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The Great Lady Decorators: The Women Who Defined Interior Design, 1870-1955

Adam Lewis

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Mixing gorgeous interiors with sparkling social history, this is the first book on the visionary women whose work gave us the timeless, essential principles of modern interior decorating.

In 1904, Elsie de Wolfe was given a contract to design the interiors of the Colony Club. Their success launched de Wolfe’s career and the entire field of professional interior decoration. Soon other women followed, known collectively (for their privileged backgrounds) as the Lady Decorators. This book focuses on the extraordinary, glamorous interiors of these influential designers, as well as their decorating theory and maxims, from Rose Cumming’s electric color combinations ("Parrots are blue and green. Why shouldn’t fabric be?") to Nancy Lancaster’s refined English-country-house look ("She liked for the sun to get to . . . materials. She wanted them to go shabby and live a life of their own."). A witty and readable treatise on the principles of decorating, as well as a luxurious visual resource, this book will be an essential addition to every decorating library. Also including: Dorothy Draper, Elsie Cobb Wilson, Ruby Ross Wood, Frances Elkins, Eleanor Brown, Sister Parish, Syrie Maugham, Madeleine Castaing.

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