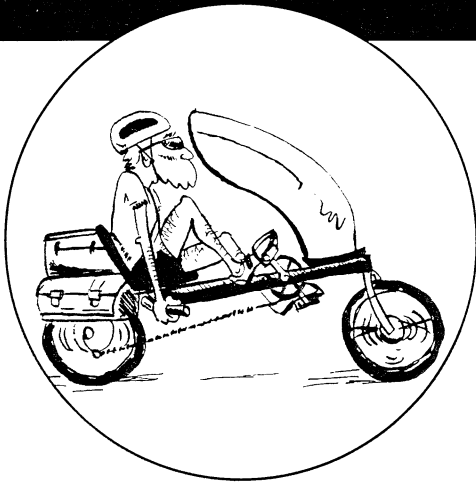


FIELD GUIDE

Silicon Valley Alpha Males

BY PAULINA BORSOOK

The Hypernurd



Has acquired multiple degrees from one or more elite computer-science departments.

Advantages: Will almost always be working on something really trendy. From him, you'll pick up jargon you can dine out on for months before it starts cropping up in *Red Herring*.

Disadvantages: Can dress him up but can't take him out. May view argumentation as courtship behavior.

Clues: Legos, stock certificates from obscure companies, *The Art of Computer Programming* at work, on his way to work, on his bedside table.

The VC



Has affected more lives and fussed about with more money than the finance ministers of many developing nations.

Advantages: If you like power, you'll love rubbing up against the VC. Usually has the best hair in the room; also likely to be the best-dressed, most fit and best-looking. **Disadvantages:** Comparable to Wall Street's 1980s masters of the universe. At worst goes for aerobics instructors that dress like high-class call girls; at best, because of overpredation, will prove as elusive a prize as a cabinet-level appointee. Best caught before he becomes a VC. (See Repeat Success and Hypernurd.)

Clues: Sony Vaio, Ty Nant spring water, Stanford Park Hotel, breakfast at Buck's.

The Dominant



Has acquired a fierce reputation as a cypherpunk-extropian-polyamoury-nanotechnology top dog.

Advantages: Has a sense of the theatrical. **Disadvantages:** Has a sense of the theatrical. **Clues:** Multiple piercings, Doc Martens, Burning Man (first three years), raves, Exotic/Erotic Ball.

If you crave a guy with more money than sense, leaders of all kinds of packs are there for the taking in Silicon Valley.

Like him rich and preppy? Page the VC. Have a hankering for costume drama? Look up the Dominant.

Happy Hunting!

The Repeat Success



Has founded many companies and been bought out more than once. Has gone from executive position to executive position. Now gives angel money.

Advantages: Low-key, comfortable in his own skin.

Disadvantages: As with his repeated success with companies, has also had repeated success with women. Can only be caught during the rare 20 minutes when he's between wives, girlfriends or both.

Clues: StarTAC on the belt, Woodside address, 1989 Saab 900.

The Dark Horse



Has come from nowhere with nothing obvious to necessarily recommend him, but scored big by virtue of timing, a single great insight or beginner's luck.

Advantages: Has had an interesting life.

Disadvantages: May be a one-trick pony. You may be stuck for the rest of your years listening to yarns about him n' Gary Kildall, or the program-trading software he conned Salomon Brothers into buying in the late 1980s. Won't be able to understand *why* you are not interested in sharing in his latest venture, which may have something to do with salt-tolerant horticulture or the cuisines of Dalmatia.

Clues: Mountain bike, Japanese anime, Esalen spa retreats.

The New Media Mogul



Has made his mark by being a player in the Internet economy.

Advantages: Media savvy. Probably has great connections in the entertainment and design industries, and would like to live in the City, if he doesn't already.

Disadvantages: Really likes talking about branding and whole-person thinking. May not realize he's a charlatan.

Clues: Soul patch, TAG Heuer, infused vodka, world music, Sundance.