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Old Havana / La Habana Vieja: Spirit Of The Living City / El Espíritu De La Ciudad Viva (English And Spanish Edition)



Synopsis

Old Havana: Spirit of the Living City artistically captures the architecture, people, and daily life of La Habana Vieja (Old Havana) through the lenses of two visionary photographers and colleagues, one American and the other Cuban. Chip Cooper and Néstor Martínez began collaborating in 2008, documenting the picturesque features of the oldest and most historically rich quarter in Cuba's capital city at the behest of Eusebio Leal Spengler, the historian of the city of Havana and the director of the Habana Vieja restoration project. Cooper's and Martínez's images highlight the spirit of change and renewal underlying the restoration of this international treasure and its revival as a vibrant business and residential area. Inspired by the work of twentieth century American photographer Walker Evans, Cooper and Martínez, through perspectives both unique and deeply entwined, capture the humanity of the city, in a language at once universal and transcendent.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This publication is a tribute to Cuban-American collaboration. It could not have been accomplished so successfully without the University of Alabama and staff, but could not have been published at all without the Cubans. It is wonderful the way the English and Spanish captions appear side-by-side. Not an easy task to complete, as the English text requires comparatively fewer words. Nestor Martínez, our friend and knowledgeable guide in Havana, does a wonderful of displaying Cuba through Cuban eyes in this book. Chip Cooper's contribution of photography and organization is to be commended. I liked it so much I bought two.

Excellent, Chip is a master photographer.

These are wonderful photographs with compelling composition and color. When I visited Cuba, I saw many lovely sights, but these photos wonderfully and masterfully capture the beauty and intrigue of Havana.

I was slightly disappointed. I was born and raised in La Habana Vieja, and expected more pictures of actual buildings, houses, parks, historical places, etc. La Habana Vieja is full of them. There were some, but the photographs were capturing mostly small architectural details. The photos were artistic, but they could have been taken anywhere and not necessarily in Old Havana. Also, there were many pictures of people, but it seemed to me that the photographer was searching for caricatures or stereotypes. (With one remarkable exception of a little old lady playing ball with her grandson, that cheered my heart. She looked just like my mother.) There were, of course, the obligatory pictures and posters of revolutionary leaders. Obviously, the photographer was ignorant of the fact that many cruel deaths can be traced back to those individuals. Since the leaders were included, I wish they had also included the infamous Police Department building in Old Havana where so many young Cubans had met a cruel fate. So, it was fair as Cuban p.r., but it did not capture the heart of La Habana Vieja, in both its joys and its misery. This is not La Habana Vieja that I remember.

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