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Jacqueline Kennedy : The White House Years: Selections From The John F. Kennedy Library And Museum



Synopsis

This illustrated volume celebrates the 40th anniversary of Jacqueline Kennedy's emergence as America's First Lady and explores her enduring global influence on style and fashion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Did the clothes make Jackie, or did Jackie make the clothes? Decide for yourself: Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years is a stunning catalog of some of Jacqueline Kennedy's most important dresses as worn during her years as first lady of the United States. As visually sleek and elegant as Mrs. Kennedy herself, the book offers a beautiful analysis of the stunning, simple outfits that typified the Jackie style and brought a breath of sleek modernity to the White House after the somewhat frumpy fussiness of previous first lady Bess Truman. Released to coincide with the 40th anniversary of Kennedy's "emergence" as a style icon, the book presents an eclectic selection of suits, evening dresses, daywear, and accessories from the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum collection. Divided into cities where each item was first worn, the gowns, suits, and dresses are first presented alone in a full-page color photo. Each is then accompanied by various photos of Jackie wearing the item and detailed design notes, history, and anecdotes behind the outfit. These photos give a wonderful context to the clothes, and it's clear that Jackie's carriage and persona injected life into these garments--which sometimes appear markedly different from what one might deduce as each item's "personality" when simply viewing it alone. For example, a pale cream embroidered silk Givenchy evening gown looks dull and somewhat dowdy when seen alone, but the accompanying

photograph of Jackie wearing it while cuddling a newborn John Kennedy Jr. transforms the dress into something feminine and timeless. Or a very simple, innocently pretty pink shantung evening gown by Guy Duvier becomes arrestingly sexy when she wears it with nothing but white gloves and a Palm Beach tan. Contextualizing and interpreting Kennedy's style is an important part of this book. Featured are essays on Jackie and her effect on the world of style by Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Kennedy friend Rachel Lambert Mellon, and the book's author and Vogue editor at large, Hamish Bowles. *Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years* accompanies an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. --Marisa Lencioni, .co.uk

Bowles's book accompanies a summer 2001 Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition of the same name, curated by Bowles, European editor at large of Vogue. The focus here is Jackie's famous and much emulated wardrobe. Each gown, suit, and accessory has an informational entry that includes a photograph of Jackie wearing the item. The selections highlight the first lady's savvy and sensitivity to the symbolic nature of dress. At a 1962 White House dinner for 49 Nobel Laureates, she looked like a "modern-day muse" in a "liquid, columnar dress suggestive of ancient statuary." A red wool twill Pierre Cardin suit, worn in Canada for her international debut as first lady, was "perceived as a stylish and calculated compliment to the uniforms of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police." The book provides a wonderful context for the images (many never before seen) while giving readers an enjoyable look at the woman who was arguably our most elegant first lady. Essays by White House gardener and friend Rachel Mellon, historian Arthur Schlesinger, and the author capture Mrs. Kennedy's personality. Highly recommended for all libraries with an interest in Jacqueline Kennedy.- Jennifer Mayer, Univ. of Wyoming Libs., Laramie Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This book is a lavishly illustrated companion book for the 2001 exhibit of Jacqueline Kennedy's White House wardrobe at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. It is apparent from looking at the photographs of the dresses, suits, and gowns worn by Jacqueline Kennedy as First Lady that she enjoyed wearing vivid colors like pink, lime green, apricot, and blue. She wore bright colors like these during her 1962 tour of India. Some of the famous outfits illustrated in the book include the red dress worn by Jackie during her famous tour of the White House which was nationally televised on February 14, 1962. Also illustrated is the gorgeous white gown that she wore to the pre-inaugural activities the night before her husband, John F. Kennedy, was sworn in as the nation's 35th president. The gown that she wore to the inaugural balls the following evening is on

display at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Jackie's style as First Lady was very simple and timeless and the outfits she wore during that period would be fashionable if worn today. Conspicuous by its absence in this book is the pink suit worn by Jackie on November 22, 1963, when President Kennedy was tragically cut down by an assassin's bullet during a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. For the past 50+ years, that suit has been kept in storage at the National Archives in Washington D.C. This is a great book for anyone interested in American history, fashion, and the life of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

My wife loves this book because Jackie was such a fashion icon during her White House years. The book is beautifully written and illustrated.

A few reviewers have complained that this book reads like the catalog for a museum exhibit--which is exactly what it is. It was prepared for the traveling exhibit of artifacts--the vast majority of which were items of clothing--belonging to Jacqueline Kennedy during the years her husband was campaigning for the presidency and served in the White House. That exhibit was absolutely breathtaking, one of the most impressive I have ever attended. Each display case featured a poster-size enlargement of a photograph of Jackie at some historic event or meeting with such world figures as Nikita Khrushchev, Pope John XXIII or Pablo Casals, next to a dress form with the outfit she was wearing in the photo and an explanation of why she chose that particular ensemble. What made the exhibit so impressive, of course, was that those historic photos were juxtaposed with historic artifacts, the actual clothing she wore at those events; what makes this book unavoidably less impressive is that here the historic photo is juxtaposed with--another photo. The clothes are beautifully photographed and reproduced, but they are still mere photos, nonetheless, without the emotional immediacy of seeing the actual item in person. The texts displayed in the exhibit are reproduced here, and of course they are as insightful as ever. As the book puts it, Jackie was "a woman of commanding personal style, with an unerring sense of history and of her place in it." What boggles the mind is how brilliantly she chose every detail--fabric, color, design, accessories--not only to look gorgeous or make a fashion statement, but also to make a political statement, however subtle, to reinforce the message of her husband's presidency, always taking into account where she was and who she was with. And yet every look is stunning; never, either here or in the press during her lifetime, did you ever see her in an outfit that made you wonder, "What was she thinking?" She was a First Lady with not only impeccable taste, but also unassailable class and--something lacking in virtually every other First Lady--true star quality. In that

this book conveys that message, it is well worth acquiring, even if you didn't get to attend the exhibit. And if you did, you absolutely must have this book. It was sold out by the time I attended, but fortunately it is still available.

Bought this for a gift -- I have owned this book for years. Wonderful book ---- she is posing on the covers -- front and back in her inaugural ball gown ---- fascinating the detail that went into the design of this gown --- the "flower" -- the meaning behind it ---- buy the book - you won't regret it.

I have many books on the Kennedys, but until I saw this one at my local library I didn't know it existed. So I am thrilled to have it and found it intriguing..

Many books written on the late First Lady, Jackie Kennedy Onassis. But if you have a curiosity for her fashion sense and style, as well as her diplomatic and social gatherings at the White House, this is the book for you!!

Presented as a fashion journal, this book is surprisingly insightful of Jackie's personality, charisma and intelligence. It is a presentation of her poise and strength as an influence on the nation (and the world,) both politically and artistically. Personally, looking back on those years, I am able to see and understand the changes within our society based on the Kennedys aesthetic. I highly recommend this book as a review of the times when we as a nation were in Camelot.

Beautiful photos of Jackie's fashion with detailed info about each one. It's a large book that is enjoyable to browse through. I am very happy that I ordered this book. I highly recommend this book to fans of Jackie.

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