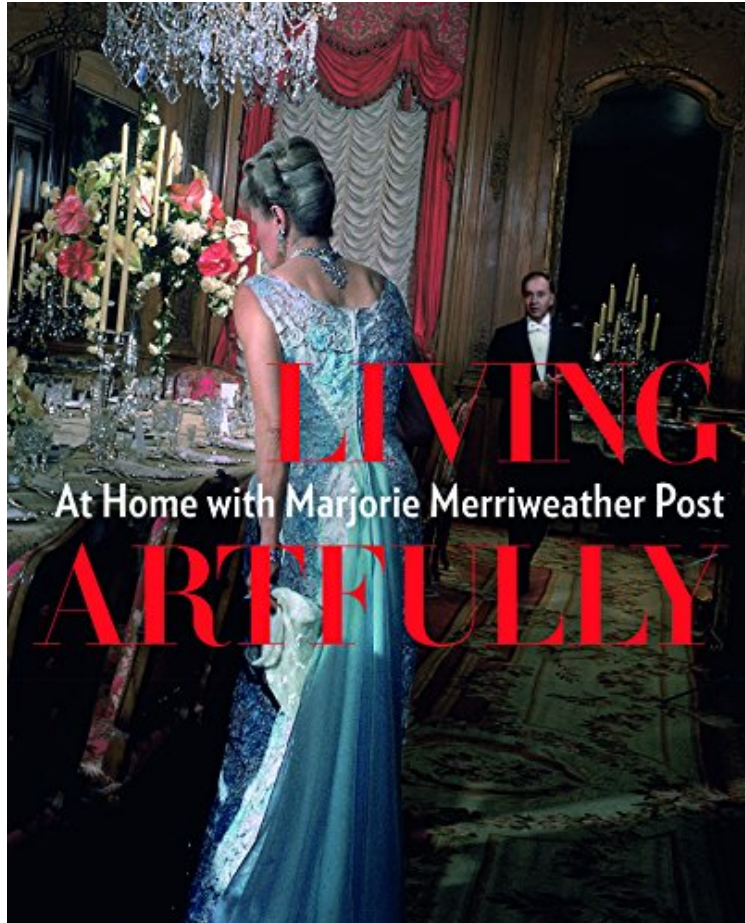


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Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriweather Post

Estella M. Chung

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Estella M. Chung : Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriweather Post before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriweather Post:

61 of 64 people found the following review helpful. Not what I was expecting but I ended up liking it anyway By basbleu I was expecting this to be a decorating book. Or at the very least a book totally dedicated to Marjorie Merriweather Post's decor in her homes, and perhaps include hints on beautiful table settings for nice dinners. Well, the book is very little about those things and a lot about what an amazing woman M.M. Post was. Marjorie inherited what eventually turned into General Mills Co. The book features her amazing homes, (opulence of a Queen), what an impeccable and thoughtful hostess she was to VIP's and ambassadors, political figures from all parts of the world, including the time of the Kennedys' Camelot; but also individuals and charities, friends, and family. The book is put together from interviews by people who worked for her, were guests of hers, people who whose lives she touched in some way, and memories of her children and grandchildren. We learn of her 3 homes from the 1950's-early 1970's. For

spring and autumn she lived in a grand mansion in prestigious Hillwood in Washington DC. Pictures included in the book attest to her grand decorating, her exquisite taste in art and furniture style. She held huge luncheons, teas and dinners for literally hundreds of guests at a time. Procured and managed a staff of hundreds for everything from a personal secretary, gardeners, grounds keepers, managers of her 3 homes, of course cooks and all the rest needed to run 3 mansion to castle size homes and art, gardens, furniture, she even had a person who stocked fish for her summer property, Camp Topridge in the Adirondacks. She flew her guests in to camp in her own private jet. Her guests rode in one boat across her lake to Topridge, their luggage rode in another boat. By the time the guests reached their cabins, their clothes were pressed and hung up. And she kept a massage expert on staff at Camp for her guests. Breakfast was ordered, anything you wanted and brought to your cabin in the mornings. This is just a sample of what it was like to be a guest of Marjorie Post. Her third home, for the winter, was a drop dead gorgeous villa in Palm Beach, Florida (so incredibly beautiful you have to see the pictures in the book to understand how much like royalty her homes were. A guest could expect a dance after supper with live music or perhaps a movie showing theatre style. Yet this amazing woman oversaw every detail of every moment of her life. Everyone who knew her loved her, her staff maybe most of all who were given many, many perks and total respect at all times. Even though it was not a decorating book. I felt fortunate to learn about this remarkable woman who lived in a time we will never see again, she was special, her homes are unbelievable. A lot of pictures from all 3 of her properties are included in the book a great deal of them are black and white, and many are whole page pics. The opulence is a feast for the eyes and a journey of its own.

