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MUFFED

I'm a magazine junkie. I love the things. Sometimes I walk into a newsagent on the way to the weekly grocery shopping and end up blowing the whole budget on a stack of mags.

I don't discriminate either. I'll read about anything. It's just as easy to shell out too much money for a wanky British style glossy as it is to pick up the latest issue of Simpsons Illustrated (especially when they throw in nifty gifts like a free pair of 3-D glasses!).

But as any fellow member of Mags Anonymous will tell you, the time of year when you can really go into a feeding frenzy is the annual round-up. The 20 best records of 1992; the 50 best dressed people of 1992; the 100 most nicely groomed pooches of 1992—it all adds up to fascinating reading. The main reason for the fascination is that when you discuss these articles with fellow mag junkies at parties, you can scoff at the choice of music/the drastic dress sense/the poorly coiffed pooches. In reality you're thinking "Shit, I've never even heard of half the bands in this list!"

There was only one problem with the reams of information that flooded the racks as 1993 lumbered into view. Where was the list of the most ingenious people of the year? I'm not talking about ground-breaking physicists or fearless environmentalists or genre-busting novelists here. I'm talking about people like that guy up in Queensland who happened to drop into conversation that he had scored a cameo role in Beverly Hills 90210. He was lying, of course, but faster than you could say "Luke Perry's sideburns are, like, totally to-die-for", he was having limousines, bodyguards, free passes to nightclubs and bevies of blonde females pressed upon him.

It speaks volumes for the mentality of the Australian public. So much is made of the alleged Tall Poppy Syndrome in this country, but what about the phenomenon of elevating completely ordinary (and in many cases less than ordinary) people to the status of godhead?

Let's call this species MUFFIES (Mostly Untalented Famous Folk) and marvel at their achievements and their public profile, while carefully considering them for nomination for the Australian Of The Year. You may have your own favourites, but here for your edification and future dinner party argument fodder, is my Top 10 MUFFIES OF 1992.

1. Elle Macpherson—Not only for that rivetting one hour special about the making of her Balinese calendar. And not only for her wafting arguments detailing why she refused to appear nude in Playboy (at the time she was only wearing a bit of dental floss on her nether regions). Mainly because of a comment she made last year which will endear her to educators forever. Why doesn't Elle have any books in her house? "Because I never read anything I haven't written." Role model ahoy!

2. Doug Mulray—I can't understand why everyone's so up in arms about the fact that he's a sexist, racist, crass pig. Hasn't anyone noticed his biggest crime? He's not funny. Even if you don't admire Kerry Packer for anything else, at least he terminated Uncle Doug's highly entertaining video show at the half-way mark.

3. Noeline Hogan—OK, OK, we're sorry Paul left you for Linda Whatsemame. Now could you please slip out the back quietly?

4. Noeline Donaher—Did you know that this shy, reclusive woman from a modest home in Sylvania Waters has had her life ruined by the media? She told us on the Midday Show, and on A Current Affair, and in Woman's Weekly, and in TV Week, and...

5. The entire 1992 Australian cast of Jesus Christ Superstar—Andrew Lloyd Webber may be to music what Jackie Collins is to the art of the novel, but at least you could come away from the original JCS saying "nice sets". A bunch of overpaid pop stars wandering around a stage while singing pap does not a spectacle make.

6. Athol Guy and Karen Knowles—Wouldn't you like to be judged seriously on New Faces by the bespectacled bass player from The Seekers and high profile (and hey, what have you been up to for the last 10 years, Kaz?) former juvenile from Young Talent Time?

7. Tony Barber—No, honestly, Jeopardy is a completely new concept that's never been seen on TV before. And no, rumours that I'm not overly versatile are completely exaggerated.

8. Molly Meldrum—An inspiration to us all. Who said you have to know anything about music to be the rock'n'roll guru of a country?

9. Daryl Somers—The leer of a used car salesman, the personality of a commercial FM radio jock, and a stuffed animal as a sidekick. It all adds up to top ratings and great television.

10. Adriana Xenides—What do you mean "Who"? She's the one who spins the letters around on Wheel of Fortune, and...um...well...she spins the letters around on Wheel of Fortune, OK?

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