

# Bound for Glory

## The year's best gift books are built to browse

By Richard Lacayo



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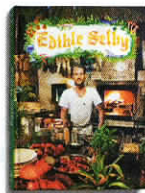
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IT'S ONE OF THE OLDEST LAWS OF HOLIDAY GIFT giving—it may even be somewhere in the Code of Hammurabi—that big, sumptuous illustrated books, the kind with lots of full- and double-page photographs and art in ultra-high-thread-count reproductions, are the obvious solution to the problem of what to get practically anybody. If you buy a friend or loved one the right book of that kind, it not only flatters your dear one's intelligence and aesthetics; it also tells everyone just how good your taste and judgment are. You're practically buying your own advertising, since richly illustrated volumes tend to be kept on display (that's why they call them coffee-table books). Which means the recipients will be constantly reminded that you were once so thoughtful and generous as to present them with books that may have cost \$50 or possibly more, even if you got them sharply discounted, which you probably did.

The crucial thing is to get the right books—the ones with the creamiest visuals, most absorbing texts and best cost-to-quality ratio. By those standards, the books on these pages are keepers—or they would be, if you weren't giving them away.

### 1. EDIBLE SELBY/ TODD SELBY

A flaky-fun addition to the annals of food porn from photographer Todd Selby, he of the Edible Selby blog on the *New York Times*' website. Since 2010 he's been chasing down people and places involved in the rise of artisanal cooking (and eating), from celebrity chefs like René Redzepi of Copenhagen's Noma to a Tokyo tuna wholesaler and a Melbourne café where everything is made on-site, down to the ginger beer. The scrapbook aesthetic is charming, with lots of amateur drawings and handwritten notes. Even the recipes are scribbled. (\$35)

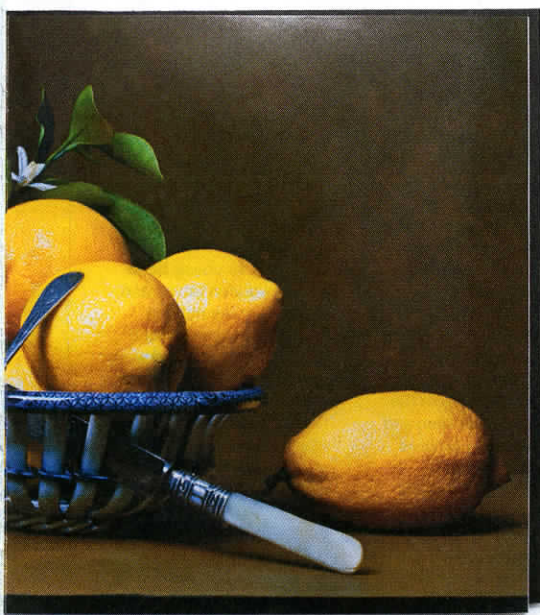


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**2. THE JAMES BOND ARCHIVES**

The ultimate book for 007 obsessives. A hefty fetish object with a faux-alligator red binding, it traces the 50 years of the Bond age onscreen—from *Dr. No* to *Skyfall*—with stills, production shots, storyboards and ad copy. Tidbits from the production saga of each film unfold via an intricate oral history stitched together from decades' worth of interviews with the crews, directors, producers and casts, including the royal succession of Bonds from Connery to Craig. In the first print run, each book comes with a strip of celluloid cut from an original 35-mm print of *Dr. No*. It's like a splinter of the True Cross! (\$200)



**3. EARLY AMERICAN/ SHARON CORE**

The point of departure for Core's irresistible photos is the many still-life arrangements of food painted in the early 19th century by the American artist Raphaelle Peale. Some of Core's images—chromogenic color prints of extraordinary richness—are dead-on reproductions of Peale originals; others combine elements from several canvases. Spotlit before sober, dark backdrops, trout has never looked more silvery. Berries have never had such glistening gravitas. Core's pictures are what all food should be: scrumptious. (\$55)



**4. BALLET/HENRY LEUTWYLER**

Cameras and ballet were made for each other: they both love movement in all its human and otherworldly splendor. Four years ago, Leutwyler began making pictures of the New York City Ballet, the legendary company founded by George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein and headed now by Peter Martins. This grand volume provides a behind-the-scenes look at the dancers' world, a vivid picture of City Ballet performances and a portrait gallery of members of the company—phenomenal specimens, every one of them. (\$88)



