

The Worlds of Don Lawrence

Newsletter - Volume 23 - Issue 2 - May 2006



From the Storm Front

With two major comic conventions coming up – Bristol and Haarlem – we're pleased to give our readers some advance news of the latest happenings on the Storm Front. The hot news, of course, is that we can now announce the name of the man who will be following in Don's footsteps as the artist of the next Storm album. He is the popular Dutch superhero comicstrip artist Romano Molenaar. Romano had been on our short list for the post and we were convinced that he would be the perfect successor to Don when we contacted him in January. Without hesitating, Romano said yes!

The news spread quickly at Rijswijk Stripfestival, which we attended in February. Thankfully it didn't spread too far as we had yet to draw up the contract and Romano insisted on creating a few sample pages before he committed himself fully. We still need to work on the colouring to make sure the new Storm matches the quality of the old Storm but the good news is that Romano's pencils for his version of Storm and Ember have convinced us even more that he is the right man for the job. However, while we were going through this process, we did not want to make any official announcements.

What we hadn't counted on were the staff at MYX magazine. We have been preparing a Storm companion book for our National Comic Strip Weeks which will include the first piece of Storm artwork by Romano. When we applied for an ISBN number for the book, MYX spotted Romano's name and published it. When a major network TV guide also published the news, we thought it was time to make things official. Two weeks ago we put the news up on our *Worlds of Don Lawrence* website, the first time we have broken a story through the website rather than through the newsletter.

Of course, there is a lot more that we are revealing here first, like the new Storm bust and the Storm vintage wine. As a bonus to our subscribers, we are also including two new Storm cards as well as the latest poster so you can enter our Storm poster competition. The winner of our last competition is also revealed.

Enjoy!

Rob van Bavel

Trading cards and collectors case

This year DLC will be producing a second series of Storm trading cards. The cards will be sent free to all members together with the newsletters, each package containing 8 cards. There will be a minimum of 6 packages. The series will also include a set of Nomad cards and a set of Marduk cards. To collect all the cards a special collector's binder is going to be released. You can

order the binder through the DLC website or buy it at one of the comic strip festivals.

The binder will be on sale during the upcoming Stripdagen in Houten on September 30 and October 1. We are still in the process of working out a price for the binder, so keep an eye on the website for an announcement.



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De opkomst en ondergang van het Keizerrijk Trigië

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Volume 5 - May 2006

Volume 6 - July 2006

Volume 7 - Oct. 2006

Volume 8 - Feb. 2007

Volume 9 - June 2007

Volume 10 - Oct. 2007

Volume 11 - Feb. 2008

Volume 12 - June
2008

Romano Molenaar

Despite all our careful planning the cat was out of the bag before we knew it. It may be sooner than we had planned, but we can now make it official: Romano Molenaar is to be the new artist of Storm.

Romano (35) is a Dutch comic strip artist who has worked only for American comic book publishers such as Chaos Comics and TopCow. His most popular work has been for *Lady Death* and *WitchBlade*, and he has also drawn X-Men and Wolverine for *X-Men Unlimited*. Romano is also an art director with a computer game company.

He is now working on the next volume of Storm, The Ring of Fire, scripted by Storm's creator, Martin Lodewijk. Martin has already written the first few pages of this 23rd Storm album and Romano is enjoying working closely with the veteran artist. Not that he is having an easy

time of it. After all, he is following in the footsteps of one of the legends of comic book art.

Colouring the strip is especially tricky: Don Lawrence excelled in the use of colour and light in his work but Romano is working hard to crack the Lawrence Code.

Thankfully, Romano is not working alone. He has a network of people around him for feedback and support who knew Don's work very well, including Elisabeth Lawrence, herself an artist. She has seen Romano's work and is very pleased with the way it is going. Romano, in turn, has been very pleased with the suggestions she has been able to offer. If all goes well, The Ring of Fire will be released in Europe in the Spring of 2007.

The Storm companion book—which is to be released in time for the National Comic Strip Weeks in May and June—will have a special preview of Romano's work on Storm.



Trigan -the collection- Update volume 6

Volume 5 has just been shipped to the members who have ordered the series and volume 6 is already in production. The book is scheduled for a week 27 release and things are looking good. Fingers crossed. Volume 6 is called The Rallu Invasion. Other stories are The City of Jewels, The Unscrupulous Servant and The Duplicator. This volume's dossier will be about the peoples and cultures of Elekton. Once again the book will have 90 pages in colour, bound in leather with a bonus art print valued at eur 15. The price for the book remains as always eur 49,95 for members of the fan-

club and subscribers to the series. If you are interested in ordering the series go to www.donlawrence.nl. All volumes are still available.

The cover to this edition was originally painted for the 21st volume of the Dutch series, Het geheime wapen [The Secret Weapon], published in 1981 by Oberon.



It is still possible to subscribe to the series. You will receive three albums a year and pay eur 49.95 (approx £33.40) instead of eur 55.00 (approx. £36.75).

