



Tiki Modern. By Sven A. Kirsten.
Taschen. \$39.99.

Kirsten follows up his now-classic *The Book of Tiki* with a fabulously illustrated book that argues that tiki design is intrinsically modern, not a bad dream that attached itself to the style.

Kirsten traces tiki style back to Picasso, to the surrealist poet Paul Eluard (seen in a tiki mask in 1936), and to the art movements Cubism and Die Brücke. "As modernism became more streamlined and antiseptic in the 1950s, designers remembered its beginnings, and juxtaposed the clean lines of modern architecture and design with the 'savage' aesthetic of primitive forms and textiles," Kirsten observes.

While some of his chapters string together words merely to hold the pictures together, others dig deeper. Kirsten tells the tale of William Westenhaver, who started out as a promising modern artist and devolved into the mind behind Witco, the firm that produced some of the best and some of the tackiest tiki furnishings ever. Throughout his career, Westenhaver turned his freeform doodles into tiki-modern wall art that, at its best, had rhythm and a vigorous line.

This book is sure to please what Kirsten calls "sophisticated suburban savages."