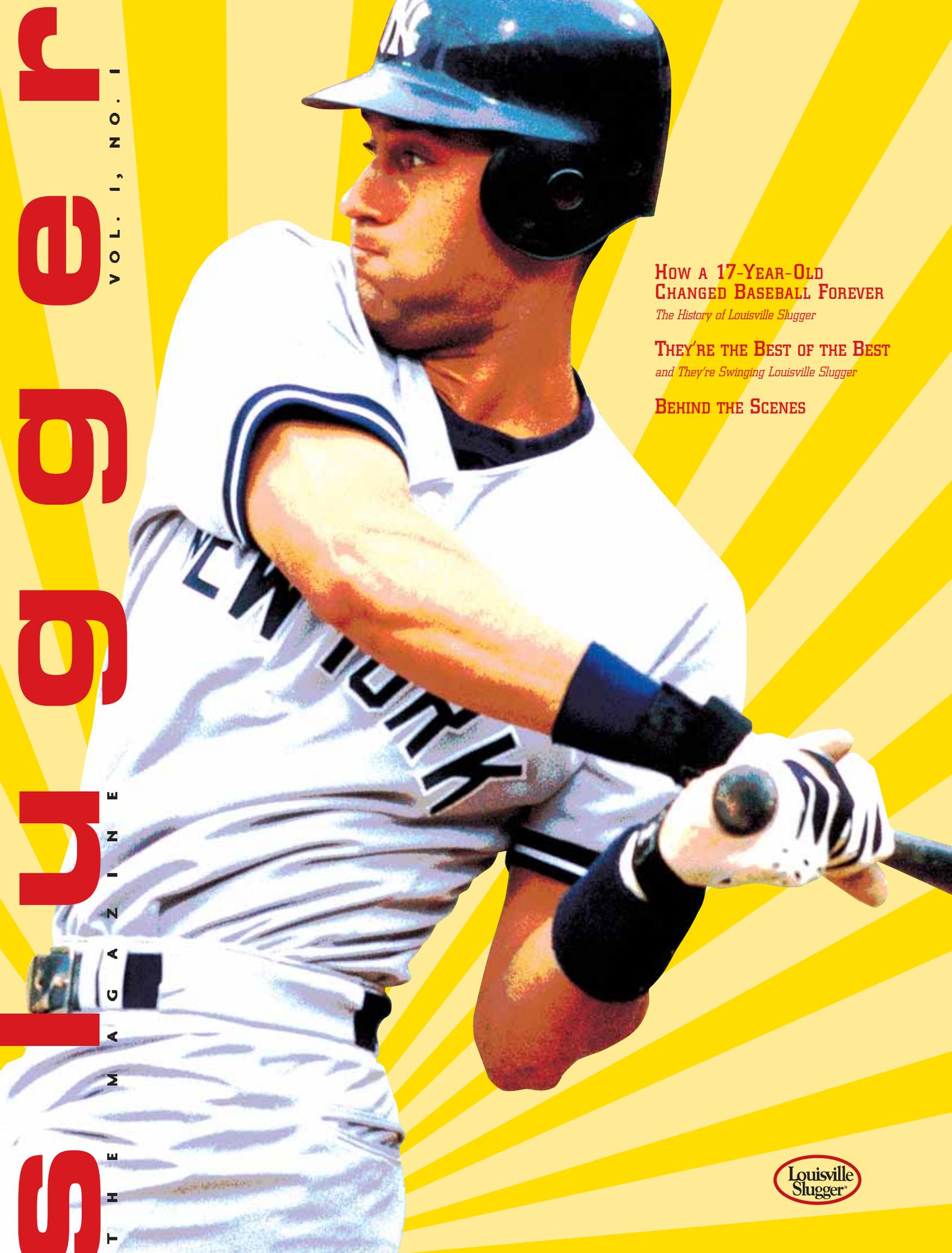


Sluggers

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THE MAGAZINE



**HOW A 17-YEAR-OLD
CHANGED BASEBALL FOREVER**

The History of Louisville Slugger

THEY'RE THE BEST OF THE BEST

and They're Swinging Louisville Slugger

BEHIND THE SCENES





N O T S O HEAVY METAL

How LOUISVILLE SLUGGER MAKES ALUMINUM BATS

In World War II, the need for lighter, faster aircraft led to a renaissance in the manufacturing and processing of aluminum. Little did anybody know, it would later lead to a technological revolution in America's favorite pastime — a revolution that came in the form of aluminum bats. The aluminum bat was actually patented way back in 1886, just two short years after the first Louisville Slugger was carved out of a log of white ash. But it wasn't until the 1970s that aluminum began replacing wood as the material of choice for sending baseballs flying. Today, Louisville Slugger makes more than a million aluminum bats a year. Without getting overly technical, here's a quick look at how these durable, high-performance bats are made.

LOUISVILLE SLUGGER'S ALUMINUM bats are manufactured in Ontario, California. They start as hollow aluminum tubes, 2 5/8 inches in diameter and about 30 inches long.

A MACHINE RUNS THE TUBES through a process called "swaging," in which they're spun and molded into the appropriate shape. Because bats are tapered at one end, the swaging process also increases the length of the tubes, leaving the finished bats at the proper length.

NEXT, THE BATS SOAK for 20 minutes in a bath of molten salt heated to over 800° F. This process cures the metal at a sub-atomic level, making the bat stronger and more durable.

AFTER COOLING OFF in a supersaturated water-based solution, the bats move to an "aging furnace" where they will endure temperatures of close to 300° for 12-24 hours. The prolonged heat strengthens the metal even further, and prepares it for the final steps in the manufacturing process.

THE HOLLOW BATS are closed at one end with polyurethane caps before a welding machine adds a knob to each one.

NEXT, THE BATS ARE POLISHED and silkscreen printed with impact-resistant paint, then outfitted with synthetic grips.

DECALS GO ON right before the bats are packaged and sent

to eager batters all over the world. Baseballs beware. There is a steady supply of aluminum Louisville Slugger TPX bats on the way.

DID YOU KNOW?

Aluminum is the most abundant metal in the earth's crust, but it's rarely found in its pure form. It must be extracted from other compounds using an electrical process.

