

Mary Ellen Bartley's *Untitled #44 (Paperbacks)*, 2010, offered by **The Drawing Room**, sets the (mono)tone for some voracious summer reading on the beach, or beyond.

REQUIRED READING

End of
SUMMER
Beach Reads

There's still time to catch a wave — *and* dive into
a great and inspiring book.

by Becca Bergman Bull

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SHOPPABLE STORY

According to the retail world, we're already well into autumn. But in reality, the dog days of August still stretch pleasurably ahead. So whether you're embarking on a vacation or just whiling away a warm afternoon, there's still plenty of time to squeeze in one of the season's greatest pleasures: a beach book (or a mountain, lake, cabin, road trip, sailboat or European grand-tour book, as the case may be).

In that spirit, we recently asked a dozen interior designers to name their favorite design-related (however tangentially) summer reads, whether old or new, fiction or nonfiction, which resulted in a wonderfully varied, invariably inspiring list. So read on — there's still plenty of time.

Christian Chaize's *Praia Piquinia* 21/08/09 15h10, 2009, offered by **Jackson Fine Art**



“Last summer I read Amor Towles’ *Rules of Civility* (Viking; 2011) about a young woman navigating the various social strata of New York in the late 1930s, which I loved. So I was pleasantly surprised when he came out with an e-book follow-up to that wonderful story: *Eve in Hollywood* (Penguin; 2013). It’s all about rich people having fun the perfect beach-read indulgence.”

— MILES REDD, NEW YORK

“I just returned from St. Barts and am already longing to return to! St. Barts, where I fell in love with the intricate gingerbread molding details, the colonial architecture, the plantation furniture and the culture of the French West Indies. My perfect beach read this summer is *French Island Elegance* (Abrams; 2006), by Michael Connors, which discusses how the decorative arts, design and architecture in this region were shaped by its colorful and unique history.”

—KISHANI PERERA, LOS ANGELES

“Edith Wharton’s short stories make for great summer reading. R.W.B. Lewis, Wharton’s Pulitzer Prize winning biographer, edited *The Selected Short Stories of Edith Wharton* (Scribner; 1991), which reflect an insider’s view of America’s privileged classes. Wharton was a tastemaker, interior designer and garden designer as well as a Pulitzer Prize-winning author herself.

Sister: The Life of Legendary American Interior Decorator Mrs. Henry Parish II (St. Martin’s Press; 2000), by Apple Parish Bartlett and Susan Bartlett Crater, the famed decorator’s daughter and granddaughter respectively, is about the standard bearer of American interior design. When it was published, Dominick Dunne called *Sister* “a loving portrait as well as a superb social history of her era.”

—EMILY SUMMERS, HOUSTON

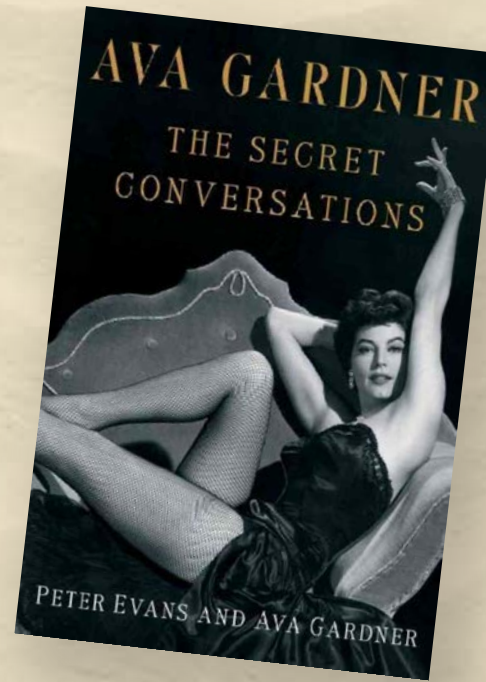


Laurie Victor
Kay's Plage St.
Tropez II, 2012,
offered by [Clic](#)
[Gallery](#)



“I love *Ava Gardner: The Secret Conversations* (Simon & Schuster; 2013), because Gardner lived such a fascinating life, from the men she married to her daily stylish and grand gestures. She lived to the fullest when it came to fashion, beauty and art.”

