



The Chrysler Building: Creating a New York Icon Day by Day

David Stravitz

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The Chrysler Building is surely the jewel in the crown of New York City's skyline. Completed in 1930, the 77-story Art Deco skyscraper--the tallest in the world at the time it was finished--quickly became the symbol of big city glamour, excitement, and style. Its cloud-piercing spire and gleaming, steel-clad ornament depicting gargoyles, hubcaps, and the winged helmets of Mercury came to represent the thrill of the Machine Age at its most exuberant.

But, until now, this magnificent building has also been one of the least documented and studied, a simple result of the fact that there were no known archives relating to its design or construction. This material was lost in the decades following its completion, or so everyone believed, until author David Stravitz discovered a box of negatives on the floor of a defunct stock photo company, just days before they were to be shipped off for silver reclamation. The never-before-seen photographs, reproduced as sumptuous duotones in this oversize book, illustrate the day-by-day construction of this American icon.

The photographs were taken by professional photo companies hired to document the construction of the building. In so doing, they also captured the day-to-day life taking place on the streets and in the environs of the Chrysler Building in exquisite detail.

This book beautifully illustrates the history of one of the most important buildings in New York as it emerged from street level to spire.

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