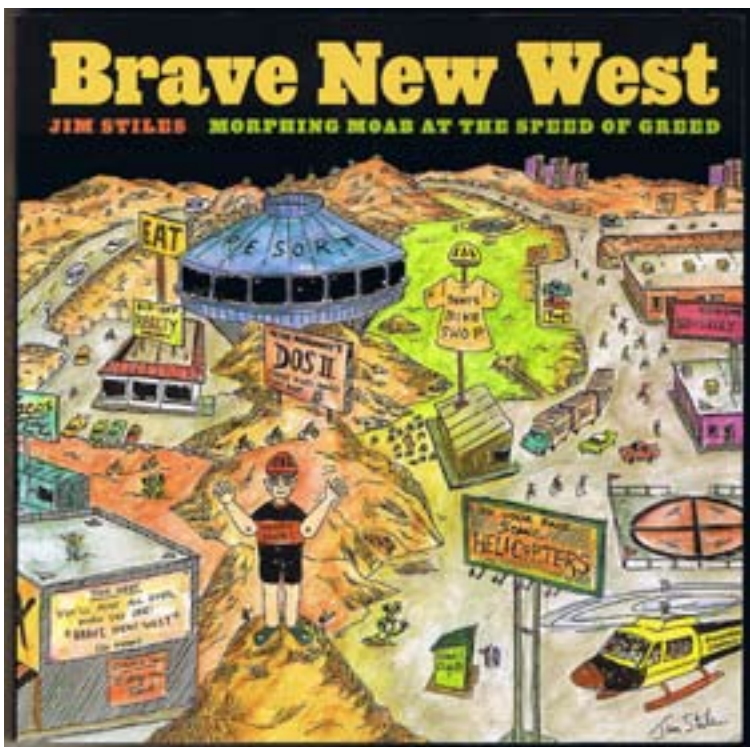


BRAVE NEW WEST

By Jim Stiles



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“Jim Stiles holds up a mirror to those of us living in the American West, exposing issues we may not want to face. We are all complicit in the shadow side of growth. His words are born not so much out of anger but a broken heart. He says he writes elegies for the landscape he loves, that he is “hopelessly clinging to the past.” I would call Stiles a writer from the future. Brave New West is a book of import because of what it chooses to expose.”

Terry Tempest Williams,
author of “RED - Passion and Patience in the Desert”

No one but Stiles can deliver the bad news to us and make us laugh; then flip to provocative challenges that tweak our tails. We find all this, and more, in Brave New West, where he defines some true meanings of that over-used, misused word-- “environmentalist”-- and asks us to reconsider if we honestly are the protectors of nature and wilderness we always thought we were.

Katie Lee
author of “All My Rivers Are Gone”

When the author of this humorous and provocative book moved to Moab, Utah, nearly 30 years ago, he thought he'd found the perfect “funky little town” that offered “open land, solitude, and the freedom to live an uncluttered life.” But within 25 years, the place was inundated with mountain bikers, backpackers, motor homes, fast food chains, housing projects, resort hotels and all manner of promoters and developers. As in the independent newspaper he started in 1989, the Canyon Country Zephyr, Stiles rails against these intruders and the uncontrolled growth they bring to the rural West. Developers and tourists bear the brunt of his spleen, but he also has harsh words for those who long for the “good old days” while

making a buck from the new, and for environmentalists who promote an “amenities economy” but fail to see how this commodifies nature. Though a curmudgeon, he allows some cautious optimism, advocating dialogue between the Old and the New West, and champions those who defy conventional economic wisdom.

Even at his most acerbic—castigating environmentalists and admonishing tourists to be humble—Stiles never fails to be entertaining. 17 line drawings by the author. (Mar.)

Publisher's Weekly

ABOUT JIM STILES & THE ‘BRAVE NEW WEST’

When Jim Stiles moved west from Kentucky in the 1970s to make Moab, Utah his home, that corner of the West had already endured decades of obscurity, a uranium boom and then a bust, and was facing an identity crisis. What kind of economy would prevent Moab from becoming yet another ghost town? For more than two decades, environmentalists in southeast Utah have had a simple answer to this question: replace extractive industries—mining, timber, and cattle—with an economy catering to “green” tourists with hotels, restaurants, and bars. They feel that if these lands can be spared further degradation by huge industries, the West could begin to thrive on something cleaner and more lucrative. But Stiles sees a downside to this seemingly idyllic vision. Bringing insight based on decades of residence in Moab, he makes a provocative and compelling argument that the economy most environmentalists hail as the solution to the woes of the rural West is in fact creating an unprecedented impact of its own. In recent years, Moab and other rural towns across the West have seen a massive influx of urbanites fleeing crowded cities in search of a simpler life. Yet Stiles also observes that these transplants are often unwilling to accept the isolation and lack of services that characterize genuine rural life. Believing themselves to be liberal, sensitive, enlightened environmentalists, they nevertheless bring with them exactly the type of lifestyle and ecological impact that they sought to leave behind and, in the process, create a community that no longer serves the native inhabitants. With a blend of travelogue, local color, and geography, Stiles engages readers with folksy humor while defending the lifestyle of the “pre-cappuccino rural West-erners” and exposing the paradox that underlies the professed good intentions of liberal newcomers.