You also receive a limited edition portfolio of The Trigan Empire for free!

For further information please visit our website www.triganempire.co.uk.

Stripfestival Haarlem

Every other year, the city of Haarlem welcomes comic strip artists from all over the world to it's comic strip festival, this year being held on June 4 and 5. This time, there will be no big pavilion on the market square in the town centre – instead, all the major publishers and other comic strip companies will be found in two indoor locations, both with a great tradition in the history of Haarlem.

Don Lawrence Collection will be located in the Philharmonie on the top floor. In our booth you can sip Storm wine and admire Don's bust. The second volume of *The Legacy* will be presented for the first time and both Martin Lodewijk and Romano Molenaar will be there to sign their work. We will also have a surprise for everyone visiting. The Philharmonie will be open on both days from 10.00 until 17.00 hours.



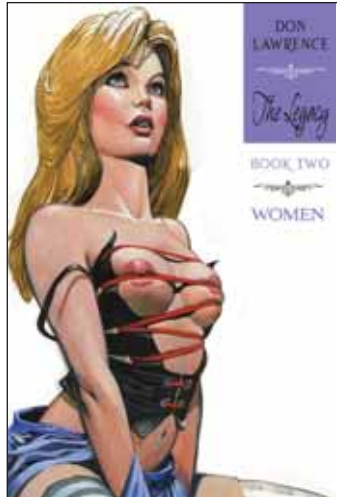
Left: An illustration by Anto, an Indonesian artist who also created some sample pages of *Storm*. Centre and beneath: *Storm* drawn by Romano Molenaar (photo).

Legacy 2

Despite our best laid plans, there seems to be no end to slipping deadlines as we try our best to keep up the quality of reproducing and publishing the artwork of Don Lawrence. This has been the case with one of our current productions, *The Legacy volume 2*, entitled 'Women'. To make sure *The Trigan Empire volume 5* would arrive in time, we had to postpone the publication of *The Legacy 2*, which will now debut at the Haarlem festival. It is officially scheduled for release in week 23. If you want to follow our production schedules just take a look on our Don Lawrence website.

The book is worth the wait. It includes no less than 80 previously unpublished drawings and

sketches by Don Lawrence. You can order the book by sending an e-mail to action@donlawrence.nl. The price for members of the fanclub is eur 49,95 + P&P. The book will ship as soon as it is printed.



Bristol comic expo

Although this will not be the first foreign comic convention we have attended, this year will be the first time DLC has been represented at a British convention. On May 13 and 14, Bristol will host the International Comic Expo. The main events will take place at the Exhibition Hall and the Ramada Plaza hotel. Don Lawrence Collection will have a booth and will present volume 5 of *The Trigan Empire -The Collection*. Some of the artwork featured in the book will be on display. British comic strip artist Ian Gibson will be at our stand to sign comics and show off the first pages of his new comic strip 'Lifeboat', which was commissioned by Don Lawrence Collection.

We are looking forward to meeting British members of the Fanclub in person as it will be a great opportunity to show them what Don Lawrence Collection has published in The Netherlands to date. It promises to be a great weekend.



Poster competition

Last year's poster competition was such a huge success that we have decided to organize another one. The latest poster is distributed with this newsletter and it is now up to you to find somewhere to display it... and we will be offering a prize for the person who comes up with the most original location. We look forward to seeing some incredible photos from you, which we will include on our website and with the next newsletter. Send them to the usual address and we wish all our readers the best of luck.

The winning pictures were taken by Nancy van Wijk. Congratulation!



Storm vintage wine

In Holland, beer based around comic strips is a regular feature at comic festivals. A vintage wine based around a comic strip character is another matter. But that was the idea of wine importers Vinites from Haarlem: to bottle a special consignment of wine for the upcoming Haarlem comic strip festival. They contacted Jan Verdegaal of Haarlem's comic book shop, Bee Dee and asked him which comic strip characters would look attractive on a wine bottle. It did not take much thought for Jan to find the perfect answer: Storm and Ember.

The next step was for Vinites to get in touch with Don Lawrence Collection. We loved the idea... and we even had the perfect label in our archives. Some years ago, Don had pencilled an illustration of Storm and Ember raising a glass of wine in celebration. To get the illustra-

