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# Private Newport: At Home And In The Garden



## Synopsis

Newport, Rhode Island, blessed with stunning ocean vistas and constant sea breezes, is home to some of the most exceptional private residences in America. Its deeply rooted history makes it a perennial destination, with more than 3.5 million visitors each year. Although it is one of the most high profile towns in the country, Newport is also one of the most cloistered. *Private Newport: At Home and in the Garden* offers an invitation to venture beyond the privet hedges and massive iron gates. It is the first book to step inside the privately owned mansions to reveal a diverse collection of architectural jewels complemented by spectacular gardens. These homes, created by distinguished architects and landscape designers, are stunning examples of Newport's 375-year "old-world" heritage. Eighteen exquisite and unique homes are prominently featured—from the resilient crescent curve of majestic Seafair, which withstood the Hurricane of '38, to the prizewinning Japanese garden at Wildacre, to the nostalgic working farm of heritage breeds at Swiss Village—each contributing its own part to the "Eden of America."

## Book Information

Hardcover: 224 pages

Publisher: Bulfinch; New title edition (April 14, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 082122848X

ISBN-13: 978-0821228487

Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 0.9 x 11.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #226,399 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in Books > Travel > United States > Rhode Island > Newport #33 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Architectural > Houses & Hotels #39 in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Vernacular

## Customer Reviews

The co-chair of the annual Newport Flower Show and a flower-arranging judge with the Garden Club of America, Pardee was a Bon Appetit contributing editor for 10 years and hosted the PBS series *The Presidential Palate: Entertaining at the White House*. Unlike many residents, Pardee lives in Newport year-round and, though the scale of this land of scions and heiress has been reduced, there's still plenty of wealth hidden there. As Marion Oates Charles writes in the introduction, "Private Newport revolves, for the most part, around a community at ease with itself."

The residents are not pictured here, but they do speak to Pardee about the 18 properties on which she has chosen to focus. There is "A Rocky Hall Christmas" with a giant decorated fir glowing before a burnished wood living room; there are "Sunset Views at Pelican Ledge," where the fireplace is inset with Wedgwood porcelain. While many of the houses date back generations, and period furnishings are appropriate to them, many of the book's color photos make an eerie, Stepford-like impression. It's as if the American upper class's idea of style were frozen in time, endlessly copying 18th-century English and French manors. Pardee is knowledgeable about the histories of various houses ("Gray Craig had a large staff, including thirty gardeners in the summer"), and her pleasure in them is clearly evident. The photos are well-framed and lit, though the interiors can seem chill and antiseptic. But the book's other main attractions, the sea and the gardens that surround it, are undeniably sumptuous. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Beautifully photographed" -- Boston Globe, June 6, 2004

Beautiful photos of Newport homes. The photos are roughly evenly divided between exterior views of spectacular gardens and interior views of the rooms of the houses. None of the subjects of this book are the more famous mansions such Marble House or The Breakers. The fact that even these "minor" houses are beautiful with outstanding landscaping gives the idea of just what living in Newport must be like.

Despite the potential of the interesting subject matter, 18 private homes and their gardens, PRIVATE NEWPORT is light on details. Author/flower-arranging judge Bettie Bearden Pardee treats it more like a cocktail party of a book with some name-dropping and a few anecdotal stories. Every property is architecturally significant with some fine furnishings and an interesting history, but do not count on much more than just small talk here. Photographer Mick Hales does a better job of presenting the substantial homes, not the so-called cottages of the Gilded Age but mansions none-the-less. All the photos are color and appear to be taken expressly for the book. In addition to an Introduction and an Index, there is a Forward by Marion Oates Charles. Best for those who already love Newport, one of the loveliest towns in the U.S.

Great book. Lots of beautiful pictures

interesting

Beautiful book especially if you have taken a tour of the Newport Mansions.

Great book! Rich history and overview.

The photos of these beautiful homes are stunning and the brief text on each is, in my opinion, just right for the casual reader who enjoys photography of homes with not so much text. Not for the architectural student; more appropriate for those whose visual appetites need satisfying. Not as good as Susan Sully books, but close.

This was a bright, well-photographed book, with a very complete story of each decorative design of the houses decorating its pages. The history of the houses is also included but pales in comparison with the artwork. I'd recommend it to anyone needing a coffee table book to keep you coming back to the coffee table.

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