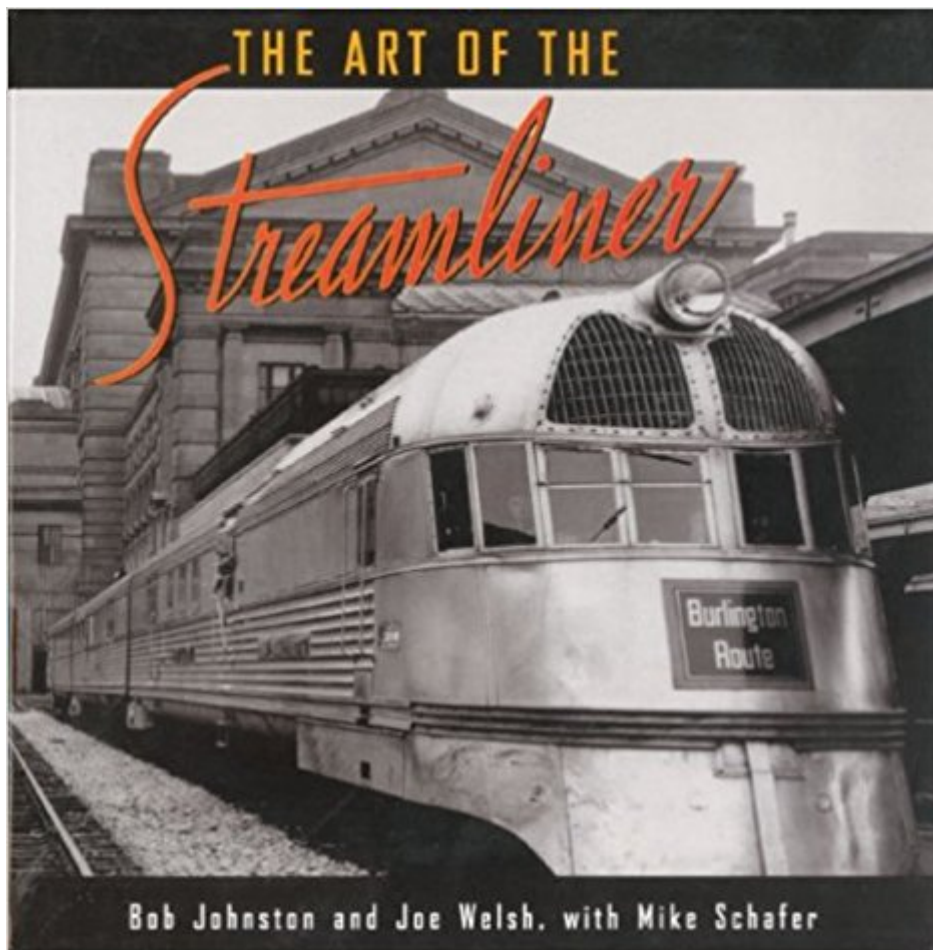




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The Art Of The Streamliner



Synopsis

By the early 20th century, as the railroad became a vital means of moving people and goods, trains and locomotives became the focus of some of the world's finest mechanical engineers and industrial designers. From this increased attention arose perhaps the most elegant land-based form of transportation in human history: the streamlined train. Relive their glory through magnificent photographs of these cars, which show both their elegant interiors and their graceful shapes speeding across the countryside. Here are the ever-more luxurious rolling accommodations for the discriminating traveler, with increasingly spacious sleeper cars and dining rooms that came to resemble those in four-star restaurants. Written and researched by a team of veteran transportation historians and illustrated with more than 175 black-and-white and full-color pictures, this tribute honors not only the dazzling passenger cars, but also the legendary designers, and presents the gorgeous promotional brochures and posters used to entice passengers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A great book on this part of history of American railroad early 1920's and 30's; a lot of changes were made at this time to railroad engineering.

I was born 30 years too late to travel on the beautiful machines. The book had a lot of pictures showing how people traveled during that era. Great comfort and luxury compared to flying in coach today.

This books take a little bit different slant on the streamliner passenger train era. Good interior decorating photographs (and some in color). The design aspects of streamlining are explored.

Fabulous photographs and reproductions of marketing brochures highlight this great little book about Streamliners. We bought this for our son who loves trains, but I found myself reading every single word and marveling at these gorgeous trains of the past. I wish it had went a bit deeper into the histories of individual trains, but it packs a lot into a small package.

nice book

Good book!

This is the second book about streamline trains for authors Welch and Schafer. Their first book, 'Classic American Streamliners', told the history of these trains in words, photos and plenty of graphic material, now this latest book takes a slightly different approach and looks at the art and design of the streamliner. There are 175 pictures including reproductions of color brochures and lovely artwork which the railroads used to sell the trains to the public. As it turned out it was a losing struggle as increasing car ownership and planes beat the rails. Also included are several side-bars of designers involved in engine and train design, John Harbeson, Paul Cret, Raymond Loewy, Henry Dreyfuss and Otto Kuhler. The last chapter Renaissance Streamliners, about the latest Amtrak trains, seems rather out of place. American streamline was a specific design style at a particular time and modern train design is more organic in its treatment of mass and curvature. I think the rather odd looking General Motors Aerotrain was perhaps the last of the streamliners. Two more books about these trains are 'The American Streamliner', the Pre-war and Post-war Years by Donald Heimburger and Carl Byron. A very comprehensive study, with great photos and plenty of graphic material (all with excellent captions) but I was disappointed by the bland layout of these two books. All four books are the same landscape size and amazingly although they all cover the same subject there is very little duplication of photos and graphics. If you want to see how these wonderful trains were marketed have a look at the two hundred ads in 'Classic Railroad Advertising' by Tad Burness. Also I don't think any of the books have enough photos of the great steamliners of the day (Commodore Vanderbilt, Hiawatha's, Crusader, Blue Goose, Coast Daylight, Mercury and Twentieth Century Limited) admittedly they were just steam engines with a covering shroud but they looked so

good, especially the Dreyfuss designed Twentieth Century, the ultimate travelling experience, whose engine wheels were floodlit at night! Finally 'The Art Of The Streamliner' is different from the other three books because of its bargain price. Railfan books always seem to be rather expensive, no doubt because of limited sales, so it is refreshing to see a quality product costing so little.***FOR AN INSIDE LOOK click 'customer images' under the cover.

This book is a marvelous insight into a stylish form of travel that is lost to time and progress (almost lost). The book explores the genius and ingenuity of the industrial designers and railroad men and women that took ideas and forged them into beautiful machines. Graceful, yet practical trains designed with features to lure travellers back to the rails and away from the roads and the ever increasing airports. The book explains how competing railroads teamed up together to provide continuous through service to popular business and vacation destinations there by reaping the benefits of economies of scale. It did indeed increase ridership, however it could not stave off the mounting losses in passenger service. While operating losses continued to rise, service quality and luxury remained high right to the end, which demonstrates a pride in business that may seem uncommon today. Finally the book touches on the resurgence of streamliners with Amtrak's new trains. After reading this book, you'll probably want to run out and book a trip on the next Acela Express, as I do, instead of piling into a United Airlines cattle car.

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