



San Francisco
Book Review

Prepared by: San Francisco Book Review
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A 5-STAR REVIEW

The practice of medicine has been part of human activity since the dawn of civilization. Pre-modern practitioners relied on natural cycles for their harvest, while their modern counterparts have found ways to distill the very essence of these potions and produce them synthetically. However, not every secret has been uncovered, and using herbs and oils continues into contemporary times.

Healing Civilizations is a gorgeous large-format book with high-quality paper and full-color pictures. It is 14×10 inches in size and weighs over five pounds, which would qualify it as a “coffee-table book.” However, that descriptor would be a disservice to this work. While it is the kind of book that one can leaf through with great delight for a few minutes (okay, hours), the blend of personal narrative could turn a casual reader into an avid one. After the introductory chapters, the book explores ancient natural remedies in several parts of the world (in the Ancient World, along the Silk Road, and in the Americas). The next set of chapters explain contemporary methods of producing essential oils and quality-assurance techniques deployed to ensure consistent oils. There are also chapters on perfumery and aromatherapy. The last set of chapters devotes a double page for each of the various oils. One page provides a thumbnail summary, and the other is a full-color picture. These summaries contain not only popular areas of application from ancient medicine but also chemical and physical properties. For some of the oils, mass-spectrograph and chemical structures are also provided.

The book highlights the blending of modern science and ancient medical practices. Readers will be left with the feeling that there is much more to be learned from ancient practices, and modern science is just scratching the surface of ancient wisdom. An excellent reference for those interested in natural cures.