

VOGUE

A New Book Offers a Peek Inside the Gilded Paradise of Palm Beach

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Melania and Donald Trump, 2013
Photo: Harry Benson

The preppy triangle of Manhattan, Southampton, and Palm Beach is a truly rarefied circle, the latter two enclaves providing much needed respite from the hectic city life of the first. And with the social season upon us, a new tome, *Palm Beach People* (out November 11), is aiming to document the gilded paradise of Florida. Who better than society scribe Hilary Geary Ross and legendary photographer Harry Benson, CBE to capture the elegance and splendor of fun in the sun? “Harry’s photos are never ever dull,” says Ross. “A few jokes, suggestions on how to pose, then abracadabra, the magic happens, and the photograph becomes a portrait!” As a follow-up to their first book, *New York New*

York, Benson and Ross have cataloged iconic figures ranging from Estée Lauder (captured sitting for a portrait by Marion Pike in 1974) and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor to more contemporary rulers of Palm Beach including Julia and David Koch, Melania and Donald Trump, and the Pulitzer clan, whose contribution to fashion still lives on today. “Everyone was interesting,” says Benson.

Benson’s photographs span decades—and even generations. Aerin Lauder is shown in a diaphanous evening dress on one spread, while her uncle, Leonard Lauder, elegantly reposes on the grounds of his award-winning home. “It was a pleasure to photograph old friends and make new ones during the two years that we worked on the book,” adds Benson. Those chums now include designer Vera Wang, spotted on links at the Trump International Golf Club; a young Brooke Shields, sunning herself on a boat; and even Zsa Zsa Gabor in full evening dress atop a horse. “No two days are alike,” says Benson, with Ross adding, “Palm Beach is getting better and better every year as more and more friends are moving down.” And although summer might have just ended, the duo is already gearing up for the next adventure—a book focusing on eastern Long Island, including Southampton, with Ross excitedly noting, “It’s a truly beautiful part of the world.”