

Midmonth BookNotes

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Happy Holidays

Adler, Rebecca. [Here Today Gone](#)

[Tamale](#) (Berkley \$7.99)

After her fiancé dumps her and she loses her job as a newspaper reporter in Austin, Josie Callahan heads back home to Broken Boot, where her Aunt Linda and Uncle Eddie are more than happy to give her a job at the family restaurant. However, when an opinionated local jewelry designer is found dead right before the town's big Wild Wild West Festival, Josie senses there is more to the story than what the police are saying. Adler kicks off a new series with a bang by serving up a smartly written cozy that delivers plenty of colorful characters, a nicely developed small-town setting, a smattering of Tex-Mex recipes and, of course, the requisite pinch of romance.

Carmack, Amanda. [Murder at Whitehall](#) (NAL \$7.99)

As personal musician to Queen Elizabeth I, Kate Haywood has enough to do with writing the music and directing the holiday pageant that the Queen wants as a part of her Twelfth Night festivities at Whitehall Palace. However, when the Queen finds a threatening picture left in the royal bedchamber that hints at a possible indiscretion in her past, she gives Kate one more new task: find out who is responsible. Two different Catherines play important roles in the fourth in Carmack's (the pseudonym for romance writer Amanda McCabe) vividly written Elizabethan-set series featuring Kate Haywood. One is Catherine Parr, Henry VIII's last wife, who was one of the few people to show Elizabeth any kindness after Anne Boleyn was executed.

The second is Lady Catherine Grey (sister to the Nine Day's Queen Jane Grey), whom everyone thinks will become Elizabeth I's heir, but who is more concerned about the fate of her heart than the fate of a nation. Carmack neatly weaves both of these storylines together into a satisfying tale that should please fans of Karen Harper's historical series featuring Elizabeth I as well as readers of Fiona Buckley's equally neatly crafted mysteries.

Carr, Robyn. [Bring Me Home for Christmas](#) (Mira \$7.99)

When an accident turns her impromptu visit to Virgin River into an extended stay, Becca Trim gets an unexpected second chance at love with her college sweetheart, Denny Cutler, who had broken her heart three years earlier before heading off to war. With its themes of love and forgiveness, this reprint of one of Carr's earlier Virgin River titles is the perfect antidote to the sometimes overly commercial flavor of the holidays. Carr will be returning to the Poisoned Pen this spring to launch her first hardcover women's fiction title. Watch for more details later!

Chase, Loretta. [Dukes Prefer Blondes](#) (Harper \$7.99)

"If you kill anybody, Lady Clara," he said "I shall be only too happy to offer my services." "If I kill anybody" she said, "I shall be far too discreetly ladylike about it to get caught." This quote from Chase's latest brilliantly written historical romance demonstrates her remarkable flair for razor sharp dialogue and tart wit as Lady Clara Fairfax, who is tired of men who is

tired of men who cannot (or will not) look beneath her beauty and see the woman inside, meets her match in the form of an arrogant, albeit dashing, barrister named Oliver Radford, who agrees to help her find a missing child. There is an excellent reason why Chase's romances have appeared on the top 100 lists of romances for more than a decade: she is just that good.

Crosley, Sloane. [The Clasp](#) (Farrar \$26)
Online data cruncher Victor, who has recently lost his job with a start-up online company and feels like a failure, is still in love with Kezia. Currently working as the harried second in command to a Manhattan jewelry design diva, Kezia still carries a torch for Nathaniel. A struggling writer in L.A., Nathaniel is really still only in love with himself. When these three old friends from college meet up again at a luxe wedding for another friend in Miami, they find themselves suddenly slipping back into their old college roles as all of their old insecurities and doubts about whether they have really achieved their goals in life resurface. While at the wedding, the mother of the groom lets slip to Victor a story about a valuable cache of jewels that vanished from France during World War II. Figuring he now has nothing left to lose (either professionally or personally) Victor sets off in pursuit of the loot with Kezia and Nathaniel hot on his trail as they travel to France, where they end up at the estate of Guy de Maupassant. As you can tell from the book's title, Crosley, whose witty collection of essays *I Was Told There Would Be Cake* was a Thurber Finalist, was inspired by de Maupassant's story "The Necklace." Crosley has a diamond-sharp writing style as well as a deft hand with characters and an irresistibly sardonic sense of humor. Put all of these things together, and I am certain that Maupassant himself would admire the end result (even if Crosley's occasional usage of a more modern swear term might make him blush).

