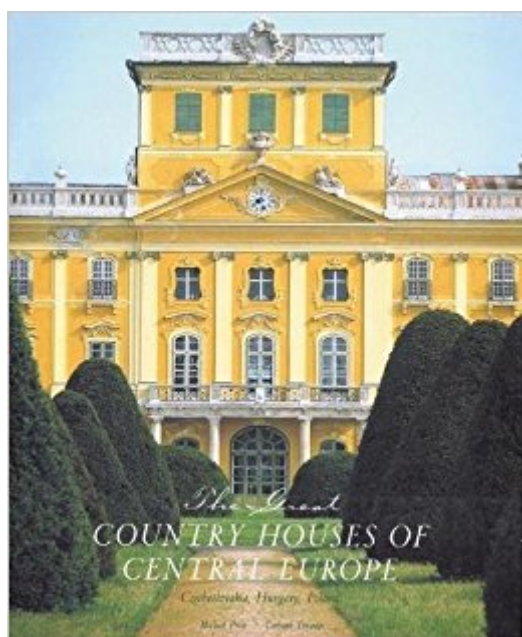


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# The Great Country Houses Of Europe: The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland



## Synopsis

In the heart of Central Europe stand some of the most elegant and grandly conceived country houses ever constructed, from medieval fortresses and Renaissance-era estates to baroque villas and neoclassical palaces. Until the last decade these illustrious residences were inaccessible to the West. This landmark volume presents these rarely seen treasures of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland, nations that shelter a superb selection of Europe's finest country houses, built over the centuries by some of the continent's most distinguished families. Richly illustrated with specially commissioned photography, *The Great Country Houses of Central Europe* tells the stories of these magnificent buildings and the families that constructed them, immersing us in the vanished world of the region's aristocracy. Lord Michael Pratt sets his discussion of the houses and their patrons against the backdrop of Central European history. Beginning in the Middle Ages and continuing to the present day, this monumental study analyzes thirty of the region's most important estates and introduces dozens of others. Although the primary focus is on the houses and the families that built them, gardens, grounds, and interiors are also illustrated in detail, including examples of furniture, decorative arts, and paintings. Splendid and surprising, these remarkable structures and the magisterial book that celebrates them display Central Europe in its full glory.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Impeccably designed and lavishly illustrated, this volume allows us to wander into a part of the

European heartland hitherto closed off to all but the most adventurous....Trumler's photographs of these national treasures unfailingly surprise and satisfy. Highly recommended as a visual delight and an unusual introduction to a newly opened region."

Lord Michael is a scholar based in London who specializes in modern European history. His works include Britain's Greek Empire, a study of Corfu and the Ionian Islands under Venetian and British rule. Gerhard Trumler is a professor of photography in Vienna and a professional photographer whose work has appeared in over fifty books.

This is a huge well bound book depicting a collection of beautiful country houses from across Eastern Europe. The book is filled with clear large color photography showing both the interior and exterior of each structure, where the architecture and the landscape are immaculate. Each house is also accompanied with a concise amount of text giving enough information about the history and significance of the presented properties. This is a highly recommended book for its scope where most of the structures are rarely or never photographed before, and its beautiful production makes it a worthy addition to any collection of fine architecture.

Absolutely a great synopsis of the convoluted history of individual countries with plenty of details (historical and architectural). Too bad the photos showed only a couple of exteriors and a couple of interiors for each house. They do supplement the descriptions of the architectural styles. Many were taken in shadows. The major disappointment is in not seeing the diverse and intricate interior decors. Having toured some of these castles and palaces, I can say that the most spectacular rooms were not photographed. For a "coffee table" sized book, you would expect to be awed and wish to experience some of these "country houses" in person. (If you only saw a photo of the East Room in the White House, would you feel like you knew what the White House was like?) I give the text 5 stars without hesitation. I personally would buy the book for the commentary but definitely not for the pictures. That's why I give it 4 stars. I did buy The Great Country Houses of the Czech Republic and Slovakia as it is a reprint of the first 140 pages of this book. My personal photos are much better but the text and large photos were a bargain at \$0.63. If the author had divided this category into single country books and shown you 6-12 rooms per location, this would be an awesome collection to add to your library. He tried to cover too many locations and yet missed several significant ones. The Hungary and Poland segments show how much more conservative the

architecture is compared with Czech designs. I found little inspirational in these segments and would rate them a 3 star. The commentary is very interesting for those interested in those locations.

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