and mahogany, had a sunny balcony overlooking the hotel's pool.



The day I arrived I was delighted to accept a luncheon invitation from Manuel Quintas, the Palacio's manager, a tall, elegant man whose polished charm and regal bearing were in perfect harmony with our surroundings. The spacious, newly-renovated dining room was resplendent in the midday sun, and from our table we looked out over a landscape of lush bougainvillea. The conversation ranged from the architecture of the Palacio and its counterpart in Madeira to my host's favorite wines and, finally, to the recent political history of Portugal.

"On the morning of April 25, 1974," he explained, "a group of army officers in Lisbon overthrew the dictatorship established by Antonio Salazar in 1932 and declared Portugal a republic. The entire country suddenly exploded with street demonstrations, political rallies and public debates, all of which had been strictly forbidden for more than 40 years. And in the six years that followed, the country had 12 different governments. But now we finally seem to have achieved a healthy degree of political stability.

"Something else, equally important, also took place. Only three months after the new republic was established, the government announced that it was giving up its enormous overseas empire and granting independence to the two African colonies, Angola and Mozambique, as well as to some smaller regions. As a result, Portugal found itself with over half a million *retornados,* former residents of the colonies who chose to return to Europe rather than remain in the new countries. Of course, we had no place to put them.

"Then someone came up with the idea of locating them in the Algarve. With all the confusion of the revolution, the tourist industry had fallen off dramatically, and resort hotels in the South were closing down. So we solved our problems by housing the *retornados* in four-star hotels in the Algarve as subsidized guests of the government. It was an expensive solution at first, but they are responsible for reviving the Algarve as one of Europe's choice vacation areas.

"Here's to your tennis holiday there," he said, as we toasted.

In Lisbon, tennis players are not known to pay more for court time than for rent. Nor are tennis courts crowding cork trees into extinction in the countryside. Yet even in the ostensible absence of tennis fanaticism, Portugal does present an attractive selection of resorts, hotels with courts, and private clubs whose privileges are available to visitors.

The *Clube de Tennis do Estoril* lies just a stone's throw from the Palacio Hotel. Its comfortable clubhouse overlooked seven courts neatly arranged in a grid pattern, a perfect setting for my tennis debut on red clay. After an hour of hitting I stopped by to say hello to the pro, a tall, stately Hungarian dressed in white trousers and a white cable-knit sweater. Geza Torok Adam has been pro there for 43 years.

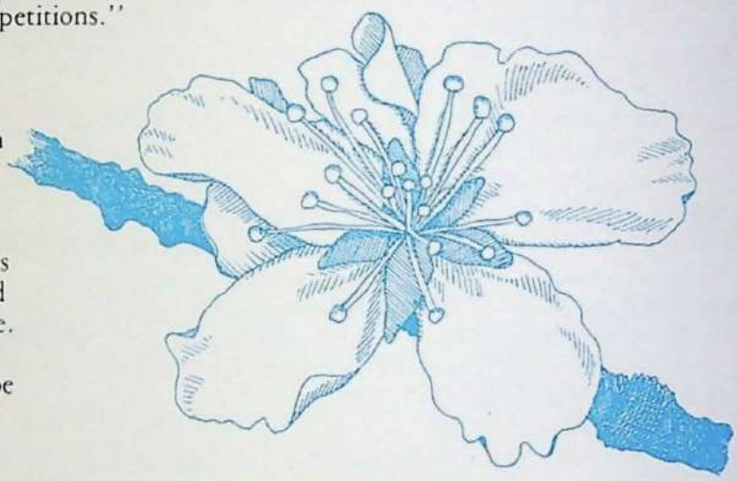
That afternoon I dropped in at the National Tennis Center, situated in the middle of Lisbon's Monsanto Park, a vast wooded area with a breathtaking view of the city and the Tagus. The main stadium, a sunken bowl nestled into a gently sloping hill, seats several thousand, and its terraced sides serve as seats.

As I strolled along the tiled walkway that rimmed the upper level I saw two first-rate players battling it out on the magnificent red clay center court. I was surprised to discover that the Center was holding qualifying rounds for the National Championships. The whole scene was quite informal. No referee was present, but a group of players intently followed the action from the top of the stadium. Sitting with

them was Moura Diniz, columnist for the *Jornal do Tennis* and Portugal's best-known tennis commentator.

"Referee? Sportsmanship is not a problem in Portugal," declared Moura. "Players learn the rules early on, and if they abuse them their fellow players will make sure they conform. The real problem here is that our government does not consider tennis to be a particularly important sport. That's according to a classification system based on the number of people who play the game. As a result, tennis gets very little money for development or for national teams. But we're improving. We have an excellent junior named Pedro Cordeiro who plays on the Davis Cup team. He should make the world rankings. Our junior team is also beginning to do well in European competitions."

We walked over to the other side of the stadium where individual courts were separated by huge hedges and fragrant bougainvillea. In another qualifying match the former Mozambican champion (who happened to be 65 years old!) was holding his own against a young opponent. It was late afternoon, and the light on the gardens in the background was intoxicating. I asked Moura if we might be able to hit for a while. He smiled, and said it would be possible and he added that the Center might also be persuaded to waive its normal court fee—about 20 cents an hour.



Tony Madeira has returned home. After living in New York for 18 years, working as a sports journalist, gathering colorful stories about the old days at Toots Shor and the days of Dempsey and DiMaggio, he returned to Lisbon to become Director of Public Relations for the Portuguese Tourist Bureau. When I finally met this enthusiastic, energetic man, once a world class runner, he promised to pace me through Lisbon for a day.

"The Portuguese have an old proverb," he said. "'*Dios escreve direito por linhas tortas,* which is best translated as "God writes straight in crooked lines." And Portuguese history seems to bear out this proverb's accuracy—that enduring chaos, adversity, and pain can ultimately lead to good fortune.

"Centuries of battling a powerful ocean created a country of expert sailors who know the sea, who became the first Europeans to explore the non-Western world. Domination by the Romans, who conquered the region under Julius and Augustus Caesar in the first century B.C., gave us our language which is now spoken by over 100 million people. Arab culture and science, brought by the Moors in the eighth century, had an enormous influence, especially in the South. . . .

"The country first won its independence in the 12th century after we defeated the Moors, and the following centuries were the most celebrated period in our history, a time of enormous colonial expansion. Under Prince Henry the Navigator, Portuguese ships explored the coast of Africa, discovering Madeira, Cape Verde, and the Azores. In 1488, Bartholomew Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Less than ten years later, Vasco da Gama reached the coast of India.

"In the early 16th century, we continued our explorations, and the country's empire stretched across Asia, Africa, and America. But foreign competition, piracy, and endless wars on the high seas between the English, Dutch, and Spanish cut off our foreign trade, ruining the nation's economy.

"Today the proverb still rings true. From decades of repression emerged a fierce sense of independence and a love for freedom. Economic problems have made the us resilient and enterprising, even as these same problems have driven over ten per cent of our population out of the country. These tribulations have given the Portuguese a strong national identity and nowhere is this sense of national identity more prominent than in Lisbon."

We started in the Alfama, the old Moorish section of the city whose buildings were fortunately spared from destruction in the earthquake and fire of 1755. The twisting cobblestone streets are so narrow that travel by car is impossible. In most places I could stand right in the middle of the street and touch the buildings on both sides. The Alfama sends forth the savory smells of food—the markets are piled with fresh fruit and vegetables, and strands of garlic and pepper dangle from the doorways of local taverns.

And besides the fascinating spectacle of everyday life in the Alfama, the quarter has some lovely old churches, most of which date from the 18th century.

Above the Alfama and the Tagus hovers St. George's castle, a hilltop fortress. The Visigoths, who overran the country in the fifth century, used it as a fort. Then it was taken by the Moors in the early eighth century. We walked along the ramparts and esplanades and wandered through the olive, pine, and cork trees on the roof terrace, where we had the best possible view of the city, whose uniform red tile roofs reflected the early morning sun. As we stood there we tried to imagine how many times in Lisbon's long history St. George's had been under siege.

From St. George's we headed to Belem, where the Tagus meets the Atlantic, to visit Praca Alfonso de Albuquerque, a former royal palace. Its enormous rectangular garden overlooking the Tagus was stunning, but the truly curious attraction there is the famous Coach Museum, installed in a beautifully ornamented salon where the palace riding school once stood. Lisbon's most popular tourist attraction, the museum is considered the best collection of its kind in the world, with ornate vehicles dating from the 17th century. By that time, however, our attentions were turning to food.

Since much of Portugal's history has been determined by its relationship with the ocean, it's not surprising that there's an abundance of fish and seafood in every market and on every menu. *Caldeirada*, the classic Portuguese version of bouillabaisse, was always delicious. Countless other kinds and preparations of fish are available and, of course, I never had to ask if it was fresh.