Fiorato, Marina. [Beatrice and Benedick](#) (St. Martin's \$27.99)

Like many couples, Beatrice and Benedick, the romantic heart of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, have a past. Fiorato uses the few literary clues the Bard gives about this pair's first encounter in his play as inspiration for her historical novel about how the two first met, why they

parted, and what brought them back together again. Nineteen-year-old Beatrice first crosses paths with Benedick in the court of Sicily. Beatrice has come to the island to act as a companion to her cousin while Benedick, a newly minted soldier, is on leave with his Spanish commanding officer. A misunderstanding parts the two young lovers with Beatrice returning home to an unwanted betrothal while Benedick sails for England as part of the ill-fated Spanish Armada. It is an interesting idea that ultimately works for historical fiction readers interested in that time period, and since Shakespeare had his own habit of borrowing from other literary sources, he really isn't in much of a position to complain.

Heiter, Elizabeth. [Seized](#) (Mira \$7.99 Signed)
When she is kidnapped by a dangerous cult of survivalists, FBI profiler Evelyn Baine is trapped in a nightmare as she stumbles on an emerging terrorist threat led by a man who has a score to settle with the FBI, forcing her to make a decision that could end her own life, but save the U.S. from a surprise attack. Heiter will be appearing at the Poisoned Pen on January 9th at 2 PM with several other authors to talk about *Seized*, the latest in her nail-biting suspense series featuring Baine.

Hoyt, Elizabeth. [Sweetest Scoundrel](#) (Grand Central \$7.99)
Eve Dinwoody is all business when it comes to protecting her brother's investment in Harte's Folly (London's premier pleasure garden). But when she agrees to take control of the company's purse strings, she finds herself butting heads with Asa Makepeace, the garden's larger-than-life owner. The latest in Hoyt's Georgian-set "Maiden Lane" series is another intoxicating mix of richly nuanced characters and smoldering sensuality. Hoyt also writes contemporary romantic suspense as Julia Harper.

Jefferson, Marci. [Enchantress of Paris](#) (St Martins \$26.99)

On the day of her birth, the stars foretold that Marie Mancini would possess a powerful gift for divination, but that same gift would ultimately disgrace her family. The only hope Marie has of avoiding her dying mother's wish that she spend the rest of her life in a convent is to cast her lot in with that of her uncle: Cardinal Mazarin, who

brings her to French court of Louis XIV, where the occult arts are all the rage. Once there, Marie finds herself caught up in Mazarin's political machinations as he tries to use first Marie's sister Olympia and then Marie herself to gain the King's favor. Ultimately, Marie will be forced to use her "powers" to not only protect herself and her family but to also help the Sun King fulfill his destiny. Jefferson's latest is a potent mix of dangerous court intrigues and star-crossed royal passion mixed in with a generous soupcon of the supernatural. If you love authors like Philippa Gregory, Margaret George, and Judith Merkle Riley, Jefferson is a new author you may enjoy.

Klassen, Julie. [The Painter's Daughter](#) (Bethany \$14.99)

After his brother abandons Sophie Dupont, the daughter of a portrait painter, and heads off to Italy to find his muse, Captain Stephen Overtree proposes to her to save her from scandal. But their simple marriage of convenience soon becomes quite complicated once Sophie finds herself falling in love with her new husband. Klassen has racked up a number of Christie Awards as well as a few RITA wins for her historical romances, which always deliver well-crafted characters and an impeccably researched setting. If you miss Victoria Holt's old gothic romances, you may want to give Klassen a try.

