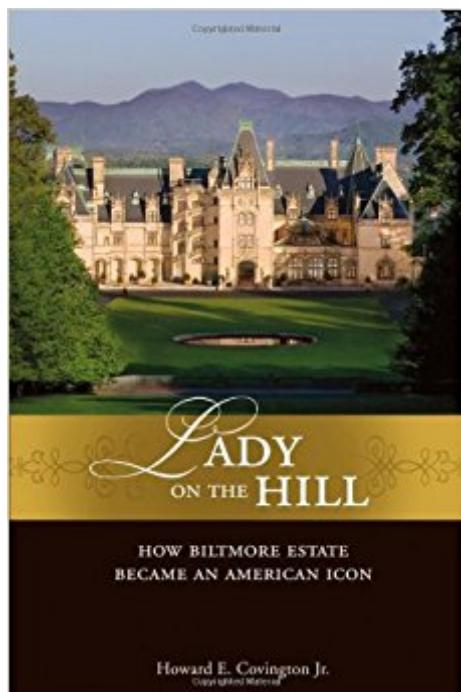


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# Lady On The Hill: How Biltmore Estate Became An American Icon



## Synopsis

"What William Cecil has accomplished at Biltmore Estate is one of the great preservation success stories of all time. He has set a high standard for what all historic house museums strive for: magnificently preserved buildings and grounds, engaging interpretation, and--perhaps most challenging of all--economic self-sufficiency. It is no surprise that Biltmore Estate is widely recognized as one of America's finest places to visit." --Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation "Biltmore is a glorious national historic landmark that, through creative vision and entrepreneurial management, preserves and provides insight into a way of life in the early 1900s. Bill is the imaginative and multifaceted leader who has built this great monument to enrich his community. George and I admire his dedication and success." --George and Abby Rockefeller O'Neill "Bill Cecil and his team at Biltmore Estate have sure proved that they know how to build a successful business. They did it the old-fashioned way: embrace a bold idea that others said could not be done and--through commitment, determination, and hard work--bring it to life. Their achievement against the odds is inspiring, and their vision and perseverance are valuable lessons to us all." --Don Logan, Chairman, Media & Communications Group, Time Warner "If George Vanderbilt did nothing more than engage the two most prominent and storied designers of their time, architect Richard Morris Hunt and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, to carry out his vision of a European estate in the southern Appalachians, he would have created an American icon. The beauty of the method by which the estate was executed and, even today, the meticulous attention to detail, in the presentation and care of the estate by William Cecil, have brought history to life." --Gary J. Walters, Chief Usher, The White House

## Book Information

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Wiley; 1 edition (March 10, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0471758183

ISBN-13: 978-0471758181

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 1.3 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 130 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #108,428 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Historic Preservation #76 in Books > Arts & Photography >

## Customer Reviews

Set amid thousands of lushly landscaped acres in the North Carolina mountains, the Biltmore estate is a 250-room Gilded Age mansion stuffed to the rafters with objets d'art. Writing a very authorized business history rather than an architectural appreciation, journalist Covington celebrates the estate's transformation from quasifeudal folly to lucrative tourist mecca. Built in 1895 by George Vanderbilt, who played lord of the manor to hundreds of tenant farmers and servants, the estate passed in the 1960s to his grandson William Cecil, whose tight-fisted budgets, canny marketing initiatives and rapt attention to customer service turned it into a profitable museum of robber-baron privilege, selling more tickets than Colonial Williamsburg. The author's sycophantic account of this not unduly exciting saga is mainly a tribute to Cecil, who wrote the afterword. Covington defends the Biltmore owner's model of private, for-profit historical preservation against charges of commercialism leveled by nonprofit preservationists, repeats his complaints about inheritance taxes, extols his entrepreneurial daring, salutes his Biltmore restoration projects ("surpassed what many had seen anywhere") and raves about "customer satisfaction reports... comparable to those enjoyed by a five-star resort." This anodyne hospitality-industry success story will find a place in the Biltmore gift shop, but probably nowhere else. (Mar.) Copyright Ã  © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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had seen anywhere") and raves about "customer satisfaction reports... comparable to those enjoyed by a five-star resort." This anodyne hospitality-industry success story will find a place in the Biltmore gift shop, but probably nowhere else. (Mar.) (Publishers Weekly, January 2, 2006)

My grandma LOVED receiving this book as a gift before our trip. She shows it to everyone and shares it with her family! It is a great book and even better if you are planning a trip or have visited! Helps round out the overall experience!

Read this before our vacation to Asheville. Easy read and lots of great information.

Excellent read, purchased after visiting, this and other books filled in some of the blanks from our guided tours and visit to the Biltmore Estate and Asheville, NC.

Not a literary giant, but a good story about one of the most beautiful homes in America.

Had to get after the visit.

After visiting Biltmore for the first time, I was interested to learn more about its history. This book helped answer many of the questions I had and I learned many things about the estate, from its early history to the present. The later chapters covering Mr. Cecil's challenges to balance having a historic estate open to the public, while maintaining the originality of the property are just as interesting. I definitely will return to Biltmore in the future and this book will have me looking with new eyes.

Wonderful read

Very nice book about Biltmore Estate and its history. It is amazing that it was not too long ago that this house was built.

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