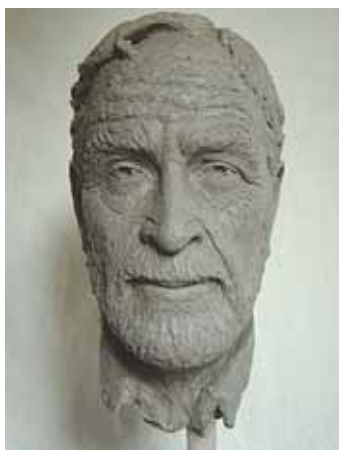
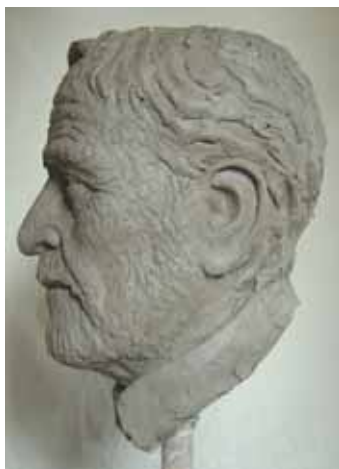
tion coloured, we turned to Chris Weston, who worked with Don as a student back in 1986-87. Chris absorbed a great deal of Don's influence during his time at Don's studio and is very familiar with Don's technique for colouring. It took him some time to complete the job but we were very pleased with the results when we visited Chris in Eastbourne a few weeks ago. We hope that this will be the first of many projects we can work on with Chris.

The Storm Vintage will be officially presented a week before the Haarlem festival, which is to be held the first weekend in June. The wine, which comes in the usual styles of white, red and rosé, will be available in and around Haarlem and also through DLC. The price will be eur 4,95 for half a litre, and eur 5,95 for a three quarter litre bottle. Whilst we're looking forward to the wine as a special treat during the festival, we would remind everyone not to drink too much.



Don in bronze

During the last few months of his life, Don posed frequently for his daughter, Pippa. Being an artist herself, she had always wanted to make a bust of her father. Unfortunately the bust was not ready when Don passed away in December 2003. Nevertheless, Pippa continued working on it, using photos she had of her father. After two years she has managed to complete the bust. Pippa is now working on the mould to be able to make a few busts in bronze or resin. One of the busts will be placed in the DLC office. The bust can be produced on demand. The price will be between eur 1500 and eur 2500, depending on the materials used. We will, of course, be bringing the bust with us to Haarlem. Please e-mail us via collection@donlawrence.co.uk if you have any questions.



Comic Buyers' Award

To receive an award is always special, but to receive one from the comic buying public is especially rewarding. We were delighted to discover that Don Lawrence Collection had been nominated for the Public Choice Award at the recent Rijswijk

Stripfestival and even more delighted when it was announced that DLC was the winner, both for its almost 25 years of publishing and for the recent steps DLC has taken regarding in the creation of new Storm books.

The award itself is a small bronze statue created by R. E. Mind Creations, one of the organisers of the Rijswijk Festival. We see the award as a token of the appreciation of *all* comic strip readers, not just those who love Don Lawrence's work, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who voted for us.

Stripbook gift

Five years ago, Dutch comic strip publisher Silvio van der Loo of publishing house Silvester launched a national promotion campaign for comic strips. To accompany the campaign, a free gift comic strip album was produced especially for the event, with comic strips and information about one particular comic strip or artist each year. Because of the 30th anniversary of Storm, created in 1976 by Martin Lodewijk and Don Lawrence, this year's edition is about Storm and the artist and writers who made it all possible. The book includes stories Don Lawrence did for *Baberiba* magazine, the memorable sequence in 'The Last Fighter' of Storm and the other champions as they enter the

spaceship, an interview with Dick Matena and Martin Lodewijk, and a close look at all the recent developments in our search for the new Storm artist, including some fine work by Romano. The National Comic Strip Weeks are from May 19 till June 10 with the Haarlem Festival in between. The book is in Dutch, but if you want to order a copy, please let us know.



IPC archive

When DLC started the publication of Don Lawrence -The Collection nearly twenty years ago, we used material from the Fleetway archives in Deptford near London. Back in 1989, you could find hundreds of original pages for Karl the Viking and Maroc the Mighty stored away in a warehouse alongside the artwork for hundreds of other classic British comic strips.

In the early 1990s, the Deptford warehouse was closed

down and the artwork packed off to cheaper storage facilities in Birmingham. Since then the archive has been moved from one location to another, diminishing with each move as rain and leaks destroyed more boards. The remaining boards have only recently returned to London, where they were catalogued for the first time to find out what artwork had survived.

Fortunately, most of the original artwork of Karl and Olac has survived and we were invited by the Intellectual Property manager at IPC to visit and scan all the remaining pages of Don's artwork. Armed with the D&I studios Powermac and digital scanner, we drove through London's rush hour traffic on Wednesday, March 8, looking for the skyscraper-like IPC offices. Once there, we were ushered into the comfy office of the Foreign Rights department, offered coffee and sandwiches and then spent the day scanning all the art boards that had been rediscovered: the early episodes of Olac the Gladiator, hundreds of pages of Karl the Viking, plus Maroc the Mighty and even a 1959 episode of Wells Fargo.

It will come as no surprise that we have plans for this material. We recently signed a contract with IPC/DC Comics to publish both Karl the Viking and Olac the Gladiator in two new series of collectors' books as we have done with the most famous of Don's British strips, The Trigan Empire. More in our next newsletter.

