Cary Grant: A Celebration of Style by Richard Torregrossa

One of the most charismatic movie stars of all time, Cary Grant left an indelible mark on the film industry and on the culture at large. His sense of style--so integral to who he was both onscreen and off--has been admired, copied, emulated, and lauded, but never fully examined, until now. With rare and never-before-published photographs and exclusive interviews with film and fashion luminaries, this groundbreaking book reveals the style secrets that helped make Grant a fashion icon and a perennial inspiration to fans and fashion designers alike. On the 20th anniversary of Grants death, fashion and style writer Richard Torregrossa makes a powerful case for why Cary Grant matters today more than ever.

Personal Review: Cary Grant: A Celebration of Style by Richard Torregrossa
When charting the influence of certain key Hollywood figures on the evolution of classic men’s style, some observers have divided the relevant universe into camps of "Astaire Men" and "Grant Men." I am unabashedly an Astaire Man ... though I hasten to add far more by aspiration than achievement. There's nothing wrong with G. Bruce Boyer's brief 2005 book "Fred Astaire Style (Memoire)" -- I gave it four stars last October -- but I could only wish the great dancer, singer, and actor might someday receive the same in-depth treatment the arguably even greater actor Cary Grant does in this style-biography by Richard Torregrossa.

"Cary Grant: A Celebration of Style" is not a traditional biography (though of course there is a wealth of biographical details), nor is it an analysis of his films (though many of them are mentioned, with a particular focus on To Catch a Thief (Special Collector's Edition)). What it is, is a look at how Grant's distinctive and influential style evolved, what the details of that style were, and what lessons we mere mortals can learn from it. The book is packed with interesting details, revealing and entertaining anecdotes, a perhaps-surprising degree of psychoanalytical analysis, and names of designers, craftsmen, stockists, and other suppliers who helped provide Grant with the raw materials he molded into a style distinctly his own. Though very traditional, and seldom employing the surprising detail of pattern or accent the way Astaire did, nobody has carried it off so well since.

One of the things I was most interested to read was that Grant dressed much the same way off the set, and in his private life, as he did on-screen. Which is another way of saying, he was the real thing. Dressing well wasn't an affectation, or a way to get in the papers to publicize his films, but instead an honest reflection of who he was and how he lived. This encouraging discovery is perhaps one of the best lessons an aspiring Grant ... or even Astaire ... Man can take from this entertaining and educational biography of style.

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