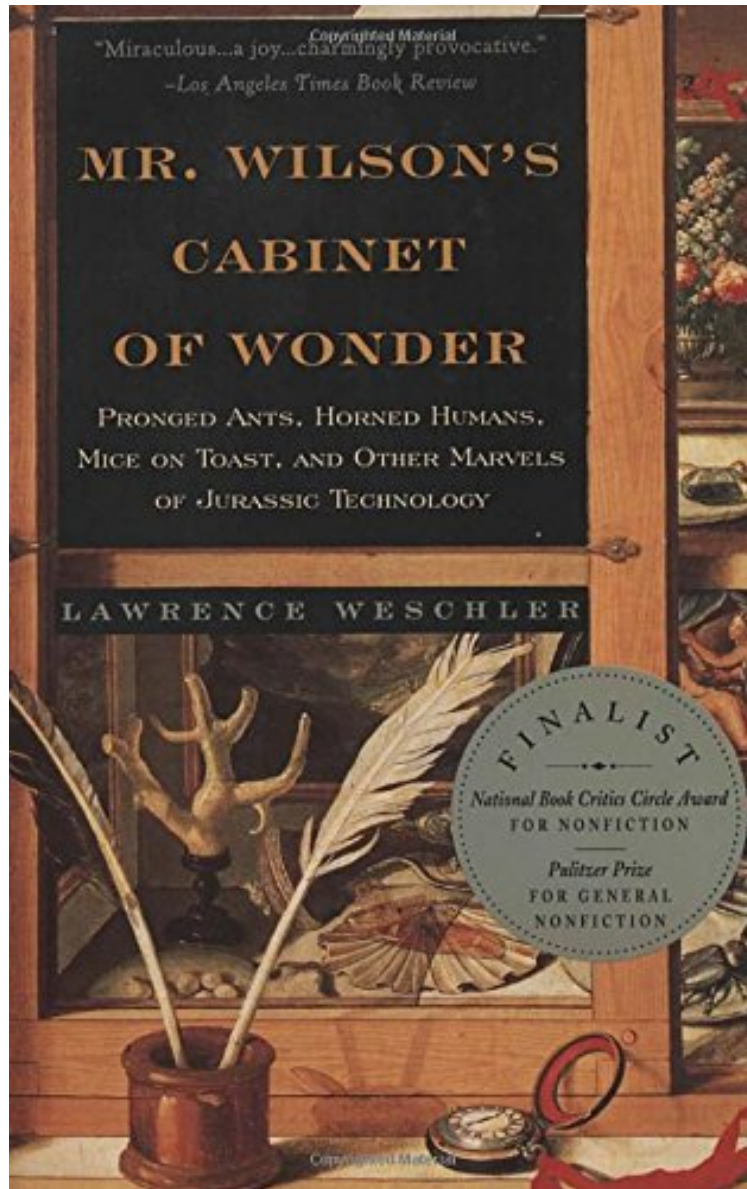


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Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder: Pronged Ants, Horned Humans, Mice on Toast, and Other Marvels of Jurassic Technology

Lawrence Weschler

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Lawrence Weschler : Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder: Pronged Ants, Horned Humans, Mice on Toast, and Other Marvels of Jurassic Technology before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder: Pronged Ants, Horned Humans, Mice on Toast, and Other

Marvels of Jurassic Technology:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good look at the museum, but try to visit before reading
By Ryan A. Ward
I went to the Museum of Jurassic Technology a few months ago, and immediately fell in love. I didn't understand much, but was fascinated by every exhibit. When I found out there was a book about it, I had to have it. Weschler does a great job tracing the history of the museum, similar museums, and trying to uncover the mysteries behind the MJT's curator. The book can be a little longwinded at times, and I'm not a fan of the footnote system (they should have been footnoted on the actual page, rather than making the reader flip to the end of the book and find the page number). Still, the book is entertaining and informative. It ruins a bit of the magic of the museum by providing answers/background to some of the exhibits, but I hope this will only amplify my curiosity on my next visit.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Paean to Wonder
By Deb Oestreicher
This odd little book celebrates the odd little Museum of Jurassic Technology (MJT) in Los Angeles. Really, the book celebrates wonder itself. I have not been to the MJT, but this book has certainly put it on the itinerary of my next trip to LA. Presenting itself as a natural history museum, the MJT features meticulously detailed exhibits that may or may not pertain to "real" phenomena. The pronged ant of the title, for example, may be unknown to science under the name *Megolaponera Foetens* but, as Wechsler discovers, its odd life history is perfectly plausible: a large ant, and the only one that produces a cry audible to humans, normally forages on the forest floor; however, after ingesting the spore of a fungus, it climbs upward and then waits to die as the fungus consumes its body from the inside, finally generating a spike about an inch long from the place where the ant's head was, which distributes spores downward, to be breathed by other *Megolaponera Foetens*. The book (and, presumably, the MJT) makes you think about the purpose of museums, and whether the relative "truth" of things that astonish you matters. In other words, since reality routinely trumps imagination, why quibble?
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. What makes a museum!?
By Brianne Baird
A look at the purpose of museums- specifically the unconventional Museum of Jurassic Technology. A very exciting and thought provoking read! Funny, informative and surprising! Historical examples help to form an understanding of how museums have evolved and poses the question what should they become.

Finalist for Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction
Finalist for National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction
Pronged ants, horned humans, a landscape carved on a fruit pit--some of the displays in David Wilson's Museum of Jurassic Technology are hoaxes. But which ones? As he guides readers through an intellectual hall of mirrors, Lawrence Weschler revisits the 16th-century "wonder cabinets" that were the first museums and compels readers to examine the imaginative origins of both art and science.

.com In the non-Aristotelian, non-Euclidean, non-Newtonian space between the walls of the Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles exist bats that can fly through lead barriers, spore-ingesting pronged ants, elaborate theories of memory, and a host of other off-kilter scientific oddities that challenge the traditional notions of truth and fiction. Lawrence Weschler's book, expanded from an article for Harper's, is, at turns, a tour of the museum, a profile of its founder and curator, David Wilson, and a meditation on the role of imagination and authority in all museums, in science and in life. Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder is an exquisite piece of "magic realist nonfiction" that will prove utterly captivating.
From Publishers Weekly
New Yorker staff writer Weschler probes into L.A.'s highly unusual Museum of Jurassic Technology in this NBCC finalist. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
You have to search for the Museum of Jurassic Technology, a small storefront operation located on Los Angeles's less than noteworthy Venice Boulevard. Despite its awkward location, this quirky museum now has a cult following, and Weschler, a staff writer for the New Yorker, attempts to explain why. The driving force behind this nondescript institution is the accordion playing, filmmaking, computer wiz David Wilson, a man whose imagination rivals that of George Lucas. His bizarre exhibits feature spore-inhaling ants, peach-pit carvings, sculpture so small it fits into the eye of a needle, and a horn that once sprouted from the head of an English midwife. Weschler's research indicates several stretches of the truth in Wilson's exhibits, but most contain some modicum of authenticity. Weschler's journalistic style enhances this monograph's odd subject, and this slim volume will no doubt be enjoyed by the same fringe element that is making Wilson a cult hero in the museum world. Recommended where interest warrants.
Jonathan Jeffrey, Western Kentucky Univ., Bowling Green
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