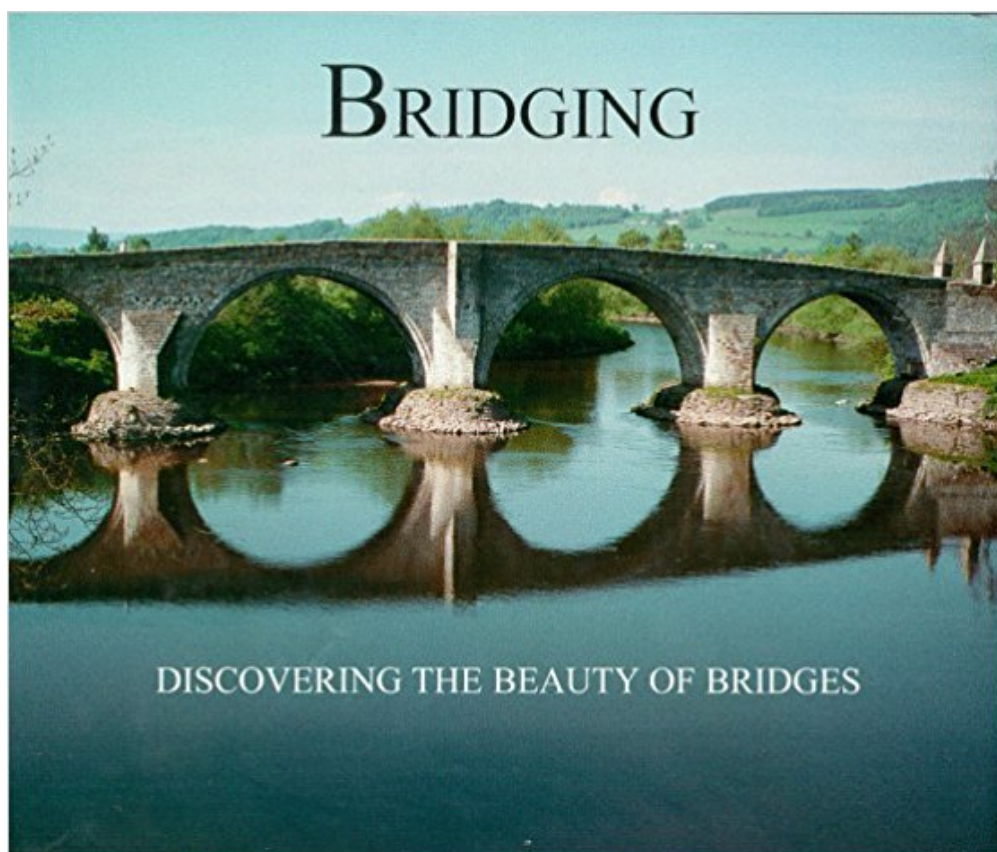


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# Bridging: Discovering The Beauty Of Bridges



## Synopsis

A remarkable gallery of lavish photographs which elevate bridges from pieces of the roadway to pieces of art. The 283 colorful pictures cover 20 centuries and 16 countries across North America and Europe, concentrating on structures with striking aesthetic features. The succinct but somehow satisfying captions reveal that Cortright has made an extensive study of his favorite photographic subjects. This splendid book, a testament to one man's fascination, invites the reader's wonder at the utility and grace, strength and imagination, the art and science of bridges.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 176 pages

Publisher: Bridge Ink; 1 edition (July 1, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0964196328

ISBN-13: 978-0964196322

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 9.5 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,651,177 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #101 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Architectural > Bridges](#) #4761 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Photojournalism & Essays > Photo Essays](#) #14078 in [Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Civil & Environmental](#)

## Customer Reviews

"CIVIL ENGINEERING" PROCEEDINGS OF THE INSTITUTION OF CIVIL ENGINEERS LONDON, NOVEMBER 1998  
Bridging - discovering the beauty of bridges  
This is a little book (235 x 187 x 13mm) in metric measurement, but it is a very big book when one considers the quality of its construction and the quality of its contents. Its stitched signatures contain 283 glossy full colour bridge photographs from 16 North American and European countries. The photographs selected for publication were of bridges constructed throughout the last 20 centuries, including 20 stone structures of Roman construction. The book consists primarily of photographs, with a brief introductory text for various book divisions, and brief and generally interesting photo captions. The book appears to be a labour of love for Mr Robert S. Cortright, a retired banker, and his patient and supportive wife Kathy who initially were `enthusiastic tourists, thrilled with all of the sights encountered in travel. Gradually [their] focus of attention and the focus of the camera began to be

