

In-PersonSCOOP

Kilmer thrills fans in rare Hollywood signing appearance

by Steven Woolf of The I.P.A. Network with Jeffrey Woolf

Collectors flocked to the Beverly Garland Hotel in North Hollywood the weekend of Oct. 4-5 for an encounter that no one ever thought possible. Although it was billed as just another Hollywood Collectors & Celebrities Show – an event that happens four times a year – this one promised to be something special.

Over the past few years, the HCS has earned the collecting community's respect and patronage by bringing in some notable names from Hollywood's past including Charlton Heston, Debbie Reynolds, Don Knotts and Carrie Fisher. But organizers broke new ground and stunned autograph collectors everywhere when they announced that **Val Kilmer** was among the scheduled guest signers. Was it a hoax? Wishful thinking? Would Kilmer actually show up? Needless to say, anticipation leading up to the event reached a fever pitch.

Well, Kilmer not only showed up, but also arrived at 9 a.m. – a full hour



Alex Michel: The Bachelor had the girls swooning with his offer of a red rose.

before his scheduled signing time – just to get an early jump on the huge crowd that greeted him throughout the day. Dressed casually in a long-sleeved colored shirt, Kilmer sported a full mustache and beard, much as he did in his



The biggest-name star ever to appear at the HCS, Val Kilmer came through big-time.

most recent big screen release *Wonderland*.

Kilmer has always had a reputation for being one of the most reclusive and difficult signers in Hollywood. Despite this, Val seemed genuinely thrilled to meet his fans and was all smiles throughout the entire weekend. What made his appearance at the show so astounding was that not only is he an "A-List" star, but also one of the rarest and most desirable autographs in Hollywood. That said, it's not surprising to hear that he reportedly raked in six figures for his two-day stint.

Collectors were pleasantly surprised at the beautiful signatures they received from Val both days. Coming into the show, he had a reputation for having one of the worst signatures in Hollywood,

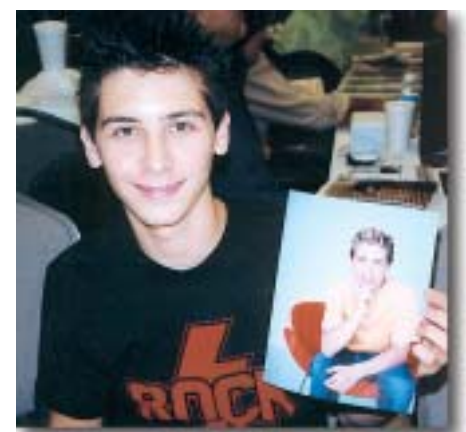
typically a hastily scrawled V-line, K-line. But this time he gave out fully legible, complete signatures. Making his autograph even more special was his willingness to sign character names like "Jim Morrison" for *The Doors*, "Doc Holliday" for *Tombstone*, and just about any other character name or inscription fans asked him to write.

Kilmer's friendly, down-to-earth attitude made the dream-like encounter a sweet reality. Best of all, not only did the fans go home happy, but Kilmer said he thoroughly enjoyed the show as well, and would be happy to return again in the future. Bravo Val, Bravo!

While Kilmer was certainly the star of the show, collectors had plenty of other noteworthy celebrity guests to keep them occupied. Making his first public signing appearance was the original bachelor, **Alex Michel**. Now a staple of reality television, Michel was the first subject for ABC's hit

program *The Bachelor*.

In between signing and taking pic-



Fast-rising "Malcolm in the Middle" star Justin Berfield was a big bit with fans.



Popular Tippi Hedren took time out from her crowded table to bam it up with Alex Michel.

tures with fans, Alex schmoozed with fellow guests Tippi Hedren and former *Happy Days* star Erin Moran, both of whom insisted on having their pictures taken with him. As an added feature, Alex

Another newcomer who enjoyed a fabulous turnout was *Malcolm in the Middle* star **Justin Berfield**. As Malcom's older brother Reece on the Emmy Award-winning show, Justin was well received by collectors of all ages, and had a constant stream of fans at his table throughout the weekend. Many bought signed photos of this up-and-coming young actor and were eager to have their pictures taken with him. Although Justin plays a devious bully on *Malcolm*, the real

Justin Berfield is nothing but a great kid.

Even though **Tippi Hedren** was making her second HCS appearance, collectors still "flocked" to her table. Forever remembered for her role in the 1963 Alfred Hitchcock classic *The Birds*, the gracious actress proved once again that she's a real fan favorite and was more than happy to sign their memorabilia.



(Clockwise from top left) Charlene Tilton, Kathryn Crosby, Sybil Danning and Julie McCullough helped make this perhaps the best HCS event ever.



also handed out roses to female fans that wanted photo ops – a gesture that won their hearts instantly. He also made sure he asked each one the famous *Bachelor* question, "Will you accept this rose?" While Alex has both male and female fans, it was obvious that the women found him simply irresistible.

One unique thing that collectors always seem to enjoy about Tippi's autograph is that she likes to add small bird caricatures around her signature when signing

memorabilia from the film. Very cool!

Although Batman (Val Kilmer played the caped crusader in *Batman Forever*) was the highlight of the show, many collectors were equally happy to meet The Greatest American Hero himself, **William Katt**. Making his first autograph



William Katt: *The Greatest American Hero* made a rare signing appearance and didn't disappoint.

show appearance, Katt is best known for his role as Ralph Hinkley, the teacher-turned-superhero in *The Greatest American Hero*, which enjoyed a three-year run on network television during the early 1980s.

Katt received a strong response from collectors at the show, with many of them stopping to buy the many color photos that he had to offer. One reason for Katt's popularity may be the fact that a major motion picture version of the TV show is in the works. Could a revival of the humorous superhero sitcom turn *The Greatest American Hero* into a smash movie hit? That's yet to be seen, but one thing is for certain: Movie or no movie, many fans still remember and appreciate William Katt.

After encounters with the likes of Batman, *The Birds* lady and *The Bachelor*, most collectors left the show grinning from ear to ear. What more could you ask for? Rounding out the show were several other celebrity guests, including **Charlene Tilton, Julie McCullough, Linda Gray, Frank Gorshin, Phyllis Diller, Joey Heatherton, Eddie Carroll, Kathryn Crosby** and **Sybil Danning**.

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