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ODD MAN IN: NORTON SIMON AND THE PURSUIT OF CULTURE (HARDBACK)



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University of California Press, United States, 1998. Hardback. Condition: New. New. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. In 1931, at age 24, Norton Simon invested \$7,000 in a bankrupt juice bottling plant. This investment grew into Hunt Foods, which soon ruled California's canned tomatoes empire. With a rare ability to transform laggard companies into highly profitable enterprises, Simon went on to amass a huge fortune. Then, in his late forties, he turned to art collecting and built one of the greatest private collections since World War II. Suzanne Muchnic has written an intimate and very readable biography of Norton Simon and at the same time provides a thoughtful overview of Los Angeles culture in the postwar years. The tycoon-turned-art-collector was accused of knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing, but he pursued art with passion. A shrewd negotiator, obsessed by power, Simon astonished the art world with acquisitions ranging from Old Masters to Impressionists to rare Indian and Asian artworks. Searching for an appropriate home for his 12,000-strong collection, Simon courted (and disappointed) numerous California museums before eventually taking over the floundering Pasadena Art Museum, now the Norton Simon Museum. Simon's influence extended beyond the business and art world: as a University of California regent he challenged funding cutbacks, sympathized with student activists, and opposed the firing of Angela Davis. His personal life was equally tumultuous and included a difficult divorce, his 31-year-old son's suicide, a whirlwind courtship and marriage to actress Jennifer Jones, and a run for the U.S. Senate. Simon died in 1993, and during his last ten years Suzanne Muchnic was the only person to whom he granted an interview. *Odd Man In* reveals a man very much of his time--brilliant, anxious, powerful, and caught up...



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