concentrated upon bridges. Ultimately, that concentration escalated to the level of an obsession.' This obsession, supported and guided by a perceptive eye and an intuitive appreciation for the conceptual genius and exceptional craftsmanship displayed by early bridge builders, and by the time, patience, and persistence to locate suitable perspectives, resulted in a portfolio of over 4,000 bridge photographs from 20 countries. Of these, nearly 300, considered by Robert Cortright to be his best, now grace the pages of this fine publication. Unfortunately, the editors, in an apparent effort to achieve page format variety, an effort that has generally succeeded, spoiled a few of the larger photographs by superimposing caption text directly on the photographs. However, this one fault diminishes the overall quality of the book only slightly. Bridging will make a suitable companion to Fritz Leonhardt's *Bridges: aesthetics and design* and to the Highway Agency's *The appearance of bridges*. It should be in the personal library of all bridge engineers, architects and other fine bridge enthusiasts. For those interested in this book, copies should be obtained as soon as possible, since the modest cover price of \$29.95 suggests that its first edition may not be available for long. M. P. Burke

Like most people, I'd never really noticed bridges before reading this book. After looking through this book at my father in-law's house, though, I can't stop noticing every one I encounter. Bridges are little pieces of land suspended over a precipice. Engineers have spent the last 3000 years trying to solve the problems of seemingly uncrossable rivers and chasms, and Cortright's photographic selection of bridges, spanning more than two millenia and 16 countries, traces the increasingly more sophisticated ways that builders have triumphed. Interestingly, many seemingly high-tech solutions go right back to the very first arches and cantilevers. Others seem totally out of this world. You'll learn a lot about the different kinds of bridges and their basic principles, but more than that, this book is downright entertaining. Cortright appears to be one part expert photographer and one part eccentric, and his gorgeous photographs are grouped in ways that tickle one's fancy rather than in a dry, dusty textbook manner. Categories include Stone Bridges, Wooden Bridges, Bridges of Iron and Steel, Bridges that Move, bridges that people live on, Aqueducts and much more. It even has a photo of a bridge with a giant troll living under it (I kid you not). The final chapter entitled "The Little Woman" is sure to catch you by surprise, and best sums up the quirky charm that enlivens this book. Long on great photos with just the right amount of text to help you appreciate them, this book is great for an eight year-old or for a highway engineer. Highly highly recommended.

I'm a giver of books: novels, poetry, cookbooks, and more than any other single book, this one:

"Bridging." It has art and love, form and metaphor. The beautiful images and the metaphor of "bridging" -- and the personality of the recipient and the occasion for the gift -- make inscribing the book for a friend a pleasure. I grew up with the Mississippi bridges of St. Louis and have lived for decades with the bridges of New York City -- so I feel that the photographer is a kindred spirit and made this book for me. Cortright awakens the eye and mind to the beauty of bridges -- from all angles and in all weathers. These are not promotional postcards, but lovingly composed and arranged photographs that give us not only the settings but the personalities of these bridges. See the Civil Engineering review below for a fine appreciation of bridge builders' and Cortright's achievements -- technically and aesthetically. Better yet, take a look at the book.

Bob Cortright's new edition of *Bridging* is a delightful meander down roads not frequently taken. In a series of thoughtfully photographed color images, Cortright reveals the enduring beauty of slab and arch bridges of stone, marvels of ancient engineering that are often overshadowed by their huge, high-tech cousins of suspension and cable-stayed ilk. They're included too, but buy this book for its small unexpected treasures. Helpfully organized by location, the book provides an armchair trip off the beaten path with a well-traveled friend in tow.

I bought this book sight-unseen on the basis of reviews and, honestly, was a little disappointed. This book is basically a collection of the author's own pictures he has taken in his years of travelling the world and visiting bridges. I think the personality of the book will win you over because he really does have a wonderful appreciation of bridges. But if it was cloudy the day he visited that bridge, you get a picture on a cloudy day. I also thought the printing was not great quality.

This unique symphony of pictures can create a newly loved appreciation of bridges or emphasise a love with its array of vivid images from all over the world. One may have had the pleasure to view, experience and feel many buildings, however this book will change the way you see and feel about "just" a bridge.

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