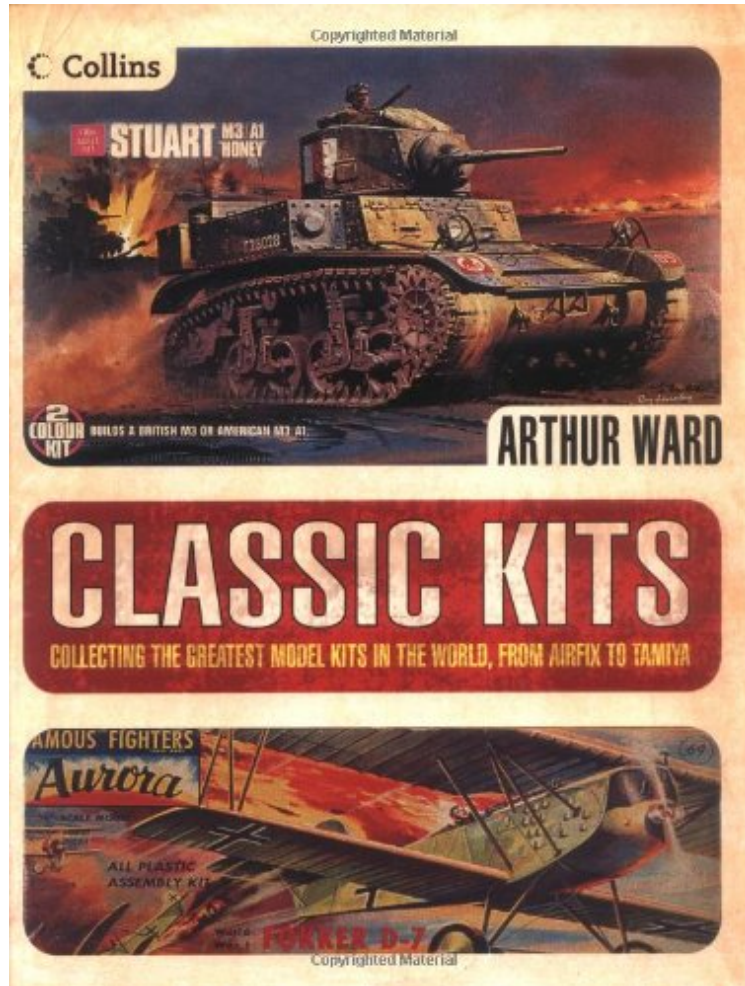


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Arthur Ward

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[Online library] Classic Kits: Collecting the Greatest Model Kits in the World, from Airfix to Tamiya

Classic Kits: Collecting the Greatest Model Kits in the World, from Airfix to Tamiya

Arthur Ward : Classic Kits: Collecting the Greatest Model Kits in the World, from Airfix to Tamiya before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Classic Kits: Collecting the Greatest Model Kits in the World, from Airfix to Tamiya:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. "Classic Kits" by Arthur WardBy C. P. GilmoreThis is not a bad book, by any means, as some reviewers would like us to believe. Yes, the author is British, so most of this book deals with British brands (especially Airfix!) at the expense of US, Japanese and other countries' brands, and yes, the title misleads because this is not so much about classic kits as it is about kit brands and collecting those classic kits, but it's a very good book! I enjoyed it very much! Mr. Ward lays down the purpose of this book himself in the book's Introduction: "...the focus of the narrative is a survey of the most famous and enduring kit brands.", and not the kits themselves. Chapter 1 deals with the History and Development of model miniatures through the ages, the rise of

