Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ix

INTRODUCTION xi

1. Over the Top
   Americans in the Lap of Luxury  1

2. The Social Construction of Luxury
   A Taxonomy of Taste  41

3. Let’s Go Shopping
   The Streets of Material Dreams  81

   LVMH and Condé Nast  123

5. How Luxury Becomes Necessity
   The Work of Advertising  153

6. From Shirts to Tulips
   A Musing on Luxury  175

7. Viva Las Vegas!
   A Strip of Luxury  215

8. Still Learning from Las Vegas
   How Luxury Is Turning Religious  239

Conclusion
   A (Mild) Defense of Luxury  269

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY  289

INDEX  299