

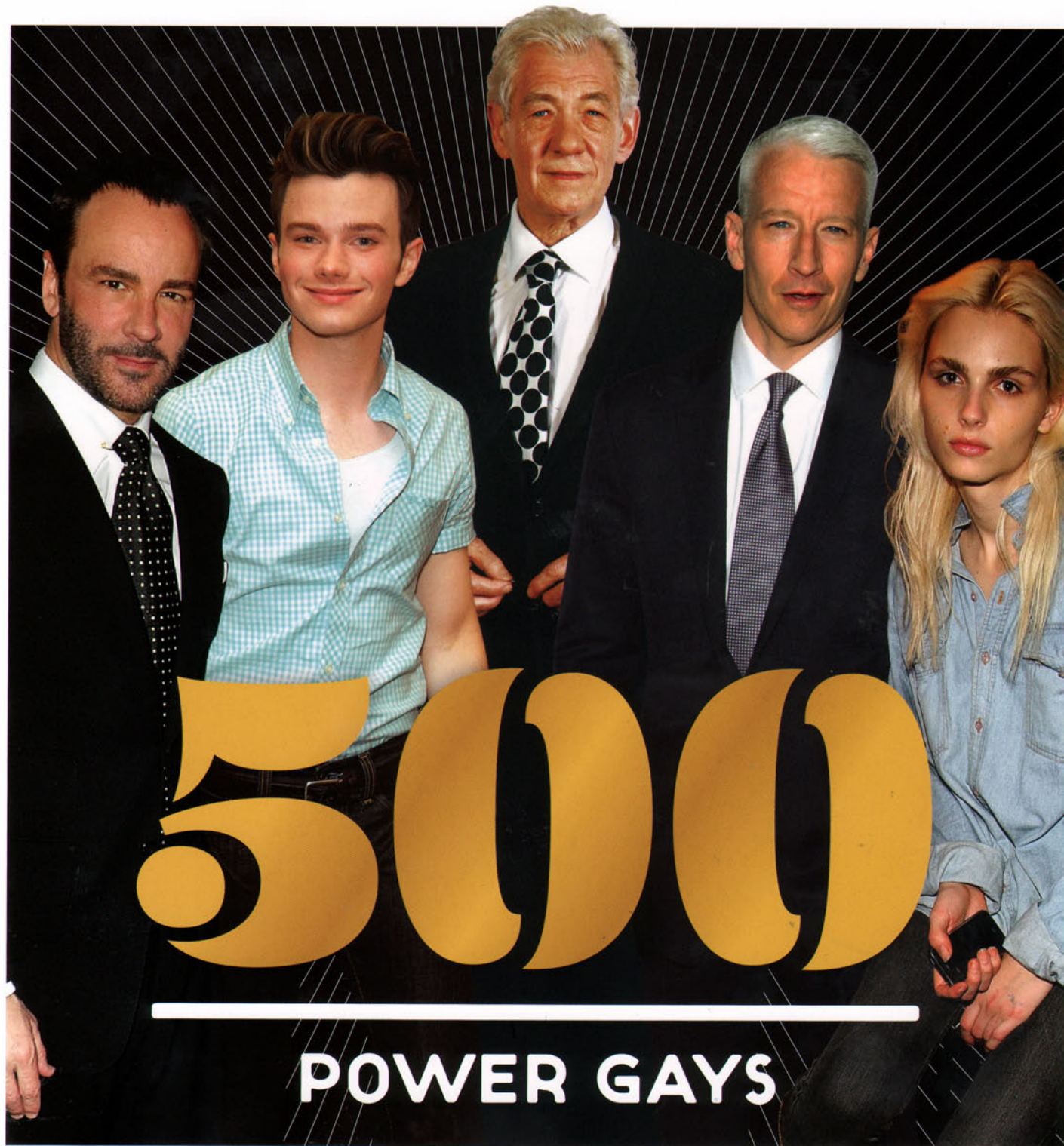
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347 BENJAMIN ORTIZ NORIEGA

1956 -

Interior designer...it's a bit of a gay cliché, but a bunch of fresh flowers alone will not make you a pro. Benjamin Noriega Ortiz knows that only too well, as the 56-year-old native Puerto Rican studied architecture at the country's university, then moved to New York in 1982, before studying at Columbia University where he earned his second master's degree. In 1992, Ortiz established his own firm,

BNO design, in order to become independent. His work is much lauded, and he has gotten praise from every corner, such as being included on *New York Spaces*' 50 top designers list, and being voted into the top 10 of designers by *House Beautiful* magazine. His Style? It's sleek chic – as shown by his Cartier Boutiques and Morgan Hotel Group projects, for which he refurbished two Mondrian Hotels (in New York and Los Angeles). Ortiz lives with his partner Steve Wine; Wine is a fellow designer, and runs the ABYU lighting studio.

