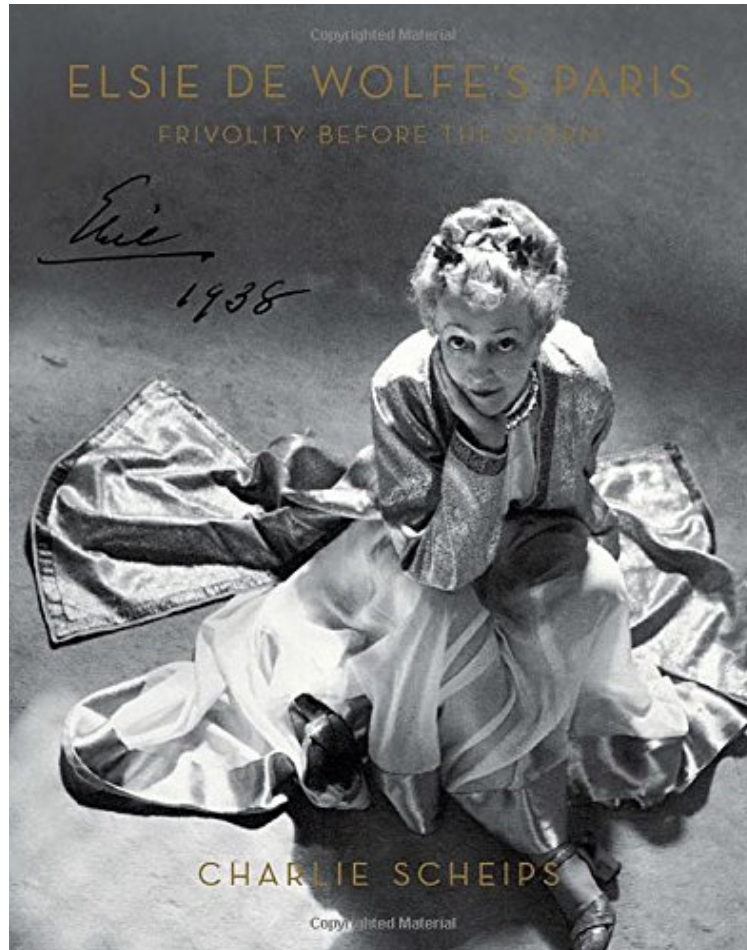


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Elsie de Wolfe's Paris

Charlie Scheips

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Charlie Scheips : Elsie de Wolfe's Paris before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Elsie de Wolfe's Paris:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Its brilliant, for the multiples layers of meaning in the ...By Donald L. MacGregorElsie de Wolfe's Paris arrived yesterday(finally!) and I devoured it. Im so captivated by this extraordinary time capsule Charlie Scheips has assembled. Its brilliant, for the multiples layers of meaning in the storytelling to the detailed research of finding the name of the caterer found on the paper cups holding the petit-fours. The Swelligant design and enchanting BW photos and the ephemera; "art" and cartoons. My single favorite is the full page photo of Cecil Beaton in drag as Lady Mendl. It's so inspired, and the reference to the Cole Porter lyric describing the 'gay spirit' that Lady Mendl had in "the talent to amuse" from "If Love Were All" is an all-time favorite.7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. This is just a beautiful book full of black and white photos and fabulous ...By SacheverelleThis is just a beautiful book full of black and white photos and fabulous illustrations of

an elegant, bygone era just before WWII. One can only dream of how it was back then to be at Elsie's villa, drinking champagne, chatting with the likes of Cecil Beaton, Coco Chanel and Wallis Simpson..Very evocative.34 of 34 people found the following review helpful. The greatest party of its kind of the century --- and the lastBy Jesse KornbluthIt wont do to describe Charlie Scheips, as his site does, as a curator, art adviser, writer and cultural historian. Hes all that, but in Manhattan, this description is close to generic. What distinguishes Charlie Scheips from the art mob is his range. He knows everyone instead of a photograph, his book jacket image is his portrait, painted by David Hockney and instead of serving up a smart spin on the latest trend, he scores actual scoops.Like, for instance, a treasure trove of close to 200 unpublished photographs of Elsie de Wolfes 1939 Circus Ball. Hes used these as the centerpiece of a book like no other. On the surface, its a voyeurs dream, a behind-the-scenes look at the high water mark of a kind of entertaining that went extinct two months later, when Hitler invaded Poland. But more, its a deep dive, an X-ray of an elite Society that took dinner parties and balls as seriously as we take our work because it was their work.As Scheips writes: This book is my search to bring back a lost moment in time, when men in white tie and women in elaborate evening dresses saw the occasion of a grand ball as an expression of sophistication and a means to confirm the existence of a civilized life and have fun.Ephemeral? Beyond. As a biographer of Proust has noted, Even the greatest hostess is forgotten when the last of her guests dies. But to Elsie and her crowd, an invitation to a great party was the equivalent of immortality. Now, in a book, they actually have it.When she hosted the last Circus Ball, Elsie was 81. Shed done it all: Shed been an actress, Americas first interior decorator, longtime companion of the very rich Bessie Marbury, and bestselling author.In 1903, touring the Palace of Versailles, de Wolfe and Marbury found an abandoned Louis XV pavilion. They bought the Villa Trianon and, with Marburys fortune, restored it. In 1926, de Wolfe married Sir Charles Mendl; as Lady Mendl, she did less decorating and more entertaining. She became a pillar of Society, famous for being famous and ripe for inclusion in a Cole Porter song, because everybody knew she did headstands as part of her morning exercises:When you hear that Lady Mendl standing upNow turns a handspring landing upOn her toes,Anything goes.The Circus Ball of 1939 the second of an annual event given on the final evening of the social season featured bejeweled white Lipizzaner horses and even more bejeweled guests. The beauty part: Scheips also takes us backstage, to the preparation of a circus ring, the feeding of the ponies, the icing of the champagne, the three weeks of preparation, the planeloads of roses.And then the war came, and the Mendls fled to America.Imagine the Titanic, iceberg approaching, as the glittering passengers danced.

The American decorator Elsie de Wolfe (1858-1950) was the international sets preeminent hostess in Paris during the interwar years. She had a legendary villa in Versailles, where in the late 1930s she held two fabulous partiesher Circus Ballsthat marked the end of the social scene that her friend Cole Porter perfectly captured in his songs, as the clouds of war swept through Europe. Charlie Scheips tells the story of these glamorous parties using a wealth of previously unpublished photographs and introducing a large cast of aristocrats, beauties, politicians, fashion designers, movie stars, moguls, artists, caterers, florists, party planners, and decorators. A landmark work of social history and a poignant vision of a vanished world, Scheipss book belongs on the shelf with Abrams classics such as Slim Aarons: Once Upon A Time and Tony Duquette.

Scheips utilizes 170 black-and-white and color imagesome previously unpublishedto visually illuminate his fascinating narrative of this peerless womans life, one that intersected with some of the most colorful and important characters of the day on both sides of the Atlantic, including Elsa Maxwell, William Randolph Hearst, Cecil Beaton, Janet Flanner, Gertrude Stein, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. The tome culminates with de Wolfes final grand fte, the second Circus Ball, which defined the glamour and decadence of international society before the lights went out all over Europe.