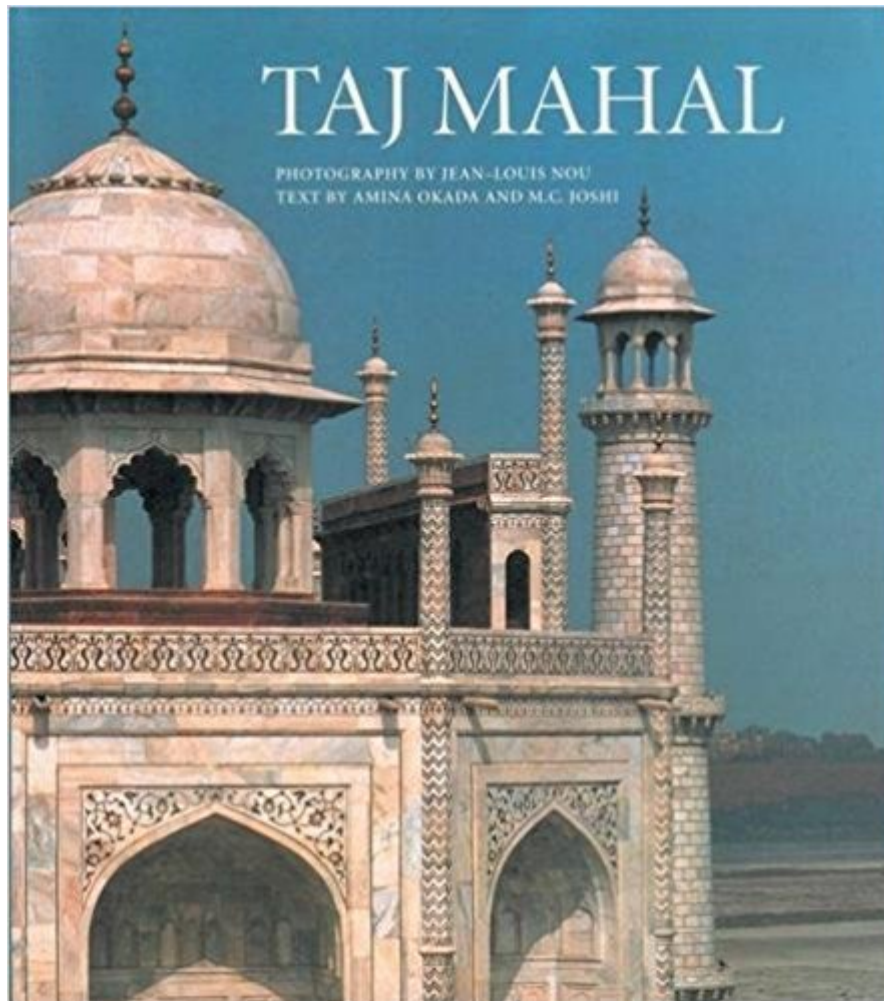




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Taj Mahal



Synopsis

Built between 1632 and 1643 by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in honor of his deceased wife Mumtaz Mahal, the Taj Mahal is unquestionably the most renowned mausoleum in the world. Now this legendary monument to love can be seen as no visitor to the site has ever viewed it. On the pages of this exquisitely illustrated volume, the Taj Mahal is revealed detail by detail. Starting inside the mausoleum, a sequence of closeups show the semiprecious stones, inlaid in white marble, that form the interior's Koranic calligraphy and floral patterns. The next sequence of images presents the octagonal plan of the structure, emphasizing both its perfect symmetry and its subtle variations. The final sequence is devoted to the decorative patterns carved in the walls of the mosque and entrance gate. In addition, four lavish fold-out photographs show the entire Taj Mahal complex from different perspectives. In their informative texts, authors Amina Okada and M.C. Joshi provide historical and architectural analyses of the Taj Mahal. Quotations from the Koran and from the journals of travelers as diverse as Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Pierre Loti, and Aldous Huxley complete a breathtaking tribute.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The construction of the world's most splendid mausoleum, the Taj Mahal, is surrounded by a haze of romanticized legends. Did the powerful seventeenth-century Mughal emperor Shah Jahan build this filigreed marvel of white marble, gems, and semiprecious stones purely out of grief over the loss of his wife Mumtaz Mahal, who died while giving birth to her fourteenth child, or was he "vaunting his grandeur and munificence to the world"? While master photographer Nou celebrates the exquisite

artistry of the structure's stone marquetry, authors Amina Okada, an expert on Mughal and Rajput India, and M.C. Joshi, director of the Archaeological Survey of India, contemplate the motives behind the Taj Mahal's erection and discuss its remarkable design. The most astonishing of Nou's photographs are close-ups of the floral inlays that run riot in the mausoleum's luminous and arabesque interior. Every surface is alive with the grace of flowers and the animated strokes of Qur'anic calligraphy. Nou's impressive exterior shots display the opulence of the entire building, as well as the compound's earthier but still quite majestic mosque, lavish gardens, and stately main gate. A fresh and artful look at one of the wonders of the world. Donna Seaman

