



The Wabi-Sabi House: The Japanese Art of Imperfect Beauty

Robyn Griggs Lawrence , Joe Coca (Photographer)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Wabi-Sabi House: The Japanese Art of Imperfect Beauty

Robyn Griggs Lawrence , Joe Coca (Photographer)

The Wabi-Sabi House: The Japanese Art of Imperfect Beauty Robyn Griggs Lawrence , Joe Coca (Photographer)

What is wabi-sabi?

Simply put, wabi-sabi is the marriage of the Japanese wabi, meaning humble, and sabi, which connotes beauty in the natural progression of time. Together, the phrase invites us to set aside our pursuit of perfection and learn to appreciate the simple, unaffected beauty of things as they are. Wabi-sabi can be found in the deep cracks of a weathering pine table. It is flea markets, wildflowers, and cobblestones. Intimately tied to Zen Buddhism, wabi-sabi is an aesthetic that welcomes comfort and a subtle spiritual component into the home. It is not a decorating style, per se, but a mind-set. To create a true wabi-sabi environment, one must slowly strip away excess and learn to be satisfied living in the moment.

The Wabi-Sabi House recounts the rich history of this emerging trend in home design and reveals countless ways to introduce wabi-sabi elements into contemporary living spaces, including tips for gracefully decorating with salvaged materials and vintage furnishings, advice on how to rediscover the lost joy of hand-crafting household items (or supporting artisans who do), and simple solutions for clearing clutter and blocking noise (even with a spouse, kids, and no closet space).

But The Wabi-Sabi House is so much more than a handbook for interior design. With heart and a sense of humor, author Robyn Griggs Lawrence gently reminds us that there is a life in lifestyle books, and she encourages people from all walks of life to slow down and recognize beauty in what may seem ordinary. Intimate, authoritative, and truly inspirational, "The Wabi-Sabi House" lays the foundation for transforming any home into a nurturing retreat from a hectic world.

The Wabi-Sabi House: The Japanese Art of Imperfect Beauty Details

Date : Published November 23rd 2004 by Clarkson Potter

ISBN : 9781400050468

Author : Robyn Griggs Lawrence , Joe Coca (Photographer)

Format : Hardcover 192 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Cultural, Japan, Spirituality, Architecture, Art

 [Download The Wabi-Sabi House: The Japanese Art of Imperfect Beau ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Wabi-Sabi House: The Japanese Art of Imperfect Be ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Wabi-Sabi House: The Japanese Art of Imperfect Beauty Robyn Griggs Lawrence , Joe Coca (Photographer)

From Reader Review The Wabi-Sabi House: The Japanese Art of Imperfect Beauty for online ebook

Aleah says

"Simply put, wabi-sabi is the marriage of the Japanese *wabi*, meaning humble, and *sabi*, which connotes beauty in the natural progression of time. Together, the phrase invites us to set aside our pursuit of perfection and learn to appreciate the simple, unaffected beauty of things as they are." -- Robyn Griggs Lawrence, *The Wabi-Sabi House*

I bought *The Wabi-Sabi House* 4 or 5 years ago. I remember really enjoying the book but somehow it got put down unfinished, until recently. My current fascination with the philosophy of Taoism brought this book back to mind. I found that many of the ideas I was reading in the books on Taoism mirrored concepts I'd seen in *The Wabi-Sabi House* all those years ago. So I fished this book back out of the bookshelf and gave it another go, this time getting all the way to the end before it was again tucked away on the shelf.

I'm clearly no wabi-sabi aficionado, but my understanding is that this Japanese aesthetic is rooted in Zen Buddhism. And in my readings on Taoism I did learn that Taoism had an influence on that particular school of Buddhist thought. The concepts of simplicity, humbleness, and appreciation are clearly shared by both philosophies.

This book was very wabi-sabi in its own right. The focus is on home decor from the wabi-sabi perspective, but there are segues into voluntary simplicity, the art of tea, and other connected ideas. Pictures were sparse throughout. I can understand why this was done (it's very wabi-sabi) but would have liked illustrations of the various schools of design that were discussed. Someone without a background in home design (like myself) was a little lost in the sea of name dropping. The only name I recognized was Frank Lloyd Wright, the rest was white noise. But a full list of resources in the back gives websites for further research so I suppose I shouldn't really complain.

And, in any case, after reading this book I found myself looking at the well-loved but aged things in my home a bit differently, with more appreciation and acceptance. I will definitely learn more about wabi-sabi and hope to incorporate it into my home. For these reasons alone I'd gladly recommend this book to anyone interested in paring down and finding the beauty of life as it happens.

