



The Scottish Country House

James Knox

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At the heart of this stirring tale and visual delight is a group of ten extraordinary houses and castles that have survived the vicissitudes of Scotland's history with almost all of the original families who built them still in residence today. Their histories are peopled with strongwilled men and women—from the notorious General Tam Dalyell of the House of the Binns, who served not only the Stuart kings but the czar of Russia, to the first Duke of Queensberry, who built one of the most sensational castles in Britain, to a love match worthy of the "auld alliance" between the Earl of Stair and his French-born countess.

Each house also represents a landmark in Scotland's architectural history, ranging from the early seventeenth to the early twentieth century. The cutting-edge classicism of William Bruce at Balcaskie, the sensational French château-inspired Drumlanrig, the splendor of William Adam's baroque at Arniston, and the sublime Palladianism of his sons, the Adam brothers, at Dumfries House, are a roll call of architectural genius. The Victorian passion for all things Scottish is displayed in Lochinch Castle, a bravura example of the Baronial style, bristling with turrets, bartizans, and stepped roofs. And Robert Lorimer's beautifully crafted reconstruction at Monzie at the turn of the twentieth century reveals him as a major talent who synthesized European and purely Scottish styles, expressing, like his fellow architects in this book, a uniquely Scottish sensibility. The architectural revelation is matched by the houses' sensational settings, which merge the historically designed gardens and landscape with the unparalleled wildness and vistas of Scotland.

But, as author James Knox writes in his lively, insightful text, "The glory of Scottish country houses is not just their architecture but their contents, which add layers of personality to the interiors." As Knox guides the reader on an intimate tour of the houses, he recounts their fascinating histories and profiles the colorful, often eccentric, lairds, lady lairds, clan chiefs, and nobles who have called them home. And James Fennell's masterly photographs, which rely solely on natural light for effect, capture the distinctive atmosphere of each residence. The Duchess of Buccleuch's boudoir at Bowhill is a frenzy of chinoiserie, needlepoint, and silk tassels. At Ballindalloch, the Macpherson-Grant tartan carpets the entrance hall and Victorian paintings of the family's prized Aberdeen Angus herd—the oldest in Scotland—adorn many a room. The motto of the Munro clan, "Dread God," is emblazoned throughout Foulis Castle—on china, wall plaques, not to mention the clan chief's bonnet. All of these cherished houses are chockablock with memories of the past, from swagger portraits to sporrans, from vintage photographs to ancient weaponry, from curling stones to fading chintz. Some are also treasure houses, not least Dumfries House, saved from the auction block by a consortium headed by the Prince of Wales, which boasts an unrivaled collection of documented Chippendale and Scottish rococo furniture.

The Scottish Country House will enthrall anyone with an interest in Scotland, history, architecture, or interior decoration—all wrapped in a compelling narrative of past lives and taste.

Praise for *The Scottish Country House*:

"If you like historic homes, this book is for you. It's filled with beautiful photos of historic Scottish castles and grand estates." -*Design*Sponge*

"Who can resist a beautiful chateau set in the lush green countryside of Scotland? I, for one, cannot. In James Knox's new book, he focuses on ten standout examples of Scottish country living. With each house, he

details the history of the establishment, and follows through to how it stands today.” —*Home Design with Kevin Sharkey*

“This book, filled with lavish photography by James Fennell, profiles ten outstanding Scottish castles and mansions, from sprawling Walter Scott-type baronial spreads to elegant neoclassical, Adam-designed treasure houses. . . . This book makes one want to get on the next plane for Edinburgh.” —*Art of the Times*

“I just had the pleasure of reviewing *The Scottish Country House* which confirmed that this fall is turning out to be an exceptionally good season for design books. *The Scottish Country House* features ten Scottish houses and castles from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, spanning a range of architectural styles. Almost all of the houses are inhabited by the original families who built them, and each has a fascinating story to tell. As you might expect, the interiors are rich and layered with vintage photographs and portraits, ancient weaponry, taxidermy, and Chippendale and Scottish rococo furniture, all of it beautifully photographed by James Fennell.”—*From the Right Bank* blog

“I have recently read a book (and yes, I read it cover to cover!) that now has a prominent place on my library coffee table - *The Scottish Country House*, by James Knox. . . . The book is a fascinating read. . . . [and] the photography in the book is incredible; James Fennell took the pictures that illustrate the 10 Scottish country houses profiled in the book (I spent hours poring over the pictures—each picture has dozens of interesting details).”—*Things That Inspire* blog

“Vicariously experience Scotland's ruggedly beautiful vistas and striking architecture with James Knox's *The Scottish Country House*. Knox collaborated with photographer James Fennell (remember his work from *The Irish Country House?*) who was determined to shoot only in natural light.”—*Style Court* blog

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Lidia Flynn:

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