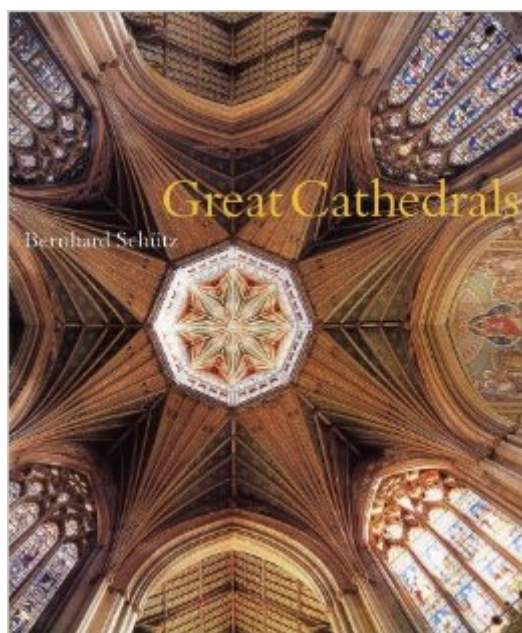


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# Great Cathedrals



## Synopsis

From Chartres to the cathedral of Florence, this volume covers the major Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals in France, England, Germany, Italy and Spain. Over 300 photographs showing the cathedrals inside and out, including close-up architectural and sculptural details and an authoritative text, combine to produce a survey of these buildings.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Probably few other works of man have caused more awed neck-stretching than the Gothic cathedral. In over 400 stunningly illustrated pages, Schutz presents the major cathedrals of France, England, Germany, Italy and Spain. The text is well written and scholarly, but with pictures like these, the text is almost irrelevant. The mind-blowing photographs of Chartres, Notre Dame, Salisbury and the rest, leave us gaping in awe at the magnificence of these buildings and shaking our heads in disbelief at the labor and craftsmanship that went into making them reality, and marveling how mere mortals could have produced such glorious works of art.

No doubt it, the pictures are the star of this show. We get a three or four page long architectural history of each cathedral, a couple of exterior shots, a view down the main sanctuary, and several closeups of various details, statuary, and art. Most of these cathedrals are so wonderful that they could be made the subject of books of their own, of course. But this visual symphony brings us up close and personal with arguably the greatest treasures the European Middle Ages

bequeathed to posterity. The only mild disappointment for me is that not much mention is made of the gigantic lost abbey church of Cluny, which was in the late Romanesque style. One of the better uses of computer imaging these days is the virtual reconstruction of that edifice. Wonderful books like this are why coffee-tables were invented!

GREAT CATHEDRALS is an elegant and eloquent, impressive large book that addresses in pictures, drawings and well-crafted research the magnificent cathedrals of France, England, Spain, Italy and Germany that represent the finest in Gothic architecture dating from about 1100 AD. Bernhard Schutz knows his architecture and takes the reader on an informed tour of these incredible monuments, explaining with very helpful diagrams the architectural wonders and phenomena of each cathedral. Just when you think you remember the Notre Dame in Paris as being the most exquisite example of European cathedrals, turn the page and study the beauties of the cathedral at Chartres in a way that few other books have captured its majesty. The photographs of the buildings are beautifully rendered with copious examples of the details such as the stained glass windows, the decor of the columns, and the variety of doors. For readers who are looking for a book about the psychosocial development of the Holy Roman Empire and all the permutations and controversies of the life and times of the architects that surround these monuments, then this is not the history book one would expect. Yet for concise, informed, and inspiring writing about these great cathedrals as art and architectural wonders, it would be difficult to find a more thorough presentation. This book helps us remember that the roots of fine art are in the cathedrals and examining those roots has never been more captivating!

This book has been around for at least 3 decades; I'm 43 and remember looking over an earlier edition with awe and reverence in the town library when I was a teenager. The current edition has some nice updates, including added coverage of the great eastern European cathedrals, such as St. Vitus in Prague. The photography is splendid, and gives a feel of the look and scale of each building, as well as for the smaller details like sculpture and stained glass that makes each great cathedral a triumph of Western civilization. If you are looking for a book that covers the major cathedrals of Europe in a thorough, satisfying way via photographs and a text providing the history of each building, a discussion of its style, and so forth, search no more. This is EASILY the best book out there that provides what you want.

This book is beautifully presented, the photos are first rate and though one reviewer felt the text

could have been better, I was pleased with that as well. I liked the fact that the book had a blend of photographs of the exterior as well as the interior, too often only the interior gets photographed. The book itself is of the highest quality and it has a luxurious feel, it's quite heavy and well bound. I did expect to see Westminster Abbey and St. Peter's, but I suppose they didn't fit the authors strict definition of Cathedral, still I would have liked to have seen them included, but that's a small disappointment in an otherwise fine book.

Schutz's photographic tour in "Great Cathedrals" is one of the most superb "coffee table" books on the market. The volume is massive in size and tips the scales at a number of pounds, but one glance is all it takes to be hooked. This is professional photography with results that only a seasoned photographer can produce, and then reproduced in the highest quality with splendid detail and high gloss, heavy weight paper. Browsing through these monumental pictures that pay homage to the monumental cathedrals, we forget all about the technical details of how the great Gothic structures were built and simply enjoy the fantastic beauty and immense impact the medieval architects planned all along. There are surprisingly few of these types of books in the American market (a plethora of them exist in France, England, and Germany), but Schutz's book fills the bill, and makes a splendid addition to the genre. From what I can see from the other posted reviews, it seems there is 100% agreement on the beauty of this book.

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