

# GHOST TOWNS

**Berthold Steinhilber**

**With an essay by Wim Wenders  
and texts by Mario Kaiser and Hans-Michael  
Koetzle**

## SPECIFICATIONS

Format: 24.5 x 28

Length: 112 pages

Illustrations: colour

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## SYNOPSIS

The ghost towns of the American West are deserted places whose very air carries echoes of their colourful past. Once, these towns were magnets for prospectors, whose lust for gold, and the wealth it could bring, often destroyed their lives. But the towns' heyday was short-lived, and most have lain empty for at least a hundred years. These days, they are strange, evocative places with many stories to tell about a lost world where dreamers, chancers, and villains all came in search of land, riches, and happiness.

Smithsonian Magazine has commissioned the German photographer Berthold Steinhilber to capture the spirit and atmosphere of the ghost towns with his camera. Working with long exposure times, Steinhilber has created unforgettable and eerie effects. Among the towns he has photographed is the infamous Bodie, where killings and gunfights were an everyday occurrence. Then there is Rhyolite, the little camp that became a boom-town overnight after its first two inhabitants, having drunk too much whisky, let slip their mining secrets.

The stunning photographs are accompanied by short informative captions and an essay by Wim Wenders and Mario Kaiser, who lived in one of the ghost towns to experience the lingering atmosphere of the Gold Rush. Following this is an epilogue by Hans-Michael Koetzle, the well-known German critic of photography, who acknowledges the technique that makes Steinhilber's book a masterpiece.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Soon after finishing his studies in photography, the young German BERTHOLD STEINHILBER received a celebrated prize and was commissioned by *Smithsonian Magazine* to do a photo feature on ghost towns. The piece also appeared in *GEO* magazine in Germany. This is a much more extensive version of the original piece, and is his first published book.

MARIO KAISER lives and works in the United States. He writes regularly for a number of German periodicals, including *DIE ZEIT*, *Spiegel*, and *Frankfurter Rundschau*.

HANS-MICHAEL KOETZLE is photography critic and chief editor of *Leica World*. He has published many articles and books on the history and aesthetics of photography.

**POINTS OF SALE**

The pictures have a magical charm that will win over all those who love the romance of the Wild West and its cowboy legends. The book is a sequel to *Route 66* by Gerd Kittel.