Krentz, Jayne. [Secret Sisters](#) (Berkley \$26.95)

Krentz's latest thrilling novel of romantic suspense was previewed in last month's Book Notes, but I am mentioning it again since it just received a starred review in PW along with a star from Booklist. Here is what PW says "In bestselling author Krentz's gripping new romantic thriller, hotel heiress Madeline Chase returns from Arizona to the spooky abandoned Aurora Point Hotel, on one of the San Juan Islands of Washington State, to find the caretaker dying from a head wound and the assailant stalking her. Madeline and Edith, her grandmother, fled the island 18 years ago, after 12-year-old Madeline was attacked. Only five people know the gruesome details of the incident, including the caretaker and Edith, who are now dead; the others are Madeline, her friend Daphne, and Daphne's mother. Madeline brings in Jack Rayner, a

former FBI consultant and the head of her hotel security team, and together they pursue their own investigation, though Jack has a secret of his own. Krentz (Trust No One) expertly introduces plausible suspects, weaving in sexual tension between Jack and Madeline and terrifying uncertainty as someone strikes to eliminate the remaining secret-holders. Krentz scores another winner with complex characters and seamless plotting."

Maclean, Sarah. [The Rogue Not Taken](#) (Harper \$7.99)

When Sophie, the least interesting of the Talbot sisters, knocks her philandering brother-in-law backside-first in a goldfish pond in front of all society, she knows it is only a matter of time before she becomes a social pariah. Sophie's only choice is to flee London, but unfortunately, the carriage in which she stows away, which belongs to Kingscote "King" the Marquess of Eversley - isn't saving her from ruin . . . it's filled with it. MacLean has won one RITA award (the romance genre's equivalent of an Edgar) for her lushly written, lusciously sensual historicals, and her smart, sexy love stories are absolutely addictive.

Maxwell, Alyssa. [Murder Most Malicious](#) (Kensington \$25)

The Great War has finally ended and Phoebe Renshaw is looking forward to spending a quiet Christmas with her family at Foxwood Hall. However, when Phoebe overhears her older sister Julia arguing with her fiancé, Henry Leighton the Marquess of Allerton, she wonders exactly how peaceful their holidays will be, especially when Henry fails to turn up the next morning. When the police arrest one of the footmen, Phoebe - with some help from her maid Eva Huntford- decides to do some sleuthing of her own in order to find the real killer. Maxwell, the author of the Gilded Age historical mysteries (Murder at Beechwood) moves into Downton Abbey territory with this charming story that gives readers a fascinating glimpse of life both upstairs and downstairs at one of England's grand estates. If you enjoyed Tessa Arlen's fabulous debut mystery *Death of a Dishonorable Gentleman* or you love Carola Dunn's Daisy Dalrymple books this should be just your cup of tea.

Maxwell, Cathy. [The Match of the Century](#) (Harper \$7.99)

Gavin Whitridge, the Duke of Baynton, might be Benedict's older brother but there were times when Ben really hated Gavin. First Gavin forced Ben to give up his commission in the army in order to return home and assume his family "duties." If that wasn't bad enough, Ben has to stand idly by while Gavin marries Elin Morris, the only woman he ever loved. However, just when Ben thinks he will have to watch his brother marry Elin, a tragedy occurs at the betrothal ball, and the wedding is postponed. Now nearly two years later Ben still has forgotten Elin when she unexpectedly stumbles across his path once again. Someone is trying to kill Elin, and the only person who can return her safely back to Gavin's arms is Ben. Readers who enjoy their historical Regencies seasoned with a generous dash of mystery and danger will savor Maxwell's latest elegantly written romance, the first in her "Marrying the Duke" series, since it not only delivers that element but also the fully nuanced characters for which this writer is known.

Perinot, Sophie. [Medicis Daughter](#) (St Martins \$26.99)

Summoned to the 16th-century French court in the aftermath of a devastating religious war, beautiful young Princess Margot struggles between the manipulations of her ruthless mother, Catherine de Médici (aka "La Serpente"), and her own conscience. Brimming with political intrigue and scandalous affairs, Perinot's novel reads like a slightly darker, sexier version of the classic historical novels that Jean Plaidy used to write about the royal families of Europe.

Pullen, M J. [The Marriage Pact](#) (St Martins \$24.99)

Ten years ago, college best friends Marci Thompson and Jake Stillwell promised each other that if they both were not married by their thirtieth birthdays, they would marry each other. At the time, Marci chalked the pact, which was written on a cocktail napkin, up to one to many drinks. However, when Marci's thirtieth birthday arrives, she receives an email from Jake with a scanned copy of the agreement attached and the words "I'm game if you are." It isn't as if Marci, who is still working as an office temp despite her dreams of one day becoming a writer, has hordes of eligible men beg-

ging her to marry them. In fact the only man in Marci's life is her married lover, who has yet to leave his wife as he promised. So if Marci decides to go ahead and marry Jake, will it be the best thing ever or the biggest mistake of her life? There is a definite Chick Lit feel to Pullen's novel with its inviting mix of tart humor and a heroine trying to find true love (though for the first half of the book some readers might be sorely tempted to give Marci a copy of *Smart Women, Foolish Choices*).