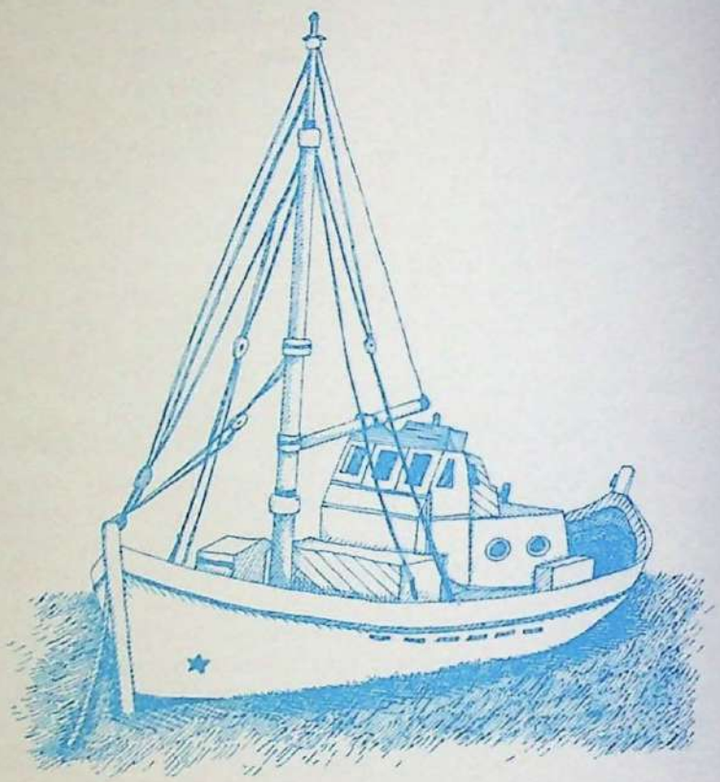
Portugal is also famous for port wine, for which the English developed their taste as early as the 17th century. It comes from the mountainous northern region called the Douro, and it takes its name from Porto, the nation's second-largest city. While dry port makes a fine aperitif, vintage port, blended, aged, and matured in wooden casks until it turns the color of straw, is the very finest of this class. Madeira, which like port comes from only a precisely defined geographical area, also has a selection of great variety. Among them, Sercial, Malmsey and Boal have found their way into literature and culinary history. Wines from the Dao and Colares districts, unheard of outside of Portugal, are also especially good. But my favorite discovery was *vinho verde* (green wine), a young, light wine from the Minho district of northwestern Portugal. This pleasant drink, low in alcohol content, is called "green" since it comes from grapes that are not fully mature.

That evening I headed back to the Alfama for *fado*. This characteristically Portuguese song, which came from the docks of Lisbon, is usually melancholy and its name can be roughly translated into English as fate. The singers, who clutch black shawls around themselves as they sing, lament the inevitable acceptance of fate which characterizes so much of Portuguese society. Accompanied by two guitarists, the *fadista's* face becomes trance-like as she throws her head back, clasps her hands before her, and closes her eyes in an expression of painful surrender. In the sheer intensity of its emotional force, *fado* has been compared to American blues. But while a heartbreaking *fado* reduces an audience to tears, it also brings them close to the heart of Portugal.

Tourists never allow enough time for Lisbon and I was no exception. No time for shopping—Lisbon is famous for embroideries from the islands, china and glassware, gold jewelry and glazed Portuguese tiles. But I was looking forward to the scenic drive to the Algarve, and a night in a *pousada*, a government-run inn that could very well be a restored royal castle, medieval monastery or Moorish fortress.

The drive would take me to Sintra, nestled high in the mountains and remembered by Lord Byron as "Glorious Eden" with its unforgettable crown, the Pena Palace; through the vast plains of bull-breeding country in the Ribatejo province and the cork-producing plains of Alentejo; to the museum city of Evora with its tiled patios, cobblestones and labyrinthine streets; and the 15th century Convent dos Lois, now a luxurious *pousada*.

And then to the Algarve.



Suddenly I found myself in the middle of a movie set. Albufeira at noon was a *caldeirada* of activity: shops, fishermen, children, vacationers. It could have been St. Tropez, or Marbella before the invasion of the highrise. The name of the Algarve region comes from Arabic, and the distinctive allure of the area's farms and villages bear witness to a strong Moorish influence. This maritime province, which forms the southwest corner of Europe, stretches along the hundred miles of southern Portugal. For centuries a rugged mountain range separated the Algarve from the rest of Portugal. As a result, the region's people developed a unique character and culture —partly Arab, partly European. And now, though the province is accessible to all, the magic and spirit of the past remain.

To the south of the mountains lies one of the world's most exciting coastlines. From pale golden beaches, luminous yellow rocks point upwards from the sea, which faintly joins an azure sky at the horizon. Along the water, white houses cluster together in tiny fishing villages. Beguiling works of Moorish architecture are virtually everywhere.

Spring in the Algarve starts in January with the blossoming of the almond trees, and summer there seems to go on forever. Lemons, oranges, and figs ripen in the warm sun, and throughout the entire year wildflowers add their own unique hues to the landscape. Other colors appear at the time of Carnival, when villagers don their local costumes and celebrate this event with parades, dancing, fireworks and bullfights.

For generations, fishing has been the way of life in the coastal villages. And each town offers its own particular attractions. Faro, with 18,000 inhabitants, is the capital and southernmost city of the Algarve. Olhao, a fishing village near Faro known as the Cubist Town, has long attracted painters from all over Europe. Portimao is famous for its bustling port and handsome fishing boats. Pria da Rocha, with its seaside cathedral of caves and grottoes, is considered queen of the Algarve beaches. Prince Henry the Navigator's favorite residence was located in Lagos, at the edge of a magnificent bay. At Sagres, at the very southwestern tip of the nation, the first school of navigation was founded over 500 years ago. Loule is known for its gleaming white chimneys and Moorish ramparts, and Slives is another town with a rich Moorish tradition. Monchique's ancient Roman spa is still reputed to cure rheumatism. And Albufeira, once a sleepy village whose white houses hugged the cliffs along the sea, is now a swinging resort. It was in Albufeira that I met Roger Alexandre.

Roger's smile was infectious as he repeated his favorite expression, "No problem, no problem." In fact, there are rumors going around that people come back to the Algarve just to see his smile and experience his *joie de vivre*. This warm and gracious temperament seemed ideally suited to Roger's position as Director of the Algarve Agency, whose business is ensuring that villa vacations there are enjoyable. When I met him for the first time at A Ruina, a superb restaurant in a dazzling setting overlooking the beach of Albufeira, he talked about the elegant villas in the area which can be rented by vacationers. Only two nights later we were old friends eating chicken *piri piri* and sipping *vinho verde* at one of his favorite spots just outside of town, a local restaurant called Antonios.

"During the war I was very brave," he told me. "One night my troops were ambushed, and I jumped

up and fired into the forest until they found cover. We were all frightened. The war in Guinea-Bissau was very bad, but we had to defend the people. This was not too long ago. Then, of course, I was in good shape, only 65 kilos. Now I weigh 87—I am on a diet and exercise program."

His wife, who spoke no English, smiled as Roger told the story. A shy woman with unassuming beauty, she spoke in French about growing up in the traditional male-dominated society of the Algarve. She talked about their children, and mentioned that their son was attending a special private school where he learned English.

Then the subject of port came up. Roger's response was predictable: "No problem." We headed to the Port Bar in Albufeira, and after Roger exchanged a word or two with the owner several candle-warmed glasses appeared along with a bottle of 50-year old Sandeman port. That glorious experience simply cannot be described. Nor will I try to describe the look on my face when, leaving the restaurant, a 30-year old bottle of Armessetti port, costing $60, slipped from its container and crashed into pieces on the street.

"No problem," said Roger. "I will take care of it. Anyway, it was clearly the fault of the bag."

He reappeared with a big smile, holding another package tightly, and announced, "Now it's time for *fado*."

I still have a vivd image in my memory of this wonderful man, dancing around his living room, singing along with Amelia Rodrigues, and translating the *fadista's* plaintive lyrics.

Looking down from the collonaded clubhouse at the Roger Taylor Tennis Center, I saw the stuff that tennis player's dreams are made of. There, below, set in a narrow wooded valley which sheltered the site from a gentle sea breeze, were 12 all-weather courts, neatly paired so that each had a certain independence. On the two front courts stood a tanned, athletic figure, scrutinizing four young players who were pounding their ground strokes with authority.

"That's my husband," said Frances Taylor, who had greeted me inside and showed me around the club: pro shop, sauna, massage rooms, heated pools, solarium, and patio bar and terrace overlooking the courts. Although she was formerly a ranked British player, Frances leaves the coaching to Roger and his assistants, and concentrates on the administration of the Center.

