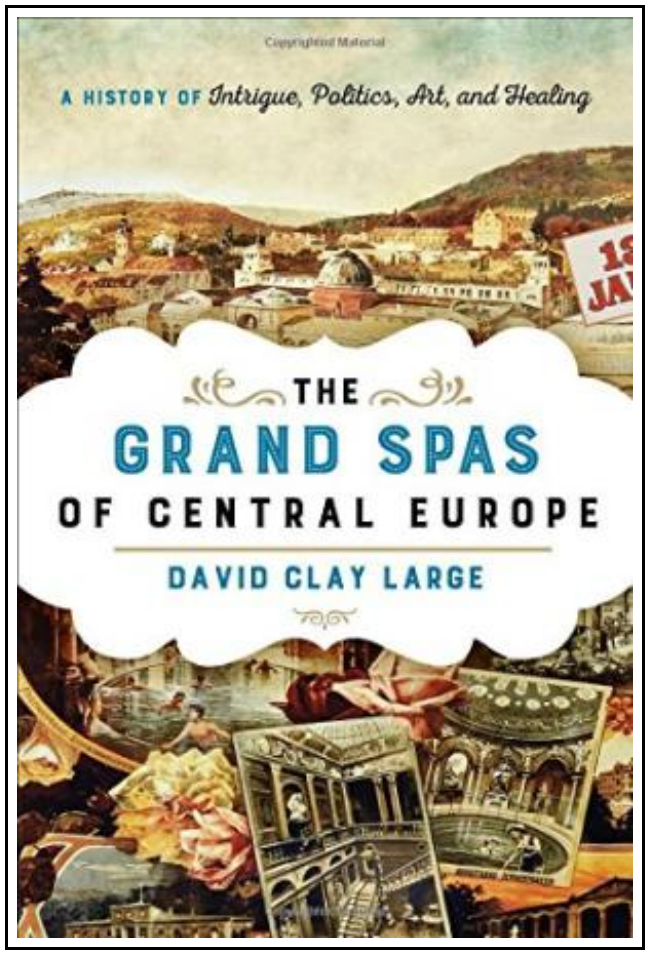
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ROWMAN LITTLEFIELD, United States, 2015. Hardback. Book Condition: New. 235 x 158 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. The Grand Spas of Central Europe leads readers on an irresistible tour through the grand spa towns of Central Europe-fabled places like Baden-Baden, Bad Ems, Bad Gastein, Karlsbad, and Marienbad. Noted historian David Clay Large follows the grand spa story from Greco-Roman antiquity to the present, focusing especially on the years between the French Revolution and World War II, a period in which the major Central European Kurorte (cure-towns) reached their peak of influence and then slipped into decline. Written with verve and affection, the book explores the grand spa towns, which in their prime were an equivalent of today s major medical centers, rehab retreats, golf resorts, conference complexes, fashion shows, music festivals, and sexual hideaways-all rolled into one. Conventional medicine being quite primitive through most of this era, people went to the spas in hopes of curing everything from cancer to gout. But often as not curists also went to play, to be entertained, and to socialize. In their heyday the grand spas were hotbeds of cultural creativity, true meccas of the arts. High-level politics was another grand spa specialty, with statesmen descending on the Kurorte to negotiate treaties, craft alliances, and plan wars. This military scheming was just one aspect of a darker side to the grand spa story, one rife with nationalistic rivalries, ethnic hatred, and racial prejudice. The grand spas, it turns out, were microcosms of changing sociopolitical realities-not at all the timeless oases of harmony they often claimed to be. The Grand Spas of Central Europe holds up a gilt-framed but clear-eyed mirror to the ever-changing face of European society-dimples, warts, and all.

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