“It is not just the sweep but the detail that makes Taj Mahal so enveloping, as the glorious filigreed stonework and calligraphic mosaics are freshly jeweled by the color images of the late master of Indian photography.~çâ –Â• -- The San Diego Union-Tribune “The most astonishing of Nou~çâ –â,,çs photographs are close-ups of the floral inlays that run riot in the mausoleum~çâ –â,,çs luminous and arabesque interior. Every surface is alive with the grace of flowers and the animated strokes of Qur~çâ –â,,çanic calligraphy. Nou~çâ –â,,çs impressive exterior shots display the opulence of the entire building, as well as the compound~çâ –â,,çs earthier but still quite majestic mosque, lavish gardens, and stately main gate. A fresh and artful look at one of the wonders of the world.~çâ –Â• -- Booklist

I am an Architect and visited TajMahal 2 times before 35 years as a student. At that time I had taken 36 pictures from Kodak film. Today, when I compare my photography with Jean Louis Nou , Ebba Koch and Raghu Rai's master class photography, I feel ashamed my self for my inexperienced approach of photography. Now, after buying and viewing photography of Jean Louis Nou , Ebba Koch and Raghu Rai in their books on "TAJMAHAL", I have realized that what is meaning of photography. Their art of photography, way of looking at objects, selection of background, angles, lighting, timing, shades and details are gifted by the god. Tajmahal in isolation and Tajmahal in context of seasons, surrounding, flora and fauna, human beings and other buildings is presented effectively by photographers in very large color photos in each page. Great photography!!! Great book !!!... I would also recommend this extra ordinary (\$ 27 on) book- "TAJ MAHAL" by Nou Okada & Joshi with stunning, sharp, crisp, detailed full size 180 color photos of interior and exterior taken from almost every angle highlighting most of the features of Taj Mahal, specially photos of interior and ornamental details of carving and flowers in Nou's book is not represented in any other book I have come across. Nou's book is my first choice while I like other (\$30 book on) "THE COMPLETE

TAJ MAHAL" by Ebba Koch which is equally good for exterior photographs. Koch's book has very limited coverage for interior but that covers more photos for gates and 2 adjoining structures of the complex. I give 3rd choice for Raghu Rai's TAJMAHAL" for its art of photography and Very large poster size photos. 4th book (\$4 on) I suggest is, "THE TAJ MAHAL", published by 'Newsweek' that has 15 photos and more writing. These 4 books make a complete book treasure on "TAJ MAHAL". I would not like to miss any of these 4 books. Those who want to visit Taj Mahal and take its pictures, one must buy or refer to these 4 books so that they can take memory of the TAJ in real sense. Otherwise, later on they may feel that they have missed a lot about Taj Mahal without referring to these book. I still compare the vast difference between my amateurish photography of the TAJ" done before 35 years and photography of above 4 books. HARSHAD D, PATEL 8 WINDWOOD DR GLASTONBURY CT 06033 USA

Because I referred readers to this book in my 3-STAR review of the Prestons' recently published *Taj Mahal: Passion and Genius...*, I want to offer a more specific comparison of the two. Significantly, the amount of text each devotes to the Taj complex and those directly associated with it is the same. So, too, is most of the information. But rather than detailing differences--such as that only in this book are criticisms of the mausoleum or that only in the Prestons' are technical details about the water system as well as inconsequential elaboration on who could not have been the architect of the Taj--let it suffice to say that regardless of which book you own, the notes you'd add from the other would amount to but a few pages, unless you'd also want to copy the two pages of translated calligraphic inscriptions that appear only in Okada/Joshi/Nou's TAJ MAHAL. What makes the two books so dramatically different is that 3/4ths of this one is devoted to showing readers the Taj Mahal complex via Nou's stunning photographs, all of which are in color. There are, for example, 56 of the interior of the mausoleum: 7 are two-page spreads; 40 fill an entire page; many are close-ups that reveal astounding detail. Also given extensive photographic coverage is the exterior of the mausoleum as well as the complex's mosque, guest house and main gate. And showing the magnificence of the entire complex from different perspectives are 4 three-page foldouts. So many photographs are there in this book, in fact, that as revealing as they are, many begin to have a sameness about them. That the explanations of the architecture/ornamentation are not integrated with the photography may also be a negative for some as may be the absence of any photographs of the related funerary architecture that Joshi discusses. Nevertheless, if you are primarily interested in photographs of the splendors of the Taj Mahal complex as it now appears, you will find none better than Nou's. Before deciding on this book, however, I strongly recommend

that you investigate Ebba Koch's *The Complete Taj Mahal*, published in 2006. --B. Evans,
4/14/07

This book is heart-breakingly beautiful. We visited the Taj Mahal in person and got all the usual photos. But we didn't linger long enough to get many close-up photos of the structure, and of course it's impossible to get some images available in this book, such as close-ups of the areas where tourists cannot go. I bought this book before traveling to Agra. And so while at the Taj, I did not feel like I needed to view the Taj through a tiny camera lens and try to capture every awesome angle of it in a photo. Sometimes I do that on vacations, and then later, don't have strong mental images of my own because the whole time there was a camera in front of my face. But while visiting the Taj Mahal, I knew this book was at home, and it has more beautiful photos than what I can capture. This book gave me the freedom to really focus on the Taj and see it with my own eyes. Don't worry so much about the camera. For that, the price is worth it.

This is a beautiful book. I got it for a friend who wanted it for her mother, who has always wished to see the Taj. They were both delighted.

fantastic photos with great details
concise and interesting information on the historical background of the monument

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