Rothschild, Hannah. [The Improbability of Love](#) (Knopf \$27.95)

When she comes into possession of a lost masterpiece by one of the most important French painters of the 18th century, chef Annie McDee, who works for two sinister art dealers, finds herself pursued by interested parties who would do anything to possess her picture, as well as faced with the possibility of falling in love again. I especially loved the art history background the author deftly incorporates into the plot of this dazzling book that brilliantly manages to blend mystery, history, and romance into a truly unique story.

Rowell, Rainbow. [Carry On](#) (St Martins \$19.99)

Rowell hinted at Simon and Baz's adventures in her previous novel *Fangirl*, but now she gives these characters their own story. Simon Snow is the worst Chosen One who's ever been chosen. That's what his roommate, Baz, says. And Baz might be evil and a vampire and a complete git, but he's probably right. Half the time, Simon can't even make his wand work, and the other half, he starts something on fire. His mentor's avoiding him, his girlfriend broke up with him, and there's a magic-eating monster running around, wearing Simon's face. Baz would be having a field day with all this, if he even even bothered to show up at the Watford School of Magicks. Rowell writes for both adults (*Attachments*) as well as YAs (*Eleanor & Park*), and her latest YA novel –which falls somewhere between the Harry Potter books and Lev Grossman's recent *Magicians* trilogy - is filled with plenty of surprising plot twists. The novelist Jodi Picoult even chose it as one of her top reads for 2015 for the Wall Street Journal.

Shelton, Paige. [To Helvetia and Back](#)

(Berkley \$7.99 Signed)

Clare Henry loves working with her grandfather Chester at The Rescued Word helping to repair old typewriters, sell beautiful papers and pens, and restore old books. When long-time customer and old friend Mirabelle Montgomery with her trusty old Underwood No.5, Clare figures fixing the L key on the typewriter will be a piece of cake. However, when a stranger dressed in leather and chains suddenly comes into the shop and demands that Clare sell him Mirabelle's typewriter, Clare's ordinary workday takes a sharp turn into the unusual. A quick call to the local cops sends the man packing, but when Clare later finds his dead body in the alley behind the shop, it leaves her wondering exactly why anyone would kill someone for an old typewriter. Blend together an appealing protagonist, a cast of realistically quirky secondary characters, a colorful small-town Utah setting, and some fascinating tidbits about old typewriters and book restoration and you have the perfect cozy mystery. Shelton, who is also the author of the "Farmers Market" and the "Country Cooking School" mysteries will be at the Poisoned Pen on Saturday January 9th at 2 PM to launch *To Helvetia and Back*, the first in a new series.

Back in Print

Pilcher, Rosamu. [Winter Solstice](#) (\$16.99)

The reprint of Pilcher's later novels continues with *Winter Solstice*, a poignant tale of five people, each buffeted by life's difficulties, whose lives intersect when they find themselves staying at a large Victorian house in Northern Scotland during the Winter Solstice. *Winter Solstice* delivers plenty of the cozy domestic details and heartwarming characters that fans of Pilcher demand as well as an atmospheric evocation of the author's beloved Scottish countryside. It really is the perfect book to curl up with on a chilly (well, as chilly as we get in AZ) day.

Stevenson, D E. [The Baker's Daughter](#)

(Sourcebooks \$14.99)

Sue Pringle has never met anyone like artist John Darnay before in her life. A painter who roams the countryside in search of inspiration, Darnay is so absorbed in his work that he often forgets to

eat. As his new housekeeper, Sue observes the eccentric artist at close quarters, and she soon finds herself not only falling in love with his paintings but with the artist himself. But will Darnay ever look up from his canvases long enough to see her? D.E. Stevenson is the name Dorothy Emily Peploe used for the more than 40 light romantic novels (including the beloved Mrs. Tim books) she wrote during the 20th century. *The Baker's Daughter* is one of her early works and it is a charming story about finding love in unexpected places. If you have fallen for Patrick Taylor's "Irish Country" series or you just want an old-fashioned (in the best possible sense) love story, Stevenson will be a real find.

