

Summer

Chill out with the hottest new books of the season

By MICHAEL GILTZ

Vacations can be exhausting. Packed itineraries, the demands of family, and more time spent traveling than actually relaxing.

This summer, tell everyone your main goal is to catch up on your reading. Then grab a page-turner and pop onto the beach or a lawn chair in the backyard.

The only move you'll have to make is turning the pages.

But what are the best warm-weather reads? Read on.

Those looking for romance can plunge into "Hot Ice" by blockbuster author Nora Roberts (Bantam, \$19.95), a writer so prolific she makes Stephen King seem like a drowler.

Other dependable best sellers include Danielle Steel's "Sunset in St. Tropez" (Delacorte, \$19.95), Jackie Collins' "Deadly Embrace" (Simon & Schuster, \$16), Selva Platan's budding topos in "Her Father's House" (Delacorte, \$25.95), and the posty E. Lynn Harris asking for "A Love of My Own" (Doubleday, \$24.95).

If you prefer your reading to be more stimulating, pick up "Everything is Illuminated" by Jonathan Safran Foer (Houghton Mifflin, \$24). It's quickly shaping into this year's smart answer to "What are you reading?" (Last year it was "The Corrections" by Jonathan Franzen.)

You can also stay ahead of the curve with "Gould's Book of Fish" by Richard Flanagan (Grove, \$27.50) and "The Dive from Clausen's Pier" by Ann Packer (Knopf, \$24) — two

recent titles gaining steam.

Also keep a lookout for "The Curve of the World" by Marcus Stevens (Algonquin, \$24.95), a clever adventure tale about a Coca-Cola rep who crashlands in the Congo; "Frague" by Arthur Phillips (Random House, \$24.95), about young American expatriates in Eastern Europe; and NYU professor Darin Strauss' "The Real McCoy" (Dutton, \$24.95), the hotly anticipated follow-up to "Casing and Eng" that details the life of a character who was a boxer, jewel thief and con artist.

Or you can go very young and very old.

Upper East Side high school student Nick McDonell (all of 18) delivers what we hope is a not-so-autobiographical novel, "Twelve" (Grove Press, \$23), about bored rich kids with too much time and too many drugs on their hands.

Ninety-year-old Hortense Calisher — who's old enough to be McDonell's great-grandmother — has "Sunday Jews" (Harcourt, \$28), a career-capping effort that runs more than 700 pages.

Perhaps you'd rather return to a breakout writer who's already broken through.

Larry McMurtry returns to the West with "Sin Killer" (Simon & Schuster, \$25), the first of a four-part saga about British nobility carving out a new life. Jamaica Kincaid delivers her first novel in years with

sizzlers

"Mr. Potter" (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$18), a finely observed tale about a taxi chauffeur in Antigua that has the added benefit of being a trim 144 pages.

And John Lanchester delivers his third impressive novel in a row with "Fragrant Harbor," (Putnam/Wood, \$25.95), a robust, decades-spanning saga about lovers in Hong Kong.

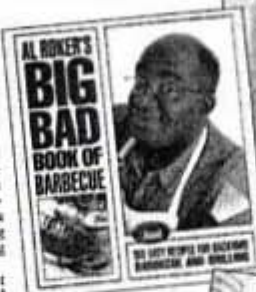
If you want to puzzle out a crime, try the brainy legal thriller "The Emperor of Ocean Park" by Stephen L. Carter (Knopf, \$26.95). Perri O'Shaughnessy returns with "Unfit to Practice" (Delacorte, \$24.95), the latest starring lawyer Nina Reilly.

John Saul bears "Midnight Voices" (Ballantine, \$25.95); Kathy Reichs can't possibly keep "Grave Secrets" (Scribner, \$25); and Elvis Cole hopes he isn't "The Last Detective" in a mystery by Robert Crais (Doubleday, \$24.95).

And all will cheer the return after six years of Easy Rawlins in "Bad Boy Brawly Brown" by Walter Mosley (Little, Brown, \$24.95).

If you prefer your stories grounded in fact, dive into "Lusitania: An Epic Tragedy" by Diana Preston (Walker & Company, \$28), a look at the most famous sinking ship not called Titanic.

Swashbucklers can rip into "The Pirate Hunter: The True Story of Captain Kidd" by Richard Zacks (Hyperion/Theia, \$25.95); and war buffs can lose themselves in "Secret Soldiers" by Philip Gerard (Dutton, \$24.95), the fascinating tale of a military unit devoted to deception.



Good books to pick up: "Everything is Illuminated" (with our model); Al Roker's "Big Bad Book of Barbecue" (far left) and "Mr. Potter" by Jamaica Kincaid.

The sleeper of the summer may be "The Keeper of Lime Rock" by Lenore Skenold (Running Press, \$18.95), the story of Ida Lewis, once the world's most famous lighthouse keeper.

More biographies on tap include tennis legend John McEnroe's wittily titled "You Cannot Be Serious" (Putnam, \$25.95); the tumultuous life of the daughter of Malcolm X, told in "Growing Up X" by Iyasha Shabazz (One World, \$25); and TV oddball Charles Grodin spilling the beans about his stint on CNBC in "I Like It Better When You're Funny" (Random House, \$24.95).

Certain to get lots of press — and furtive peeks in the bookstore — is "The Sexual Life of Catherine M." by Catherine Millet (Grove, \$23), the stunningly explicit sexual memoir by the apparently very busy editor of Art Press.

Does your summer vacation include summer movies?

After seeing Ben Affleck as a young Jack Ryan in "The Sum of All Years," read Tom Clancy's "Red



Rabbit" (Putnam, \$28.95). Loved "Spider-Man"? Then find out more about its creator with "Excelsior: The Amazing Life of Stan Lee" by Stan Lee and George Mair (Fire-stone, \$14).

Still over the moon about last year's "Ghost World"? You're probably ready for Daniel Clowes' latest graphic novel, "20th Century Lightbulb" (Fantagraphics, \$18.95), a collection of pieces from his acclaimed comic book series.

The next graphic novelist sure to break out is the increasingly assured Adrian Tomine, who's got "Summer Blonde" (Drawn & Quarterly, \$24.95).

Armchair travelers should try "Florence, A Delicate Case" by David Levitt (Bloomsbury, \$16.95), the latest in a delightful series featuring famous authors missing on their favorite destinations.

If you want to go back in time, grab "Coast to Coast" by Jan Morris, the classic memoir about traveling in '50s America (Travelers' Tales, \$16.95). Or set your sights higher with "Apollon: The Epic Journey to the Moon" by David West — Reynolds (Tehabi, \$35), a photo-heavy treat that's sure to be on Tom Hanks' reading list.

If you plan on traveling no further than the backyard, take along Al Roker's "Big Bad Book of Bar-

becue" (Scribner, \$27.95). While you're in the neighborhood, go bargain-hunting with "Good Things From Tag Sales and Flea Markets" (Clarkson Potter, \$22), from the editors of Martha Stewart Living.

Finally, if you don't want to take any chances, stick with a familiar name.

Overlook Press is in the midst of reissuing the classic comedies of P.G. Wodehouse in batches of four. The latest includes "The Clicking of Cuthbert," a wicked look at prof, and "Joy in the Morning," a tale of Berrie Wootter in the country. At \$16.95, these peripatetic little books will make any summer day a bright one.

Hitting stores this summer are books by John McEnroe (top) and Danielle Steel. Also try "Good Things From Tag Sales and Flea Markets" and the novel "Twelve."



X-Post: Summer bookcover photograph by Eric Stubbins. Photographs contributed by Mike O'Brien, David Smith, Tom Haskins and Andrew Schneider.