Yanic says

This was a second read for me... something I could pick up for a few minutes during my busy days and read a few pages here and there. This book has once again provided me with much peace of mind, inspiration and joy. Unlike many other books that speak of simplifying your life, this one does so with a very kind and non-forceful attitude. Instead of looking at how your home is wrong and telling you how to change it, it shows you that with simple adjustments, you too can have a more peaceful home filled with beauty and love. I will probably read it a 3rd time in the years to come.

Juli Anna says

This book was all over the place, and took far too many liberties with a non-English term than I think is laudable. Not to mention the book design was a complete ripoff of Wabi-Sabi: For Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers.

Andrew Tatge says

I came to this book as a new homeowner seeking to get practical advice and a stronger concept of what "wabi-sabi" is. This book offers both in good balance.

Don't expect lots of illustrative pictures. The content of the book seems like a conscious refute of the ultra-clean and staged photos one finds in magazines. Lawrence comes from a magazine editing background, so it feels like an intentional and strategic decision that fits the content and intent of the book: wabi-sabi is not all glamorous or stylish, let alone primarily rooted in appearances. Early on the point is made that wabi-sabi is fundamentally about hosting and treating other people. I kind of wish that some of the practical insights or points about aesthetics had been connected back to that because I had a hard time relating the two at times.

The book is from the early 00's and holds up well. If this were published a decade later, it would might have had "minimalism" or "mindfulness" somewhere in it's title (though the book does differentiate wabi-sabi from cold 20th century modernism and simplicity); a few decades earlier "simplicity" or "simple living" might have fit in. If you have read books about any of these topics, you may come across familiar ideas and rationales. I can't really fault the book for providing familiar material. The variety and intersections it created, and the permission to adapt concepts, are welcome.

Michelle says

This book has a lovely philosophy that accepts or embraces, rather, imperfection. It's full of good lessons and peacefulness.

Eric says

3.5 stars. I do recommend this book for its emphasis on simplicity and on finding and integrated wholeness in how we can try to mindfully arrange our living areas. Her chapters on welcoming everyone who comes into your house with a cup of tea or a small gift made me think of hospitality and openness to everyone including the least of the ones that we encounter. Very Buddhist in orientation, this book was encouraging to me. Recommended for fans of Simplicity Parenting.

Not fantastic but thought provoking.

Arminzerella says

Robin Griggs Lawrence is the editor in chief of the magazine "Natural Home," and she's been studying the wabi-sabi phenomenon since she interviewed a Maine homeowner about a rusty grate hanging on her wall. Wabi and sabi are two words that have more recently become linked together (and by coincidence they

rhyme and sound hip). Wabi means something like a noble sort of poverty and simpleness – something that is chosen rather than a state that one sinks into. Sabi refers to an aging process where things are old, but loved and well-cared for; it incorporates a sense of history along with age, but again, a noble history and one of use. So together these words describe a way of life and a decorating style that incorporates well-loved, used items (old, but not shabby dirty), and spare design; comfort and a sense of home but not overdone.

The book itself strives to be wabi-sabi. The photographs/illustrations are not what one expects of decorating books these days, where one generally finds the two page spreads of artfully designed/decorated rooms that have all of their perfect pillows plumped, the hard wood floors shining, and the sunlight gleaming through windows that bear not one print from a dog nose. These rooms are lovely, but they aren't lived in. Wabi sabi attempts to correct that.

There's a good deal of philosophy mixed into this. It's not just about a look that one achieves, but about the lifestyle and the values that go along with it. It's more of a holistic decorating book, because if you make your home somewhere where you live, and pare your possessions down to those things you really need and value, you're living a richer life than if you were to buy everything in sight and stockpile it in/on every available space. There's also a running discussion of tea ceremonies and how they play into this idea of wabi and sabi. That may seem odd to the Westerner, and particularly the American, most of who do not have an ingrained tea habit, but think about the slow food movement and think about enjoying what life has to offer, instead of rushing through it madly, and you'll get a sense of the uncluttered and, nonetheless, rich lifestyle that this kind of living has to offer.

Deborah says

Most decorating books are eye candy; this one is soul food. If you aren't familiar with wabi-sabi, it's a Japanese philosophy closely tied to Zen Buddhism, almost impossible to explain in few words to people from western cultures. But for the sake of a book review, I'll attempt it... The concept of wabi includes harmony, balance, simplicity, and humility; sabi translates literally as "the bloom of time". Taken together, the words describe the beauty of everyday, functional objects that we cherish because they are well used, patinated, handmade, and tied to memories. It's living in the moment, modestly and authentically. The author — also editor of Natural Home magazine — explains the concepts and their history thoroughly, then suggests ways to bring them into our modern lives and homes. So inspiring!

