

OPED / Scott Coffman

Books by, for and about moms

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"The Mom's Book: For the Mom Who's Best at Everything" by Alison Maloney (Scholastic, Inc., \$9.99, 128 pp.)

In the vein of the very popular *Dangerous Book for Boys* (and sporting a cover that mimics the same), this cute collection offers advice on how to do dozens of Mom-related activities, like making cupcake "spiders" for Halloween. There are short biographies of famous "Moms" both good and bad. On the whole, it reads like a condensed collection of magazine filler, but it would make a cute gift from the kids that Mom would treasure (she might even learn something).

"Porn for New Moms" by The Cambridge Women's Pornography Cooperative (Chronicle Books, \$12.95, 96 pp.)

Not the dirty book the title foreshadows, but rather photography of attractive men doing helpful and attentive things for the new mother of the house. The captions that accompany the photos are sure to tickle any young mother ("Let me get my hockey equipment out of the garage to make room for the stroller, dear"). It's all good, harmless fun, and surely the kind of thing any harried young mom can appreciate, especially if hubby is parked on the couch watching football while she does the dishes.

"Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America" by Charlotte S. Waisman and Jill S. Tietjen (Collins, \$29.95, 272 pp.).

This is a glorious celebration of the women who have shaped our country, spanning hundreds of years of our history. The stories on this timeline cover a panoply of disciplines, talents and contributions, all illustrating the unique contributions made by women throughout history. This will remind Mom that many unheralded women have made unique and valuable contributions to the world.

"The Fun Book for Moms: 102 Ways to Celebrate Family" by Melina Gerosa Bellows (Andrews McMeel Publishing, \$12.95, 128 pp.)

A simple and fun collection to encourage Mom to enjoy the simple pleasures of time spent with the family. There are recipes and anecdotes accompanied by charming artwork throughout. While the suggestions range from the simple to the silly, they allow Mom to relax from parenting and enjoy life.

"Dirty Little Secrets from Otherwise Perfect Moms" by Trisha Ashworth and Amy Nobile (Chronicle Books, \$12.95, 112 pp.)

This sweet collection will have Mom chuckling with recognition. Moms have it tough, and this collection of their dirty little secrets (passing off store-bought cupcakes as homemade; wishing your husband had gotten hair plugs) confirm that many women share commonalities of existence, and there is nothing wrong with it. Many of the wry observations are heartwarming as well, especially when one recognizes like behavior in herself.

"Learn to Garden" by DK Publishing (DK Publishing, 19.95, 352 pp.)

DK, always known for beautiful photography, does it again in this lovely book. Suitable for the garden newbie or the more experienced weed warrior, *Learn to Garden* gives Mom all the guidance she needs to create her truly perfect spaces, whether for floral beauty, relaxation, pet safety, or food production. It covers all the basics of successful gardening, from transplanted to harvest. Never condescending, the book is a great reference Mom will consult often.

"Cath Kidston Dream Home Journal" by Cath Kidston (Chronicle Books, \$19.95, 98 pp.)

This whimsically illustrated volume serves as the perfect repository to store Mom's plans for the home. There are plenty of spots for swatches and samples, arranged by room, and plenty of space for note-taking and planning. If your Mom is the uber-organized type, this might be the perfect gift.

"Essence of Chocolate: Recipes for Baking and Cooking with Fine Chocolate" by Robert Steinberg and John Scharffenberger (Hyperion, \$35.00, 384 pp.)

An orgiastic compendium of over 100 decadent and delicious recipes suitable for most cooks beyond the beginner stage, although some may be a stretch except for more sophisticated home chefs. From simple treats to elaborate concoctions, the book also provides fascinating histories of chocolate and its uses, as well as some truly mouth-watering photographs -- all decadent.

"Bon Appetit, Y'All: Recipes and Stories from Three Generations of Southern Cooking" by Virginia Willis (Ten Speed Press, \$32.50, 320 pp.)

A glorious celebration of food, chock full of recipes that the average Mom can create with ease, this book is a terrific go-to workhorse for the Mom who loves to cook. Willis, who teaches cooking in Atlanta, serves up great stories with her tasty dishes, and explains techniques with great clarity. The photography sizzles and the colors pop in one of the nicest cookbooks I've read in a long time (and the food is delicious).

"Another Serving: The Kentucky Monthly Tenth Anniversary Cookbook" by Paula Cunningham (McClanahan Publishing House, Inc., \$21.95, 192 pp.)

I couldn't fail to include this beauty from the folks at *Kentucky Monthly*. It's a great addition to Mom's collection, full of simple and delicious recipes that will have the family begging for more. No, it isn't typical Southern fare, but rather unique and tasty combinations of flavor and texture that will bring your home cooking nearer to haute cuisine.

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