Renowned Southern California architectural photographer Julius Shulman began exploring Malibu in 1929. Nearly 80 years later, he is still bringing back pictures of paradise—except that the pristine landscape is now a backdrop for luxury homes. In Malibu: A Century of Living by the Sea, more than 300 lush vintage and new photographs by Shulman and his collaborator Juergen Nogai capture the look and feel of a private Shangri-La. While many of the homes were designed by architects with local and international reputations—including James Moore, Frank Gehry and Richard Meier—the book also conveys the quirky flavor of do-it-yourself designs that hark back to the beach towns beginnings. A brief historical section describes how a Massachusetts millionaires $10-per-acre land purchase was transformed into the Malibu Film Colony. Beginning in 1924, 30-foot-wide oceanfront lots were rented to Hollywood stars, who built modest weekend hideaways. Once ownership restrictions were lifted, the style parade began. In 1948, Modernist architect Welton Becket designed a flat-roofed beach house for his family with broad expanses of glass facing the ocean and a deep roof overhang to protect against the dazzling sun. Twenty years later, John Lautner worked his magic on a narrow lot by designing a towering curved concrete shell—like a surf riders wave—enclosing the floor-to-ceiling glass facade of Stevens House. Before land costs became prohibitive, artists and musicians often designed their own homes in eclectic, personal styles that incorporated local crafts, or even an oak tree growing in the living room. Local architects developed inventive ways of handling difficult sites, the constant threat of fire and the requirements of the California Coastal Commission. And the super-rich built their palaces, ranging from a crenellated monstrosity called The Castle Kashan to an 7,000-square-foot modular compound designed by Bart Prince. Invitably packaged, except for the hard-to-read gray type, Malibu is above all a showcase for Shulmans signature manipulation of sunlight and shadow to reveal architectural form. ——Cathy Curtis

My Personal Review:
Despite reading the "Nice, but not Nice Enough" comment by one reviewer, I purchased this book and considered it for myself. I'm so glad I did. The reviewer misses the point. It's an architecture-oriented lifestyle book about the history of living in Malibu, not a technical book. Which explains why there are no floorplans. It's about the photos that take you thru each decade and each house, and they are gorgeous. The introductory text/concise house-specific texts are well-written and informative. The featured houses are mostly private, which explains why no addresses are provided. The 2 or 3 houses in the book that are open to the public are well known in this area, easily findable for those who have a yellow pages.

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Malibu: A Century of Living by the Sea by Juergen Nogai - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!