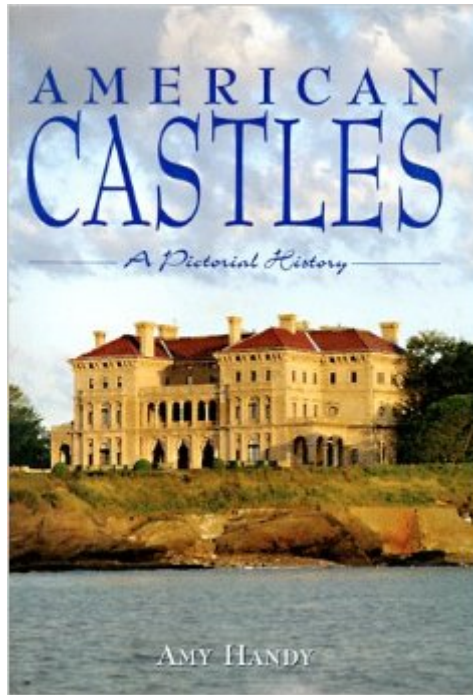


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American Castles: A Pictorial History



Synopsis

Beginning in the Gilded Age and extending through the 1930s, American millionaires constructed flamboyant and conspicuously opulent dream palaces to establish their prestige. With more than 80 full-color photographs, this volume is a spectacular tour through some of North America's most, lavish, exotic, and legendary palatial residences. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A variety of architectural styles are represented in this full color book, including gothic castles, victorian mansions and palazzos. Each building represented contains a brief history and beautiful photographs. A few of the castles highlighted are the monumental Hearst Castle, the Winchester Mystery House and Ca'd'Zan. Newport's mansions are well represented also. It is an absolute bargain for the price. Short and sweet it is a great way to start a library of castles. I would highly recommend.

Though I greatly enjoyed a visit to Hearst's "Castle" in San Simeon some years ago, as a European one tends to be unaware that it isn't the only building of its kind in the USA. This book provides an excellent overview of what's on offer, and for me truly opened up whole new perspectives on architecture. The shameless display of wealth is very much to the fore in several of the houses that are documented. Though the results are sometimes in questionable taste, or even childishly naïve, and architects apparently weren't always able to articulate the difference between a

hallway in a private dwelling and an opera house lobby, there is also an exhilarating buoyancy to it all that's rarely found in European buildings, weighed down as they are by historical and stylistic consciousness (barring maybe a few Victorian extravaganzas in the UK and of course Ludwig II's castles in Bavaria). Confections like the dining room at The Breakers or the ballroom at Marble House might have been cooked up in Hollywood as sets for some million-dollar fairy tale movie and are simply mind-blowing. Still, of even greater interest than these would-be Versailles' are quintessentially American buildings like the Carson House in Eureka or the bizarre Winchester "Mystery" House. All of these are shown to excellent advantage in this book, with an occasional Italianate Palazzo and the odd gothic monstrosity thrown in for good measure. Both interiors and exteriors are (selectively) documented. Texts are brief and to the point. The photography is more than serviceable, though of somewhat variable quality and rarely quite top-notch. Still, at the price nobody interested need hesitate to pick up this slim volume. If you are seriously interested in the subject I would however urge you (also) to invest in the McAlister's more comprehensive, scholarly, and visually stunning "Great American Houses", which includes floor plans, unfortunately missing in the present book.

For \$10.36 you simply cant beat the value of the beautiful photos in this book. Grand 'modern' castles & mansions of the Guilded Era with pictures of their interiors also. My favorites are the Hearst mansion/castle & the Hammond castle. I gave it less than 5 stars because it is only 80 pages long. I gave it more than 3 stars for the exquisite photos. See other books I have reviewed if you want more suggestions for books on castles & architecture.

This book is OK. The photos are beautiful, but the book seems to wander. I was hoping for something along the lines of the Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd books on the homes of England and Scotland. It is a pretty book, but leaves much to be desired in my opinion.

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