"Let's say hello," she said.

Roger Taylor, at 39, has abandoned Big Time tennis, but you wouldn't guess it from his appearance: dark hair, the chiseled good looks of a movie star, six feet, with the strong hands and legs of a world class athlete. Americans don't recognize his name like they would that of Rod Laver, Stan Smith, or even Roy Emerson, all his contemporaries, but Taylor was a popular figure in the tennis world in the sixties and seventies, and his name still carries the aura of Wimbledon. He was semifinalist there in 1967, 1970 and 1973; he shared the U.S. Open doubles crown several times; and he was always ranked in the top ten in those years. As the best player in Great Britain since Perry, Taylor received an MBE from the Queen.

As we began to chat, the first thing that struck me was his pleasant, unpretentious manner. (Taylor grew up in an era when tennis stars were athletes and gentlemen.) We talked about Wimbledon, the Legends Circuit, the Tennis Center, and his transition from playing to entrepreneurship.

"It's interesting," he said. "All of a sudden you find yourself having the qualify for events. You miss a few tournaments, lose a match or two, your ranking slips, and there you are fighting to qualify. I'd been looking at some opportunities, certainly for a better tax situation. There was the Monte Carlo Country Club, but it was too formal for me and then I looked at something on the Channel Islands. That's when I thought of the Algarve—the British have always liked to vacation here—and there's great tennis weather virtually every day of the year.

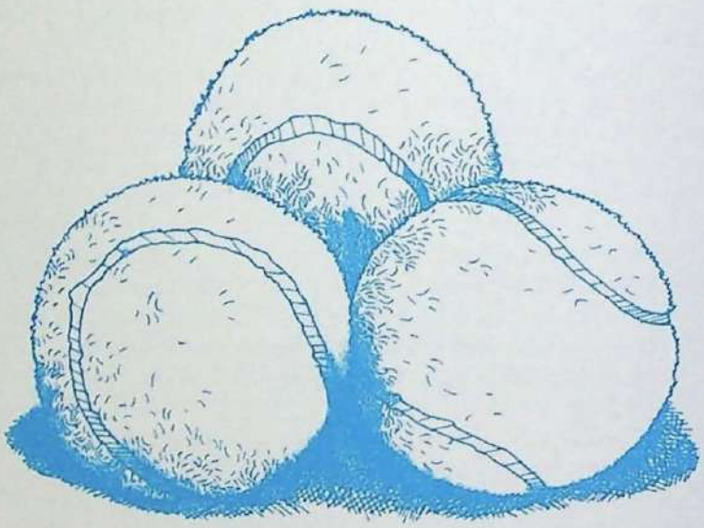
"Vale do Lobo is sensational. And this place, near the sea, has got to be one of the finest tennis playing centers in the world. We emphasize individual supervision as well as some competitive play in our progams which include training weeks or simply tennis holiday packages. There are also junior, senior and over 35 tournament weeks during the year. Oh, for women, it's over 25. Tough to get them to admit ....

"So I combine my time here and at home with appearances in the Legends Circuit. And that means facing Rosewall and Laver again. As if I didn't see enough of them in the old days! Except now, in the 35 and over tournaments, there might be an eight man draw, and I'm often matched against one of them in the first round. I stay in good shape but don't have anyone to push me in practice down here—anyway, Rosewall is winning everything, 10 of 13 so far, at $10,000 per tournament. The tour is great fun, and there's a great feeling about it. At a recent stop in Barcelona, for example, the full house went wild every time Laver hit a ball. I even earned a little there for winning the doubles with Owen Davidson."

We talked about the craziness at Wimbledon this year and I asked him how it felt to have gotten so close, especially in 1973, the year of the boycott, or in 1970, when he ended Laver's streak there.

"Yes, there's nothing in the world quite like Centre Court at Wimbledon," he said. "In 1973 I lost 7-5 in the fifth to Jan Kodes in the semis before he went on to beat Metrivelli decisively. Yes, it was close... ."

Just then one of his pupils challenged him to a game, actually a drill, where they would try to hit tennis ball cans set up near the base line. The 15-year old from nearby Loule, Marco Seruca, son of a fruit farmer, had not missed a day of practice since he came to the center almost a year before. Although he showed talent and determination, he hadn't hit the cans many times that morning. But against the master the clang of flying cans came at an alarming rate—alarming, that is, for Taylor, who was losing the challenge.



"What are you playing to?" I called.

"I'll decide later," he retorted with a wry smile.

His English humor resurfaced later after he invited me to play in the weekly tournament at the club.

"Now make sure you're here by 9 AM," he instructed.

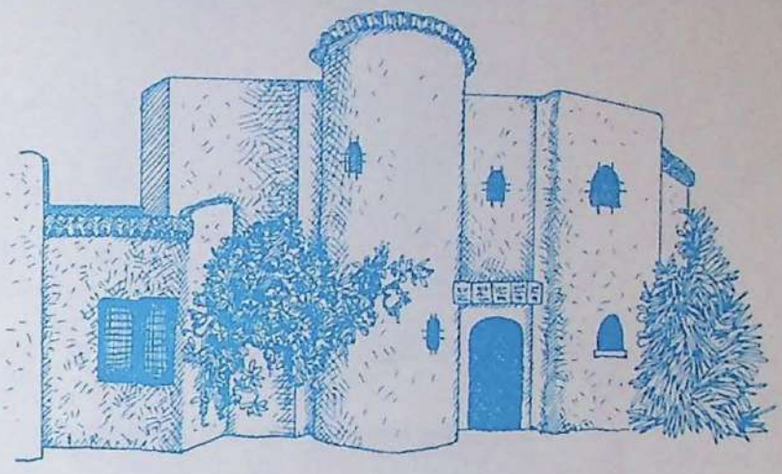
After a moment's pause, he added, "Because nobody else will be!"

As we talked, I noticed that one of his students not only looked and dressed like McEnroe—curly hair, chunky build, red headband, Tacchini outfit—but affected his mannerisms as well. I wasn't surprised to hear his friends refer to him as "Little McEnroe." Along with two other juniors, he was part of the Taylor clan, living at their villa in Vale do Lobo. Each morning they would run on the beach or golf course, and then play six or seven hours a day.

"I beat McEnroe's brother at the Orange Bowl last year," said Sheldon Mayer. (I could only think of him as Little McEnroe.) "I'm ranked 17 in South Africa right now and getting better. . . .I guess the difference is that Americans want to win more. I was playing one of the top juniors in Florida and he kept saying, *'Miss, miss,'* just loud enough for me to hear every time I went to hit."

I liked Little Mac, his cockiness wasn't overbearing and I looked forward to facing him in the tournament, to testing his temperament against my "defensive" game. As it turned out, we both lost to a ringer from the Netherlands, a pro who gave Little McEnroe a lesson in gamesmanship after drubbing me in the quarters.

As I left the Vale do Lobo estate I noticed how carefully planned and elegant it was, set within pine forest, facing a long, sandy beach, with magnificent views from every angle. It had all begun with a spectacular golf course designed by Henry Cotton, and now the site included restaurants, bars, shops, a disco and night club and, set in the heart of the exclusive community, a five-star hotel, Donna Filipa.



Vista Verde was an appropriate name for a villa bordering the seventh fairway of a spectacular golf course on the Atlantic Ocean. And it was but one of the 250 vacation homes in the Algarve, Palm Beach, Greece, Jamaica, and England that ITP International offers people in search of a special holiday. Each villa seems more luxurious and elegant that the next, yet the American owners of Vista Verde seem to have taken exceptional care in the design of their home. The house's spacious living room, complete with fireplace, opened onto a sunlit terrace and swimming pool. The interior of the villa, white marble, radiated with light and charm.

This building and its site were only part of the romance, for the ITP International takes pride in a distinctive style of personal service. From the moment I called to request a brochure to the final day of my vacation, I had the impression that I was visiting old friends. Not only were my travel accommodations courteously planned and confirmed, but I was met and taken to the villa, where I found the kitchen stocked with food, wine, and a bottle of port. Needless to say, I had no trouble feeling at home.

Then I met Pikki, manager of the Algarve Agency who first came to the Algarve in 1974 as a *retornado* from Angola. Her warmth and refinement reflected a wonderful mixture of British, Portuguese and Angolan cultures. But this young woman is no prima donna. She's a whirlwind, rigorously competent in attending to the needs of her guests. One afternoon we drove around to look at some of the other villas and she mentioned that, not too long ago, on her way to a formal dinner, she had stopped in on an aristocratic couple who reported that their plumbing was out of order. Without a blink, Pikki went out to her car and returned with a tool box, removed her high heels, rolled up her sleeves and, within a few minutes, had the problem under control.

