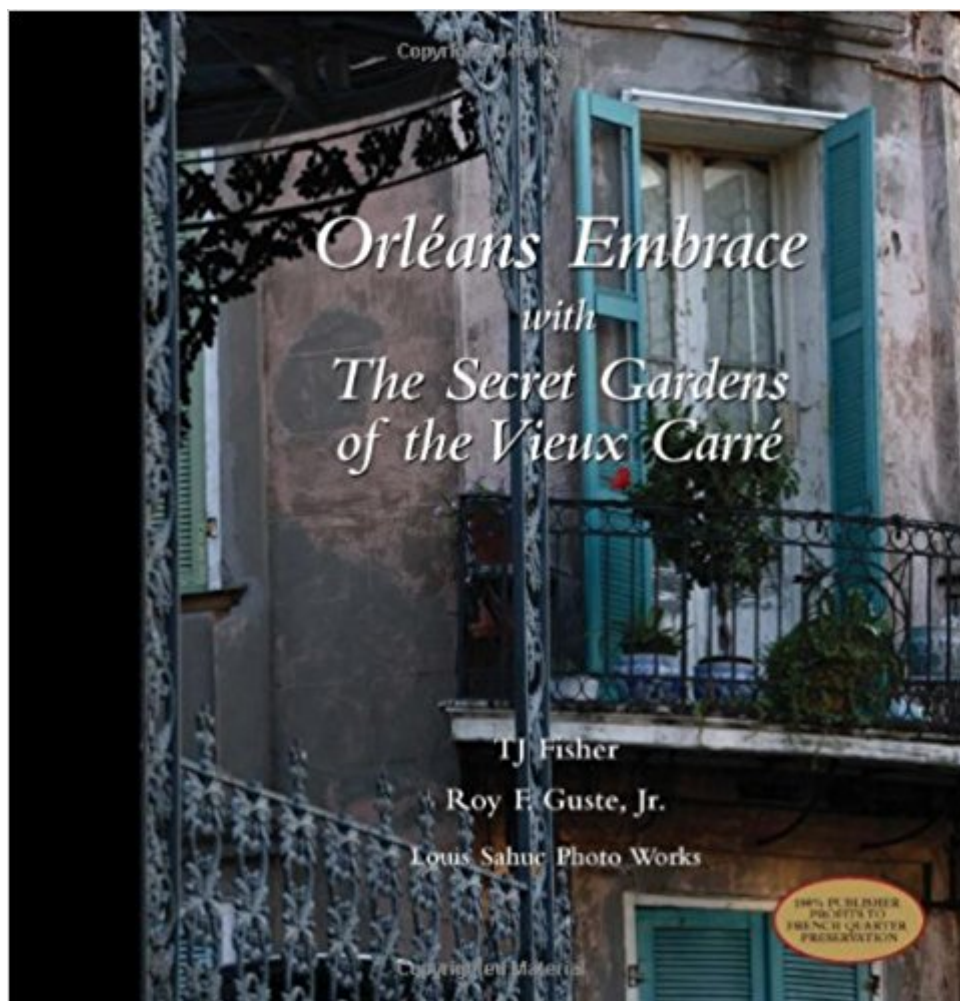


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# Orleans Embrace With The Secret Gardens Of The Vieux Carre



## Synopsis

100% of publisher profits will be donated to French Quarter preservation groups. Revisit the timeless mystery, magic, and majesty of the French Quarter and its legendary gardens with this lush collection of photographs. An emotional narrative about the heart and soul of New Orleans and the city's ability to triumph over sorrow accompanies hundreds of pictures taken before and after the life- and landscape-altering Hurricane Katrina; a special section presents the classic work *The Secret Gardens of the Vieux Carré*, which offers mesmerizing images of the verdant gardens concealed behind brick walls and iron gates in the Quarter. The importance of fundraising for and conscientious rebuilding of New Orleans is stressed throughout the book, making this a gorgeous book with a purpose.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

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## Customer Reviews

Lavishly designed and sumptuously illustrated, *Orleans Embrace* celebrates what makes New Orleans' French Quarter unique and significant. In a long, meandering introduction, Fisher addresses Hurricane Katrina but mostly writes about the history of the quarter and the spirit of those who live there. "No great American city should be left lying spread out as a mutilated carcass with bits of people's lives strewn clear across the horizon," she writes, then recounts all that the quarter has given to America over the centuries. The central section presents Guste's out-of-print classic, *The Secret Gardens of the Vieux Carré* (1993), in which Guste provides beautiful photographs and capsule backstories for 20 historic gardens. In the book's final section, Fisher tackles Katrina

