



Pretty Things For Nice People: Tales of Patrons & Artisans-----The Challenges and Triumphs of 20th Century Artisans in New York

Joseph Fiebiger

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For nearly a century, three generations of Fiebiger men created masterpieces in metals for the most well-known families and institutions in America. Their firm, P.A Fiebiger Inc., became a legend for its dependability and creativity. In the beautifully illustrated and insightful *Pretty Things For Nice People*, Joseph G. Fiebiger, grandson of the founder, pours out his passion for the works and their patrons as he tells an American story of hard-earned success and of creating and protecting lasting national legacies. *Pretty Things For Nice People* is a tribute to ingenuity and industry and a historic volume that may be regarded as the firm's final work of art. Today, the firm's influence is seen in such important institutions as the Morgan Library, The Frick Collection, Central Park, the U.S. Capitol, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ellis Island and that American icon with the French foundation, the piece de résistance, The Statue of Liberty. This book reveals the continuing love story between artisans and their patrons. It explains how they unite to transform vision into reality in new projects and to protect and restore historic works. In perhaps the most famous of these efforts, one particular lady became both patron and an object requiring restoration: America's beloved Statue of Liberty. Many of the sometimes warm, sometimes testy encounters in this book are more personal than monumental. CBS President Frank Stanton wanted to protect something his late wife loved; Oscar-winning actor Paul Newman became indignant at a presidential sleight; New York socialite and philanthropist Brooke Astor measured her trust of men by her love for dogs; and The Donald sought help in a quest for a design that was years ahead of its time. *Pretty Things For Nice People* presents a rare, authentic and expert examination of the Great Lady in the Harbor. Demonstrating that she exists in more than metal and stone, the author conveys the uplifting dynamic she instills in so many visitors today – just as she did for millions of newly arriving Americans through the decades. This book unveils the ambitions and challenges of the architects, conservators and interior designers whose ideas were brought to glorious reality by talented and dedicated artisans. These projects – many now part of the texture of America – encompass Old World, high tech and low tech methods skillfully supported by the undying belief that necessity is, indeed, the mother of invention. Relying on common sense and experience, these artisans solved some of their most puzzling problems on major restoration projects by employing common household items – orange juice and ice. While some portions of the book are poignant and others funny, some take the reader behind the scenes in such places as the U.S. Capitol and the world's finest museums. The author demonstrates that no design is just a design and no statue is just a statue. He tells the inside stories such as how famous architects use their skills to gently poke fun at wealthy clients and how the death of President Abraham Lincoln contributed to the creation of the Statue of Liberty. Perhaps the greatest love affair between the Fiebiger artisans and a dramatic work of art is the relationship with the Statue of Liberty. Joe explains the challenges of construction and marvels at the talents of acclaimed engineer Gustav Eiffel (10 years before his famous tower), artist Frederick Bartholdi and architect Richard Morris Hunt – each man's contributions essential to the creation of the symbol of liberty. Dynamic, knowledgeable passages and vivid photographs – from the broken chain at her feet to the majestic torch -- give readers a more intimate perspective of the project that restored the reign of the Lady in the Harbor.

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