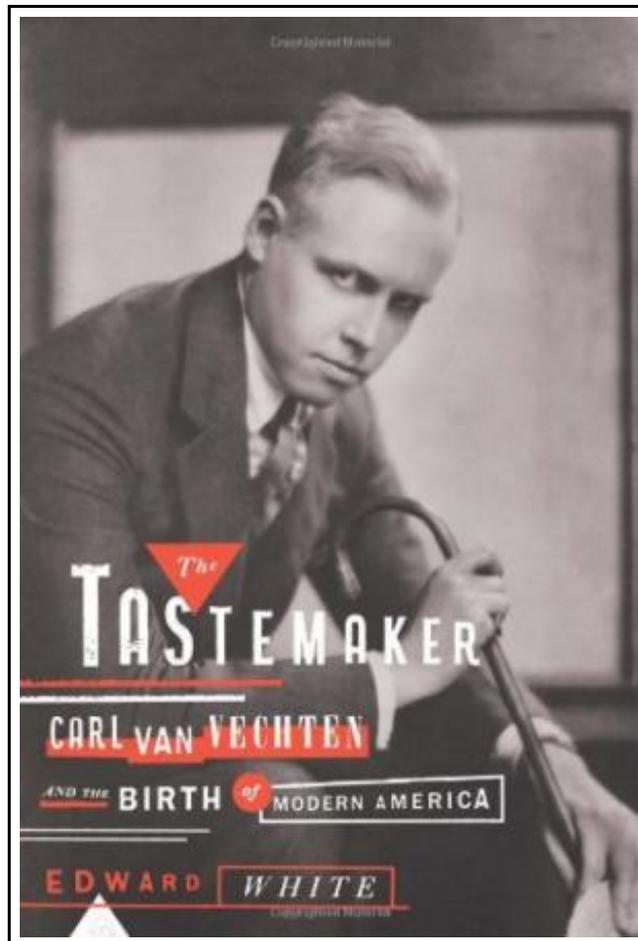


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Reviews

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(Wilhelm Predovic)

THE TASTEMAKER: CARL VAN VECHTEN AND THE BIRTH OF MODERN AMERICA



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FSG. 1 Cloth(s), 2014. hard. Book Condition: New. One of the early 20th century's most influential cultural impresarios, Carl Van Vechten was a patron and dealmaker of the Harlem Renaissance, a photographer who captured the era's icons, and a novelist who created some of the Jazz Age's most salacious stories. He was a confidant of Langston Hughes, Gertrude Stein, George Gershwin, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and the Knopfs, often to be found in Harlem's jazz clubs, the speakeasies of Hell's Kitchen, and Greenwich Village's underground gay scene. Edward White fully explores Van Vechten's tangled relationships with race and sexuality, family life and romantic trysts, modernist literature and low-brow entertainment."As Edward White writes in *The Tastemaker*, his ambitious and engaging portrait of a 'polymath' and the world he helped shape, Van Vechten 'collapsed the 19th-century distinctions between edifying art and facile entertainment, constantly probing the boundaries of what was considered good and bad taste.'. White shows a commanding grasp of the larger cultural ethos and Van Vechten's place in it."NYTBR"White celebrates all the things that might once have seemed shocking about Van Vechten: his conviction that Negro culture was the essence of America; his simultaneous fascination with the avant-garde and the broadly popular; and his string of sexual relationships with men, which were an open secret during his life. White calls him, plausibly enough, 'prophet of a new cultural sensibility that promoted the primacy of the individual, sexual freedom, and racial tolerance and dared put the blues on a par with Beethoven.'. The most startling thing about White's book is its breadth. [Van Vechten] was in the end, the opposite of a dilettante."The New Yorker" In the prologue, first-time author White notes that you may not have heard of Carl Van Vechten (1880-1964), but that's in large part because he was a difficult...



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