"I think you'll like this one—it has a tennis court," she said, as we approached Quinta do Moinho, a rambling old farmhouse converted into a luxurious residence. Only about a 10 minute drive from the beach, the villa was surrounded by acres of vineyards and its own almond and fig orchards. Entering on the ground floor, I was impressed by the house's tastefully furnished drawing room and comfortable library. The sunny dining room opened onto an expansive terrace which offered a superb view of miles of rolling countryside. We walked to the villa's large swimming pool and newly constructed all-weather tennis court, across from a terraced garden which makes Quinta de Moinho one of the most attractive vacation spots in the Algarve.

As we headed a few miles east of Albufeira, Pikki remarked that Quinta da Ravina could be the very best house in the Algarve—beautifully built, beautifully decorated and furnished, and beautifully situated. And as we looked down the cliffs to the ocean from the villa's manicured lawns, I couldn't disagree with her. Inside, the living room with an open fireplace, marble floors, and an elegant wood-beam ceiling led right to a sunny poolside terrace. The central garden courtyard was equally magnificent, and a fabulous beach lay just below the Quinta da Ravina's site.

Our final stop that afternoon was the Casa Daniela, another lovely house. Overlooking Quinta do Lago lake, this modern residence was both luxurious and comfortable, and its open plan design and extensive use of marble and glass created a dazzling combination of light and space. The villa's spacious living room opened onto a large terrace, with an enormous L-shaped swimming pool.

As I gazed across the lake to the sea, my mind returned to *fado*, the lyrical, melancholy longing for something that might have been. But I would leave it to the *fadista* to sing about regrets. Portugal had exceeded my wildest expectations. Instead of lamenting my inevitable departure, I quietly contemplated the future, and looked ahead to my next opportunity to visit the last foreign country in Europe.●

FREE SPIRIT

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO RACQUETBALL STAR STEVE KEELEY

by Tim Yost

As success came, Keeley's on-court accomplishments were overshadowed by his off-court eccentricities. He continued to prefer sensationally austere housing, he relished off-beat adventures, and he insisted on indulging his rather bizarre sense of humor. "With Keeley, you just gotta expect anything," says Marty Hogan, the defending national champion, who shared a house in La Jolla, California with Keeley five years ago. During that period, Keeley, among other things, shaved his head, slept in a closet, raised tarantulas, and once boiled a dog on the kitchen stove because he needed its skeleton for a veterinary project. "I wouldn't say he's weird," Hogan hastens to add, "but a lot of the things that he does sure are."

"With Keeley, you just have to expect anything . . . I wouldn't say he's weird, but a lot of things he does sure are."

It's three o'clock in the morning and the mid-winter moon casts a pale blue light across the windswept snowbanks that engulf Haslett, Michigan. Within the next couple of hours lights will begin flickering on in this sleepy whistle-stop as people get up and prepare for their jobs at the auto factories in nearby Lansing. But right now a single light burns, as it has all night, in a boarded-up garage that displays a sign above its door reading: NIRVANA.

Inside, a mop-headed, athletic-looking figure hunches over a manuscript, busily scribbling away with his right hand as his left reaches out to pat the icy nose of one of the six full-sized dogs that roam freely about this spartan domicile. A portable radio standing in a corner announces a sub-zero temperature outdoors. Indoors, the mercury lingers somewhere in the upper 40s, but neither the dogs nor the man—who is working in rumpled shirtsleeves—seem to mind the cold.

In another hour, the man will double-check the matchbook cover on which he has written tomorrow's itinerary. His activities will include: writing another chapter in his new book, seeing a printer about the cost of publishing his just-finished book, playing in a major league racquetball tournament, inventing a racquetball-related gadget, mapping out a cross-country bicycle trip, evicting a delinquent tenant, and trimming his dogs' toenails. Then, finally satisfied that he has squeezed in as many projects as this particular day will hold, the man will grudgingly set his alarm for noon and, still fully dressed, join his dogs atop his disheveled waterbed. Thus ends a typical day in the life of pro racquetball star Steve Keeley, America's most prolific, and peculiar, author-athlete.

In these days when every high-paid, lowbrow jock within earshot of a ghostwriter is dictating his or her 200 pages of self-approbation, Keeley stands out like Charles Dickens at an extention course at Rocky Mountain Community College. In just the past five years, Keeley, eleventh in career money winnings on the National Racquetball Club pro tour, has written *eight* books. Among them is *The Complete Book of Racquetball*, a thorough instructional tome aimed at novices to intermediates. Published in 1976, that book has muscled its way to the top of an ever-expanding heap of racquetball literature by selling more than 120,000 copies, making Keeley the best-selling author in his field.

Another field in which this ruggedly handsome 32-year-old remains unsurpassed is general zaniness. In its brief history, racquetball has known its share of talented oddballs. Vic Niederhoffer, one-time national squash champion, used to carry his gym clothes in a waste basket on the way to NRC tournaments. Bud Muehleisen, a dentist and one of the Founding Fathers of racquetball, was known to berate upstart rivals for not brushing their teeth before stepping onto the court with him. Bill Schmidtke, national champ in 1971 and 1974, was such a notorious rube that it was said he contracted the bends whenever the pro tour stopped at a city with a population over 1,000. But on the court Schmidtke was a shark. Then there is Charlie Brumfield, who shares a countenance with fellow Californian Charles Manson. Brumfield gave up a law career to lead a cult of beer-swilling, semi-crazed followers known as "Brum's Bums" en route to claiming an unprecedented five national titles. And then there is Keeley, in a league all by himself.

Generally acknowledged to be one of the pioneers of modern racquetball, Keeley has led a baffling eccentric ten-year pro career. After earning a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Michigan State in 1972, he abandoned his promising profession to become a racquetball bum in that sport's sunny mecca, San Diego. Like all the other bums in those lean years, Keeley played for T-shirts and trophies, stuffed his pockets with sandwiches at tournament hospitality rooms, and, out of economic necessity, made his home in vans, basements, and garages.

But Keeley wasn't just another bum. He quickly shinnied up the racquetball ranks to become one of the top two players in the country. "I think the guy was the most talented player in that era," says Brumfield, who, nonetheless, emerged as Keeley's nemesis in the mid-'70s, leaving Keeley standing on the threshold of the national championship enough times to wear holes in the soles of his trademark mismatched Converse sneakers.

As success came, however, Keeley's on-court accomplishments were overshadowed by his off-court eccentricities. He continued to prefer sensationally austere housing, he relished off-beat adventures, and he insisted on indulging his rather bizarre sense of humor. "With Keeley, you just gotta expect anything," says Marty Hogan, the defending national champion, who shared a house in La Jolla, California with Keeley five years ago. During that period, Keeley, among other things, shaved his head, slept in a closet, raised tarantulas, and once boiled a dog on the kitchen stove because he needed its skeleton for a veterinary project. "I wouldn't say he's weird," Hogan hastens to add, "but a lot of the things that

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he does sure are."

Keeley's exploits in just the past half-dozen years reveal something about his approach to life. A few highlights:

- In 1974, he made a 2,400-mile solo bicycle trip from San Diego to Lansing in 24 days, including a two-day layover at St. Louis to play in the International Racquetball Association pro nationals.
- In 1975, saddled with a 40-pound backpack, he set out to walk the 1,050-mile length of the Baja California Peninsula, and covered 90 arid miles before being forced to turn around for lack of water.
- In 1976, he ran in his second impromptu marathon—his time was a respectable 3:42—and hunted tarantulas in the Rockies. "I had an eight-unit 'Tarantula Hotel' that I kept them in," he says. He also aborted a summer bicycle trip from Vancouver to South America while some 200 miles deep in the Baja. "I was miserably hot and I couldn't stand listening to the Mexican music on my radio headphones anymore," he recalls.
- In 1977, wearing a Bozo the Clown haircut—"a Mohawk in reverse"—he traversed the country, hitting all the major tournament sites in his customized Chevy van. Accompanying him on this 90-day, 6,000-mile jaunt was his seven-foot stuffed rabbit, Fillmore J. Hare, who rode shotgun.
- In 1978, in sweltering July heat, Keeley bicycled the 230 miles from Lansing to Charlevoix, Michigan in less than 24 hours to win a $5 bet, which, he says, "I still can't remember if I ever collected."
- One year later, he pedaled 300 miles in one continuous 24-hour period to win a single-dip ice cream cone. "For a double-dip, I'd have cheated", he concedes.
- Last winter, in order "to see how the other half lives," Keeley spent a week dwelling among the winos at a skid row rescue mission in downtown Los Angeles.

In 1977, just as racquetball was finally coming into its own, Keeley surprised everybody when he pulled up stakes in San Diego, foresaking the four-walled promised land for the hinterlands of Michigan. A few pro players figured Keeley's exodus indicated that he'd lost interest in the game. A veteran in a sport still on this side of puberty, Keeley had never been patient with the infantile behavior that has always plagued the pro circuit. Moreover, his slow-paced, control style had been stymied of late by the wide-open, power game popularized by his housemate Hogan. This prompted some to write off Keeley's retreat to an unheated garage perched on the wooded shores of tiny Lake Lansing as the parting gesture of a misunderstood, though well-liked, flake.

