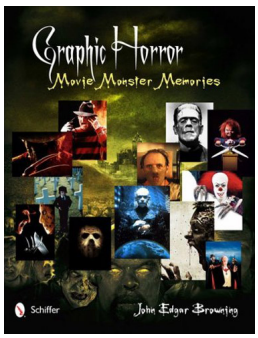
As with any carnival come-on, the joy of horror-film worship often lies not just in the movies themselves, but in the way they’re marketed around the world. Indeed, historically, in some cases the poster hyperbole outdid the picture it shucked, and you know what? That’s OK.



John Edgar Browning’s hardcover coffee-table book GRAPHIC HORROR: MOVIE MONSTER MEMORIES (Schiffer Publishing) is unique in that it is not only a fine collection of saturated, sensational posters, lobby cards and other promo material from every corner of the globe, it uses said art to give a brief, scattered but effective history of the genre. Not only is it Browning’s voice you “hear,” but the author has assembled an impressive array of some of his famous friends to comment on the films, their subjective appeal and the imagery used to draw in the crowds.

Each decade is covered in hazy fashion, with some of the most important pictures featured (the 1960s section favors PSYCHO and NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, with posters both domestic and European) and many splendid detours (dig that amazing UK QUEEN OF BLOOD poster! Or the Polish SON OF GODZILLA one-sheet!), and talents like Ramsey Campbell, Nancy Kilpatrick, David J. Skal, F. Paul Wilson and even Fango’s Tony Timpone all pipe in with fond comments. Still, the text is really just a special guest star in GRAPHIC HORROR; as the title suggests, this one is meant to tell its tale by dazzling the eyeballs. And it does.

With Christmas coming, giving the gift of a book that features the UK poster for THE HOWLING III and the Japanese BLACULA one-sheet might just make you a star in some horror fan’s eyes. For more info, go to www.schifferbooks.com .