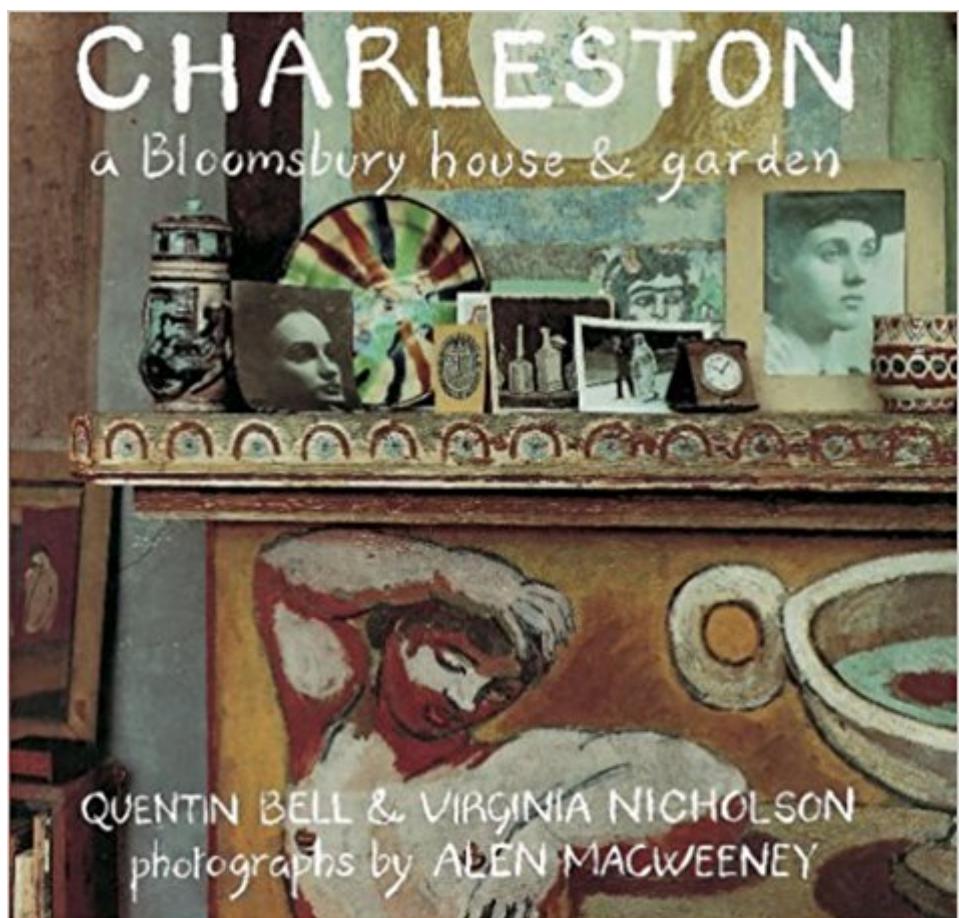


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Charleston: A Bloomsbury House And Garden



Synopsis

This volume encapsulates the artistic sensibility and casual sophistication of the Bloomsbury Group. In 1916, Virginia Woolf wrote to her sister, Vanessa Bell, that though the farmhouse at Charleston in Sussex was primitive, "you could make it lovely." Six months later, Bell moved in and, treating the house as a blank canvas, went on to create a treasury of Bloomsbury art. As the best remaining example of the decorative style of Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, Charleston presents the visitor with insights into the art of the Bloomsbury Group. The book provides family memories and anecdotes drawn from a lifetime's experience of Charleston. Each room links the interiors with some of the leading cultural figures of the 20th century, guests such as Vanessa's sister Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey. Specially commissioned photographs portray the essence of the Bloomsbury style both throughout the house, with its painted furniture and walls, decorative items and paintings and in the garden.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a solid overview of German interior design and stylistic movements from the Middle Ages (when there technically wasn't a Germany) up until roughly the Weimar period (where the struggle over what it meant to be German was a quite contentious and less-than-civil debate). Sangl's book finds a happy medium between text and (gorgeous) images, although I prefer the text to be front-loaded, followed by an uninterrupted flow of pictures (as is the case in other coffee table books on Bauhaus). As with any other book about art, tangential questions about culture and little sidebars

