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Colt: The Making of an American Legend

William Hosley

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William Hosley : Colt: The Making of an American Legend before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Colt: The Making of an American Legend:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Kindle Customer The book was in good shape as promised. It was for my Dad and he enjoyed it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Colt and gun fans look somewhere else...this book is not for you. By bubbapug If you are a gun enthusiast in search of a detailed history of Sam Colt and his factory, this book is not for you. This work is a book dealing very briefly with Colts factory, his guns, and Colt himself. The main thrust of the book is to shed some light on the home Colt built, which was a museum of sorts, and the artifacts within the home which happened to land in the possession of the author's museum. The author is no lover of firearms and it shows. He also is a thinly veiled critic of the firearms industry, and goes to great length to portray Mr. Colt as somewhat of a slick con artist salesman, not what I would consider to be a fair assessment considering Colt's firearms changed the world. Perhaps the title should be changed to "An elitist's critique of the art and furniture of the Colts". That would certainly be more fitting. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. IMPRESSIVE AND INFORMATIVE BIT OF WORK HERE! A must for those interested in our history. By D. Blankenship Much of what America is today, as a nation and culture, and much of what we are as individuals can find their roots shaped and molded in what has come to be known as the Victorian Age. Vestiges of that wonderful and complex era of our brief history can still be found in our views and attitudes toward religion, family, relationship, ethics, morals and general lifestyles. As a culture we owe them much. A study of the Victorian and Post-Victorian era is a study of us. I have always felt that to know where we have been will give us a pretty good idea of where we are

going. We now live in an age where change has become a blur. A time where "future shock" is a reality to be dealt with on a daily basis, and we tend to become so focused on the "now" that it is very easy for us to forget that we can take a close look at ourselves at any given time and say "been there, done that." With this work, "Colt - The Making of an American Legend," William Hosley has presented us with a true American story. Many readers will be able to take this work and see in it their great-great-grandparents and know that this is the stock from which they sprang. The book is an excellent sketch of the life and times of Samuel Colt, founder of the famous Colt Manufacturing Company and inventor of the "gun that won the west," and just as important (possibly more so in some aspects), that of his wife, Elizabeth. Whatever your present attitude is toward firearms, good, bad or indifferent, it must be acknowledged that the gun has had a profound influence on our society and how we got where we are today. Guns are as much a part of the American Culture, past and present, as the automobile, baseball, capitalism, politics and democracy. The Colt name ranks with that of Ford, Edison, Whitney and other inventors and innovators in our colorful history. Do not be overly influenced by the title of this work. While Hosley does address the Colt gun collection and the Colt Manufacturing Company, and does it well, the book is so much more. The Colts, we find, fit into the mold of the "Old Victorians," both in this country and in England. The vigor of a new age in manufacturing, invention and the expansion of western civilization and culture, along with a never before known growth in scientific and artistic achievement, are well represented and documented here. This period was one of those decisive and defining moments in the history of the western world, and Hosley has captured this spirit well. While Sam Colt and his gun were certainly the legend, his wife Elizabeth was certainly the keeper of the legend. As with many Victorian wives (Lady Isabel Burton, the wife of Sir Richard Burton and LaSalle Pickett, wife of General George Pickett of "Pickett's Charge" fame, come to mind). Elizabeth spent the years following her husband's early death devoted to enhancing the family name, building on the legend and adding to it. I have always felt we owe much to the rich philanthropists of this period in our history. Many of the great art collections now in our country simply would not exist for our enjoyment and education if it were not for individuals such as the Colts. This book certainly bolsters my feelings in this area. Not only does this work address the life and times of this remarkable couple, the Colts, it also examines in great detail the art collection assembled by them, now housed at the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, Connecticut. Of course the wonderful collection of Colt Firearms is well represented, but this work, again, goes well beyond that. While Sam and Elizabeth's taste can certainly be questioned at times, this book certainly points out the fact that they cannot be faulted for lack of enthusiasm. Hosley has chosen a very workable format for this book. Subject rather than chronology is used very effectively. I found it to be very much like a Victorian drawing room; everywhere I looked was another interesting curiosity, a gem on a cluttered table, hidden treasures here and there with never a lapse of space. Fortunately the text was not Victorian and is quite readable, flowing evenly from one subject to the next. Very few wasted words here. It was very nice to see the text actually corresponding with the illustrations in terms of location. No shuffling and constant turning of pages endlessly. Foot notes, something near and dear to my heart, were well organized, manageable and quite informative. This book is very well enhanced with 132 black and white and 72 color illustrations covering the collections, home and community of the Colts. The photos of the Colt gun collection will make any collector's mouth water. Being one myself, i.e. a collector in a small way, I was rewarded with the sights and facts of some weapons I did not even know existed. I was also very impressed with the author's obvious expertise and ease in handling his subject matter. He obviously enjoys what he does. After reading his work, I feel William Hosley would be a very nice person to spend several evenings with over a pot of coffee and pipe, tapping into his obvious well of knowledge. I suspect, like his writing, he is comfortable to be with. I must admit, that in general, I usually am not overly fond of "coffee table books," but in this case I must confess to be impressed and well satisfied as a reader. This book is well worth the read and is a good addition to any library or collection. Don Blankenship The Ozarks

