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Retro Radio: Six Decades Of Design 1920s-1970s



Synopsis

Before television and MTV, the radio was central in the home, a way for the family to gather to hear the news or listen to music. At one time, the radio was a piece of hand-crafted wood furniture and limited stations fell silent during part of the day. Over 175 images provide an impressive visual journey through the radio's aesthetic history reflecting all the major design changes across the years. The images also reveal the diversity of materials, textures, colors, shapes, and sizes of radios of earlier ages. It ranges from the 1920s tabletop wooden console models in the classic bread box, cathedral, and tombstone styles, the wooden and early Bakelite and Catalin plastic art deco models of the 1930s to the 1950s, on to the 1950s thermoplastic models in modern styling, and the transistors that ascended to prominence in the 1950s and beyond. Reintroducing machines that few people see anymore and perhaps hardly know existed, this fascinating book restores the once state-of-the-art machines' aesthetic glory.

Book Information

Hardcover: 176 pages

Publisher: Schiffer Publishing, Ltd.; 1 edition (December 28, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0764346792

ISBN-13: 978-0764346798

Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 0.8 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.8 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (5 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,277,770 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in Â Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Radios & Televisions #7213 in Â Books > Arts & Photography > Decorative Arts & Design #248962 in Â Books > Textbooks

Customer Reviews

Over the years, I have enjoyed acquiring books on collectibles....mostly of the radio and phonograph hobbies. When I saw this book introduced, I was thrilled at the chance to add to my collection and find a book that would show some of the designs and beauty of early radios.

Unfortunately, I could not have been more disappointed. The author did not spend a lot of research time garnering pictures from a variety of collectors and showing exquisite samples. Rather, he took one man's accumulation of radios....the good, the bad, and the ugly. Thus, you see radios with missing veneer, torn grill cloths, and rather ordinary radios. To add further insult, the pages with the

pictures are blank. There is no information on the radio....no manufacturer, date of manufacture, information about the design....nothing. You just have some good pictures of some very poor radios. There are a couple of exceptions, but it is rare that I am this disappointed with a purchase. When I consider all that this book could have been and what it offers, I believe that the book garners a rating of 1 star. Hopefully someone else will release a proper book showing the industrial design, art deco, beautiful mirrors, veneers, and gorgeous catalin varieties which are the heritage of the radio era. This book is not one of them!

When I got this book I was expecting to learn about vintage radios and possibly get some insight on the history and development through time of the different designs, and I was quite disappointed. The book is pretty much all just pictures, and to make it worse, it doesn't even show the manufacturer, year made or any other details of the sort. At the end of the book it does have a glossary of all the radios, and does list only the year under each small picture, but no manufacturer or any other info, and some of the dates are just plain wrong! There are also a lot of radios that I would have thought would be included in a book like this but are not there. If all you are looking for is a picture book of old radios, and no other information whatsoever, then you may enjoy it, but I certainly did not.

Basically a photo album with no detailed information about the radio pictured in the main part of the book. If you want to know what year the radio was made you have to look it up in the index, but even that won't tell you the company that made the radio. That info would be helpful since some of the older radios have no nameplate on the front. So if you want details this isn't the book for you.

This is a beautiful book of photographs of vintage radios, many I had never seen before. The book is a clean presentation of how the designs of the radios evolved over the decades. I bought the book to give as a gift and ended up ordering more. If you are looking for an in depth description of each radio other than the date each was released, this book is not for you but the author states in the intro that his goal was to show the progression in design and that's what the book accomplishes.

Great book, perfect gift. The photos are beautiful and the book has a clean, simple design. Great for flipping through and seeing how the radio designs changed over the years/decades. I like the fact that some of the radios are not in perfect condition so you see their age.

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