about history emerge in the discussion. The fact that France cast such a long shadow over Germany (through a long string of conquests) makes it difficult to separate what is French from what is more German. That German artists freely appropriated everything classical Greek to Ottoman and Byzantine flourishes makes any art/architecture historian's job that much harder. The authors prove themselves generally up to the test, though, and do a good job of showing how every ostentatious movement in art and design (like Rococo and Neo-Classicism) gave rise to more spartan reactions, like the Biedermeier and Bauhaus schools. My favorite part was an entry on Carl Junker, a man with whom I wasn't familiar prior to reading this work, but whose wood-heavy designs are torturous and intricate (and somewhat creepy) testaments to the beautiful mind of an artist that has reached its tether. As long as you're expecting a general overview of various schools and styles in German design and architecture, I have a hard time believing you'll be disappointed by this offering. If you're into antiques and learning the history (and philosophy) behind the creation of certain furnishings that double as works of art (or if you binge-watch "Antiques Roadshow" as I sometimes do), you'll find this one quite enjoyable and somewhat informative. Recommended.

As an Anglophile and book lover this is a must, just before hopping on a plane to visit there! Or simply to be impressed by creativity and beauty. One will want to visit one day! This is a classic!

I "thought" I knew a lot about this beyond-unique home and its inhabitants; but this beautiful book has provided the Complete Story....with endless visuals. (the best photos of Charleston I have ever seen) Two books in one, the main text tells the story of the family and friends who occupied the home with additional emphasis on the evolution of the various rooms, PLUS the extensive italicized photo captions provide further insights about each room and the accoutrements that appear in each photo. There is also a brief mention of how the home was (thankfully) rescued from oblivion, and became a destination for those seeking to see this wonderfully-creative environment for themselves. Welcoming and one-of-a-kind, this home is a perfect reflection of the creatives who lived there (not to mention, exuberant visitors) and the "evidence" is everywhere. No cabinet door, or end table was safe from the paint pots and brushes; and "spontaneous" hardly describes the artistic approach of the resident artists. Again: thankfully! This book succeeds on many levels.....and I recommend it to those who might be rallying their courage to create a home environment that is truly-unique and fully-expressive. This home proudly affirms: "Please all, and you please none". Lovingly embellished, and lavishly emblazoned -- Charleston is an historic residence that continues to inspire. Super book!

This is a lovely, loving homage to a place and those who lived there. The text is interesting and revealing, while the photographs are marvelously evocative. It's one of those rare coffee-table books that is a good read. Fans of the Bloomsbury Group will want this book not so much as a keepsake, but as an important part of their Bloomsbury library collection. Fans of intimate interiors (intimate portraits of intimate interiors) will love this book, too. It's beautiful. Each room is discussed and portrayed, and then, as a grand finale, the lush garden, a series of outdoor "rooms," is featured. I recommend this book to anyone for whom places are alive. My only caveat is that if you are not fond of The Bloomsbury Group (or are among those who are scandalized by the way they lived their lives), there's no reason to buy this book. Its frank contents will just upset you, and the artwork will seem amateurish. Charleston is, as the cover says, "a Bloomsbury House and Garden."

A beautiful pictorial presentation of a much-loved home.

If you love art history, you will really love it.

Perfect.

As I am an admirer of the art of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, and also an advocate of unique interior decoration, this lovely book captivated me. Each chapter details a room in the Charleston home, and describes in writing and photographs not only the decoration-- the furniture and the paintings-- but also the persons that inhabited these rooms. Quentin Bell and his daughter give us a first person perspective of the life and times of these remarkable people; the famous Bloomsbury group, as well as other family and friends. Their unconventional living situation, as well as the time in which they lived--the travails of the first and second world wars-- hardship and loss, but also a great commitment to their family and their art--it makes for a compelling story. The detail of the photography was the purpose of my purchase, and it did not let me down. I am very happy to review again and again the unique way in which they imprinted their own artistic perspective upon the furniture, the walls, and the doors of their home! I am so thankful that Charleston was preserved, and that I can visit it as often as I wish through the pages of this unique book!

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