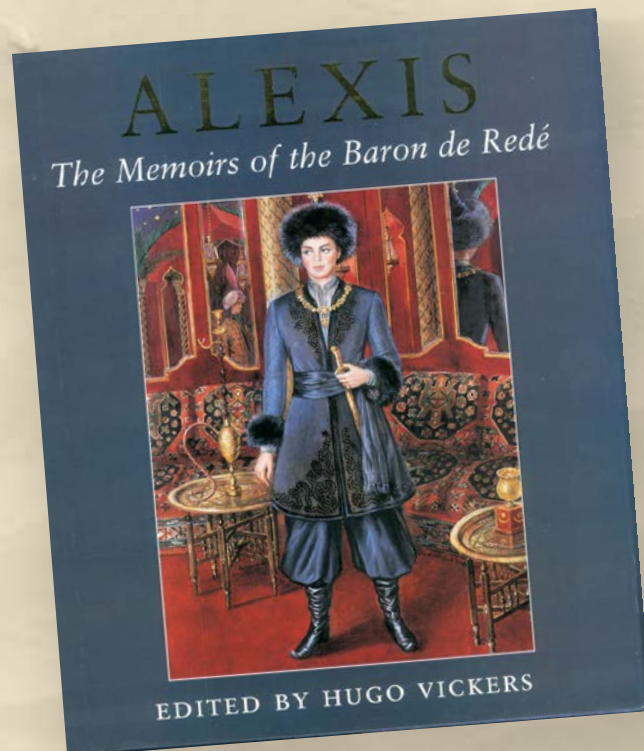
— VICENTE WOLF, NEW YORK



“When I heard about the fire earlier this summer that ravaged parts of the magnificent Hotel Lambert in Paris, I immediately set aside for this year’s summer re-read a copy of *Alexis: The Memoirs of the Baron de Redé* (privately published; 2005), edited by Hugo Vickers. Alexis de Redé was instrumental in giving life, beginning in the 1950s, to this most magnificent of mansions. He had a true love affair with the 17th-century house, with beauty, with luxury and elegance.

I am also looking forward to *In Search of Rex Whistler: His Life & His Work* (Frances Lincoln; 2012), Hugh and Mirabel Cecil’s new biography of this great English artist. I have read the 1980s book by Whistler’s brother, so I’m truly intrigued by this new picture of the painter, illustrator and set designer who enjoyed a fascinating career, in particular as a muralist, from 1925 up until his death in World War II. He lived a short life, but he responded to beauty in such multifaceted ways. Just browsing through the book’s illustrations gives me a design overdose.”

— NESTOR SANTA-CRUZ,
WASHINGTON, D.C.



“*The Flamethrowers* (Scribner; 2013), by Rachel Kushner, is set in 1977, when Reno, a feisty tomboy comes to New York, intent on turning her fascination with motorcycles and speed into art. This coincides with a flurry of activity in the art world, and Reno falls under its dodgy spell with very suspect ‘under-the-radar’ artists. I can’t wait to be lounging on a deck chair to read it. It was recommended by someone at Much Ado Books, in East Sussex, the best book shop in Britain.”

— KIT KEMP, LONDON

Andy Warhol's
Montauk Beach,
1982, offered by
Hedges Projects



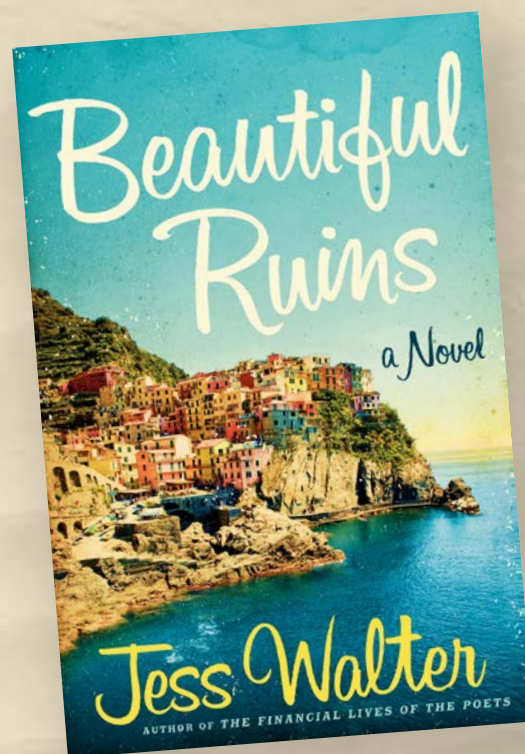
“I just saw Baz Luhrmann’s film version of *The Great Gatsby*, and it has reignited my obsession with F. Scott Fitzgerald. The opulence of Long Island’s Gold Coast during the roaring twenties! Those glorious European-style estates, the fabulous parties, flowing booze, crystal-encrusted flapper dresses and luxurious debauchery. The ivory-and-shagreen cigarette holders are gorgeous enough to make you want to smoke!

