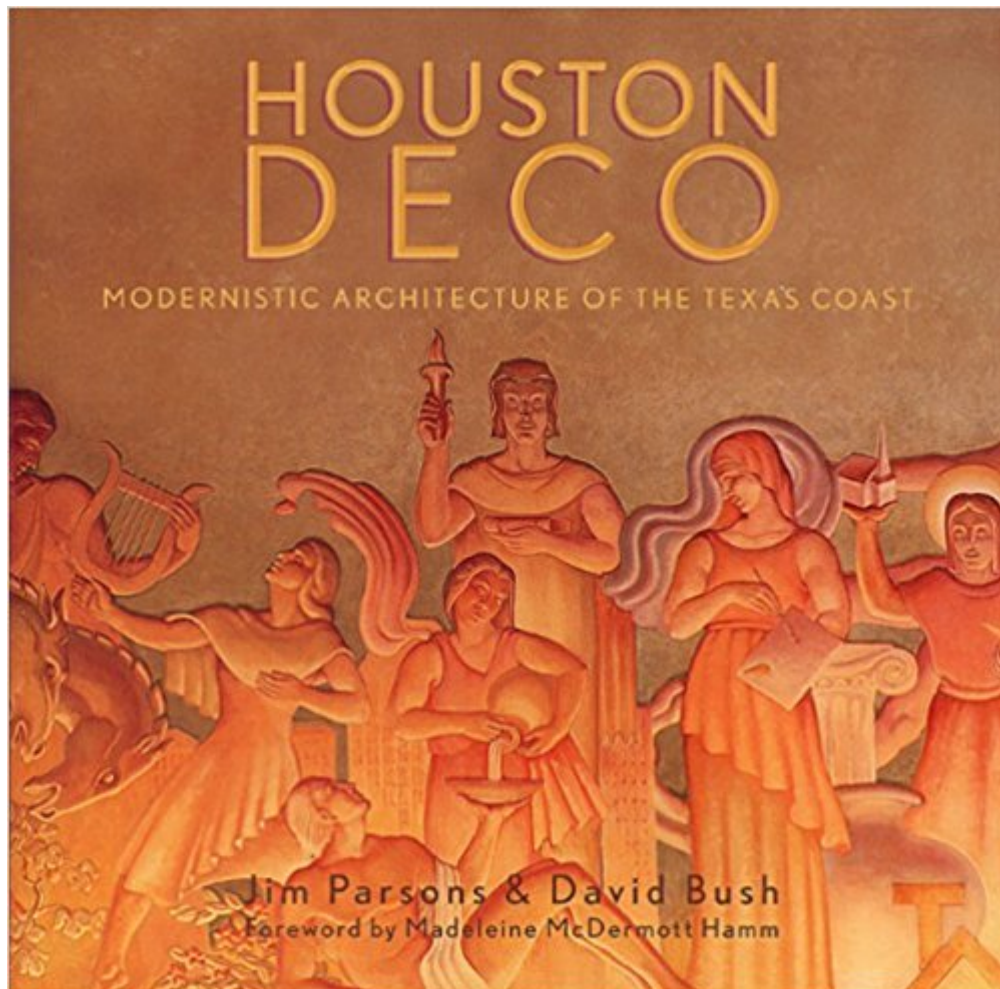




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Houston Deco: Modernistic Architecture Of The Texas Coast



Synopsis

When it comes to art deco, Houston is rarely cited in the same breath as Miami, New York, or Los Angeles, but this Texas city boasts many gorgeous examples of this early-twentieth-century style, some of which are in jeopardy of being forever altered or demolished. In the 1920s, as Houston was beginning its transition from medium-sized southern city to major American metropolis, local business and civic leaders made a conscious decision to create a new image for their community. As the Roaring Twenties gave way to the Great Depression, Art Deco zigzags and Art Moderne streamlining reshaped the city's stores, skyscrapers, factories, and apartment buildings. More than one hundred color photographs showcase the fine detailing on Houston's surviving Art Deco and Art Moderne structures. From downtown landmarks to east end industrial sites, this lavish guide captures the grace and beauty of these innovative designs with an eye toward the importance of conservation, restoration, and preservation.

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Customer Reviews

When Houston's Gulf Building opened in 1929, the city's planners were eager to align the growing metropolis with the dynamism of the American West, and art deco buildings proliferated: courthouses, schools, even car dealerships had sleek, modern designs, and movie palaces incorporated art deco murals. This book grew out of efforts by the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance, begun in 2006 to save some of these structures. The authors, who also did most of the color photography on every page, went through the city and its environs to chronicle existing structures. Some were well preserved, others in disrepair. The authors provide minimal information

on the architects or building processes, but their work is intended more as a field guide than a history and may be of interest beyond Houston to similar preservation groups in cities across America. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Captures the grace and beauty of these innovative designs." —Houston House and Home
"Smart little book." —Houston Chronicle

An eye-opener and the answer to several questions I have been asking myself ever since i moved here to Houston a few decades ago. Lovely book!!!

Born and raised in Houston, Texas and it was nice to read up a little history from Houston. This is great reading for those days where time is available to just do that - reading.

Excellent. One of the authors is the son of my high school classmate 50 years ago and we are both still alive.

The National Trust Guide to Art Deco in America (ISBN 0471143863) lists eight buildings in Houston, all are obviously in this book with another ninety or so but look through the photos and it becomes clear that many of them are living on borrowed time unless the Greater Houston Preservation Alliance can save them. The authors (they took the photos, too) have done a great job in capturing the essence of probably every Deco/Moderne building in Houston. There are a few interiors but mostly they are exteriors and some close-ups of detail. Divided into commercial, theaters, institutional, residential and industrial sections. Each section has at least one gem, I loved the interior of the Alabama Theater which is now a bookshop but unfortunately it looks like it will be demolished soon. Page thirteen has a fascinating period postcard of an aerial view of the River Oaks Community Center designed in 1937, the buildings still stands but for how long? The printing and design of the book are fine and the back includes a building index, a short bibliography and nicely an alphabetical index of architects. If you live in the city the book will be an excellent reminder of some good working architecture of past decades. For others, like me, it's a useful visual reference to a European design cleverly modified to an American style. ***FOR AN INSIDE LOOK click 'customer images' under the cover.

Honestly, I have never thought of Houston as having great art deco architecture..NYC, Miami, Chicago of course, but not Houston, and after reading this book, im still not sure. Houston really never went all the way with Deco, I mean the City Hall is a decent example, and so is Jesse Jones' Gulf Building, by far Houston's best example of Art Deco, which unfortunately had its great interiors altered, but really compare it to the Art Deco masterpiece, Buffalo City Hall, or NYC's Rockefeller Center, they don't even remotely compare, having said that, this is a very good book, it's well researched, with vivid visuals, it's just a shame Houston is not more worthy a subject for a study on great art deco architecture. Houston is a bastion of Modern architecture, it has an embarrassment of treasures in that regard, but unfortunately in this architectural category is woefully bereft, all the more remarkable that this is such a good book.

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