What Keeley actually did was retreat to his Walden Pond to begin a new career as racquetball's preeminent Bohemian. Buoyed by the success of *The Complete Book of Racquetball* but dismayed by his meager royalties, Keeley decided to publish and distribute his own books. So he formed Service Press Inc., the only publishing house in the nation run out of an unheated garage.

Keeley made his publishing debut two years ago in a characteristically zany way—by simultaneously releasing his third and fourth books, *It's a Racquet!*, the first collection of racquetball's anecdotes in print, as well as *The Kill and Rekill Gang*, 96 pages of cartoons involving assorted Doonesburyesque racquetball characters.

"Beyond the motivation to get a larger piece of the pie for myself, I decided to publish my own books to satisfy my urge to undertake new and different projects," Keeley says. "I just like to experience life in different ways, and to do this I have a lot of little goals, little projects. Like my goal of publishing two books on the same day. I read once where Tom Wolfe had done that. It sounded weird, so I decided to go ahead and do it, too."

Lest anyone get the idea that Keeley is running a vanity press, he quickly points out his timetable for writing and publishing at least another dozen instructional books, ranging in subjects from conditioning to advanced strategy to gamesmanship. In a remarkable tribute to his earnestness, Keeley cranked out four new books during a hectic five-month stretch last year.

"It really wasn't a pleasant experience," he recalls. "I let myself get behind schedule, so for five solid months I secluded myself in my garage and did nothing but write every waking hour. I wrote while eating, while talking on the phone, even when I was in the bathroom." The fruits of Keeley's labors are *The Women's Book of Racquetball*, co-authored by female champ Shannon Wright and published last fall by Contemporary Books, *Racquetball for Beginning Players* and *Racquetball for Advanced Players*, both released last summer by Strokeminder Books, and *Equipment and Stroke Production*, which Keeley himself will publish and distribute later this year.

"One of my little goals," Keeley confides, "is to become a millionaire author, the Harold Robbins of racquetball." On his way to the jackpot, Keeley is

"Before settling in his dark, cold garage, he toyed with the idea of living in a treehouse, a cave, and even a sewer pipe."

carving out new genres in sports literature. He's written racquetball articles, racquetball anecdotes, racquetball cartoons, and racquetball poetry, but his ultimate goal is to write a racquetball novel. "Why not?" he says. "I know racquetball better than anyone else in the world."

Few would question his credentials. Keeley entered his first national championship in Salt Lake City in 1971, a time when hardly anyone believed that racquetball, then a fledgling sister of handball and paddleball, would ever get out of the nest. Keeley was one of the non-believers. Playing on two sprained ankles, he lost in the round of 16 and hobbled back to Michigan State to resume both his veterinary studies and his reign as national paddleball champion. "At that time, only three other people in the whole state of Michigan played racquetball," Keeley says. "From all indications, it didn't seem that the sport would make it."

Then Brumfield showed up. Fresh from the surrender of his paddleball title to Keeley six months earlier, Brumfield came to East Lansing in the summer of 1971 to hone his racquetball game against his rival. Every day the two took to the handball courts at MSU's Men's Intramural Building for a punishing five-hour workout. The result was the birth of modern racquetball. "Charlie and I got the game down to a science," Keeley says. "We invented the Z-ball and the around-the-wall ball. It took other players six months to figure out where those shots were coming from when we hit them during matches."

"At that point in his career, Steve was the best offensive player there ever was," says Brumfield. But with the advent of the fast modern ball a couple of years ago, Keeley's style of play changed radically. To handle the up-and-coming power hitters like Hogan, Keeley adopted a defensive game that relies on controlled strokes and percentage shots. His game is still good enough to get him into all the major tournaments, but seldom good enough to win them anymore.

Keeley claims that he voluntarily sacrificed his offensive game—and his former Top Ten ranking—to gain time for other pursuits. Brumfield doesn't buy that. His opinion is that "Steve became frustrated and lost interest in the game because I always stood between him and his goal of being the best racquetball player. Behind all that smoke and guise about originality and unique lifestyle lies someone who is afraid of failure."

If Keeley is indeed afraid of failure, he doesn't slow down long enough to notice it. An efficiency nut, he organizes his every waking hour to accomplish as many of his "weird projects" as possible. Charlie Drake, president of Leach Industries, the racquet manufacturer who has sponsored Keeley since 1971, witnessed the Keeley efficiency firsthand when Keeley and Hogan were living with Drake in La Jolla. "Steve's very meticulous about notes," Drake says. "He's likely to have a matchbook cover in his pocket with 15 things to do written on it, ranging anywhere from writing a book to making sure the bathroom door is locked. As he goes through those things, he checks each one off, treating each with the same importance."

One item at the top of all of Keeley's lists is sleep. He hates it. A night owl, he seldom hits the sack before 4 a.m., he goes to bed in his clothes to avoid wasting valuable time undressing and dressing. He also practices sleep-learning—a tape recorder near his bed comes on at intervals throughout the night admonishing him not to hit forehand shots cross-court—and recently he consulted a hypnotist to see if he could cut down on his shut-eye. "Eight hours sleep a night is a waste of time," he complains. "I'm utilizing my time to the utmost, except for sleeping eight hours a night—eight little slices of death. I wouldn't change my life at all, except to sleep less."

Keeley's housing preferences have long been a source of astonishment to his friends. He is slightly photophobic, which accounts for his fondness for the dark. He also likes the cold; frostbite, he seems to believe, is healthy. Before settling in his dark, cold garage in Michigan, he toyed with the idea of living in a tree house, a cave and even in a sewer pipe.

"My pipe dream has always been to live in a pipe," he says. Vic Niederhoffer, the former national squash champion, who also happens to own a pipe company, heard about this and offered to fix Keeley up with some six-foot sewer pipes, complete with smaller pipes branching off the main pipe for Keeley's dogs and offices. "He was serious!" Keeley says. "But I didn't take him up on it, because I have nirvana right here in my garage."

Keeley's nirvana is a 12' x 18' unattached one-car structure in the backyard of an aging wood-frame house, one of a dozen rental properties he has bought with his racquetball earnings. Six doghourses crowd the garage's "foyer," one for each of the canines that share the residence: an Irish Setter, a Great Dane, a Golden Retriever, a Labrador Retriever, and two Dobermans named Corn and Flake. Beyond the foyer is a cramped area containing a heated water bed (the sole source of warmth in the garage), an air conditioner that runs constantly in

"In the world according to Keely, there are two reasons for living—to learn things and to have fun."

the summer, and shelves holding such memorabilia as embalmed tarantulas, rubber mice and gag false teeth. There's also a makeshift office, where Keeley does his writing and conducts his real estate and publishing business.

The place clearly lacks a woman's touch. "Oh, sure, I date now and then," says Haslett's most eligible bachelor, "but by and large dating is not a very efficient use of time." Why some women would disagree with that sentiment remains a mystery to Keeley, as does why one of his dates screamed in terror when he presented her with a goat's heart on Valentine's Day. "I guess the only girl I could marry would be a Keeley clone," Keeley says. "And then I don't know if I could stand living with myself."

Keeley insists it is his singular lifestyle, rather than his love of letters, that leads him to write. "I like it dark and quiet, and I like it cold," he says. "My garage is double-insulated and double-walled, and there are no windows, so there's no noise, no light, and it's cold. It stays between 48° and 58° in the winter. I usually stay up late, and there's really nothing else to do in a garage in the middle of the night when it's cold except write—but my typewriter doesn't work when it gets below 50°."

As a student at Parkside High in Jackson, Mich., Keeley stood out neither as an athlete nor as a writer. A shy, skinny kid, he struggled through three years on the wrestling squad before he enjoyed a winning season. As a senior, he was fifth man on the junior varsity cross-country team. He wasn't good enough to make the tennis team. He did manage to become sports editor of the *Parkside Heritage*, but only his parents can remember his writing.

"I was a jock of all trades, but master of none," he remembers. "The only things I was really good at were chess and rinky-dink sports such as walking-the-fence and mumblety-peg, things that had a gimmick and that required individual effort to figure out."

At Michigan State he found his niche. Just a year after picking up his first paddle in 1969, he fought to the top of State's legion of hard-playing paddleball enthusiasts, shaping his game in his own distinctive way "without the hindrance of a coach or teammates." The by-product of his three-hour daily training regimen—which he claims he stuck to simply because he wanted "to be in good shape" and "to just have fun"—was his first national paddleball championship in 1971. He subsequently won the title in '73, '74, '76 and '77.

