

base. The solid green splodges representing wine regions (p.106) extend far beyond the base map, making the map look like its color separations are grossly misaligned. The several maps of bathymetry lack any contour values (pp. 57 & 115-123).

This is not an academic or scientific text, but a coffee-table book, aimed explicitly at “anyone who appreciates the history, nature and future of the ...lakes”. But as both a cartographer, and someone new to the Great Lakes region eager to learn more about the geography of my new home, I found the book disappointing in content, and sloppy in execution. I can only recommend it as a case-study in poor cartographic technique.

Iconic Transit Maps: The World's Best Designs, By Mark Ovenden



Ovenden, Mark. *Iconic Transit Maps: The World's Best Designs*. London: Prestel Publishing, 2024. 200p. ISBN: 978-3-79138-025-4

Iconic Transit Maps by Mark Ovenden takes a tour through cities around the world via the maps and graphic design of their transit systems. It emphasizes the importance of

understandable graphic design for transit systems; as Erik Spiekermann writes in the foreword, "If a transit map looks inviting and legible, the city itself becomes accessible." While the ebook provides the images and text adequately, the print version of this book is beautiful. The oversized format allows for large, high-quality images of the transit systems and historical photographs, allowing the reader to see more details.

Ovenden is an author, lecturer and television/radio presenter in the U.K. He primarily focuses on design, architecture, cartography, signage and typefaces in the world of transport. He has published several previous books on metropolitan transit map design, including two looking specifically at the metro maps of Paris and London.

The volume looks at fifty-three transit systems from around the world, organized by continent. Each profile provides a brief history of the transit service and the development of its infrastructure and design, including historic and contemporary maps, designs, diagrams, plans, and photographs. The profiles discuss map design characteristics such as fonts, lines, images, alignment, and colours. There is some Canadian content in this book; Ovenden praises Montreal's Metro for its dark background and 35-degree angles, and the Toronto Transit Commission for its inclusion of streetcar routes.

Given their longer histories and significant sizes, several of the European and North American cities get more detailed entries than those of smaller, newer systems. There are extensive sections on the systems of New York, London, Paris, and Berlin. Berlin's profile is especially interesting, given its history of division and reunification, which also applies to its transit systems and their design, as well as the actual city. Most of the

profiles of African and Asian transit systems note their recent rapid development. Shanghai, for example, had one line in 1995 and over the past thirty years, has grown to be the world's largest system, with a stylish, orthogonal transit map.

The final section of the book features perspectives from graphic designers commenting on how graphic design affects passengers' use, understanding, and usability, as well as their dreams for transit systems, and how that impacts the way people navigate the cities they belong to.

This book is designed for a general audience interested in transit systems and graphic design. Those looking for a more comprehensive atlas of transit maps would be better served by Ovenden's *Transit Maps of the World*, which provides maps and a brief history of almost one thousand systems, while those looking for more specific information should be referred to books about individual transit systems.