



Author Reading List #2: Jeremy Lee

Jeremy Lee is the chef proprietor of Quo Vadis in Soho and author of the shop-favourite Cooking: Simply and Well, For One or Many. Inspired by his years of great purchases, we have asked him to compile a list of recommendations that you'll find around the shop. He values quality ingredients as the key to great food. Jeremy's savvy for leeks, asparagus, and mussels is matched by his taste in great literature, as you'll see below.

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Asked to write a list of books, it has taken months to hone one that even remotely contains favourite books read over the years. Tis a nigh on impossible task and flummoxed early attempts. Thoughts did however begin to hover and remain and were put on paper and so grew a list of books I enjoyed as a child, as an adult, I wished I had read when young, books I have always loved and read again, books I have loved as a cook, and books when I could not sleep and had me turning pages into the wee hours of the morning.

Nikolai Gogol, *Collected Tales (and everything else!)* With a singular, unique mind that is at once otherworldly, strange and quite extraordinary. Gogol takes you into Ukraine and Russia of the early 19th century with satire and folklore woven into day to day life and so much more.

Alexander Pushkin, *Queen of Spades and Russian Magic Stories* For short stories that are as magical as they are satirical from the mind and pen of a Russian nobleman in the early 19th century who inspires and delights equally with needle sharp observation.

Nancy Mitford, *Love in a Cold Climate* is the best and funniest and most heartfelt book that satirises the upper classes like no other. A wonder.

Sybille Bedford A wonderful writer who writes peerlessly about food, people, wine, place, her life, her family and brings to the page tales that beguile, sadden and delight.

John Banville, *The Sea* (Although all his books are superb.) Elegant and poised, beautifully paced, mesmerising and utterly engaging.

Colm Toibin Tis hard to choose one above the other so merely start at the beginning and work your way through the books of this remarkable and wonderful writer who will hold you still while reading.

Elizabeth David, *Italian Food, French Provincial Cooking, An Omelette and a Glass of Wine* Peerless, perfect books, who put forth always simplicity and forthrightness in writing and cooking equally. On dishes and cooking, produce and markets, as quick to applause as to criticise, so ahead of the game, and so poignant.

Elizabeth Luard, *European Peasant Cookery* is a superb book, beautifully illustrated by the author, insightful, inspiring, a testament to so much that is good. And what cooking. Reading such recipes, as real as can be, you find yourself on turning a page to be on a beach simmering a pan of beans.

Dr Jessica B Harris, *High on the Hog* The pioneering and brilliant authority on the diaspora of black cooking from Africa throughout the world. A writer whose mind can pen pages that are heartfelt, inspiring, heartbreaking, painful, poignant and never more than now, required reading.

John Buchan, *Huntingtower* A Russian princess kidnapped by Bolsheviks after the revolution. A retired Glaswegian Grocer. A wayward bunch of ne'er-do-wells called The Gorbals Diehards. Derring-do unsurpassed from the author of the 39 Steps. Read on every summer holiday in the Hebrides.

Jane Eyre, *Charlotte Bronte* How many books has this glorious tale inspired without once being bettered. Brilliant in every way, this tale of an unprepossessing woman who against many odds navigates extraordinary travails.

Count Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina* A magnificent tale that takes the reader on a journey as compelling as it is heartbreaking. Some men really are shits.

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* A favourite from childhood when Dad used to read this to us at night, leaving Gandalf to watch over us as the lights went out.

Tove Jansson, *The Moomins* I am so pleased I read these books, for you must read them all, instead of Enid Blyton. Delightful, engaging and wonderfully odd characters and tales from the mercurial and marvellous mind of Tove Jansson. I wanted them all as friends and still do.

Vladimir Nabokov, *The Luzhin Defense* This wonderful tale of a brilliant and tortured chess player, probable the finest ever, who finds love and then... no more here for the book is to be read. It is said that this is Nabokov's most sympathetic character. Tis hard not to agree.

Martin Cruz Smith, *Gorky Park* A superb thriller set in Soviet Moscow with murder, intrigue and sables. Ace in every way.

Olivia Laing Everything by this marvellous writer who has such instinctive and intuitive ways with incalculable thought and putting them in words. I only wish I had these to read as a young person growing up who loved to know about life and its myriad facets.

Armistead Maupin, *Tales of the City* The tales of the lives of the inhabitants of 28 Barbary Lane in San Francisco. A world of wonderful characters, adventures, life and endless stuff that beguiles always, tinged with a sadness recalling those times before AIDS took its devastating toll.

Claudia Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food* A scholarly work with warmth and gentleness, telling a tale that crosses continents and time in equal measure. Tis mesmerising reading.

Patricia Highsmith, *The Talented Mr. Ripley* Anything by Patricia Highsmith has to be read but in Ripley she found a character as deeply troubled as can be, creating a labyrinth of deception and... no more, read this, better than anything on the telly.