



Obsession: The Lives and Times of Calvin Klein

By Steven Gaines, Sharon Churcher

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A candid biography of controversial designer Calvin Klein draws on interviews with friends, business associates, and lovers to trace his dramatic rise to the heights of the fashion world and his self-indulgent personal life. 100,000 first printing. \$100,000 ad/promo. Tour.

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Obsession: The Lives and Times of Calvin Klein By Steven Gaines, Sharon Churcher Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This expose is little more than a re-hash of material that has appeared in supermarket tabloids over the years. Born in 1942 in the Bronx, Klein, who from an early age accompanied his mother whenever she shopped for her clothes, by the age of five knew he wanted to be a fashion designer. After attending Manhattan's Fashion Institute of Technology, he apprenticed at several fashion houses. Barely taking time out to marry Jayne Centre and have a daughter, Marci, Klein doggedly pursued success, finally opening his own company in 1968. As his business prospered, his sexual interest in men, which began discreetly, ran out of control. The authors also address Klein's alcohol and drug abuse; his hypochondria and dread of AIDS; the kidnapping of his 11-year-old daughter in 1978; his alleged "borrowing" of ideas from other designers; his divorce and marriage to Kelly Rector (they live in separate apartments); his addiction to the famous nightclub Studio 54 and to its owner, Steve Rubell; and his rehabilitation for alcohol and drug abuse. Gaines (*Simply Halston*) and Churcher (*New York Confidential*) have written a soap opera-ish biography that will be of interest only to fashion mavens. Photos. Author tour.

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From Library Journal

Gaines's last book was a warts-and-all portrait of fashion designer Halston (*Simply Halston*, LJ 9/15/91) that did little more than show how sadly dissipated a celebrity's life can be. Readers with a taste for the sordid can now immerse themselves in the misery of another fashion all-star, Calvin Klein. Dubbed the "American Yves Saint Laurent," Klein is portrayed as a gifted but insecure perfectionist, scrooge, and hypochondriac. Despite his enormous success--largely due to his gift for self-promotion--he seems to have waged an endless struggle to come to grips with his homosexuality, his dependence on drugs, and, above all, his fear of failure. Although the author describes interesting aspects of the fashion industry, he tends to linger over inconsequential details and drift from subject to subject. His opening pages tell of the kidnapping of Klein's daughter, but the outcome is not revealed for several hundred pages! Recommended only for libraries with popular reading sections.

- *Margarete Gross, Chicago P.L.*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gaines and Churcher have done a thorough job of covering every facet of designer Calvin Klein's hectic career and jittery personality, and, indeed, *obsession* is the key word here. Klein has been obsessed with women's clothes since the age of five and determined to be rich from a not much more advanced stage of his gawky, clandestinely boy-struck youth. Gaines and Churcher track his steady rise from the competitive streets of the Bronx to the pinnacle of the international fashion world in great detail, emphasizing his conflictful bisexuality, adoration for his daughter, and full-tilt indulgence in the devil-may-care club and cocaine culture of the eighties. Klein married a nice Jewish girl from the neighborhood just as he made his first bid for recognition, but that marriage soon collapsed beneath the pressure of his ambition and, yes, obsession with muscular young men. Klein made it through his promiscuous, drug-charged Studio 54 nights and days without contracting AIDS or compounding his debt woes and business fiascos. In fact, he has been an extraordinary trendsetter in the realms of fashion and advertising; he made it big, and then he made it bigger. To their credit, the authors spend as much time on the daring deals Klein and loyal business partner Barry Schwartz pulled off as they do on Klein's personal escapades, offering lots of juicy insider information on various Klein products and ad campaigns. An engrossing American success story, warts, ambivalence,

and all. *Donna Seaman*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Beth Stewart:

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