So now I am turning to *Tender is the Night* (Scribner; 1934), which Fitzgerald based on Gerald and Sara Murphy, a stylish and gorgeous couple that he and his wife Zelda spent considerable time with on the French Riviera. I can think of no better way to while away hours by the pool than dreaming of the Riviera.”

—WINDSOR SMITH, LOS ANGELES

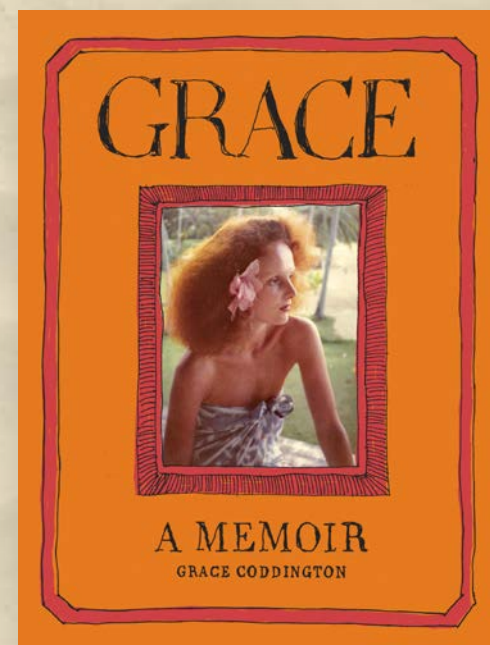
“As a designer and memoirist — my own new book, *The Bald Mermaid* (Pointed Leaf Press; 2013), is a great summer read, too! — I love the genre because it enables readers to peek into someone else’s life, if only briefly. Grace Coddington’s recent memoir, *Grace* (Random House; 2012), is a beautiful and witty book, full of interesting stories and gorgeous photos from her career as a fashion model and as creative director at *Vogue*.”

— SHEILA BRIDGES, NEW YORK



“Prepping for a family road trip through the south of France this summer, I was searching for a fun read. My requirements? A little romance, a little wickedness and a lot of escape. When I found *Beautiful Ruins* (Harper Perennial; 2013), by Jess Walter, the added bonus was the setting both in present-day Hollywood and in Italy in the 1960s. This book is the perfect marriage of witty and pretty, with a sugar-coated fun and sexy story that all designers will fall for. From the swooning opening moment on the Italian Riviera, I was hooked.”

— TAMARA KAYE-HONEY, LOS ANGELES



Michael McLaughlin's *Beach*,
Rio, 2002, offered by **Robin**
Rice Gallery



“I am in the midst of renovating my new Hamptons house, and, because it is a wonderful, vertical cedar-sided structure with horizontal windows, I have been reading for inspiration about the great architects who pioneered modern home-design in the eastern part of Long Island: Horace Gifford in the new *Fire Island Modernist* (Metropolis Books/Gordon de Vries Studio; 2013) and Norman Jaffe in *Romantic Modernist* (Monacelli Press; 2005).

Because the house is on a lovely wooded lot, I am also fascinated by the idea of a shadowy, moody garden and have found Keith Wiley’s *Shade* (Timber Press; 2007) so inspiring.

Also, somewhat more glamorously, I just started reading *Living Artfully* (Giles; 2013), a fascinatingly detailed report on the life and habits of Marjorie Merriweather Post when in residence at Mar-a-Lago — I was fortunate to stay at this beautiful Palm Beach home before its renovation.”

— S. RUSSELL GROVES, NEW YORK



“This summer I am reading Robert Massie’s *Catherine The Great, Portrait of a Woman* (Random House; 2011). Having returned from my first trip to St. Petersburg earlier this year, I have become fascinated with Russian history. During my trip, a private tour of Catherine’s summer palace inspired me to design a few new pieces of furniture for a project in New York. The book provides a wonderful historical perspective while humanizing one of history’s most powerful leaders.”

—THOMAS PHEASANT, WASHINGTON, D.C.

“Daphne Du Maurier’s *Rebecca* (Victor Gollancz Ltd; 1938) would enthrall any 1stdibs reader who appreciates a real English country home and has a love of art and antiques. This is not only a gripping story about the new Mrs. de Winter and her love affair with the handsome Max de Winter, but it enjoys a fantastic setting in Cornwall, and the descriptions put you right in all the rooms and gardens of Manderley, one of those ravishing English country houses. This is one of the five books I would want on my desert island. It’s to be read in one sitting!”

— KATHRYN IRELAND, LOS ANGELES

