



MOON TALK

A quarter of a century after the first lunar amble, PEOPLE catches up with the 12 men who've been there and back

**EDWIN
'BUZZ'
ALDRIN JR.**

Age: 64

Apollo 11,

July 16-24, 1969.

**In dress blues
near his Corona**

**Del Mar, Calif.,
home (opposite)**

**and creating his-
toric footprints.**

Twenty-five years ago this week a message came crackling into the nation's living rooms from 240,000 miles away: "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed." Brief but redolent with romance, the message was from an intense, blue-eyed young man named Neil Armstrong. Along with Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin Jr., his Apollo 11 mission partner, Armstrong had just made history with the first moon landing. The pair seemed to open the door to the universe. And during the next three years, 10 more men went through it. The country, riven by the Vietnam War, temporarily came together in pride and wonder at these exploits. But no one was more affected than the astronauts themselves. "Looking back at the Earth for the first time," says Alan Shepard, "I actually, literally, cried." The question for 11 of these men—James Irwin died in 1991 of a heart attack—is: What do you do for an encore after you've walked on the moon? The lives of these astronauts, who rarely meet as a group, provide some surprising answers.

From the Sea of Tranquility to a sea of troubles

Buzz Aldrin's life continues to rocket along at warp speed—though it's all suborbital these days. Over a recent three-month period, he

squeezed in trips to Sweden, Russia, Washington, New York, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Idaho, Colorado, and the Cayman Islands—most of them involving a lecture or conference about the space program. "Buzz has no business," says Lois, 64, his travel coordinator and wife of seven years. "The business is Buzz."

And for Aldrin, who keeps houses in Los Angeles, Laguna Beach and Sun Valley, the moon is still his abiding passion. Small wonder, given his rocky return to Earth. Aldrin, reportedly, had hoped to be the first man to set foot on the moon and was deeply disappointed when Neil Armstrong, the commander of the flight, enjoyed that honor. "Buzz's attitude," said Michael Collins, who piloted the command module, "took a noticeable turn in the direction of gloom and introspection shortly thereafter."

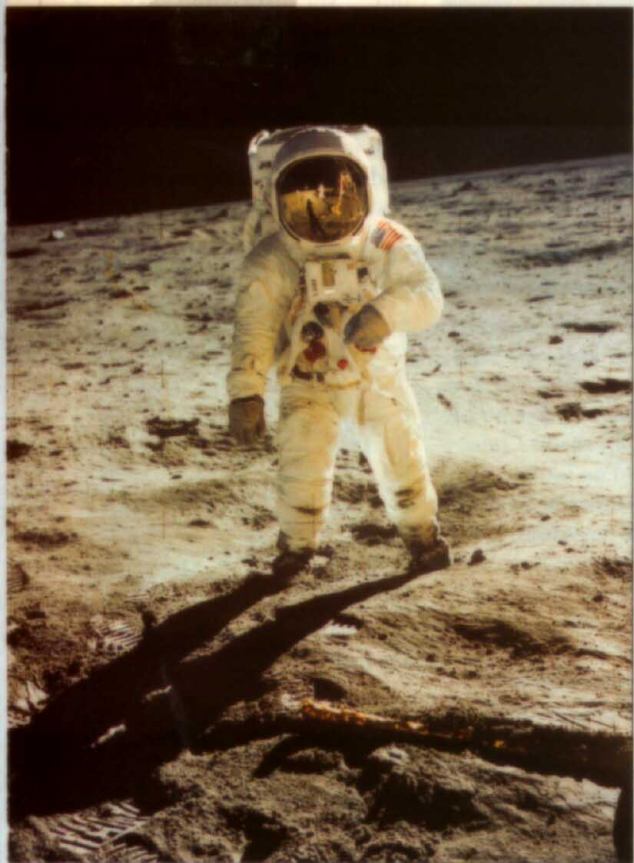
A fighter jock with a doctorate in astronautics, Aldrin wanted to follow up his 7½ years with NASA as commandant of the Air Force Academy. Instead he was given a public relations job with the space agency, then



assigned to head a test-flight school, and his life went into a tailspin. In 1971 he was treated for depression; then in the mid-'70s he faced up to alcoholism. "I was a perfectionist and over-achiever," he says. The battle "was probably the most difficult thing I ever had to do, but it also was probably the most

rewarding."

Sober for 16 years, Aldrin regrets that the U.S. no longer embraces space flight—but leaves no question where he stands: The license plates on the his-and-hers Mercedes and Porsche, both red, read MARS GUY and MOONGAL.



People
weekly

July 25, 1994

MARK SENNETT/ONYX

People
weekly

July 25, 1994

