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The House in Good Taste

Elsie De Wolfe

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The House in Good Taste Elsie De Wolfe
After ninety years, The House in Good Taste by America's "first lady of interior decoration," Elsie de Wolfe, still offers timeless design advice.

Compiled from her articles in newspapers and magazines and first published in 1914, The House in Good Taste is a seminal book on interior design with ideas that have lasted a century because they influenced not only the wealthy clients of Park Avenue and Palm Beach, but popular taste as well.

De Wolfe advised Americans to shun ostentation and clutter in favor of simplicity, to dismantle the draperies in order to let in the light, and to replace garish colors with beige and ivory. "I believe in plenty of optimism and white paint," she declared, "comfortable chairs with lights beside them, open fires on the hearth and flowers wherever they 'belong,' mirrors and sunshine in all rooms." The rooms that Americans inhabited in the middle of the twentieth century still today owe much to de Wolfe's tastes.

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