



The du Ponts: Houses and Gardens in the Brandywine

Maggie Lidz

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No American family dominated a single state longer than the du Ponts of Delaware. French immigrants who arrived in America January 1, 1800, the du Ponts became a dynasty of publicity-shy entrepreneurs, engineers, horticulturists, and collectors. They built neighboring houses, gardens, and farms that spanned miles of rolling hills in the Brandywine Valley and earned the region the sobriquet Chateau Country. With their riches from the DuPont Company, the family pursued many passions, resulting in the exquisite art collections, botanical gardens, and libraries now enjoyed by the American public. The du Ponts: Houses and Gardens in the Brandywine, 1900 1951, features 25 du Pont family houses and farms, including the celebrated Winterthur, Longwood, and Nemours estates. There are unexpected surprises: Bellevue, a replica of James Madison's Montpelier; Eleutherian Mills, the 19th-century partnership house overlooking the Brandywine Creek, resurrected in the 1920s as a colonial mansion with a garden that was considered one of most successful romantic conceits of the 20th century; and Hod House, the Hodgson system prefabricated residence built as a summer retreat on 550 acres. Winterthur Museum's estate historian Maggie Lidz captures the life of the du Ponts at home with hundreds of rare period photographs from private archives and family albums and never before published autochromes, diascoes, and Dufay color images. The Crowninshields, the Sharps, the Homseys and the du Ponts - Henry Francis, Pierre Samuel, and Coleman- all come alive as we visit their country manors, horse farms, and spectacular gardens in the bucolic setting of the Brandywine Valley.

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