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Furniture Atlas: From Rococo To Art Deco



Synopsis

A comprehensive, illustrated guide to the shifting styles and influences of furniture design from Rococo to Art Deco. The book traces the history of the techniques, the production methods, and the innovators of furniture design.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Paging through this oversized coffee-table book is a delight. It contains over 800 pages with more than 1300 beautifully colored photographs supplemented with black-and-white pen-and-ink drawings. The book contains photos not only of furniture of three centuries of styles in several European countries, but also the interiors in which the furniture is placed. And the text material focuses on the aesthetic and stylistic aspects as well as the historical aspects. This enjoyable book is one of the best of its kind that I have seen, and I recommend it to all readers interested in interior decoration. It is well worth the price. The collaborating authors have done a truly fantastic job.

This is a well written book in light of the fact there are different authors for each section. Beware that this book's focus is on Europe--there is no discussion of America or other places outside of Europe. One thing that struck me was the vastness of the furniture world. For example, Chippendale and Hepplewhite each warrant no more than a few paragraphs. One thing that I found annoying was the focus on the pinnacle of furniture making. I am more interested in furniture owned by average folks, not the crazy over-the-top stuff of royalty. I've never had a client request a bedroom in the the style

of Louis the XVI because it would take an army of craftsmen and millions of dollars to recreate the bedroom. The book has several chapters on interiors. These discussions are nice but again, the focus is on the pinnacle of interior design. I was disappointed about the discussion of Art Nouveau. The author, Ornella Selvafolta, spends many pages discussing painting and architecture. This discussion did not contribute to what I wanted to know--i.e. furniture design. The same thing goes for the section on Art Deco which was authored by Selvafolta also.

I really enjoyed Judith Miller's series on furniture and design. But there were limited examples of Rococo wood furniture with inlays and gilding. I was stunned to see 1300 color pictures in this book. I have traveled to many of the locations and seen some of these masterpieces. I could not capture on film the details that this book brings to your eyes with perfect lighting, close ups, and even whole room settings. The commentary is fascinating by detailing who designed/built it, for whom, and where it can be seen today. The variation within the same style due to country and designer/purchaser is shown. The wood grains are very visible so you can see the difference in the woods used. Many of these are rare today. If you have traveled to European palaces and museums and been impressed with the craftsmanship and decor, you will love this book. Labeled as an encyclopedia, I wasn't prepared for how the book was laid out. Yes, it can claim to be an encyclopedia (of knowledge) but you read it like an interconnected story. The progression of styles from Rococo to Art Deco is explained and examples provided. I differ from another reviewer in that I love Rococo. For once I got the sheer volume of pieces that left me satisfied. The Bibliography takes 6 pages and the Index of proper names of people and locations is 13 pages long. This should give you an idea of how detailed this book is.

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