

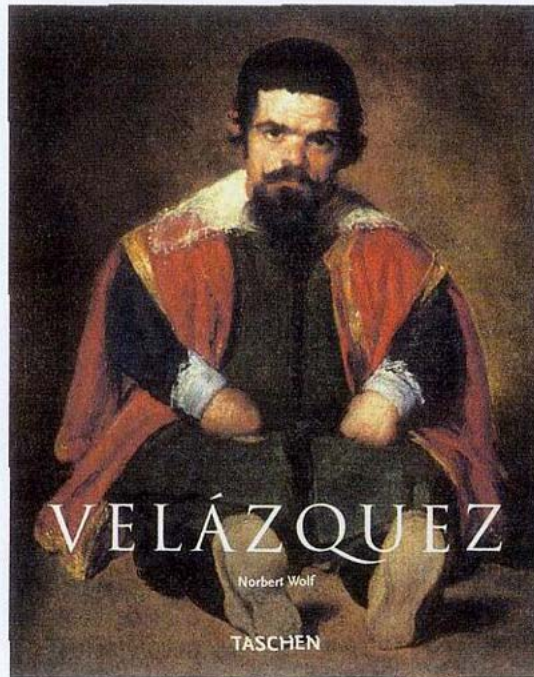
Velázquez

Jacky Wood spots a bargain

Dubbed 'the painter of painters' by Manet and revered by Picasso, Velázquez was relatively unknown outside his native Spain until nineteenth century painters, and later the Impressionists, began to regard him as a pioneer of modernity. While most of us are familiar with the 'Rokeby Venus', there's now a unique opportunity to see practically half of his surviving works in the new exhibition at London's National Gallery, which features many loans from major international galleries.

To get the most out of this exhibition it might be worth doing a bit of background reading, and you can't do better than this beautifully presented book. Its format (18x23cm) allows decent-sized reproductions, while still being easily portable.

The text is informative and accessible, liberally illustrated with high-quality images. Many of the works on show in London can be enjoyed in the book, without stirring from your armchair: *The Bodegones* with their insights into daily life; a deliciously camp Mars; dumpling-faced royal ladies; a portrait of *Innocent X* that inspired Francis Bacon's *Screaming Pope*—several with detail



enlargements to highlight the artist's technique.
A terrific book at a bargain price.

**Treat yourself, or try your luck
with our prize draw offer to win one
of six copies (WIN, p.50)**

**Diego Velázquez, The Face of Spain
By Norbert Wolf Taschen/£4.99PB
ISBN 10 3 8228 6324 695pp**