An absolute must-read for anyone interested in the related ideas of slowness, voluntary simplicity, or environmentally-friendly and natural living.

Tameca says

I already have a love for rustic bowls, plates and baskets. I also feel that lately there is too much "noise" in my apartment. Clutter abounds. I picked up the book initially because of my want to tame the clutter factor.

What I was not prepared for, and what made me very happy about this book, is the way wabi-sabi is a method of living and not just a home decorating slash de-cluttering motif.

Wabi-Sabi is what I am already and more. It is an idea that I might have called granola or hippie-dippie in the past. A good friend of mine's old house was made of stone and decorated with branches, pine cones,

fruits pricked by cloves in the winter time and dried desert blooms in hand turned vases in the summer. My friend spun wool from her mother's sheep, made knotty wool sweaters and scarves and hats for the cold. The kitchen was full of antique, non-mechanized (and lasting!) utensils. All of these things are quite wabi-sabi, according to the book.

I have an eye for more rustic and earthy things. There is a framed Bodhi leaf on the book shelf, a large half shell to catch the ashes of my incense. One of the quilts my great grandmother made is lying on the bed. Pens and post-its and other household materials are held in chipped earthenware and baskets. My antique desk is unpolished, scuffed, worn and well-used and it is bedecked by three crumbling pine cones I found in the forests of Idaho, a long time ago.

The book is an inspiration to further this tendency to include the rustic and unpolished in my life. It also links itself to Zen Buddhism. (All things come from nothingness or are on their way to nothingness. All things are imperfect. Observation is a key, as is living the present moment). Because of its inherent ideas, wabi-sabi becomes a way of life in general, an enjoyment of the present, an appreciation of any thing, relationship or idea in whatever state it is in at any given time. The book prompts its readers to shirk the mindset of replacing what is deteriorating (though we do not keep in our houses those things that are dilapidated. Wabi-Sabi is not slobby or ruin) and to instead appreciate the chips, cracks, folds, and wrinkles of time.

Emma says

My dad told me to read this book, saying that our house was very wabi-sabi. At first I thought that was what you put on sushi, but not, it is not. It also does not mean you can be a slob and call it wabi-sabi. It is the appreciation of the natural and the less-than-perfect. We could all use a little more of that. Interesting, inspiring, thankfully does not leave you with another list of things to do.

Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says

Wabi-sabi is the beauty of the imperfect. I've always said that my house is a wabi-sabi house, so how could I resist this book?

Liza says

Intersting book, but only just. Ever read a book and think to yourself, "Wow, what was an epiphany for this person is just totally obvious to me, and always has been." There's my reaction in a nutshell; this person is thrilled to have figured out that plastic is bad, wood is good. And while I love having my own opinions confirmed by print, I am a little bitter that I didn't make a ton of money writing a book that rejects artificial materials and manages to express a barely developed understanding of buddhist principles. Easy money for sure.

But the book is pretty and it will make you feel good about all your flea market finds.....but really, no great epiphanies here.

Emily says

Thoroughly explains the 2 terms--they have distinct meanings--and then interprets those principles for furnishing, decorating, and using a house. Touches on sustainability, minimalism without austerity, and timeworn beauty that is not commodified as in shabby chic.

Laura says

My brother Eric expressed my thoughts perfectly in his review of this book so I'm just copying it here (I hope you don't mind, brother):

"I do recommend this book for its emphasis on simplicity and on finding an integrated wholeness in how we can try to mindfully arrange our living areas. Her chapters on welcoming everyone who comes into your house with a cup of tea or a small gift made me think of hospitality and openness to everyone including the least of the ones that we encounter. Very Buddhist in orientation, this book was encouraging to me. Recommended for fans of Simplicity Parenting.

Not fantastic but thought provoking."

Areeg Samy says

I read this book because I thought it was purely about the wabi-sabi philosophies. However, it turned out to be more of a home styling book guiding the readers through stylising their american homes into a wabi-sabi manner. You could say it's like those interior design magazines and such. It got really boring at some points giving pointers on how to renovate your house or go to flea markets. At some other points it talked about meditation and how to specify a certain space at your home for contemplation. Although, it wasn't as I expected but it had a nice intro about wabi and sabi, how the terms originated, and how people started combining them together as one term. It had some nice stories about tea masters like Sen no Riky?. It's not the best read or even a good read for me at least, but it was fine. It had some good ideas in there, like creating a space or a room in your house for thinking "a thinking room ... I like that!