New in Nonfiction

Beard, Mary. [SPQR](#) (WW Norton \$35)

From Spain to the Middle East, everywhere the Roman Empire extended one can find the words SPQR (the Latin abbreviation for "the senate and the people of Rome") carved somewhere into stone. Beard narrates the story of the eternal city's rise from its beginnings with Romulus to A.D. 212 including an especially entertaining section that recounts the Republic's greatest years during the age of Cicero (who ended up having his cut-off head and hands put on display on the same platform from which he used to lecture the Roman populace. Those ancient Romans really did have a different way of dealing with pesky politicians). Beard, a classical historian and professor at Cambridge University, writes with verve and passion about her favorite subject, and in the process she has created a terrific introduction to the history of ancient Rome for the general reader. This makes the perfect gift for anyone wanting to learn more about the background of their favorite Lindsey Davis mystery or readers working their way through Robert Harris's new historical series starring Cicero.

Beevor, Antony. [Ardennes 1944: The Battle of the Bulge](#) (Viking \$35)

The Germans gave it the code name Herbstnebel (Autumn Mist) while the Allies called it the Battle of the Bulge, but no matter what name you might give the conflict it was brutal and bloody. As the war in Europe was dragging to a conclusion, Supreme Commander Dwight Eisenhower

was trying to coordinate the efforts of a group of fractious and over-confident Allied generals, each of whom wanted to be the one to deal the death blow to the Nazis. Meanwhile the Nazis were gambling everything they had on one last desperate attempt to stop the Allied forces from taking Berlin. The Allies eventually won the battle, but the cost was tremendous with the United States alone losing more than 89,000 men just in the Battle of the Bulge. Award-winning British historian Beevor, whose previous books include studies of Stalingrad and D-Day and whose honors include winning the 2014 Pritzker Military Museum and Library Literature Award for Lifetime Achievement in Military Writing, offers an even-handed, detailed account of this crucial turning point in World War II.

DK, Publishing. [The Sherlock Holmes Book](#) (Diamond \$25)

Brimming with great graphics and noteworthy quotes, this guide to one of the genre's greatest sleuths provides background data on every one of his cases beginning with "A Study in Scarlet" as well as fascinating facts about the series characters and its creator: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Each case in the book also includes a "flowchart" which details the process used by Holmes to solve the mystery. Perfectly timed to tie into the newest edition of Sherlock set to debut in January on PBS.

Bull, Andy. [Speed Kings](#) (Gotham \$26.95)

British sports writer Bull's debut book is a fascinating look at the four men, who made up the American bobsledding team, which competed in the 1928 and 1932 Winter Olympic games. First there was young speed junkie Billy Fiske, who would eventually talk his way into the Royal Air Force (despite not being British) in order to fight the Nazis in the Battle of Britain. Next came Jay O'Brien a high society playboy with a decided taste for gambling. Then prize-winning boxer and Rhodes scholar Eddie Eagan joined up. And finally, washed-up silent film star Tippy Gray signed on. The four men would go on to win the gold medal for the U.S. but how these disparate men became a finely tuned bobsledding machine is the stuff of sporting legends. Bull not only gives readers the details about the actual races as well as the men's lives before and after the

Olympics, but he also includes such fascinating background material as to how St. Moritz used bobsledding to become a winter sports destination and the political deal making involved in Lake Placid's efforts to become the site for the 1932 winter games (let's just say the Dewey family isn't going to win any awards for humanitarianism and social enlightenment). Ordinarily, I couldn't care less about sports (Olympic or otherwise), but I was completely swept up in this thrilling tale, which will definitely appeal to anyone who enjoyed the best-seller *The Boys in the Boat*. (And as to why the bobsledding team wears sweaters with the word "Satan" on them on the jacket, well you will just have to read this fascinating book to find out.)

Green, Julius. [Curtain Up: Agatha Christie: A Life in Theatre](#) (Harper \$26.99)

One might think that with all the assorted works dedicated to the mystery genre's greatest writer, there really is nothing new to say about Christie. However, Green, the producer of many of Christie's plays, has found a new angle by exploring Christie's life through the prism of her work as a playwright. Includes excerpts from Christie's correspondence, notebooks, and several of her unpublished plays.

