

*An Excerpt from James Wolcott's Blog*  
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### Recommendations

Last week the royal we attended a hot downtown book party for Kim Hastreiter's [Geoffrey Beene](#), and a fine party it was too, and the book is even finer--not a standoffish coffee-table snob item doubling as a design element but a lively, affectionate, unpretentious, illustrated tour of the life and genius of the American designer whose work epitomized streamlined modernity. An aesthetic that looks even more jet sleek in an era of Galliano and Alexander McQueen competing to see who can cough up the most pastiche excess for the pirate circus that has become high-end, dead-end couture. Mr. Beene was a fan of Paper magazine, of which Hastreiter is editor in chief, and the book returns the favor in handsome tribute. There's also a bonus DVD with a biographical documentary and footage of two of his shows, the one titled "Body Science" a spectacularly sexy triumph that travels back to the future. I can't imagine a better gift book for the Project Runway junkie on your Christmas list.