After graduating from vet school in December 1972, Keeley migrated to San Diego with the idea of playing a little racquetball during his preparation for the California veterinary boards in June. But by the time he passed the exam (on his first try) he was so busy playing tournaments, giving lessons and hustling matches *a la* Bobby Riggs that he decided to put his veterinary career on hold and concentrate on racquetball. His family's reaction to that decision is perhaps best reflected in the words of Keeley's older brother, Tom, a star prep wrestler who toured with the Christian-affiliated Athletes in Action before going on to Dallas Theological Seminary. "It shocked us at first, but we adjusted," says Tom. "I guess I'd have done the same thing if the Lord hadn't got hold of me first."

Keeley doubts now that he will ever return to his original calling. He's just too busy with all his other endeavors. In addition to fulfilling a hectic tournament and promotional schedule—Keeley is part owner of National Racquetball Clinics Inc., a San Diego-based agency that books pros for club openings and clinics—he has lately been working on a series of torque and vibration inventions that could revolutionize racquetball racquets. He's also been investigating the logistics of burying his garage and living underground, as well as researching his next big adventure: hopping a freight train across the country. "I'd go nuts if I couldn't go on an adventure at least once a year," he admits.

Keeley says it doesn't concern him that Brumfield and others have criticized him for at least partially neglecting his racquetball game in favor of a life of letters. "I couldn't practice five hours a day forever," Keeley says. "It was time to diversify. Besides, there are really no *ultimate* goals—in racquetball or anywhere else. When I make my million as a writer, I'll probably give it away and start all over again because that goal will have been accomplished."

Keeley just as easily sheds criticism familiar to his hero, Admiral Byrd: that he doesn't like people. "I'm neither a misanthrope nor a mysogynist," he insists. "I just like to have the freedom to drop everything and chase after the right adventure, should it come up. I can do that with racquetball, my books, my publishing business, my dogs—but you can't put a wife in storage."

In the world according to Keeley, there are two reasons for living: "to learn things and to have fun." "I believe that when you die," says Keeley, "you're going to be stuck with what you know for eternity, so you better do a lot of interesting things, live a lot of different lives. I want to have as many lifetimes as a cat before I'm six feet under."•

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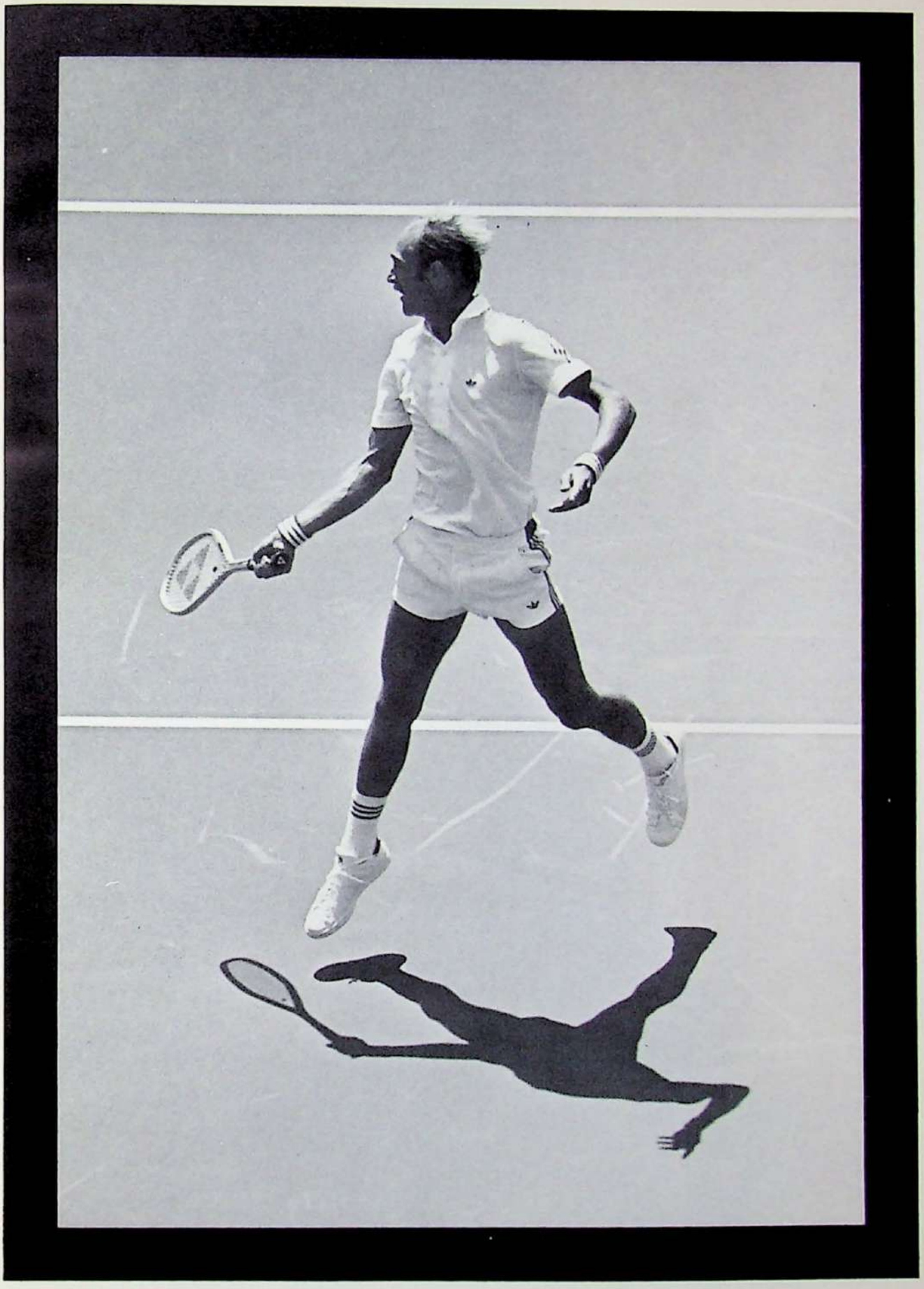

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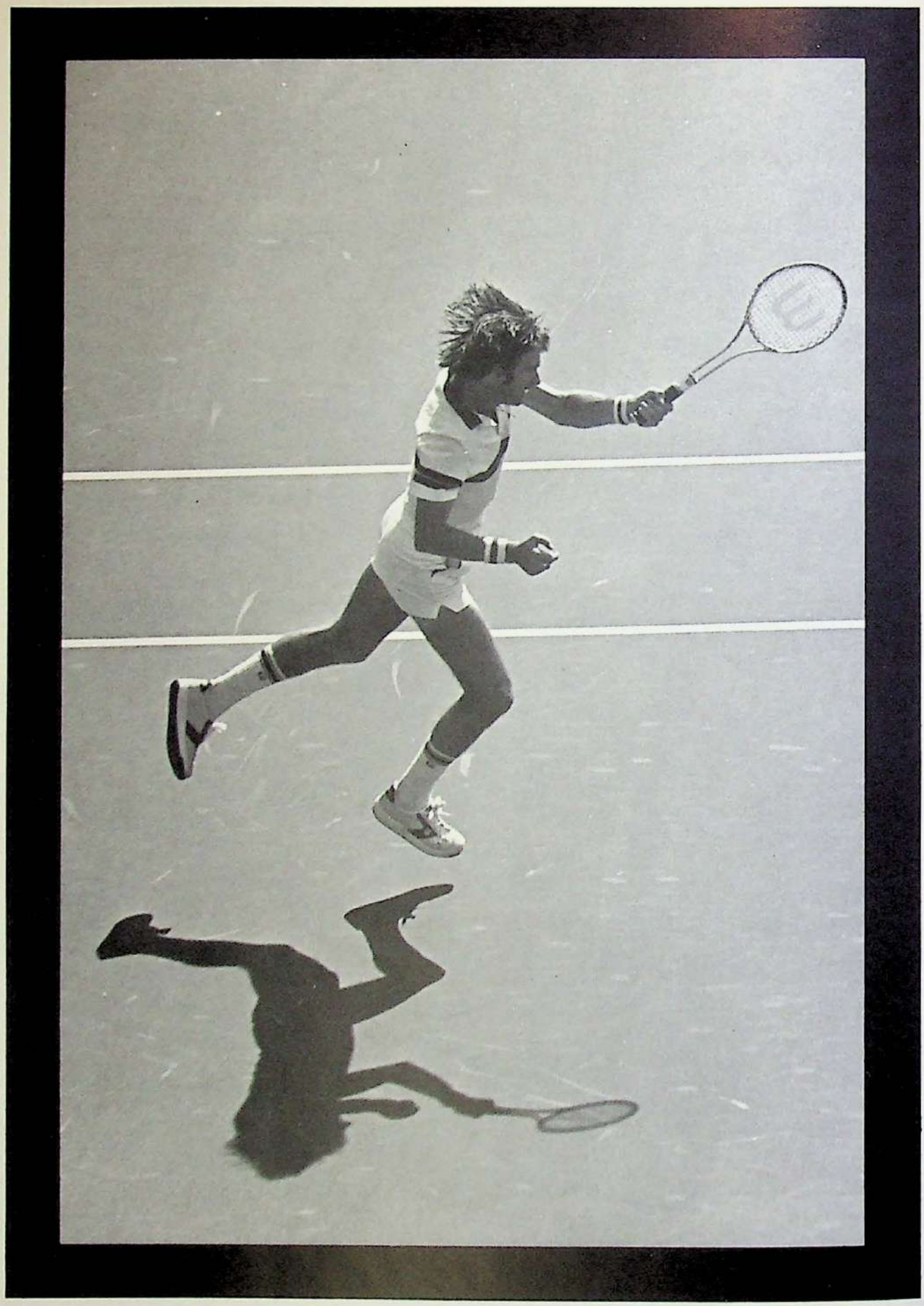