head-on to the accompaniment of photographs by native Louis Sahuc, lamenting damage to the city of "magical thinking." She declares, "We can decide to buck cruel contretemps or lie down and surrender." Unusual, gorgeous, and intriguing. One hundred percent of the publisher's profits go to French Quarter preservation. Colleen Mondor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Benjamin Franklin Awards double winner 2007 for Best New Voice Nonfiction ("An emotional portrayal of and poignant narrative on New Orleans and the French Quarter") and Best First Book Nonfiction. A finalist in 3 more categories Nautilus Book Awards Finalist 2007 "A compendium . . . passionate reflection . . . love letter to this seductive place with its distinctive history, character, and architectural style." "San Francisco Chronicle" "No medium alone, or paired with another, could possibly capture the elusive essence of the place author TJ Fisher calls 'a bewitching oasis of culture and civilization sculpted from a hostile swamp.'" "Philadelphia Inquirer" "Amazing, lushly produced inside look at the mysteries of the French Quarter through the eyes and lenses of local aristocrats' cornucopia of stories." "Andrei Codrescu, "Penny Post" column, *Gambit & Downtown Express* "An enchanting peek inside the elusively secret and mysterious parts of the indomitable French Quarter. This is the real Vieux Carré rarely glimpsed by outsiders." "Francis Ford Coppola" "What a visual palette. Wow! This is truly the New Orleans I love." "Emeril Lagasse" "A feast for those who prize the city's timeless charms." "Tom Piazza, author, *My Cold War*

Though finely printed with many photographs, I am certain this book was never meant to merely decorate the coffee table. It opens with glowing praises of notables and celebrities like Francis Ford Coppola, Nicholas Cage, Jimmy Buffett, and many others. As 100% of the publisher's profits go to preservation of the French Quarter, that is also worthy of considerable praise, for surely New Orleans is America's greatest city, and the Vieux Carré its most precious jewel. Actually three essays in one volume, the book covers New Orleans history, the French Quarter gardens, and saving New Orleans in its current post-Katrina period. The writing is uniformly verdant and lush, with descriptions often poetic if not philosophical. However, this is quite a visual book, with a great many photographs included. It's perhaps my own sense of artistry, but I find some of the photographs a bit on the dark side and of somewhat low contrast. New Orleans is not known for its many clear sunny days, and the high walls surrounding many of the gardens reduce the available light, but the gardens usually aren't quite so gloomy and shadowy as some of the photographs might suggest. I

don't know the cameras used for this volume, but some of the images also seem to lack the "snap" that would typically come from a large format camera, usually the camera of choice for this kind of work. If a 4x5 or larger was indeed used, then I really can't explain it. But that's not to say there aren't many gorgeous photographs here, and others may find my criticism far too influenced by my personal sense of style, and they are probably right. I particularly like the photographs of the pool and the spacious courtyard of the Begue home on Bourbon Street, and there are many, many others to enjoy here. All in all, a fine volume, especially on the gardens, historical preservation, and salvaging the city after Katrina. If one is looking for more on actual building architecture and how it arrived there, by all means try Lloyd Vogt's "Historical Buildings of the French Quarter," which is entertaining in its own right, yet in an entirely different and most original way. For a poetic and photographic tour, "Orleans Embrace with The Secret Gardens of the Vieux Carré" is warmly recommended. But it really shouldn't be left on the coffee table without first reading it from start to finish.

I'm sure this book is warranted for its purpose but it was not what I was expecting. I was looking for a book full of photographs of New Orleans wonderful gardens and courtyards that I know are hidden beyond the city streets and doors. Hence the title "Secret Gardens of New Orleans" but I suppose by secret gardens they meant close up photographs of plants and these I can very well see in my own yard. I was looking for photographs that showed the garden or courtyard architecture along with these plants but that was extremely limited and not very well displayed. Well kudos for giving a tribute to Katrina and hopefully the sale of this book will have a good cause otherwise.

I'm slightly obsessed with NOLA and grab up anything I can that has to do with the city. This book is filled with interesting stories and beautiful photos. I love it!

I first got this book through the library on a recommendation from the Book-A-Day Calendar series and after flipping through the pages I figured I'd buy, not one, but three copies for gifts. The combination of the three contributors to the book make for a great read, whether or not you've experience the French Quarter. The fact that all proceeds go toward the preservation of the French Quarter sealed the deal for me

Tremendous coffee table book. My copy lives on my antique table and I constantly rifle through it. Gorgeous photography and exquisite tropical gardens. I model my inventory in my garden shoppe

on the local plants shown in book. Great reference book.

Great coffee table book and conversation piece.

The first 6 or so pages have a strong crease diagonal to the bottom corner. Not in perfect shape for a gift. Don't remember the creases being mentioned in the description. Otherwise good.

No ordinary coffee table photography book, "Orleans Embrace With The Secret Gardens Of The Vieux Carre" is a 388-page memoir of the New Orleans French Quarter featuring 49 historic black-and-white photographs and 320 full color illustrations. While the overall book draws from the previous work of Roy F. Guste, Jr., the photographs by Louis Sahuc are bonded with a personal and compelling narrative text by T. J. Fisher. Readers will encounter a work originally intended to be of local interest, but in a post-Katrina world, has emerged with universal attraction as a memorial and a motivation to restore a once great American city to its unique and original glory.

Enthusiastically recommended, "Orleans Embrace With The Secret Gardens Of The Vieux Carre" will prove to be of immense interest to several categories of readership including: gardening enthusiasts, historians, architects, photographers, and anyone who has ever walked along the avenues and admired the parks, gardens, and buildings of the New Orleans French Quarter.

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