



Encyclopedia of Bad Taste

Jane Stern , Michael Stern

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Alphabetically arranged, this humorous compilation of bad taste and mediocrity covers topics as diverse as fashion, music, people, places, food, furniture, automobiles, and more.

Encyclopedia of Bad Taste Details

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From Reader Review Encyclopedia of Bad Taste for online ebook

Grant says

Mildly entertaining.

Laura says

Quite fun to read, though if you're like me, you'll blush while reading it because you actually like a lot of the stuff that appears (e.g., Twinkies).

Kelsey McAfee says

Apparently, several things I like are in super bad taste (meat snacks, accordian music, Hamburger Helper, white-lipstick, sno-globes, etc.)Don't care, I love them still!

The tack factor on some stuff is undeniable - telethons, frass, monster trucks, matching jogging suits - but I didn't realize VANS were in bad taste! Regardless, I got a kick out of this book, especially learning origins of fun tacky stuff I've taken for granted over the years.

G-- says

I discovered this book when I lived in Switzerland--yes, it was one of the very few books at our public library about American life. And it contains a hilarious caricature of the worst of American excesses. I was annoyed, and amused, that this is the image of our country that makes it out of the borders [and, quite frankly, I have to admit that it mirrors the image that many Europeans have of americans:] Big: big cars, big breasts, big paintings on black velvet.

Rie says

Interesting range of subjects, but ugly design. Worth it for the photo of Doris Day with those poodles.

Tracey says

A re-read, I got the Encyclopedia of Bad Taste as a library discard a few years ago.

As you'd probably guess from the title, this book has short articles (1-3 pages) about kitsch, tackiness and faux pas. Art, cuisine, music, fashion & celebrities are all represented. There could be more pictures for my

taste, but the articles are relatively well-written and concise. Written in 1990, it focuses on 1950's- 1980's, with a strong emphasis (IMHO) on the 60's & 70's.

You may not agree with their evaluation of everything in here, but it's a fun read. It's an oversized book & therefore somewhat cumbersome to read.

Clover says

I never laugh out loud, except when reading from the Encyclopedia of Bad Taste, AKA the Book of Tacky. Truly wonderful, and the best present I ever got.

Elizabeth Sims says

Exhilarating. Funny as all hell. Wonderful.

Denise says

Strange book. Vacillates between undisguised classism and racism (see: Low Riders, Mobile Homes) and loving, poetic devotion to The Rise of the Common Man (see: Jello, Cool Whip). I don't know what to make of it all. Beautiful presentation though.

Lisa Cattrone says

I highly recommend this book

Paul Bryant says

The subtitle of this heavenly concoction is: A celebration of American pop culture at its most joyfully outrageous.

This is not so much a book as an aspirin to banish gloom. Of course, America marches on and this book needs a major update to include such modern phenomena as Celebrity Rehab and Autobiographies by People who Aren't 25 Yet - still, it's a wonderful panorama of some truly ghastly shit. For instance

Aerosol cheese

Boudoir photography

(That special present for that special someone)

Breasts, enormous

(Can't mock Americans for that, we have this fetish over here too, but I liked that there was a page called "Breasts, enormous")

Death cars

Fingernail extremism (I see that creeping in here - now there are entire salons springing up just for nails with slogans like "rake his back and make him howl with these razorsharp bejewelled babies" - no, I made that up. But nearly)

Liberace (So many facelifts he couldn't shut his mouth)

Meat snack foods

"Modern Americans buy meat snack food in shrink-fit plastic packages at the convenience store. They call the snacks Slim Jim, Chubby Sausage, the Big Jerk — manufacturers' words for sorbitol, sodium erythorbate, sodium nitrite, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, monosodium glutamate, corn syrup, and lactic acid starter culture combined with chunked, ground, and formed beef and mechanically deboned poultry. The term "meat snack," like "cheese food" and "creme filling," is food-industry poetry, used to evoke thoughts of meat (or cheese or cream) about products that contain little or none of the substance in question."

- this quote should be written into the Constitution or something like that. Genius!

Mood rings

Perky nuns

Pet clothing

Reclining chairs

Waltzing waters

Tammy Faye Bakker

(Didja ever see a documentary called "The Eyes of Tammy Faye Bakker"? It's a bug-eyed must-see. The stuff that poor woman went through.)

Baton twirling

Children's names

(Which have got immeasurably worse since this book came out - my daughter went to school with Bracken, Angel and DeQuayne)

Cool Whip

Dinosaur Parks

Lawn ornaments

Panty-hose Crafts

Shag Rugs

Sno-Globes (yes!)

Unicorns and rainbows

Velvet paintings

White lipstick

So : got any of those in your house?

A.C. says

My friend gave this to me as a present one year. I gave her the only compliment that I thought was vaguely worthy of the book: it's in my bathroom library. This is a hilarious book that has topics from Jayne Mansfield and paint by numbers to Liberace and sweatsuits. It also works well as a bathroom book because all of the entries are pretty short. Liberace took a little while; his whole lifestyle was elaborate. If you can find a copy of this book, buy it. It will be well worth your money.

Frederic says

Not really that funny, not really that analytical or insightful. Makes a decent bathroom book though, the entries are short and varied.

David Ward says

The Encyclopedia of Bad Taste by Jane & Michael Stern (Harper Collins 1990)(306.4). Man-oh-man, whoever provided the ratings shown on Goodreads for this book were either reading something else or were members of the authors' press team. This book is poorly done, not funny, and dated. I'd recommend this to no one. My rating: 3/10, finished 1/21/14.

Lee says

From Accordians to Zoot Suits, this book has all things Bad Taste. The photos are great and the topics are entertaining. Kitschy americana.

Koeoaddi says

The pictures! My eyes!

Gina says

Second favorite book of all time. The Sterns are geniuses and the photography is amazing, especially in the Twinkie and Artistry in Denim sections.
