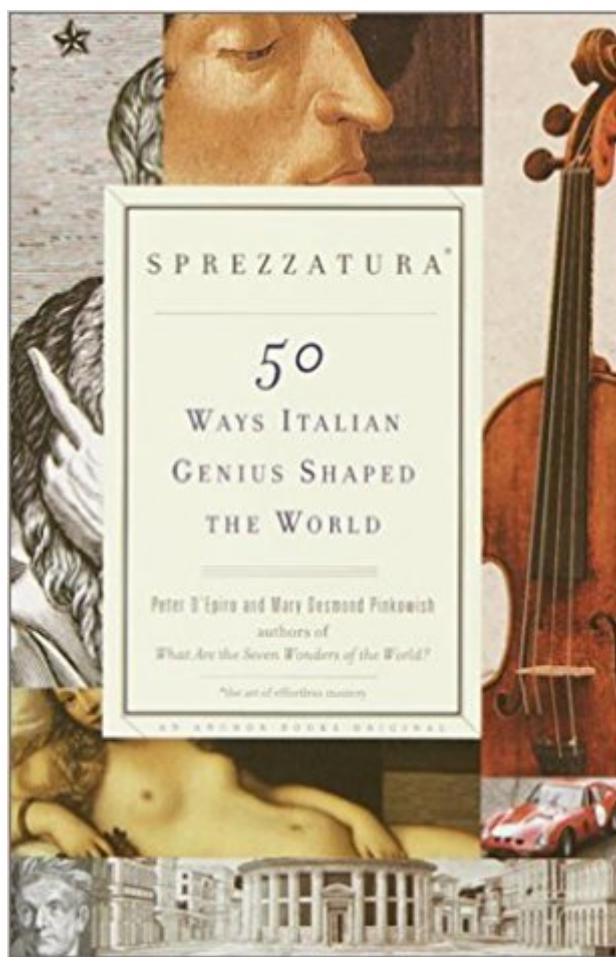


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Sprezzatura: 50 Ways Italian Genius Shaped The World



Synopsis

A witty, erudite celebration of fifty great Italian cultural achievements that have significantly influenced Western civilization from the authors of *What Are the Seven Wonders of the World?* The word "sprezzatura," or the art of effortless mastery, was coined in 1528 by Baldassare Castiglione in *The Book of the Courtier*. No one has demonstrated effortless mastery throughout history quite like the Italians. From the Roman calendar and the creator of the modern orchestra (Claudio Monteverdi) to the beginnings of ballet and the creator of modern political science (Niccolò Machiavelli), *Sprezzatura* highlights fifty great Italian cultural achievements in a series of fifty information-packed essays in chronological order.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Right away with this book, in chapter one, you know that you are in for a treat. Regarding the Roman calendar, the authors write: "In those days, (circa 700 B.C.) January and February didn't yet exist- at least in the calendar- since Roman farmers didn't have much fieldwork to do in that dead part of the year after the last crops had been harvested and stored. After a two month hiatus, the new year began in March with preparation of the ground for the next season's crop." Did you already know that? Then try this one from the chapter on Julius Caesar: "When he saw Brutus draw his dagger, Caesar covered his head with his purple toga and fell to the floor. 'Kai su teknon,' he said in Greek ('You, too, my child- and not Shakespeare's Latin 'Et tu, Brute?') before being stabbed in the groin by the man whose mother, Servilia, had been his favorite mistress. The dictator died at the base of Pompey's statue, bleeding from twenty-three wounds. Cicero wrote that he had 'feasted his eyes on the just death of a tyrant.' ""Kai su teknon"....now that is something I never knew!! I think the

above excerpts give you a pretty accurate feel for how the book is written. It is broken up into 50 chapters, each approximately 7 pages or so. You may not be interested in every single chapter, but I only found my mind wandering in 1 or 2. If you're a fairly well-read person you may already be familiar with some of the material, but I guarantee you'll still learn a lot from this book. The authors have done a great job of bringing together a lot of material on very different subjects and turning it into something coherent. And in just 7 pages per topic they have managed to present the essence of something without "dumbing it down". Not an easy thing to do!

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