

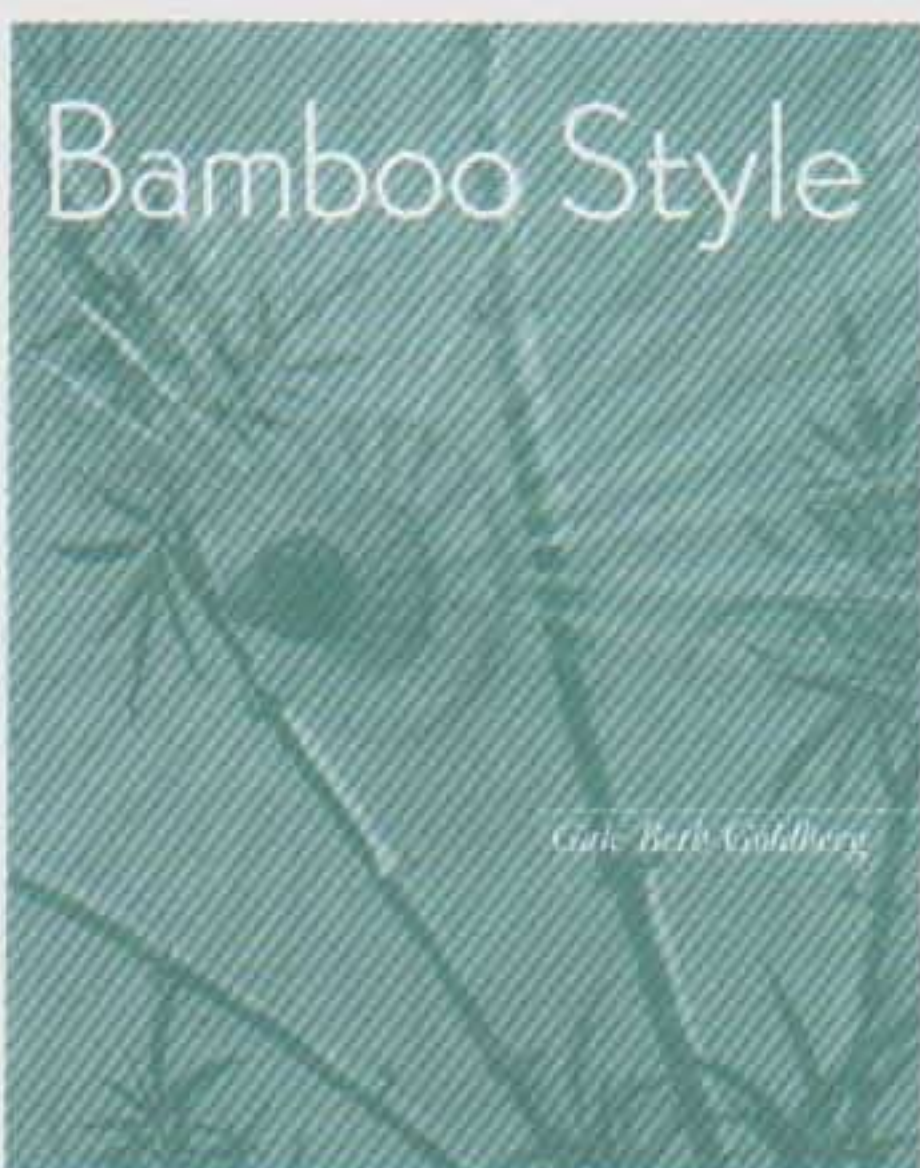
Book Review

Bamboo Style

By Gale Beth Goldberg

Book Review by Darrel DeBoer

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Even though both my wife and I are featured numerous times in this book, I can say with minimal bias that **this is a book well worth having.** The breadth of color pictures for the price give the uninitiated a good sense of what is possible with bamboo and the experienced a thirst for more. I found myself caught up in the excitement of

new ways to use this great plant. For example: stacking splits where end grain is all that is seen, as in a sculpture by Charissa Brock; or the bridges meant for trucks, spanning over 160 feet (49 m) relying entirely on bamboo, designed and built by German engineer Jorg Stamm. I believe this is the first time his bridges have been published in this country.

Though the listed resources favor Goldberg's region of Southern California, and the photographs prove how difficult it is to capture a clear shot of bamboo flooring, the text is successful in finding the many ways bamboo is working its way into American culture. Labor-intensive craft items almost always arrive here from other countries, taken out of their original cultural context. However, bamboo's random, un-machined look is widely sought right now, even though most people in the U.S. have never been inside a grove of grass this large. In some circles, there is the worry that the fall from fashion may be as rapid.

In the U.S., we make the easy substitutions first. Bamboo flooring is installed the same as oak flooring, bamboo furniture is completely conceived and fabricated in another culture which knows how to work this material that behaves very differently than our familiar wood, but the strength, beauty and light weight make bamboo very appropriate here.

Just about the time the reader is saturated with absorbing the poetry and sumptuous photos, the reader is hit with a change of pace in sketches on propagation and care of plants, as well as a few step-by-step quick projects that make use of simple tools – as opposed to Norm Abrams' laser-guided radial-arm saw! ■