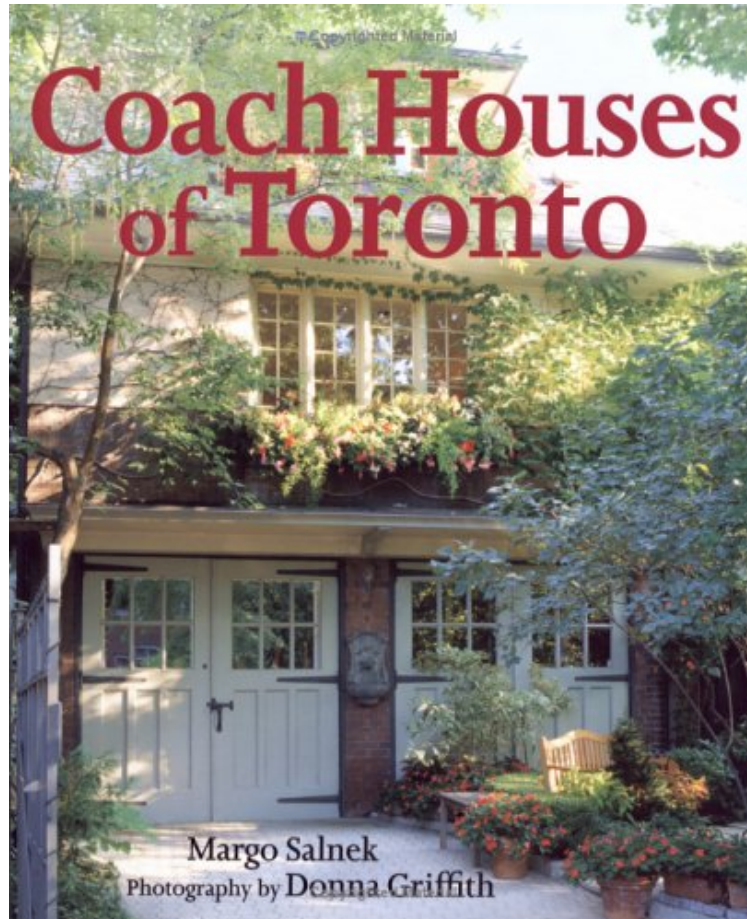


Coach Houses of Toronto

Margo Salnek

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Margo Salnek : Coach Houses of Toronto before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Coach Houses of Toronto:

An affectionate tribute to some of Toronto's most beautiful hidden homes. Some of the most charming homes in the best neighborhoods of today's modern cities once housed horse teams and carriages. Then ripe with the smells of leather, horse and hay, they are now among the most coveted urban dwellings. This book is a pictorial tour of 22 of Toronto's most attractive coach house homes, some lovingly preserved, others carefully restored, and most extensively renovated. Despite their dramatic interior-design differences, all share a distinctive historic allure. As the twentieth century progressed, the magnificent coach houses were demolished or fell into disrepair. Because of their age and rarity, the surviving coach houses are highly prized and tenaciously protected by their owners and by many city historical boards across North America. This beautiful collection of essays and images pays homage to these secret

homes.

Romantic and elegant living spaces... an impressive portfolio of historic Toronto coach houses. (Renovation and Decor 2006-05-01)23 of these lovely homes with their gardens and luxurious interiors... 170 color photos are particularly fine in showing the variety of architectural style. (Carole Desormeaux Canadian Camera)About the Author Donna Griffith is a commercial photographer whose work appears regularly in such magazines as Canadian Home and Country, Gardening Life, Canadian House and Home, Style at Home, Chatelaine, British Country Homes and Interiors and Canadian Living. She lives in Toronto Margo Salnek lives in an English-inspired coach house in Toronto's Annex neighborhood. She has written for television, film and musical theater for over 20 years. This is her first book. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.A Secret World Hidden behind and beside magnificent historic houses in old, established enclaves in the city of Toronto is a world few people know exists. It is the secret world of the coach house. A coach house was a building originally constructed to house the family's carriage and pair. Often the groomsmen and his family lived above the horses, on the upper floor. These charming buildings architecturally mirrored the parent house, and were not usually noticeable from the main entrance. The distinguishing mark of an authentic coach house is the cupola on the roof. The cupola was built originally as an air vent for the hayloft of the building. With the invention of the horseless carriage in the early 20th century, these beautiful buildings usually became grand garages. The groom's quarters above served to store family memorabilia and collectibles and, during the Great Depression, provided extra living space. Many of the city's grander pre First World War garages, built at a time when a motorcar was a novel luxury reserved for the wealthy, and the design of the garage was as important as that of the house, are also known as coach houses. Their upper floors might have housed the chauffeur and his family. After the Second World War, however, as suburban living became the lifestyle of choice, many of the beautiful homes of the 19th and early 20th centuries were converted into rooming houses, leaving the coach house to fall into disrepair. In the 1960s, artists and students in search of cheap rent began to inhabit the groom's quarters. It wasn't long before these unusual and charming buildings were sought out by local architects and designers, who began to restore and renovate the interiors into offices, studios and residences. Because so many of the century coach houses had been torn down or renovated to the extent that they were no longer recognizable, the Toronto Historical Board acted to protect the facade and integrity of these beautiful century-old buildings. Today, coach houses are home to movie stars, designers, architects, artists, authors, business executives, clergy, and people who love to live in unusual urban spaces. I am one of those lucky people. It was a brisk afternoon in late October when I parked my car on a busy side street in the heart of downtown Toronto. Hidden behind a vintage iron gate and a massive oak tree ablaze with fall colours stood a vine-covered structure, barely noticeable from the street. The real estate agent opened the gate and introduced me to the secret world of the coach house, and within forty-eight hours my husband and I were the new owners. Our coach house is reminiscent of the mystical English cottage, complete with climbing vines, lush gardens and intimate interior spaces. It is rich with the history of our ancestors. Best of all, it is tucked away beside a magnificent historical home in the centre of Toronto, a soothing retreat from the busyness of the city. Whether you live in your own coach house, dream of owning one, or simply wish to find inspiration for your own home in these pages, I hope you will enjoy this collection of beautiful exteriors, interiors and gardens that our team has lovingly put together.