THE READ

COFFEE TABLE BOOK CLUB

We put together the dream book club with the coolest members and got their picks for what you should have on your coffee table this season.

GALLERIST STEPHEN BULGER **RECOMMENDS:**
AMERICAN ARTIFACTS
by Phil Bergerson

American Artifacts is a complex and poetic photographic portrait of America as it simmered its way through the first decade of the 21st century—that span of years some have called the "lost" decade. The book is a personal exploration by an empathetic neighbour—the Canadian documentary photographer Phil Bergerson, whose active imagination and a genuine love for his subject matter shine through his work. Bergerson is a master of colour and composition with a square frame, and his photographs ponder current attitudes that we've inherited from the previous generation. His father was a commercial sign painter, and so I see his work as a collaboration between what people leave behind and what Bergerson is able to find and capture.

FOOD AND TRAVEL WRITER AMY ROSEN **RECOMMENDS:**
THE SECRET RECIPES
by Dominique Ansel

The inventor of the Cronut takes us inside his magical mind and on a full-colour romp through the do-able (Popcorn Chouquettes) to the breath-taking (Sweet Potato Mont Blanc)—and, yes, there's even The At-Home Cronut Pastry (though it will take you four hours over the span of three days to complete). Chapters run from "Time is an Ingredient" (so true!) to "Everything But the Flavor," in which Ansel explains his appreciation for treats like s'mores. Recipes begin with his inspiration—a New York heat wave led to his Frozen S'Mores: a marshmallow filled with soft vanilla ice cream spun with chocolate-covered *feuillentine* before being skewered by smoked willow branches and torched to order. Ansel's passion, humour and creativity run throughout this gorgeous hardcover, through personal stories and the in-house mechanisms behind his singular recipes. He loves what he does, and it shows on every page.

INTERIOR DESIGNER THERESA CASEY **RECOMMENDS:**
OLD BUILDINGS, NEW FORMS
by Francoise Bollack

Opposites attract! This book is my inspiration for a project I am presently designing for a musician—a contemporary bungalow married to a performance space in an 1850s stone farmhouse. Here, we see careful interventions of modern architecture intersecting in surprising and subtle ways with quirky historic buildings. The result is a volume full of inspiration from around the world, with texts referencing some of my heroes: Jane Jacobs, Anne Carson and Robert Venturi. This is a rich read that furthers the evolution of new and creative possible ways to preserve the past and embrace the future.

DESIGNER AND ART AFFICIONADO JEREMY LAING **RECOMMENDS:**
PIRATES AND FARMERS
by Dave Hickey

This collection of "essays on taste" by one of America's great cultural critics has many more words than most coffee table books and a lot less pictures. However, each of the thorny pieces it contains—collected from sources as disparate as *Rolling Stone* and *Art Forum*—can be read in about the same amount of time it would take to flip through a colourful monograph or collection of interiors, and yet they provide much more insight into our material culture.

MEDIA VP AND ARCHITECTURE BUFF RAYMOND GIRARD **RECOMMENDS:**
THE LEGO ARCHITECTURE STUDIO

Who needs another coffee table book about architecture? If it's a book about contemporary architecture, I tire of it within a year or two. And how many books about Palladio can I get? The decidedly "adult" coffee table book contained in the Lego Architecture Studio is a serious book about serious architecture—and, bonus, you actually get to build the buildings you're reading about with the 1,200 white bricks included. All of the greatest hits of contemporary architecture are here—from Wright to Mies. It's also a book of serious yet approachable architecture theory, presented and commented upon by the likes of Moshe Safdie, Sou Fujimoto, SOM and MAD Architects. And if all you want is a great-looking book for your coffee table, you won't be disappointed either. Hell, you could build your own coffee table if you want.

Interviews by Diane Peters