"A rich social and political history of 19th-century America. It is also a joint biography of Samuel Colt, an enigmatic inventor and industrialist, and Elizabeth, the strong, resolute wife who carried on his dreams and life's work. . . . Hosley creates a fascinating story that far exceeds the simple history of that famous gun". -- Publishers Weekly

From Publishers Weekly This companion to the Wadsworth Atheneum's exhibit of Colt miscellany in Hartford, Conn., is a rich social and political history of 19th-century America. It is also a joint biography of Samuel Colt, an enigmatic inventor and industrialist, and Elizabeth, the strong, resolute wife who carried on his dreams and life's work. Hosley, the Koopman Curator at the Atheneum, follows Colt's life from his strange beginnings, successes and failures, to the ultimate perfection of the firearm that would be adopted by the U.S. Army. In exploring the personal lives and excesses of this wealthy 19th-century couple, Hosley presents a particularly colorful history of the times. After Samuel's death in 1862, Elizabeth Colt's ongoing efforts to immortalize her husband's accomplishments and their name led her to build memorials and statues and to create a philanthropic legacy for the city of Hartford. Elizabeth's taste often went to the extreme, as seen in their mansion, Armsmear. "Armsmear's reception room epitomizes the kind of blunt ostentation that was the trademark of America's Eurocentric nouveau riche during the 1880's." On a larger scale, Hosley also shows how Colt fit into the culture of war and violence that would be so beneficial to his fiscal concerns.

"The good people of this world [sic] are very far from being satisfied with each other," wrote Colt, "my arms are the best peacemakers." Rich in illustrations and photographs (204 images, 72 in color) of the Colts' firearms and art collections, Hosley creates a fascinating story that far exceeds the simple history of that famous gun. BOMC dividend; History Book Club alternate. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The Colt name is now a legend in the field of firearms. This is the story of how, through personal efforts, Sam Colt, along with his wife, Elizabeth, turned an idea into a manufacturing empire and transformed himself into a household name. Beginning with Sam's early failures, it traces the evolution of his now famous revolver. The key to Sam's success was demanding a high standard of precision manufacturing backed by vigorous and imaginative marketing. The result was one of America's first major export industries. Elizabeth Colt was the person most responsible for maintaining the legacy her husband had created. Upon his premature death, she launched a 40-year campaign of civic memorialization as a patron of the arts by endowing parks, museums, and public artworks. Unlike most books on Colt, the only guns illustrated are primarily from Sam's personal collection, while the vast majority of photos depict art and memorabilia. A large-format book with a social-history approach that distinguishes it from other volumes on the subject. Fred Egloff