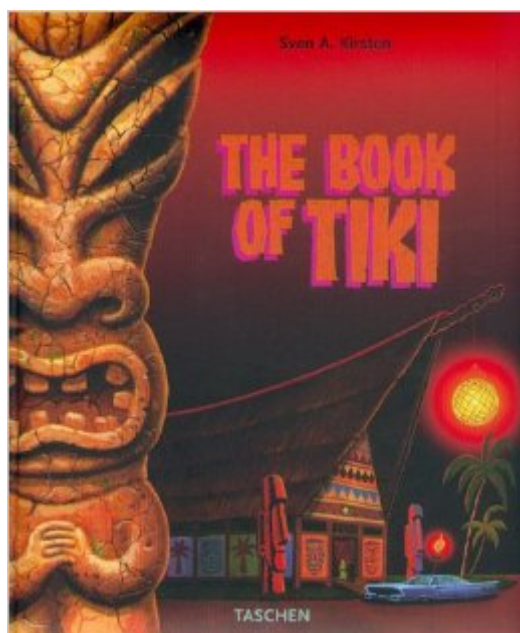


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The Book Of Tiki



Synopsis

After World War II, US soldiers stationed in the South Pacific returned home with tales of trees loaded with exotic fruits, sleepy lagoons, white-sand beaches, and gorgeous people wearing grass and feathers as they danced half-naked during all-night orgies of food and music. The American imagination seized on this exotic version of island culture, and it exerted a massive influence on Fashion, pop music, eating and drinking, and even architecture. Everything from bars to bowling alleys adopted elements of Polynesian design. Tikis, the carved wooden and stone statues from across the Pacific, found their way into every hotel lounge and suburban living room. But as the fad was reaching its peak, the big generation gap of the late 60s put a sudden end to Polynesian escapism as the children of the Tiki revellers decided to seek their own Nirvana in sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll. The 90s have seen a revitalised interest in this kitsch anomaly of post-war America -- lounge bars and the sound of "exotica" are back in. This enlightening and hilarious guide casts the reader as an "urban archaeologist" exploring the lost remnants of Tiki culture across the States -- discovering relics from this forgotten civilisation in thrift stores, yard sales, and used book and record emporia. A combination of nostalgia and fascinating pop cultural study, this volume is a long overdue investigation into the cult of the Tiki.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tiki worshipers -- we are not alone! Our friends at LuxuriaMusic.com live and breath Tiki, and the Millionaire has kindly written a thoughtful review on "The Book of Tiki." A notable excerpt from this is: "Possibly the most difficult aspect of reviewing this comprehensive study of Polynesian pop is that

it stands alone, unassailable. It's difficult to apply any critical distance to a work like this, and it's not that nothing else approaches its thoroughness or insight: the fact is that there is simply nothing else of the sort available. Whatsoever. Anywhere. Kirsten has literally "written the book" on a phase of pop culture that once encompassed architecture, interior design, clothing, music, food, entertainment and much more, yet passed from a ubiquitous vogue to decay and disregard without ever having enjoyed critical respect or even any substantial recognition.

What a fabulous book! The definitive book on tiki culture! I can't imagine that anyone could ever surpass the excellent work done by Sven Kirsten. This book is truly a joy. I'll often rush through a new book but I took my time with this beauty. Entertaining, absorbing and stylish, it's just as much fun to merely look at as it is to read it. Each page is an adventure. I was impressed by the scope of the book - it deals with not just restaurants but with motels, apartment buildings, home entertaining, etc. Sven Kirsten also profiles the major innovators and originators of tiki culture. The best part is that the book is presented (tongue in cheek) as a guide to the urban archaeologist, interested in uncovering the remnants and traces of the now-extinct tiki culture. A must-have book!

It does not happen often that a new facet of American pop culture that has not been recognized before gets discovered. With his *Book of Tiki* Sven Kirsten succeeds in establishing a style that has been overlooked by art critics and historians alike. Through an amazing amount of visuals Kirsten proves how Tiki in its heyday influenced every walk of American life, from architecture, design and graphics to food and drink. In addition to the rich imagery (which affords the viewer an almost physical experience of the phenomenon) Kirsten's writing traces back the origins of the style to the Western fascination with Polynesia and, without becoming too analytical and dry, enlightens the reader on the motives for this escapism. The chronicler's ironic enthusiasm for his subject saves him from becoming judgmental and falling for easy, politically correct conclusions. We are guided through the history of Polynesia as an eternal metaphor for an earthly Eden up to the point where Americans fell in love with this vision. Here Kirsten conveys how the post-war need for more moral freedom coincided with the tales of Pacific war theater veterans and the 50s idealization of Hawaii as a dream vacation destination. In taking the guise of an urban archaeologist who (as is done in classic archaeology) discovers a lost culture through its objects and artifacts, Kirsten accomplishes to throw light on a fascinating chapter of American pop that has so far lingered in obscurity.

I just glanced through this book at a local bookstore and was in heaven. It's priced much lower here

on , so buying it on-line is the way to go. Actually, I was a bit envious as this is the definitive book I would write on Tiki culture if I could. The history, factors, collectibles and magic of Tiki are covered in tremendous detail. Amazing illustrations, photos, trivia, historical notes and more await all fans of Tiki culture. I would say that Kirsten's book delves further into Tiki culture than any book this Tiki collector has ever seen. Simply a must buy for anyone who loves Tiki culture, or anyone looking to discover the magic of this "lost" time. I'm buying 2 copies--one for my friend and one for me.

I got a big kick out of this book--the author's dedication and perseverance amazes me (and I have done a lot of research of my own into various obscure topics, so I know what it takes). Terrific illustrations and a nice, funky layout. Anyone interested in oddball Americana, particularly the cartoonish weirdness that occurs when we apply our marketing skills to mysterious foreign cultures, ought to hustle out and buy this book. I'm not sure what language it was written in, because the text contains some odd usages, a few minor editorial problems (two chapters with the same number, in my book) and a handful of skewed captions. But none of these things bothered me much, because it was so much fun to look at. I love the concept of "urban archeology," although in the case of Tiki bars, it seems that the bulldozer and wrecking ball are providing too many final solutions. The book does make me wonder where my nearest Tiki relic might be. Maybe I'll join the hunt.

If you have any passing interest in the tiki culture of the 50's and 60's this book is for you. Containing hundreds of rare photographs, matchbook covers, swizzle sticks, and more, this book stands unparalleled in its field. About the only thing missing is a chapter on the Exotica music which closely tied to this culture - the tunes of the era get only a very passing reference. That said, YOU WILL NOT REGRET purchasing this book.

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