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# Historical Revivals, Commercial Enterprise and Public Confusion: Negotiating Taste, 1860–1890

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## Abstract

The history of fashionable taste in interior decoration has often included historic revivals, but during this period the almost bewildering array of styles based on national, foreign and exotic sources required the

investigative skills and influential arguments of design reformers and authors of advice manuals to guide consumer in the development of their personal taste at home. While museums and exhibitions offered visitors focused displays and other opportunities to increase their knowledge of historical or exotic styles, designers, manufacturers, dealers and retailers competed to attract customers with attractive catalogues and alluring collections of fashionable designs and products based on historic models, hoping to encourage greater commitment and therefore more investment from those eager to furnish their homes in the latest style. The consumer was thus educated, persuaded, influenced and finally manipulated into adopting whatever current style in home decorating and furnishing suited their income, practical considerations and personal education.

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