

*Book Review*

**The Age of the Molecule.** Edited by Nina Hall  
(E-mail: [ninah@ealing.demon.co.uk](mailto:ninah@ealing.demon.co.uk)). Royal Society of Chemistry:  
Cambridge, UK. 1999. 272 pp. 19.50 £. ISBN 0-85404-945-2

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It is the age of the Internet, or the age of *information*. However, it is also the age of the molecule, or the age of new materials or substances. Which is more important? Perhaps both, if we do not insist that substance be thought more important as substances must be used to record information. *The Age of the Molecule* [1] is a very colorful and very interesting book. I read it together with my little son several times. He also enjoyed it very much. There is no strange smell of molecules here, and it contains many beautiful pictures and very well prepared paragraphs.

This book, containing a foreword by the current British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, is written in clear accessible language by a group of leading chemists. *The Age of the Molecule* will appeal to anyone who wants to understand the world and ourselves at the molecular level [2].

The achievements and excitement of chemistry are evident in our everyday lives. Scientific research has not only led to cures for serious diseases and produced life-enhancing synthetic materials but has also offered profound insights into the nature of the world around us. In this way chemistry has made a huge impact on human progress in the 20th century. We may expect even more exciting developments in the new millennium.

This book describes the key developments in the molecular sciences in recent years and those likely to happen in the near future. These include the many remarkable discoveries made in the life sciences, and the huge variety of technological applications of chemistry: liquid crystals, batteries, catalysts, plastics and novel electronic materials. The book also explains how chemistry is actually carried out: methods of making and analysing molecules, calculating their properties and studying how and why

chemical reactions occur.

Brief Contents: Introduction: What is Chemistry?; Make Me A Molecule: Analysis and Structure of Molecules; Chemical Marriage - Brokers; Following Chemical Reactions; The Power of Electrochemistry; The Age of Plastics; The World of Liquid Crystals; New Science from New Materials; Computational Chemistry and the Virtual Laboratory; The Chemistry of Life; Epilogue: Chemistry - Architecture of the Microcosmos.

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## References and Notes

1. Visit <http://www.rsc.org/is/books/agemol.htm> for more information regarding this book.
2. This and the following paragraphs are adapted from <http://www.rsc.org/is/books/agemoldes.htm>.

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