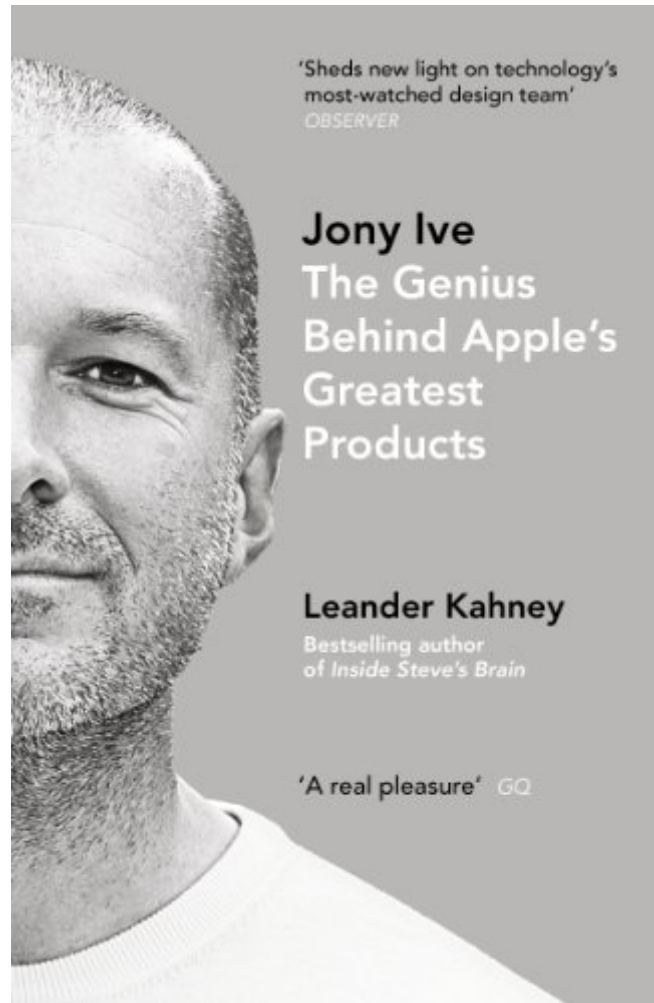


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Jony Ive: The Genius Behind Apple's Greatest Products



Synopsis

An intimate look at the legendary British designer behind Apple's most iconic products - including the Apple Watch. With the death of Steve Jobs in 2011, Jony Ive has become the most important person at Apple. Some would argue he always was. Steve Jobs discovered Ive in 1997, when he found the scruffy British designer toiling away in a studio surrounded by hundreds of sketches and prototypes. Jobs instantly realised he had found a talent who could reverse Apple's decline, and become his 'spiritual partner'. Their collaboration produced iconic products including the iMac, iPod, iPad and iPhone. Designs that overturned entire industries and created the world's most powerful brand. Little has been known about this shy, softly-spoken designer. Until now. This riveting book tells the story of a creative genius, from his early interest in industrial design to his meteoric rise, as well as the principles and practices that led Ive to become the designer of his generation. 'Sheds new light on technology's most-watched design team' Observer 'A real pleasure' GQ Leander Kahney has covered Apple for more than a dozen years and has written three popular books about Apple and the culture of its followers, including *Inside Steve's Brain* and *Cult of Mac*. The former news editor for *Wired.com*, he is currently the editor and publisher of *Cult of Mac.com*. He lives in San Francisco.

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Customer Reviews

I consider myself a casual Apple historian, in that I am a big fan of Apple's work and through that interest I have learned a fair amount about their past. It is with much interest that I purchased Leander Khaney's Jony Ive, a biography of Apple's famed lead designer. A month ago, I linked to an excerpt about the beginnings of the first iPhone. It is quite good and had me excited to read the rest of the book. Unfortunately (but not unexpectedly) this was the best portion of the book by far. I was not turned off by the entire book[1]. The beginning, which talks about Ive's education and work before Apple is informative, telling a story I doubt many are familiar with. Khaney's descriptions of Ive's early work at Apple were also enjoyable, covering the development of the Newton, the Twentieth Anniversary Mac, and the iMac. Part of me wonders, however, if these sections were more enjoyable only because I am less familiar with those product's stories already. If I knew more about them, would I have found as many faults with Khaney's writing as I did with the newer products that I am familiar with? The book is entirely effusive about Jony Ive, to the point of being annoying. The hockey puck mouse that shipped with the original iMac is only gently derided, and Ive's tendency to supplant form over function is likewise given a pass. This gushing attitude hits its high in the final chapter, where credit for the success of the iPod, iPhone, and iPad is seemingly given entirely to Ive: > The iPod was a product of Jony's simplification philosophy. It could have been just another complex MP3 player, but instead he turned it into the iconic gadget that set the design cues for later mobile devices.

I was excited to see a book on Jonathan Ive, the head of Industrial Design at Apple. He is a living legend – with the Queen's knighthood no less - with the string of runaway hits Apple has had. Stories abound of how the finer things in life from forging of samurai swords to examples from marine biology influence his design thinking. Author Leander Kahney summarizes his enduring legacy with this comment – (Ive) introduced the concept of fashion to an industry previously preoccupied with speeds and feeds – I was also a bit concerned Kahney would fall into traps authors often fall into when they profile tech executives as I wrote recently – speculation without direct access to the subject, and a chronological version of the subject's life. Kahney does but it does not affect this book as much. He focuses more on the huge product hits – the iMac, the iPod, the iPhone and iPad and uses his long term watching of Apple (he publishes the Cult of Mac) to use

alumni and other contacts to weave enough of Ive into the descriptions. And unlike Walter Isaacson with Steve Jobs, he does not focus much on Ive's youth other than to show the influence his dad and his consulting days in the UK had on his aesthetic sense. There is plenty of detail to savor – like the Daler Rowney sketchbooks preferred by the ID team, Bondi Blue translucence of the first iMac and Ive's minimalist stamp on the new iOS7. Apple fans will particularly relish these details of two decades of products they have enjoyed. Personally, I liked the design culture Kahney describes that Robert Brunner, IDEO, frog and others brought to the Valley in the 90s that have reshaped so many of our devices since. I also liked the fact he invokes anecdotes from auto, furniture and other product design from Italy, Japan and elsewhere.

Like any excellent novels, this book is so impossible to put down! I am more than fascinated by his approach to the design process and the influences placed upon him as he grew up and studied the industrial design. In addition, it is more than a biography about Jony Ive; it also highlighted the tumultuous challenges and hurdles of shifting the end result from engineering perspectives to design process as well as the difficult environment at Apple when the engineers and executives had a final say in the design process. The book described the exacting attention to the detail in his design process and end result that made Apple products very sought after. For instance, Jony insisted on the design process that favours the intimate human interaction with the machine rather than the end result from the engineering and manufacturing limitations. Because of him, the consumers have developed the taste for the 'organic' and 'humanistic' machines, which made iMac and iBook in translucent casing a roaring success in the late 1990s and iPod in the early 2000s. With Steve Jobs, Jony Ive had shifted the paradigm of interacting with the machines for the 21st century when the end result is finally consumer-oriented first instead of machine-oriented that dominated the electronic devices for many years. Jony Ive forced the engineers to work with him on stripping down the components to the minimum requirements while challenged them to seek the different approach of putting the components together. The result is amazingly high quality products with fewer pieces and manufacturing process that would be unthinkable or impossible in the past.

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