This is a lavishly illustrated tour through fifty magnificent villas and palaces built by the Italian aristocracy. From peaceful country retreats in Tuscany and the Veneto and impressive urban residences in Rome and Siena to fortresslike castles and grand villas in Trieste and Sicily, this book showcases the works of some of the most famous artists and architects of all time. Palladio, Raphael, and Veronese, among others, each contributed to create the most divine and otherworldly atmospheres ever to grace Italian art and architecture. In these pages, one is permitted behind the often imposing gates and facades to get a glimpse of a lifestyle that seems almost unimaginable in the twenty-first century.

Features:
* Notes:

My Personal Review:
The book itself is a work of art. I actually have two copies of this book, the original first edition Hardcover in Italian, and the Hardcover reprint edition from 2004. Italia Meravigliosa, I bought with the idea that any text in its original language is better than anything translated. That would probably be true if my skills in Italian came anywhere close to what I would like to think they are.
The book is a beautiful journey through Italy to places that you would never get to see, even if you lived in Italy. The book is laid out well with exquisite pictures on every page. A special bonus is the fact that the text accompanying the pictures is presented outside the picture itself so that the beauty of the picture is unmarred by text superimposed over it.
The book visits 57 places, with historical background, things to look for in the pictures, and interesting little facts in the narration at the beginning of
each new place. The pictures that follow are all relevant to the text presented, with enough information to enjoy and understand the pictures, without a lot of repetitive information. A lot of thought went into everything presented in the book. It is a refreshing change from similar books that present the same information over and over disguised in different versions of the same thing. There is a nice map that helps pinpoint the locations of all the places for you, so you never have to admit that without it, you would have no idea where these places were. Since I have both the original edition plus the reprint addition, I can provide the differences in the two. While they are both hardcover editions, containing the same amount of pages and the same information on the pages, there are some surprising differences. The original version is ½” thicker than the reprint edition and almost a pound heavier. The original version seems to be printed on better quality paper, and has a more solid binding. This would not be noticeable except for the fact that I own both copies and one is noticeably larger than the other. My advice: Take this book, get a glass of wine, wrap yourself in a blanket by the fireplace and you will be transported on journey through Italy. No matter how many times I have read this book and looked at the pictures, I always seem to see something in the pictures that I never saw before. It will definitely be a great addition to your book collection.

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