

THEN *and* NOW!

Famous Cool Cat Turns Forty

(NAPSA)—A classic comedy franchise is now celebrating its 40th anniversary. You may be able to show that your knowledge of the series is “in the pink of perfection” after you investigate a few facts about its fascinating past and exciting present:

Then: The Pink Panther was created back in 1964. In the original live action movie, it’s actually the name of a rare diamond with pink amber in the center that looks like a leaping panther. When director Blake Edwards originally asked animators Friz Freleng and David DePatie to “personalize the pink panther jewel,” they sketched over 150 different versions of the Pink Panther character.

- The jazzy, hum-along Henry Mancini theme song, however, is what 38 percent of Americans say is the first thing that comes to mind when they think of the Pink Panther. One reason may be because the original Pink Panther movie set a record for the longest opening segment at the time—it took a whopping seven and a half minutes just to get through the credits. Mancini wrote the Pink Panther theme music after the opening sequence of the film was almost completed. The director said that it was the theme song that ended up “bringing the whole project together.”

- Although it was released four months after “The Pink Panther,” the second movie, “A Shot in the Dark,” was actually filmed first.

- Over the years, a total of 172 seven-minute Pink Panther animated shorts were produced and exhibited on television and in movie theaters around the world.

Now: Today, the Pink Panther is leaving his paw print on televi-



In the pink at 40, the Pink Panther is as hip, sly and amusing as ever.

sions across the world, with cartoons airing in the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Italy, The Netherlands and Belgium. Every Pink Panther cartoon has the word “pink” in the title, including “Dial ‘P’ for Pink,” “Pink-A-Boo,” “Super Pink,” and “Pink in the Clink.”

- What’s more, the Pink Panther franchise is celebrating its 40th anniversary with a reinterpretation of the original artworks by renowned gallery artist Josh Agle, also known as SHAG, appearing on special licensed products ranging from men’s and women’s dress shirts to Vespa scooters. In addition, a special edition DVD gift set of the movies is available and modern musical artists including St. Germain and Fischerspooner have created remixes of the famous theme song.

- Even the U.S. Post Office has put its stamp of approval on the clever cat. The Pink Panther and Henry Mancini appear together on a postage stamp.

You can learn more, find Pink Panther products and play Pink Panther games online at www.pinkpanther.com.