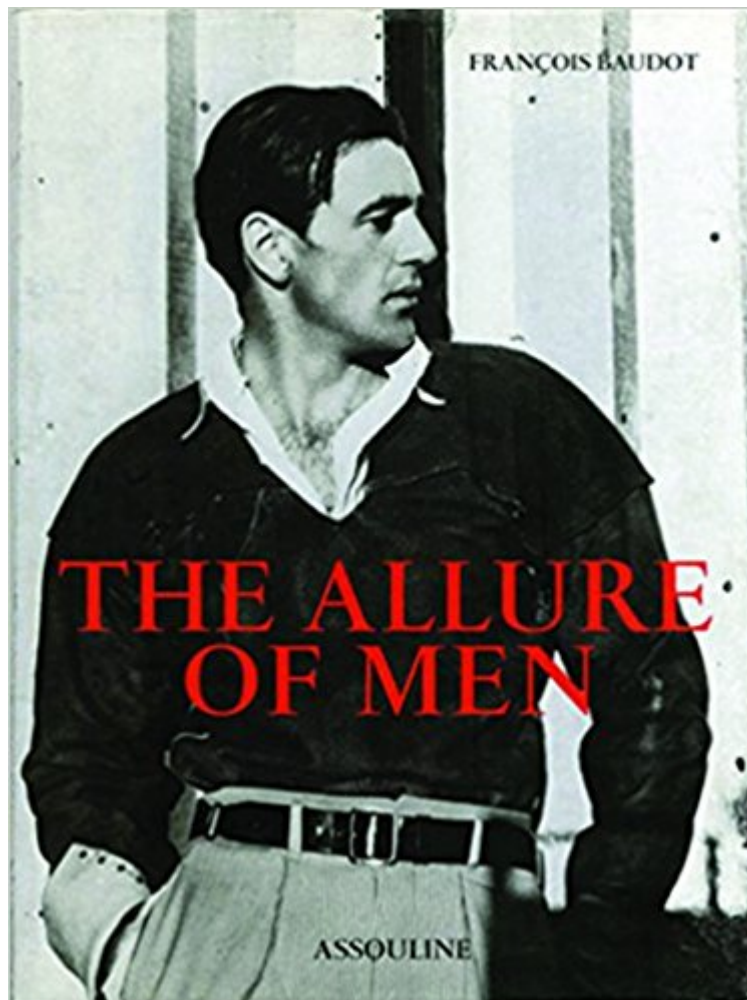


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The Allure Of Men



Synopsis

A collection of the most desired, envied, and debonair men in history. From the frock coats of Gainsborough's portraits to city workers' two-piece suits, men and their fashion have made a vital contribution to our collective notion of style. One of France's leading fashion and style specialists, author François Baudot juxtaposes paintings and photographs of famous and lesser-known figures dating back almost 200 years, embodying centuries of elegance and style.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In scholarly words and stunning, mostly black-and-white photographs, stylemeister François Baudot uses the coffee-table book format to pose an important fashion question: How in the world did the vain modern male give up colorful clothing? As he puts it, "How is it that those 17th century birds of paradise ... turned themselves into jet-black crows?" Baudot says it was the Sun King's fault. Louis XIV, mad for frills and flounces, made everybody who was anybody in France circa 1650 wear billowing shirts with lacy sleeves, plumed hats, polychrome silk stockings, "breeches so voluminous that they made walking a problem," high-heeled shoes, "their bows shaped like a windmill's sails," garters, ribbons, makeup, rings, and miserably hot, outrageously expensive wigs. Louis made fashion "lose all contact with reality." What could possibly come next? Revolution! "The Louis XIV effect was not to be reproduced.... Thenceforth, in his dress, modern man could now only proceed by way of successively and irreversibly discarding things." This sounds like a lot of French

philosophical jive, but the photos Baudot adduces of fashion-plate men--movie stars, politicians, artists, and anonymous guys--do bear him out. Compare, say, the intricately embroidered getup of the Nawab of Bahawalpur in India, or T. Phillips's renowned painting of that mad dandy, Lord Byron, with the book's main procession of men in customary suits of solemn black. England's Prince Philip, looking imperially slim in 1950s London, has much the same stylistic allure as James Joyce posed in his most famous picture in Paris in the 1920s. Mao and de Gaulle evoke similar auras of scary power precisely by renouncing outward sumptuousness for authoritative sartorial abstemiousness. Gary Cooper and Jimmy Stewart, Errol Flynn, Fred Astaire, JFK and Bobby, Prince William at Eton, even fatally flamboyant Jean-Michel Basquiat in the full flower of fame--these men resemble so many distinguished penguins. Even the naked men in the book--Sudanese Nuba tribesmen circa 1949 and Yves Saint Laurent launching his "Y pour homme" perfume in 1971--can be seen in terms of the male expression of power by emphatic understatement in dress. Ultimately, it's tough to sum up Baudot's thesis. But the man sure knows how to pick cool photographs. --Tim Appelo

"The Allure of Men is not a book about fame or custom-fit clothing, it's a salute to all those things men (rich, famous, white, black; whatever) do to leave their mark."

It's a great coffee table book..... light reading.... but all in all a great coffee table book

good colored pictures

A very interesting book. A match to the Allure of Women

There are few books on men's fashion that compare to this extraordinary survey by François Baudot. It is at once informative, scholarly, hilarious, and visually satisfying as Baudot plucks images from history and the present in his approach to defining male Style! From paintings of the romantic period when color and excess created the Peacock Male to the down dressing style of elimination of all filigree to the bare essentials, this beautifully illustrated book uses images of famous men in paintings then photography, after the camera stepped to the forefront, in documenting fashion. The book is full of men in dark suits - from movie stars to royalty to students to common man. Images include two fine photos of the young Marlon Brando as he defined a style all his own, countless images of 'dressed to the nines' businessmen, politicians, and other dignitaries. The final image is of Prince William at Eton, looking as royal as they come! But the true

joy of this photography portfolio is the witty yet erudite writing of Baudot. This is a dissertation on male vanity that serves equally well as a history book. Recommended. Grady Harp, January 06

Purchased this book as a gift for my partner who's interested in classic men's fashion - he loved the black and white photography, coffee-table book size (approx. A3) and the diversity of historical styles of dress documented. The only improvement he suggested was a change of title!

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