

[Ebook free] Casa Susanna

Casa Susanna

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Edited by Michiel Hurst and Robert Swope

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From powerHouse Books : Casa Susanna before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Casa Susanna:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fly on the WallBy Bob BernetCasa Susanna is one of the most unusual books I've ever come across. Maybe that is what makes it so alluring. To say that it is a real page-turner is an understatement. That's saying a lot for a book that is all photos except for a short three-page introduction. If you have ever felt like you didn't fit in, this book should make you feel better. By the same token, I imagine that the individuals pictured in this book were quite interesting. Many of the "girls" appear to be genuinely having a good time, but you can almost see the loneliness and heartache on the faces of others. Much has happened in the years since Casa Susanna was at its high point. This book is a bittersweet look back to a world that no longer exists.0 of 0 people found the

following review helpful. Interesting and novel look into the personal lives of those who have crossdressed historically. By Wesley Horton Fascinating look at a group of crossdressers from the '50s and '60's. Interesting too, that someone took the time to save these photographs and then research the story. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A lovely collection of photos, but nothing else. By jadedflames A nice book with nice pictures.... and no history whatsoever. I knew the bulk of this book was going to be the pictures Mr. Hurst discovered, but I was hoping at least a bit of research was done into the Casa Susanna. Sadly, this is not true. The book is a nice diversion, but it just a photo album: some pictures Mr. Hurst found at a yard sale. I am not disappointed with my purchase, it was nice to look through, and it is a nice conversation starter, but if you want to know a bit about the story behind the photos, well, you'll have to figure that out for yourself.

Some time ago, while at a New York flea market, inveterate collectors Michael Hurst and Robert Swope discovered a large body of snapshots: album after aged album of well-preserved images, taken roughly between the mid-50s and mid-60s, depicting a group of cross-dressers united around a place called Casa Susanna, a rather large and charmingly banal Victorian-style house in small-town New Jersey. The inhabitants, visitors, guests, and hosts used it as a weekend headquarters for a regular girls life. Someone probably Susanna or the matriarch nailed a wonder board on a tree proclaiming it Casa Susanna, and thus a Queendom was born. Through these wonderfully intimate shots perhaps never intended to see the light of day outside the sanctum of the house Susanna and her gorgeous friends styled era-specific fashion shows and dress-up Christmas and tea parties. As gloriously primed as these documentary snaps are, it is in the more private and intimate life at Casa Susanna, where the girls sweep the front porch, cook, knit, play Scrabble, relax at the nearby lake and, of course, dress for the occasion, that the stunning insight to a very private club becomes nothing less than brilliant and awe inspiring in its pre-glam, pre-drag-pose ordinariness and nascent preening and posturing in new identities. It is not glamour for the stage but for each other, like other women who dress up to spend time with friends, flaunting their own sense of style. There is an evident pleasure of being here, at Casa Susanna, that is a liberation, a simplification of the conflicts inherent in a double life.

From Publishers Weekly The gatherings depicted within these pages initially appear to be the bridge parties of slightly bored, if typical, mid-century housewives; on closer inspection, it becomes apparent that these women-drinking, playing scrabble, smoking, knitting and mugging for the camera-are actually atypical mid-century men. The photos, presented sans accompanying text, are some of the 400 similar images Swope found at a New York flea market. Comprised of candid snapshots and posed portraits taken during the '50s and '60s at an upstate New York Victorian home dubbed "Casa Susanna" by its cross-dressing frequenters, the book includes photos of the ladies having tea, relaxing in the backyard and preening for pageants and holiday parties. As a social document, this collection of photos provides readers with direct access to the ladies as they seize upon and amplify their era's stereotypes of the womanly ideal. Equally intriguing as a record of atomic-age housewares, conservative housewife duds and the blushing interiors of a bygone era, the photos richly communicate the sense of solidarity among this cloistered group in pre-sexual revolution America. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Michel Hurst was born in France and studied architecture in Paris. After concluding his studies, Hurst traveled the world extensively, researching and documenting various vernacular decorative arts. In 1985, he co-founded the influential twentieth century design gallery Full House in New York City with his partner Robert Swope, an artist formerly of the musical group Beirut Slump, headed by Lydia Lunch and filmmaker (Too Lazy to Live). They live and work in Easton, Pennsylvania, and New York City.