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The Art Of Clairtone: The Making Of A Design Icon, 1958-1971



Synopsis

A fully illustrated, stylish look back at the story behind a Canadian design icon. For a decade, in the 1960s, Clairtone Sound Corporation captured the spirit of the times: sophisticated, cosmopolitan, liberated. From its modern oiled-walnut and teak stereos to its minimalist logos and promotional materials, Clairtone produced a powerful and enduring body of design work. Founded in 1958 by two young Canadians, Peter Munk and David Gilmour, Clairtone quickly became known for its iconic designs and masterful advertising campaigns. Its acclaimed Project G stereo, with its space-age styling, epitomized the Swinging Sixties. Famously, Hugh Hefner owned a Project G. So did Frank Sinatra. Oscar Peterson affirmed that his music sounded as good on a G as it did live. In 1967, suggesting how deeply Clairtone's G series had come to be identified with popular culture, the G2 appeared in *The Graduate* with Dustin Hoffman and Anne Bancroft. With 250 illustrations, including previously unpublished drawings, rare film stills, confidential memorandums, and original photography, *The Art of Clairtone* is a candid and in-depth look at the company's skyrocketing success and sensational collapse. Through the recollections of those who knew Clairtone best, from its founders to its designers, engineers, and salesmen, and with comments from Karim Rashid, Douglas Coupland, Tyler Brûlé, and Bruce Mau, among others, this elegant book, published on the 50th anniversary of Clairtone's launch, celebrates an iconoclastic company that once seemed to represent the promise of Canada.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is approximately 10" x 9" in size with an attractive dust jacket and 177 pages, co-written by the daughter of one of the two founders of the Company. It is filled with photographs (some full page) and lucid commentary. Also included are copies of hand-written initial design and specification sheets along with internal memos and advertising layouts. Most of the book is dedicated to the "Project G" which is one of, if not the most, innovative console stereos of the period and certainly the most famous of the Company's products. I lusted after this magnificent collection of components and cabinetry when I was young, but the \$1,600 price tag was well beyond my means. The overall system engineering was first-rate and the sound was amazing for its time. Another reason to purchase the product was use of well-known components such as DUAL, ELAC-MIRACORD and GARRARD record changers. The only small complaint I have is not including pictures of the entire product line. Even if you have never heard of this Company or its products, you will be entertained by reading about a business that had a great impact within its product niche but was ultimately driven into the ground by its founders too-grandiose dreams: what a loss!

During the 1960s, the Clairtone Sound Corporation had a meteoric success in design and was known for its ability to reflect the spirit of those turbulent, sophisticated, cosmopolitan, experimental times. Founded in 1958 by two young Canadians, Peter Munk and David Gilmour, Clairtone was especially acclaimed for its iconic designs and masterful designs for everything from stereo cabinetry to television panels. Their advertising successes made Clairtone designs an integral part of the popular culture. Their rise to prominence was as dramatic as their sudden collapse and is provided with an insightful commentary by co-authors Nina Munk and Rachel Gotlieb. Enhanced with 250 illustrations (including previously unpublished drawings, rare film stills, confidential memorandums and original photography), this informed and informative corporate history is enhanced further with interviews with its founders, designers, engineers and salesman and is a fitting memorial to one of the most iconoclastic companies that Canada has ever produced. A fascinating read, "The Art Of Clairtone: The Making Of A Design Icon, 1958-1971" is highly recommended reading as a model corporate history.

I highly recommend purchasing "The Art of Clairtone: The Making of a Design Icon, 1958-1971". The authors, Nina Munk and Rachel Gotlieb, have revealed a fascinating behind-the-scenes tale of the rise and fall of Clairtone. I was initially drawn to the book due to my own fascination with electronic equipment, modern industrial design, and Canadiana (since I am Canadian). I have found this book to be very well written so that the reader is captivated from page to page and also

beautifully illustrated which makes the book an excellent visual reference for those who either collect vintage Clairtone electronics or have an interest in industrial design in general. This book is chock full of lavish colour illustrations and photographs depicting initial designs, close-up details of Clairtone products, and the marketing campaigns of the era. I simply could not put down "The Art of Clairtone" once I started reading it and I congratulate the authors for producing this delightful gem of a book.

Rare look into one of the true icons of early upscale sound systems with heavy design effect. The last time I saw one for sale was in Palm Springs, Ca. at nearly \$13,000! Solid and wonderfully researched.

Fascinating behind the scenes look at the rise and fall of a Canadian company way ahead of its time. LOVE the treasure of photographs.

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