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STORE EROTICA

MAGAZINE

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*A legend
is reborn*

Tom of Finland and XR Brands
come together to create the brand
new Pleasure Tools Collection





A legend is reborn

The Tom of Finland Foundation comes together with industry manufacturer XR Brands to create the ambitious ***Tom of Finland Pleasure Tools collection.***

by Brittany Black

Once upon a time, there was a boy named Tuoko Laaksonen. He lived in a small house in the rural farming country of Finland with his parents, both school teachers. Tuoko—nicknamed Tom later on in life when he moved to the U.S.—was pretty normal by everyday standards. He grew up and pursued a career in advertising. He enrolled in the Finnish Army. He did all the stuff that normal men do when they are coming of age.

But there were two things about Tom that drastically set him apart—his drawings and his sexuality. You see, Tom was gay. And in that time, homosexuality was not only seen as profane and immoral, it was also illegal. So Tom turned to art as a way to privately express his sexuality—art that would eventually inspire a cultural movement and dub him as the “most influential creator of gay pornographic images” in all of history.

What made Tom’s drawings so exceptional were the images they portrayed—his 3,500-plus works all featured confident, strong men who exuded a boldness and spirit in their sexuality that had never been seen before. Tom’s drawings opened the door for thousands of gay men all over the world to finally feel comfortable and fearless in their sexuality. His work can be found as part of permanent collections in art museums all over the world, and his signature black-and-grey style is instantly recognizable and has remained a key component in

popular gay culture since the beginning.

So why are we giving you a history lesson on one of the most influential people in both pop culture and the art world? Because Tom of Finland is about to become a phenomenon that isn’t merely seen and talked about in art museums—his legacy is making its way onto your adult retail store shelves via XR Brands.

“XR Brands was approached by Joakim, Durk and Sharp of the Tom of Finland Foundation in early 2014 initially to discuss creating a line of lubricants,” recalls XR Brands Project Development and Key Account Manager Rebecca Weinberg. “After doing some research, they found that our Passion Lubricants have become top ranked, and the Foundation quickly came to realize that XR Brands has prime realty in the world of quality product development and e-commerce placement. What started as a conversation about merely lube turned into a full line of adult novelties—and thus, the Tom of Finland Pleasure Tools Collection was born.”

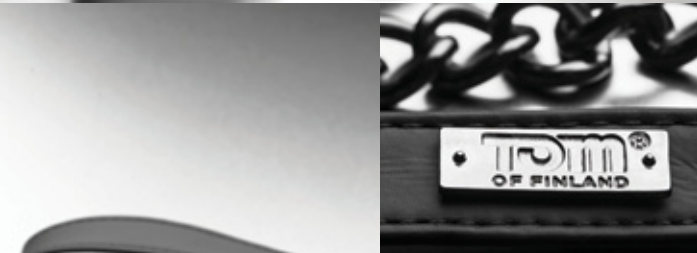
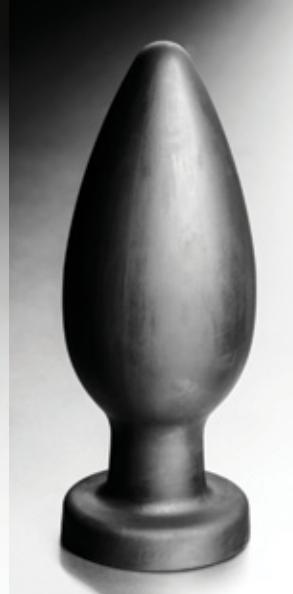
The Tom of Finland Foundation, located in Los Angeles, was initially brought to life in recognition of Tom’s reputation and to preserve his artwork. It gradually became a place where artists all over the world could go to receive support and structure for their own erotic art, and the Foundation even offers a residency of sorts for traveling artists to complete projects. Tom of Finland



“Tom of Finland Pleasure Tools is the biggest thing to ever have come into the adult novelty world, gay or straight. Never before has an adult manufacturer transformed a historically legendary figure into a series of interactive erotic art forms. Having this line in your store not only broadens your consumer appeal, but stands as an emblem of your belief in and support of the erotic art world.”

— Rebecca Weinberg
XR Brands Project Development and
Key Account Manager





continued from page 9

has been incorporated in a variety of paraphernalia, including bedroom sheets and stamps, but has never before been part of an adult product line—until now.

XR Brands worked with the Tom of Finland Foundation to bring to life a line of products that would represent every aspect of Tom's work, and that would give people all over the world the same confidence and fortitude in the bedroom that Tom's drawings portrayed.

"No decision was made without first asking ourselves, 'what would Tom have done?'" explains Weinberg of the creation process. "We worked tirelessly hand-in-hand, often at the Tom of Finland Foundation house with Durk, Sharp and Joakim to execute the intricate details—everything from the signature gunmetal grey color that is incorporated throughout the line to the branded locks and dog tags that come on the packaging. Each little detail works to convey a lifestyle outside the products themselves and gives fans the chance to take a little piece of Tom with them wherever they go. This also enhances our campaign by making Tom's fans part of the promotion."

But as they also explain, in order for the Tom of Finland Pleasure Tools Collection to be true-to-form, XR Brands had to be sure that the artwork came first and influenced the way the products were presented.

"There were an assortment of Tom's art pieces that influenced the pleasure toys," says Weinberg. "For example, the vibrating products were based on the drawings that featured biker men straddling their massive, pulsating motorcycles. The neoprene and vegan leather cuffs and collars were motivated by Tom's Men in his signature black jackets and sunglasses, as well as Tom's popular art that featured men tied up and strapped down in group sex scenes.

"We also created a cock ring that looks like a hex nut, which was influenced by Tom's construction workers," Weinberg continues. "We designed a fisting cream that was inspired by Tom's drawings of raw and deeply erotic fisting scenarios. Even the lubrications were inspired by his signature men, with his sailor men depicted on the water-based lubes and his leather men on the silicone-based products."

As far as the target audience for this new line goes, the gay community is at the top of the list. But that doesn't mean that those of other sexual persuasions can't enjoy a little piece of Tom's legacy, too.

"We believe that the gay community around the world



will embrace this line, but the ultimate beauty of Tom of Finland is that his work appeals to anyone who can appreciate the human form, artistic culture, erotic history and the positive expression of sex, gender identity and equality and sexual freedom," emphasizes Weinberg. "Everyone can appreciate a man in uniform [which was Tom's signature portrayal], but his work taps the raw, voyeuristic desire that is found within that appreciation. And with the Tom of Finland art exhibit in the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art last year, the release of the Finnish Tom of Finland postage stamps and a feature-length film in production as we speak, the launch of our Tom of Finland pleasure line couldn't come at a better time."

Although Tom's work is especially recognized in the European culture, his message is universally understood no matter what continent you reside on. For adult retailers, that means enhanced consumer appeal and an overall appreciation for what Tom has done for both the gay community and erotic art as a whole.

"This product line will allow fans new and old the opportunity to experience the look, feel and legacy of an erotic art icon with intricately-crafted tools that have been inspired by the sexual freedom and confidence portrayed in Tom's artwork," says Weinberg. "Tom of Finland Pleasure Tools is the biggest thing to ever have come into the adult novelty world, gay or straight. Never before has an adult manufacturer transformed a historically legendary figure into a series of interactive erotic art forms. Having this line in your store not only broadens your consumer appeal, but stands as an emblem of your belief in and support of the erotic art world."

For more information, please visit Xrbrands.com. For more information on Tom of Finland, visit www.tomoffinlandfoundation.org.