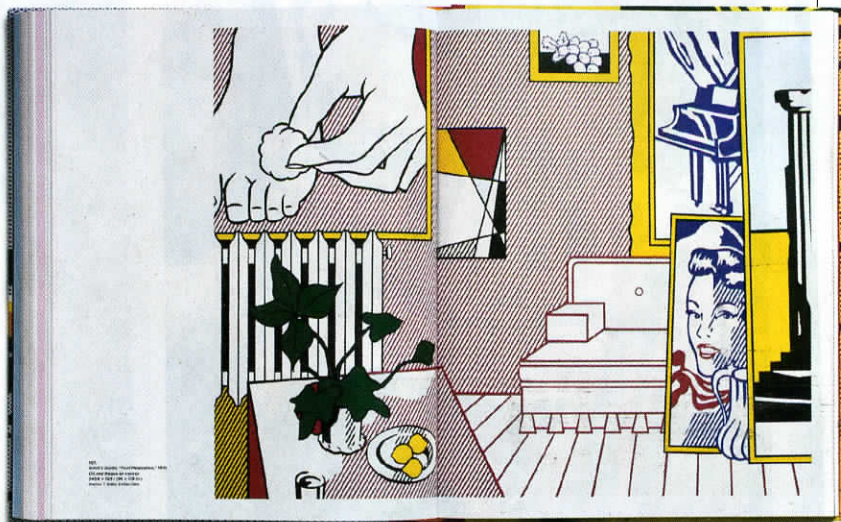




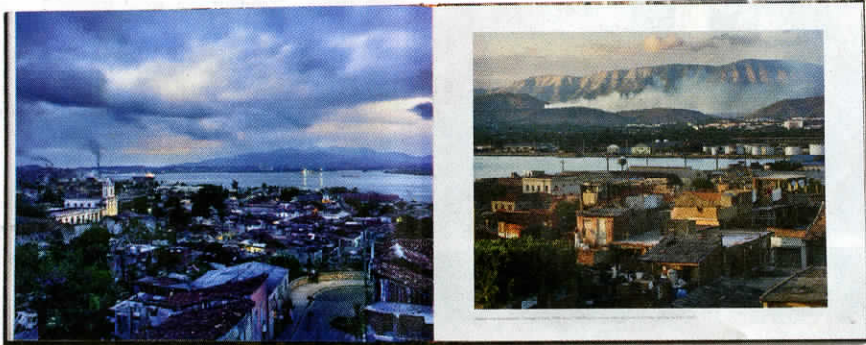
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**5. LIGHT FROM THE MIDDLE EAST: NEW PHOTOGRAPHY**

Since at least the 19th century, the Middle East has had its portrait drawn, and distorted, by Westerners. This book is by artists native to the region. The pictures range from news photos of the Iranian Revolution by the photojournalist Abbas to the winking postmodernism of Nermine Hammam, who Photoshops Egyptian soldiers in Tahrir Square during the Arab Spring into candy-colored tourist dreamscapes, turning history into a spectacle in which even the armed forces are just playing their parts. (\$40)

**6. EZRA STOLLER, PHOTOGRAPHER**

Stoller, who was 89 when he died in 2004, was the finest photographer of architectural Modernism after World War II. He was good with right angles, like the ones in his stately pictures of Philip Johnson's Glass House. He was good with curves, like the sweeping arabesques of Eero Saarinen's TWA terminal at JFK airport. He understood that though Modernism rejected ornament, there was still lyricism in those clean, crisp lines. Harp strings are clean and crisp too, and if you know what to do with them, they make music. (\$65)

**7. ROY LICHTENSTEIN: A RETROSPECTIVE**

Andy Warhol gets talked about more, but Lichtenstein, another of the seminal figures of Pop, was the more interesting artist. Like Warhol, he borrowed low-culture imagery, such as comic books and ads, to make art. But what he made was more finely crafted, more compelling to look at, than anything Warhol was interested in doing. This superbly produced book, the catalog of a show launched by the Art Institute of Chicago, shows the artist applying himself wittily to household interiors, nudes and abstractions. (\$65)

**8. ANDREW MOORE: CUBA**

Moore has a feel for decrepitude. Two years ago, he published *Detroit Disassembled*, a survey of the crumbling city that was both devastating and captivating. Now he finds an uncanny beauty in the phosphorescent dilapidation of Cuba. In his pictures, the island's cities are full of disintegrating plazas and fading rooms. After Castro, Cuba may rejoin the maelstrom of capitalism and the world in these pictures may give way. Moore's lovely, mournful book feels like a pre-emptive elegy for a Cuba that hasn't actually disappeared yet. (\$75)

**9. WENDELL CASTLE: WANDERING FORMS**

How to describe the furniture and household objects produced by Castle, an 80-year-old American designer and craftsman? *Organic* would characterize some: his sinuously hand-carved wooden tables and chairs look like nothing produced by the machine age. *Biomorphic* would work for others, like his molded-plastic floor lamps in the form of bulbous bipeds with names like Fat Albert and Sluggo. For others, like his wall-mounted shelf shaped like a cloud sliced lengthwise, only *surreal* will do. (\$60)

