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American Modern



Synopsis

Designer and merchant, collector and tastemaker, Thomas O'Brien has made a career of translating cool notions of modernism into an easy and generous array of modern styles that anyone can attain. Now he introduces readers to a range of those styles—from casual to formal, vintage to urban—alongside stunning photography and charming design stories. O'Brien carefully describes the design process of his chosen projects, including a downtown New York City loft, a traditional Connecticut estate, and a converted schoolhouse in eastern Long Island. Each home explores a view on the modern design spectrum he has created, as well as the individual choices that make the design unique and its mix essentially American. He explains not only what was at work to create a given style, but how readers can import those practices to their own homes and personal design sensibilities. Important design principles such as architectural authenticity, color relationships, correctness of scale, and informed collecting are threaded through a practical narrative that reads like a master class in interior design. American Modern is an inspiring design volume that will redefine the way readers think about modern interiors.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It amazes me how few design inspirations there are for British houses built 1900-1950. A huge number of our suburban family homes date from this period, yet British interior designers and retailers seem incredibly reluctant to engage with them, and there are very few looks available to

those wanting to avoid wholesale modernisation. Either you go down the Cath Kidston route (way too girly and twee for most blokes); or the retro Pedlars look (shabby AND expensive, a combination to make your mother weep); or the wholesale Utility or Art Deco re-creation (the Geffrye museum via Ebay, for those who really want to dedicate years of their life to replicating an Agatha Christie stage set). Well, folks, now there's an alternative. And it's BEAUTIFUL. 'American Modern' - which has nothing specifically American about it, and is absolutely not what Europeans would call "modern" at all - is the signature style of the book's author, a New York decorator called Thomas O'Brien, who is very famous in the US apparently, though I hadn't heard of him until now. O'Brien's interiors have a very polished and opulent style that incorporates a ton of "stuff": piles of interesting travel relics and eclectic gewgaws surrounded by early 20th century antiques, dreamy line illustrations and photography, sumptuous upholstery, foxed mirrorglass furniture, chrome, marble, linen, silk and velvet, all in divinely muted colour palettes. (If I ever re-do my sitting room, I'm going his 'shades of blue hydrangea' all the way). Think pre-war Hollywood movies, the great grand hotels of the world, and deposed royalty living it up in Park Avenue and Cadogan Square mansion flats. Dahlink, I cannot tell you, it's utterly fabulous. This book is not for the faint of heart, or the light of pocket.

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