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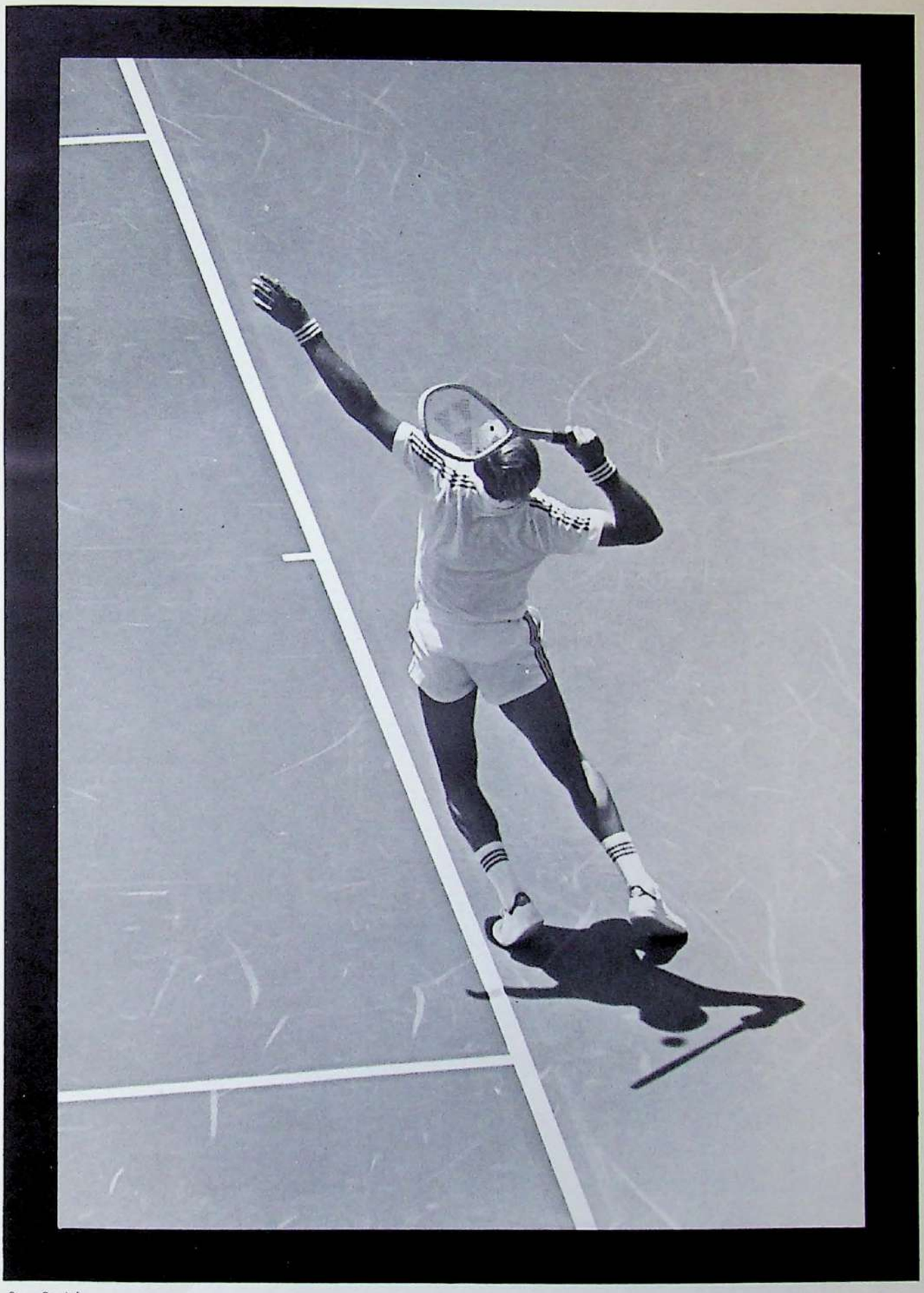

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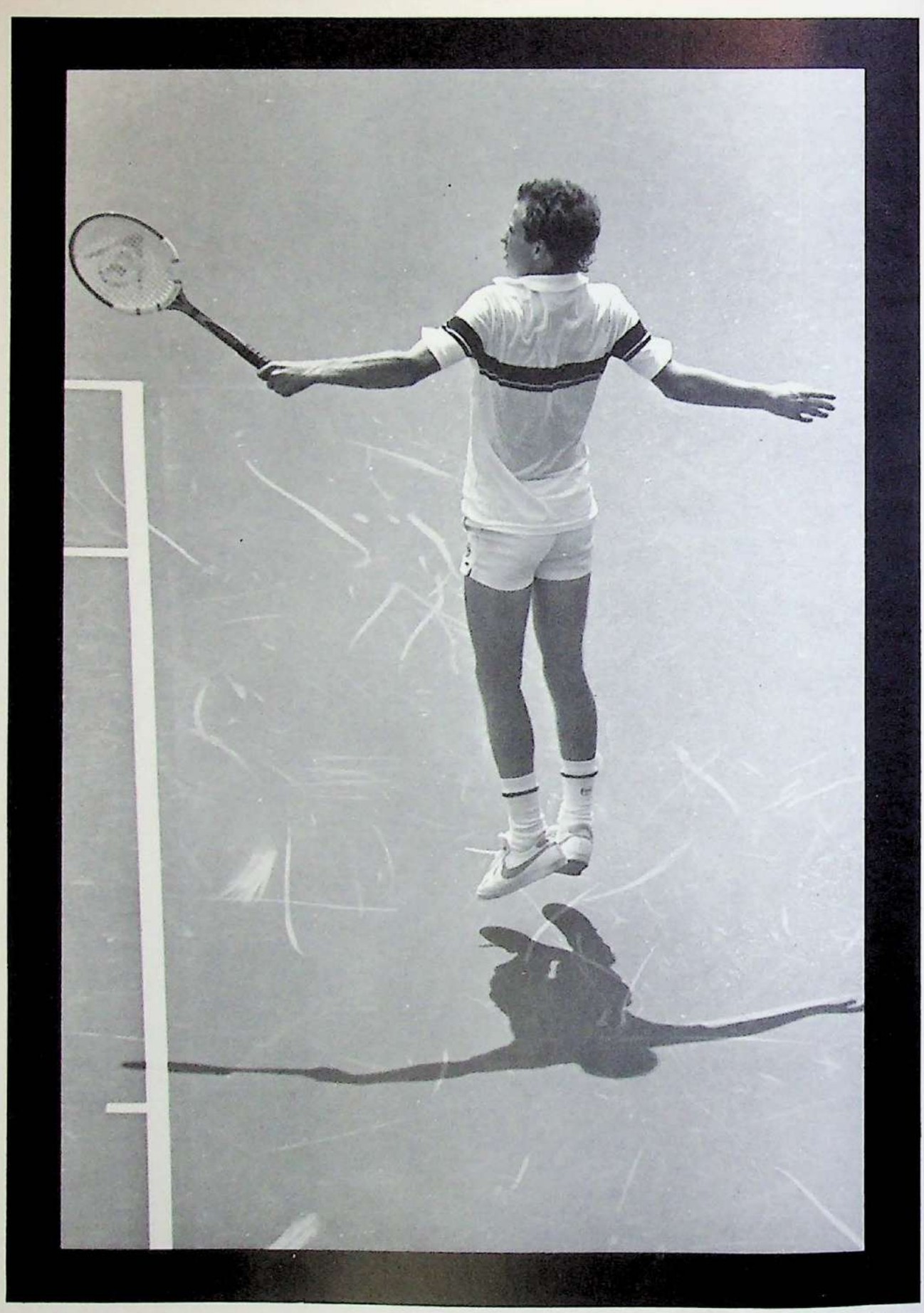

