

KEITH RICHARDS The Unauthorised Biography
Victor Bockris
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Unauthorised but highly acclaimed, is Bockris's study of the Lord of the Licks, out now second time 'round and updated with some 10,000 words of wonder. Taking up the story on page 353, Bockris subsumes the period 1993-2002 into 50 extra pages of this restyled over-sized paper back which also boasts many new photographs spread out over three sections.

The author kicks off with 1993's most important episode: the departure of Bill Wyman, before going on to celebrate old Stone face's contributions to the band. Before long the author is back in full "Keith-mode", stating that Richards came up trumps in the solo section as compared to Jagger because Keith was always more a "record maker" than Mick. Good point, as The Riff's forced solo career (because Mick had one, putting The Stones on hold) was never fully designed to chart-compete with the likes of Michael Jackson and Madonna in the first place (even though singles were taken from the *Talk Is Cheap* album and videos were shot!). Music for music's sake - sheer enjoyment, uncomplicated genuineness and pure soul - that's Keith alright!

But with all solo escapades out of the way, Bockris duly observes that the Stones were refreshed and ready once again to take on the world. Enter the Voodoo Lounge period and Keith's famous antenna "catching" up to 150 song-ideas! By then, the band seemed to have fully grown-up, as Keith orates on behalf of the unit: "I just don't want to see the Stones grasping hungrily to be up-to-date and have hit records; I just want the Stones to do the best they can."

Keith's vision turns out to be pretty accurate as even though the record company churned out singles by the sackload in a flurry of various formats in order to get the band into the charts, the Stones fail to repeat their former chart-topping glory. But lucrative deals have been signed and it doesn't really seem to bother the band. The Stones, by now, have truly reached the kind of corporate status where they find themselves in a secure financial vacuum in which all they have to do is make music and turn up on time.

Victor Bockris continues to chart the band's new-found formula, or "Mach IV" as Keith calls it, in great detail and clear insight providing his valuable observations and opinions on many an occasion, without unnecessarily taking over the text, leaving the flow of the story to the man of the moment: Mr. Keith Richards. The quotes and anecdotes that Bockris wheels out are strung together seamlessly, forming a

great punchy new addition to what's already a classic. For once a truly worthwhile addition to a re-issue! - Jaap Hoeksma