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Shaker Legacy, The: Perspectives On An Enduring Furniture Style



Synopsis

Solid construction and honest functionality make Shaker furniture one of the most popular and timeless design categories. Based on extensive research and personal experience with the last working Shaker community in Maine, this book traces the roots of Shaker design to Shaker belief, which inspired the clean lines, careful craftsmanship, and signature details that define the style. The author also discusses the less known Victorian period of Shaker design and shows how this style has influenced subsequent ones. A bibliography, glossary, and index are included.

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Customer Reviews

Many appreciate the clean, simple lines of traditional Shaker furniture, yet few know the people behind the designs or the spiritual beliefs that play such an integral part in both their work and daily lives. In his book, *The Shaker Legacy: Perspectives on an Enduring Furniture Style*, author Christian Becksvoort, a contributing editor of *Fine Woodworking* magazine and an experienced custom furniture maker and restorer who's worked for the last remaining Shaker community at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, examines the Shakers' faith in relation to their furniture. Becksvoort believes that "understanding Shaker furniture requires understanding the faith of the people who created it." Their religious practices--the constant striving for spiritual perfection in everything they did, the desire to emulate Christ and to live practically, "purely, free of vanity, greed, and pride"--permeate Becksvoort's insightful discussions of the Shaker culture, their recognized

inventiveness (inventions include the circular saw, apple peeler, wash mill, and chimney cap), their influence on other furniture styles, and finally the furniture itself, which is the focal point of the book. Highly perfected, free of vain ornamentation, and utterly utilitarian, the furniture is indeed the Shaker faith in physical form. In addition to covering the classics--including the ladder-back chair, trestle table, and the built-in--Becksvoort points out subtle variations in design that existed from community to community: the curved, cutout base of a case of drawers was typical for the communities in Ohio, while bevel-edged drawer lips and straight, tapered feet on a blanket box point to the Mount Lebanon community. Becksvoort's intelligent account of the Shakers and their furniture, combined with hundreds of full-color photographs, taken on location at various communities and pulled from archives, make *The Shaker Legacy* a beautiful tribute to these talented craftsmen and their enduring design. --Stefanie Hargreaves --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Becksvoort builds custom furniture for well-known Shaker collectors.

I bought this book to read about Shaker furniture but it turns out to be much more. It contains well researched information on the Shakers philosophy and way of life - comparison of the Shaker style to Scandinavian and Victorian styles - introduction to the Shaker Villages and some of the most notorious craftsmen, and good information about the numerous depicted furniture. All written in plain and very readable text accompanied with beautiful photographs. Excellent book.

Interesting look at the history associated with the woodworking. If you want to know "why" more than "how" associated with Shaker furniture, this is an interesting read. I read the sections that interested me but will keep it around and maybe look at this again when I start another shaker project

This was an excellent book. I enjoyed reading it as well as studying the colored pictures. It gave a good history of the Shakers. I wanted to know more about Shaker furniture so I could help explain to my clients why they would or wouldn't want to do a shaker style in their home. This book gave me the info I needed but wasn't too drawn out. It has many photos of lots of furniture from case pieces to tables and chairs. This was a good value.

A great broad history of Shaker life, craft, and design, generously illustrated with many well chosen photographs of very many shaker designed and made products, furnishing, and furniture pieces. A

very thorough and helpful insight into the mind, soul, daily life of, and the great and moving achievements of Shaker people and their culture.

I chose this book for the pictures as well as the information useful for reproducing the pieces in the book. It's a beautiful book and the pictures are excellent, as well as the detail information such as knobs, finishes and the like.

well written and excellently produced.

great work on the subject. great images of lots and lots of great pieces. lots of variety

A good book for an introduction to the shakers history culture and work.

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