Holland, Tom. [Dynasty](#) (Knopf \$30)

Holland picks up things where he left off in his best-selling book *Rubicon* with the assassination of Julius Caesar and then goes on to narrate the colorful reigns of emperors Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. Fortunately for Holland, the Julio-Claudian years give the author plenty of juicy material to work with including the short yet stormy reign of Claudius (the subject of Robert Graves's incomparable historical novel *I Claudius*).

Jordan, Jonathan W. [American Warlords](#) (NAL \$16)

This masterful study of Roosevelt and his trusted trio of Henry Stimson, George C. Marshall, and Ernest J. King, each of whom put aside his own personal differences to help the country win the war, was actually published this spring, but it deserves mentioning here since it is a real page-turner. Jordan has a definite flair for

blending history, politics, and warfare into one seamless storyline, and *American Warlords* is tailor-made for any reader, who enjoys learning more about America's part in World War II.

Kaplan, James. [Sinatra: The Chairman](#) (Doubleday \$35)

Kaplan covered the first part of Sinatra's life in his award-winning biography *Sinatra: The Voice* (2010). Now he picks up "Ol' Blue Eyes" story after Sinatra's meteoric rise to fame and his Oscar win for his part in 1954's *From Here to Eternity*. The bulk of the biography is dedicated to the Rat Pack years, during which the "Chairman of the Board" solidifies his hold on the American Songbook and pals around with JFK and other political and silver screen luminaries while at the same time managing to shoot the breeze with Sam Giancana. An insightful look at the man, his music, and his legacy.

Lehman, David. [Sinatra's Century: One Hundred Notes in the Man and His World](#) (Harper \$24.99)

As the centenary of Frank Sinatra's birth comes to a close, long-time fan Lehman, a noted poet himself and the editor of *The Oxford Book of American Poetry*, uses this music milestone as an opportunity to write 100 short reflections on Sinatra's life and his music.

Lough, David. [No More Champagne: Churchill and His Money](#) (Picador \$32)

Lough, an investment advisor in real life, uses Winston Churchill's checkbook and bank accounts as the lens by which he examines this extraordinary man's life. To be perfectly blunt, Churchill was a spendthrift, and he flirted with bankruptcy several times over the course of his life. Early in his career, Churchill took on journalism assignments in order to supplement his salary as a cavalry officer, and at one point he received the equivalent of \$150,000.00 from a newspaper for his reports on the British army's campaign in South Africa. Even after receiving two inheritances after World War I, Churchill still found himself in financial straits since much of the money was sunk into Chartwell, the country house he bought in 1922. During World War II, Churchill actually had to be financially bailed out twice by Sir Henry Strakosch, an

Austrian-born banker who loaned him money and bought out Churchill's portfolio of stock shares to the tune of what would be almost 2 million dollars today. Despite the plethora of books about Churchill available, Lough's book manages to find new ground to tread, and it will definitely be of interest to any Churchillian, who wants to understand this legendary politician better.

Purnell, Sonia. [Clementine: The Life of Mrs. Winston Churchill](#) (Viking \$30)

The only other biography of Clementine Churchill was written by her daughter Mary Soames in 1987. Purnell gives readers the inside scoop on Clementine Holzier, the fashionable, athletic, strong-willed woman who married Churchill, and then became his editor, political advisor, and better half in many ways. Clementine was convinced of her husband's greatness early on in their marriage, and she would let nothing – his political detractors even her own children – stand in her way of seeing to it that her husband fulfilled his destiny. An intriguing look at the woman behind the man.

Riedel, Michael. [Razzle Dazzle](#) (Simon & Schuster \$27)

There's no business like show business as Riedel proves in this entertaining account of the Great White Way. The author, who reviews the theater for the *New York Post*, uses the Shubert Organization as the nucleus from which he examines how Broadway rose again from the depths into which it had sunk during the late 1960s and early 1970s with the opening of shows like *A Chorus Line* followed by the British invasion led by Andrew Lloyd Weber, whose shows *Cats* and *Phantom of the Opera* can still be seen on Broadway.