21 of 21 people found the following review helpful. Entertaining and Well-Documented History of an Extraordinary Way of Life By ChiRunningMan This is the story of a Gilded Age lifestyle that survived until the Age of Aquarius. Marjorie Merriweather Post (1887-1973) inherited a fortune in her twenties and lived and entertained like royalty her entire life. Starting in 1957, she and her large staff rotated annually through three estates: Hillwood, her mansion and extensive gardens in Washington, D.C. (Spring and Fall); Camp Topridge, her private resort in the Adirondack Mountains (Summer); and Mar-A-Lago, her grand villa in Palm Beach (Winter). The author, Estella M. Chung, Hillwood historian and curator, vividly brings to life the experiences of the staff and guests at each venue as her narrative flows through each season of the year. Abundant quotations from oral history interviews give the story a lively, first-hand immediacy and illustrate the "over-the-top" nature of Post's entertaining. This book is a compelling description of her world and is fun to read. For example, Post employed numerous "footmen" who stood behind and assisted each dinner guest. One young guest recalls reaching for the "wrong" fork, prompting the "white glove" of his footman to "magically appear" to direct him to the right one. Just reading about Camp Topridge is relaxing; that is my favorite chapter. One can easily imagine the fun of flying away from the heat and humidity of Washington in Post's private airplane for a long weekend of outdoor activities by a cool lake in the Adirondacks with staff to assist with everything. If one pulled a muscle, Post's traveling masseur - whose actual name was "Joe Hand" - was there to fix it. This book is lavishly illustrated with scenes from her estates. Her 18th century French furniture and porcelain, Russian decorative arts, and stunning stone inlaid table from Mar-A-Lago (weighing 6.5 tons) are featured and can also be seen at the Hillwood exhibit, along with a hand-crafted cedar canoe from Camp Topridge and many other objects. The book also pictures less decorative aspects of Post's grand lifestyle, such as the elaborate plumbing system to retrieve, filter, and heat rainwater to be used just for washing her hair and her pink nuclear fallout shelters that could accommodate 67 people. Again, this is far more than a picture book. It is an entertaining, well-documented history of an extraordinary way of living. Hillwood, now a museum, has an exhibit based on this book (to January 12, 2014) which I have seen and recommend. At the exhibit, one can have the same rich visual experience of the decor - including objects from Topridge and Mar-A-Lago - that her guests from the political and social elite of Washington and Palm Beach enjoyed.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Educational and Delightful By VivinLA Living Artfully is educational and delightful. The author, Estella M. Chung, who is Curator at Hillwood Estate, does a terrific job of documenting Ms. Post's lifestyle as a socialite and philanthropist in the 50s and 60s. Detailed pictures along with anecdotes from those who knew Ms. Post are also filled within this book that offers readers visuals of Ms. Post's life and era as well as provides us with an essence of Ms. Post personally. This book also illuminates Ms. Post's brilliance as an executive with foresight to endow her art collections and home for future preservation and public appreciation at a time when women were regarded differently. Living Artfully is a wonderful addition to my collection of educational, pictorial, and inspirational books.

This is a beautifully illustrated account of the three main homes of Marjorie Merriweather Post (1887-1973), through the 1950s to 1970s. From 1957 onwards Post lived in stately Hillwood in Washington, DC, for spring and autumn, retreated to Camp Topridge in the Adirondacks for the summer, and enjoyed the winter season at her glamorous villa Mar-A-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida. Post was one of America's most stylish and powerful women and this book, strongly evocative of the lifestyle magazines of the period, offers a vibrant and intimate picture of life in each residence for Marjorie Post, her guests, and her staff.

But as soon as I opened Living Artfully: At Home with Marjorie Merriweather Post, I could hear my pulse pounding.

Because this woman not only had mountains of money, she used it to create her idea of a beautiful life. Jesse Kornbluth, [Headbutler.com](#) While her fortune was vast, so was her spirit she excelled at generosity and thoughtfulness, qualities that never go out of style. Charlotte Moss, [The Wall Street Journal](#) It is a world of footmen and groundskeepers, of personal chefs and women who would unpack and iron a guests clothing Lonnae O'Neal Parker, [The Washington Post](#) Post collected Sioux moccasins and Faberg enamels while treating pets royally Eve M. Kahn, [The New York Times](#) The outgoing, glamorous Post, who inherited her family's Postum Cereal Company, which is now part of Kraft Inc., ran her estate very much like a business -- specifically a hotel, welcoming people from all walks of life, all the time Doug Rule, [Metro Weekly](#) A showcase of Posts glamorous day-to-day life during her heyday, and the behind-the-scenes work that made it all happen William O'Connor, [The Daily Beast](#) Gives a fascinating insight into the glamorous life enjoyed in her three stylish homes She sounds great fun. Tim Forrest, [The Lady](#)