



## St. Petersburg: Architecture of the Tsars

*By Dmitri O. Shvidkovsky*

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Before becoming a city, St. Petersburg was a utopian vision in the mind of its founder, Peter the Great. Conceived by him as Russia's "window to the West," it evolved into a remarkably harmonious assemblage of baroque, rococo, neoclassical, and art nouveau buildings that reflect his taste and that of his successors, including Anna I, Elizabeth I, Catherine the Great, and Paul I.

Crisscrossed by rivers and canals, this "Venice of the North," as Goethe dubbed it, is of unique beauty. Never before has that beauty been captured as eloquently as on the pages of this sumptuous volume. From the stately mansions lining the fabled Nevsky Prospekt to the magnificent palaces of the tsars on the outskirts of the city, including Peterhof, Tsarskoe Selo, Oranienbaum, Gatchina, and Pavlovsk, photographer Alexander Orloff's portrait of St. Petersburg does full justice to the vision of its founder and namesake. The text, by art historian Dmitri Shvidkovsky, chronicles the history of the city's planning and construction from Peter the Great's time to the reign of the last tsar, Nicholas II. Anyone who has ever visited--or dreamed of visiting--the city of "white nights" will find St. Petersburg irresistible.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Library Journal

St. Petersburg is one of the most beautiful and architecturally imposing cities in the world. Photographer Orloff, whose work has appeared in major magazines, and Shvidkovsky, a member of the Russian Federation's Academy of Fine Arts, have produced a handsome study of the buildings constructed during the reigns of the Russian tsars since Peter the Great. The text is informative, and the photos maintain a good balance between exterior and interior views. Like Washington, D.C., St. Petersburg is a planned city, decreed and dictated, with marvelous results in the case of the former Russian capital. A commission established by Catherine the Great to plan the development of the city ordered that "Three rules must be honored in the construction of the [city's] houses: solidity, utility, and beauty." Readers will see that the rules were followed indeed. Recommended for both architecture and travel collections. —Edward B. Cone, New York City

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## **Language Notes**

Text: English

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## **Users Review**

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