Simmonds, Meg. [Bond By Design: The Art of the James Bond Films](#) (Diamond \$50)

Can't get enough of 007? Then this gorgeously illustrated book will leave you both shaken and stirred as it takes you behind the production scenes of the multi-million dollar movie franchise. Simmonds (the official archivist for the company that produces the Bond movies) comments on the storyboards, costume and scene

sketches, gadgets and vehicles, and art designs that were used for every film beginning with Dr. No in 1962 and ending with this year's Spectre. As an added bonus, the book includes two prints suitable for framing.

I'll Drink to That

Francis, Will and Stacey Marsh. [Cocktails of the Movies: An Illustrated Guide to Cinematic Mixology](#) (Prestel \$19.95)

The authors serve up a tempting collection of 64 cocktail recipes along with some fascinating facts about the movie in which they are served in this nifty guide. The selections range from the Mississippi Punch sipped in Breakfast at Tiffany's to Sweet Vermouth on the Rocks with a Twist that appears in Groundhog Day. Basic tips on preparing, garnishing, and serving drinks are also included. Perfect for the old movie fan in your life.

Maclean, Charles. [Spirit of Place: Scotland's Great Whisky Distilleries](#) (Univ Chicago \$39.95)

This wide-ranging and beautifully illustrated portrait (more than 250 specially commissioned photographs are included) of Scotland's distilleries is written by an expert on the subject, and it offers readers an insightful introduction to the "cultural terroir" of the country's fifty greatest distilleries. Includes details about the ingredients, practices, and traditions that have resulted in the best single-malt whiskies in the world. Best read with a wee dram at hand.

Macneil, Karen. [The Wine Bible](#) (Workman \$24.95)

For the second edition of her groundbreaking book on wine, MacNeil tasted more than 10,000 different wines (in the process probably leaving some readers to wonder exactly how she managed to write anything at all). However, the end result is wonderfully useful resource for both wine newbies and established collectors. MacNeil starts with the basics such as grape varieties and wine and food pairings before taking readers on a trip around the globe to visit the different grape-growing and wine-making regions of the world including new hot spots like China and South America. The book is loaded with

maps and illustrations as well as breezy side-bars so in some senses it is like taking a course in wine from an expert instructor (and with the added bonus of not having to deal with any pesky homework).

Mitenbuler, Reid. [The Bourbon Empire: The Past and Future of America's Whiskey](#) (Viking \$27.95)

Whiskey might be an Old World drink, but bourbon is the quintessential American liquor. George Washington once brewed his own blend using local ingredients, and now the drink is the latest hipster obsession with micro-distilleries creating more flavors of the drink than Baskin and Robbins has of ice cream. Mitenbuler traces the fascinating history of Bourbon from its frontier days to the multi-million dollar industry it has become today in this spirited (in all senses of the word) account of America's unofficial liquor of choice.

Mustacich, Suzanne. [Thirsty Dragon: China's Lust for Bordeaux and the Threat to the World's Best Wines](#) (Holt \$32)

Mustacich, a contributing editor at Wine Spectator magazine, explores the rise of the Chinese wine market and its delicate relationship with one of France's most famous wine regions. As global demand for Bordeaux wines began to collapse in the early 2000s, the French vintners and chateau owners were thrilled to find one country – China - that actually wanted more and not less of their legendary wine. With their own economy booming, the new Chinese business class not only saw Bordeaux wines as a good investment vehicle for their liquid cash, but they also bought and drank bottles of Bordeaux as a means of demonstrating their rising status in society. Of course with all this demand, attempts to cash in as fake Bordeaux began showing up. An interesting (if very narrow look) at one segment of the wine market and its newest (and largest consumers).

Robinson, Jancis. [The Oxford Companion to Wine](#) (Oxford \$65)

The first edition of Robinson's magisterial tome was published in 1994, and it immediately went on to win every major culinary book award including the Glenfiddich and Julia Child/IACP

awards. The newest addition is equally authoritative offering nearly 4,000 entries written by 187 academics and specialists on everything from wine regions and grape varieties to the history of wine and wine-making. Wine lovers will definitely get a lot for their money with this amazing reference work.

And don't forget *David Baker's [Vintage](#)* (SimonSchuster \$25). This debut novel about a washed-up food journalist and wine critic, who discovers a clue to a cache of vintage French wine that disappeared during World War II and then decides to follow the trail, is a really fun read with plenty of evocative writing about the glories of wine (and food).