

Jerry Lewis has learned some painful lessons

since breaking with Dean Martin, but he isn't sorry;

he has what he wants—work and more work.

# What Makes Jerry Run

by Peer J. Oppenheimer



Jerry can be a clown (above) or a gentleman. At right, he takes time out from emceeing Academy Awards to talk with Oscar-winner Jack Lemmon. Jerry handled affair in both '56 and '57.

SCRABBLE AND Canasta are no longer among Hollywood's fashionable pastimes. A quiz called "What Makes Jerry Run?" has replaced them.

Jerry is Jerry Lewis, comedy's crewcut answer to the jet age. And the game's brainbusting question concerns this frail young man's dynamic drive to do everything better than everybody.

Here was a likable refugee from the tough vaudeville-nightclub circuit who became wealthy and famous before he was 30. With his handsome singing partner, Dean Martin, he had a lifetime guarantee to glory.

So what does he do? the Hollywood gamblers ask. He breaks with Martin! He plunges into the most nerve-shattering, career-wrecking of Hollywood ventures—producing and directing his own films. He also develops a special solo nightclub and television routine.

As if this weren't enough, he enlarges his already prodigious activities in charity work, GI entertainment, and film promotion. His second stint in emceeing the recent Academy Awards presentations is only one example of Jerry's away-from-work work.

So what does make Jerry run?



Let's ask him. "I like my work," he replies matter-of-factly. "I'm happiest when I'm entertaining. People say that at this pace you can't live past 60. But what are years worth if you don't enjoy them?"

This attitude, more than occasional jealousies and rifts which were quickly forgotten, led to Jerry's breakup with Dean Martin. The singer is older and far more easygoing. A movie and a couple of TV appearances were considered a year's work by Dean. The rest of the time was best spent golfing, he figured.

But Jerry's favorite sport, hobby, avocation, and secret love all boil down to the same thing—work and more work. And so came the parting of the day's top comedy team, and a new gamble on the future by Jerry. If the keen-witted comic wanted a 24-hour schedule, he got it in his new field. His first production is "The Delicate Delinquent," from a story by (who else?) Jerry Lewis. In filming it, Jerry learned why his old producer, Hal Wallis, sometimes looked shaken at the off-camera antics of the irrepressible Martin-Lewis team. Jerry

also may have understood more clearly why his old partner wanted no part of ambition.

With Wallis, for example, Jerry was continually coming up with visual gags to spark up his films. Some of the gimmicks were expensive, but Jerry's stock reply was, "What's money?"

Jerry has learned the painful answer now. When his own prop man recently developed an idea for a chest of drawers that fell apart when slammed and then reassembled itself, Jerry was sold.

"It'll cost \$3,750," the prop man added. This time Jerry didn't reply "What's money?"

To such hourly headaches add the daily crises of a million-dollar enterprise with hundreds of workers, and you see why Lewis' day begins at 7 a.m. and ends in the late evening. Remember, too, evenings may mean charity work, personal appearances, or interviews.

It's a tribute to Jerry's strong family loyalty that his consuming ambition is never at the expense of his wife, Patti, and their three boys, Gary, 11, Ronnie, 7, and Scottie, 1.

The Lewis' vacations are always family vacations, and Jerry's business trips are arranged to keep him away from home as little as possible.

Jerry was at the Paramount Theater in New York when Ronnie broke his leg. The comedian flew back to Hollywood after his last show, spent four hours at his son's bedside, then returned East without missing a performance.

During an appearance at Chicago's Chez Paree, Patti phoned Jerry to tell him the children were lonesome. Jerry promptly made arrangements for a police escort to Midway Airport after his last show and had a car standing by at Los Angeles International Airport to meet his flight. He had only an hour and a half to talk and joke with his family before returning to Chicago, but it was worth it—for both the kids and their father.

"LONELINESS" is a terrifying word in Jerry Lewis' world. He remembers his own childhood in Newark, N. J., as one haunted by feelings of desolation. His parents were vaudevillians who, in a depression, had to accept billings far from home.

At 8, Jerry was cooking his own meals, keeping house, and spending endless hours in a dark, empty apartment where each creak magnified to dreadful proportions. His closest companion was his grandmother, who lived nearby. She died when Jerry was 14 and the world closed in tighter.

Childhood loneliness, as any Hollywood do-it-yourself psychoanalyst will tell you, is the deep-seated answer to "What makes Jerry run?" They nod wisely and say Jerry needs success, admiration, and activity to protect him from memories of being small and alone.

Well, maybe they're right. Even so, none of



Jerry is "The Delicate Delinquent" in new film he produced and helped write. He expects to direct someday.