



{ BOOK REVIEWS }

BY ALICE JUROW WITH DAN KOON AND KRISTEN CAVEN

Bombay Art Deco Architecture: A Visual Journey (1930-1953)

BY NAVIN RAMANI (LUSTRE PRESS / ROLI BOOKS 2006)

For a gorgeous coffee table book laden with color pictures of fabulous Deco architecture you've never seen before, you can't do better than *Bombay Art Deco Architecture: A Visual Journey (1930-1953)*, by Navin Ramani (Lustre Press/Roli Books 2006). This book is a revelation of something that, in retrospect, seems obvious: a city with parallels to Los Angeles (a major film industry), Miami Beach (superb tropical beauty) and Manhattan (financial power and cultural vibrancy, especially during the 1920s - '30s) can be expected to have some great Art Deco architecture. As Navin Ramani shows us, Bombay extravagantly surpasses all expectations - from the wealth of examples shown in this splendidly illustrated book, it becomes clear that the city now known as Mumbai is a world-class Deco destination.

Navin Ramani is ideally qualified to produce this book; growing up in Bombay in an Art Deco apartment building owned by his grandparents, he spent some 21 years exploring the city's architecture. But it was only when he moved to Miami in 1989 that he perceived this architectural treasure-chest in the wider context of international Art Deco. Now a board member of the Miami Design Preservation League, and a founding member of the Florida chapter of the Congress for the New Urbanism, Ramani also keeps in touch with preservationists in his original hometown. His two final chapters are particularly fascinating: "A Tale of Two Subtropical Deco Cities" illustrates 'mirror image' buildings from Bombay and Miami Beach; while the final chapter encouragingly details the preservation action -- studies, guidelines and legislation -- being done by various groups to protect Bombay's Art Deco heritage for the future.

Signature Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area

BY DAVE WEINSTEIN (GIBBS SMITH, 2006).

Architecture buffs whose tastes extend beyond Art Deco (both pre- and post-) will not want to miss *Signature Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area*, by Dave Weinstein (Gibbs Smith, 2006). Equally, anyone with an interest in Bay Area history and beautiful homes will relish this book.

Weinstein is the 'author' of the successful campaign to save the Cerrito Theater (which had its grand re-opening in late 2006), and has written numerous articles about architecture in the *SF Chronicle* and *CA Modern*.

Here, his focus is very specific: his chapters present portraits of 15 architects (working from about 1880 to the present) each



of whom produced a substantial body of residential work that exemplifies or contributes to 'Bay Area Style'. He deliberately omits the biggest names - Maybeck, Morgan, Wright, Wurster - and it's amazing to see what emerges from the shadows of these giants. The arty yet pragmatic Craftsman homes of "girl architect" Leola Hall, the story-

book cottages of John Hudson Thomas, the serene streamlined modernism of Gardner Dailey, the post-everything playfulness of Ace Architects - all are part of Weinstein's fascinating story. Bungalow, Prairie and Spanish Colonial Revival styles all appear, even hints of Art Deco.

With Linda Swendsen's warm photographs, this book shows us living, livable architecture, both intimate and inspiring.