John McEnroe

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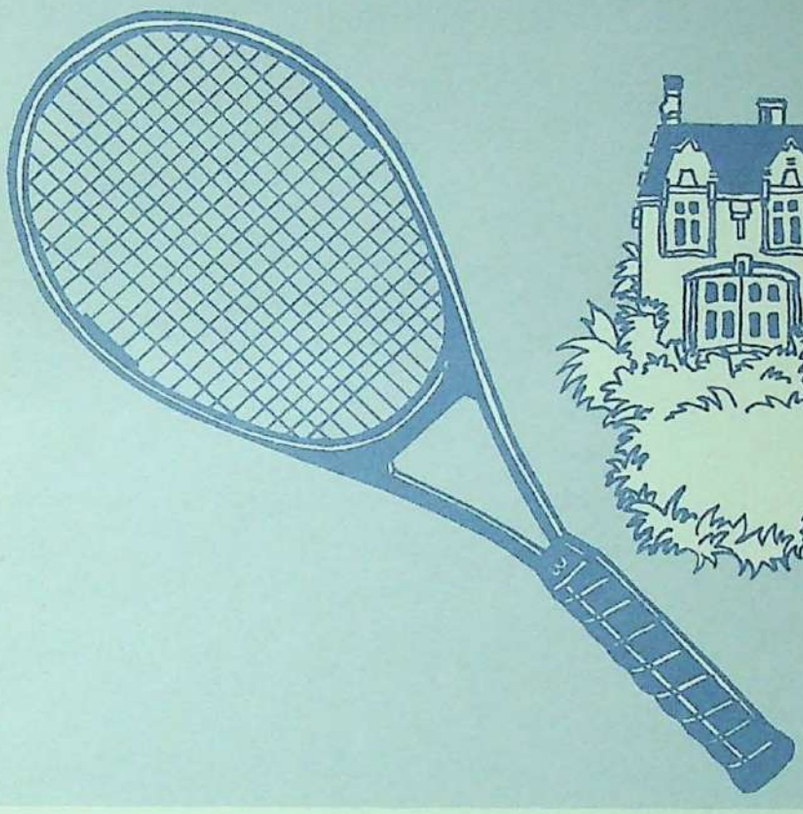

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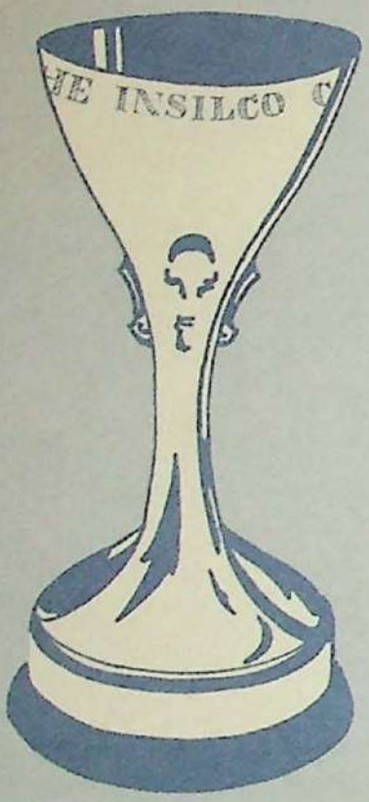

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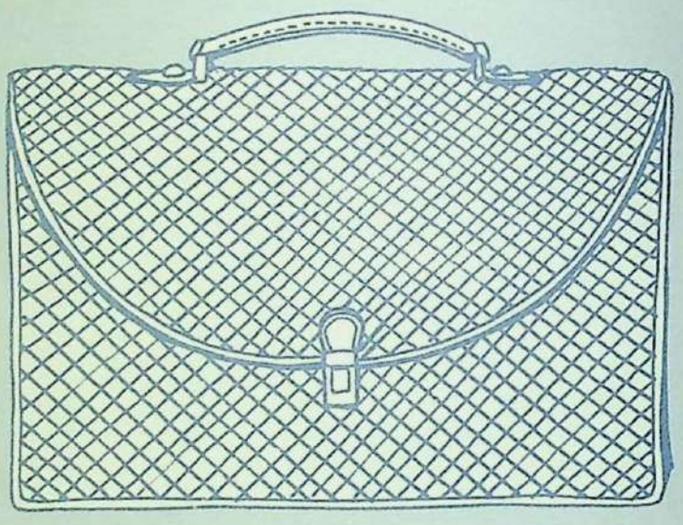

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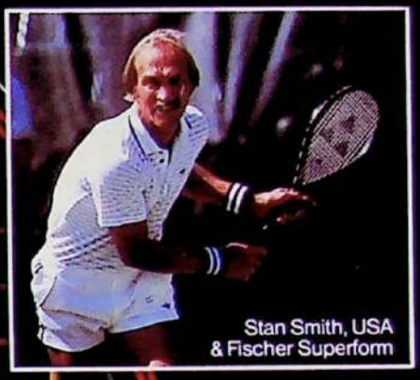

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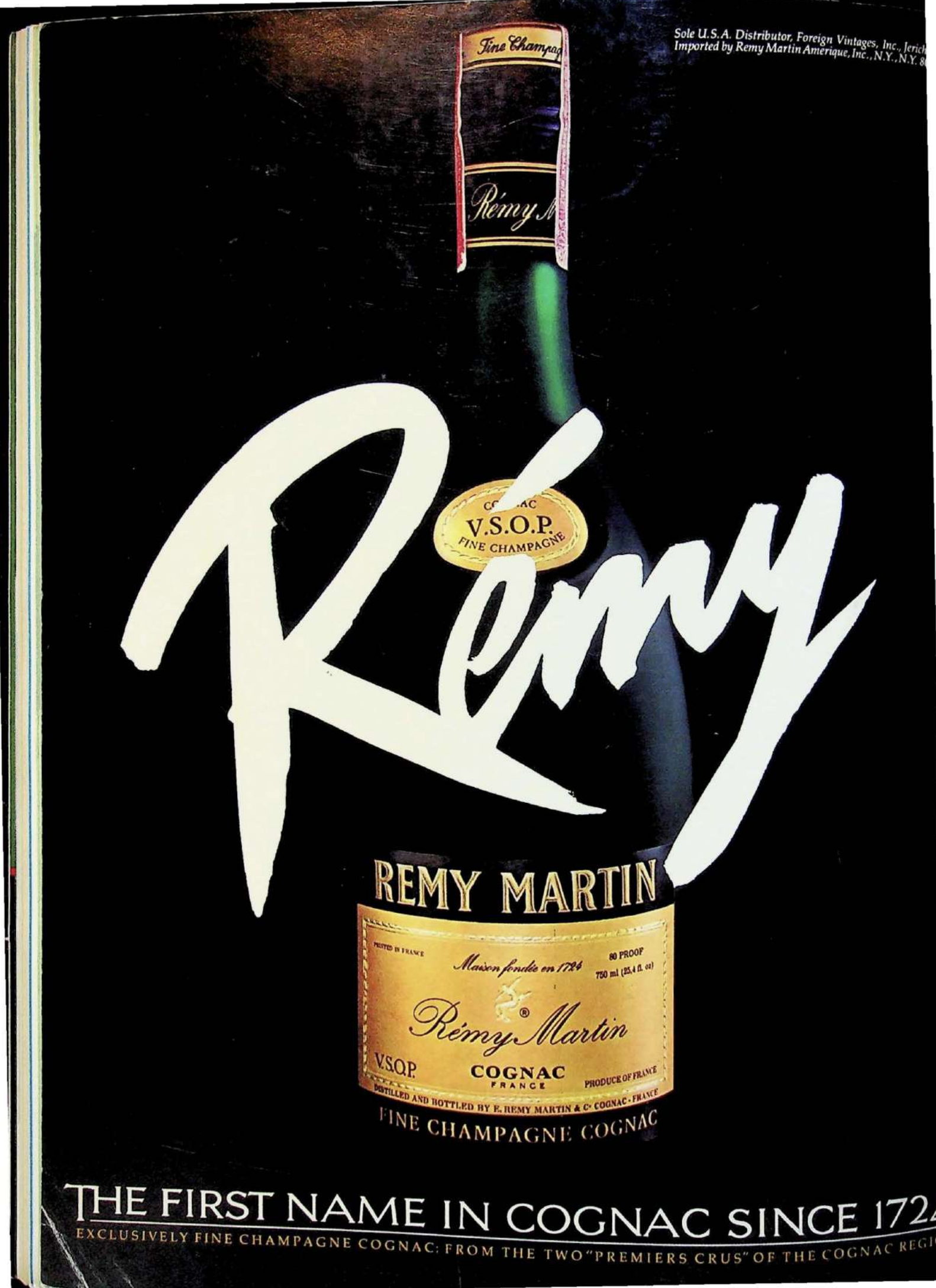
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