



High Line: The Inside Story of New York City's Park in the Sky

Joshua David, Robert Hammond

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How two New Yorkers led the transformation of a derelict elevated railway into a grand?and beloved?open space

The High Line, a new park atop an elevated rail structure on Manhattan's West Side, is among the most innovative urban reclamation projects in memory. The story of how it came to be is a remarkable one: two young citizens with no prior experience in planning and development collaborated with their neighbors, elected officials, artists, local business owners, and leaders of burgeoning movements in horticulture and landscape architecture to create a park celebrated worldwide as a model for creatively designed, socially vibrant, ecologically sound public space.

Joshua David and Robert Hammond met in 1999 at a community board meeting to consider the fate of the High Line. Built in the 1930s, it carried freight trains to the West Side when the area was defined by factories and warehouses. But when trains were replaced by truck transport, the High Line became obsolete. By century's end it was a rusty, forbidding ruin. Plants grew between the tracks, giving it a wild and striking beauty.

David and Hammond loved the ruin and saw in it an opportunity to create a new way to experience their city. Over ten years, they did so. In this candid and inspiring book?lavishly illustrated?they tell how they relied on skill, luck, and good timing: a crucial court ruling, an inspiring design contest, the enthusiasm of Mayor Bloomberg, the concern for urban planning issues following 9/11. Now the High Line?a half-mile expanse of plants, paths, staircases, and framed vistas?runs through a transformed West Side and reminds us that extraordinary things are possible when creative people work together for the common good.

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