plastic model kits after WWII, and how many companies evolved into manufacturing plastic model kits. Chapter 2 is the bulk of the book and reviews the Classic Brands of plastic model kits from their beginnings to their ultimate demise, either through acquisition by other firms or outright dissolution. For those companies still in existence he offers opinions on why they have remained in business and optimism for their future success. Chapter 3 deals with kit Genres (military, figures, aircraft, ships, cars, etc.) and the reason many modelers choose one genre over another. Chapter 4 is devoted to Kit Collecting, or why modelers often become kit collectors by default because they buy more kits than they will ever be able to build. One collector he interviewed for the book has over 12,000 unbuilt kits in his collection! Chapter 5, The Future, offers a very short discussion of the future of plastic scale modeling. Wrapping up the book is an extensive bibliography of 15 books that deal with all sorts of modeling genres from Aircraft to Figures to Space, including his own books, "The Model World of Airfix" (1984) and "Airfix - Celebrating 50 Years of the Greatest Kits in the World" (1999). Is it any wonder that Airfix gets 36 full pages of coverage in the Classic Brands section (Chapter 2) while other companies barely get an honorable mention with a line or two of narration on one page? Mr. Ward has a definite bad case of "Airfix-ation"! To be fair, though, he does devote sixteen pages to Tamiya, eight to Monogram, six pages to Frog, and seventeen to Revell, but curiously only one to such famous brands as Hasegawa, Lindberg, Italeri and Fujimi. While his book covers many brands, there are still many omissions. Brands like Mania and Nichimo aren't mentioned at all, except in text, while a brand like Hawk, which was taken over by Testors, receives a one page spread with no mention of Testors as Hawk's successor company. Nor is there a section on Testors. It seems to me that Mr. Ward was either unaware of many of these companies at the time he wrote this book, or didn't know enough about them to include them. All it would have taken would have been a little bit more research on his part and his book could have been complete with no omissions. The real enjoyment of the book comes from the excellent full color pictures of the Classic Kit boxtops from each kit manufacturer. This book is meant to be SEEN, probably more so than to be read. But the reading is enjoyable, too. Ever wonder how FROG got its name? (Flies Right Off the Ground). Did you know that Mr. Yoshio Tamiya was in the lumber business in 1946 when he decided to exploit the market for high quality wooden model kits by turning his lumber yard into a model kit company? Were you aware that Inpact was created to capitalize on the success of the movie "Those Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machines" in 1966 and their 1/48 scale aircraft kits later popped up in Pyro, Lindberg, and Life-Like boxes after the company's demise? In fact, Life-Like was created to produce Adams's, Inpact's and Pyro's kits, as well as its own kit designs, and was in turn taken over by Lindberg, which began as a balsa flying models company in 1933 and produced its first plastic models in the late 1940s under the O-Lin name. All sorts of fascinating tidbits such as these appear in Mr. Ward's narrations. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves to build plastic models, or who loves to collect plastic model kits. It's a nostalgic walk back through time and a real eye opener to the history and inner workings of the model kit industry.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars
By chris ortlieb
Still reading it but good so far
7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. As bad as Ward's Airfix book was good
By Mark A. Taylor
This book is professional to look at, but amateur hour to read. Ward loves Airfix. It showed in his solo work on that firm's kits, he was on task. The personal stories and anecdotes were on-topic, and the work was coherent. This book is...frankly....a huge mess. It's nearly impossible for me to see how it was published. First, unless you're a huge fan of Frog, or Airfix 1/72 airplane kits there's nothing here for you. Most of the companies (regardless of size, importance, or the number of kits they produced) get only a couple of pages. Frog and Airfix are the lion's share of pages here, and most of it was done first and better in Ward's book on Airfix. Also, even though Ward's "airplanes only" bias is kept somewhat in check in the Airfix book, it's rampant here. Builders of armor, autos, and ships have some pictures to look at but nothing in the way of text that is worth your time. Plus, I don't feel that I needed to pay good money to hear which companies his (non-modeler) friends and neighbors remembered. The side stories here are painful. To be fair Aurora, Tamiya, and Revell get decent coverage...problem being they get more and better coverage in single-company books by other authors. To me, the reason to get a book like this isn't to read about the kit companies you can still find represented in the local hobby shop, but to see and remember (or discover) the lost past of the hobby. Slim pickings here. Go buy some more kits instead, or back issues of vintage hobby magazines.

There's no meat in this sandwich....

Classic Kits treats you to an international tour of model-kit history, taking in all the favorites Airfix, Monogram, Mattel, Frog, Matchbox, Bandai, Merit Aurora, Esci, Heller, Tamiya, Fujimi, Eaglemwall, Italeri, and more. Not only does this nostalgic guide allow you to compare and contrast the different models and their historical development (and, in some cases, demise), it also notes the rare and the valuable, so you can re-evaluate those pieces you have stored in your attic. Packed with color photos and valuable information for collectors, hobbyists, and enthusiasts, Classic Kits is a one-of-a-kind history of the giants of miniature modeling.

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