

## Holiday Gift Ideas

### **Like a Flower: My Years of Yoga with Vanda Scaravelli**

**By Sandra Sabatini**

Tuscany-based author and yoga teacher Sandra Sabatini writes, “To try to explain the relationship that links and binds a student to her teacher may be an impossible task,” but in this vivid memoir about her experiences studying with Vanda Scaravelli, she makes the job look easy. Using uncluttered storytelling accented by natural imagery, Sabatini honors the memory of her teacher, as well as the awakening of her own inner teacher. From her first meeting in the mid-1980s with Scaravelli—a student of Iyengar and long-time friend of Krishnamurti—to Scaravelli’s death in 1999 at the age of 91, Sabatini distills and reflects on the lessons she learned.

These lessons did not advocate any particular approach to asana; instead, Scaravelli emphasized reducing effort and expanding awareness. She urged students to attend to their own breath and posture closely, while learning to play with the force of gravity. As Sabatini assimilated this tutelage, she blossomed into a thirsty listener, eager to heed “a series of inner awakening events” that would release her from physical and mental contraction.

Despite the book’s somewhat sluggish start, with an unsympathetic explanation of the health issues that drew Sabatini to yoga in the first place, those who want to hear about the transformative effects of a sustained breathing and asana practice will enjoy this memoir. And those who wish to understand more about the subtle spiritual benefits of an intimate student-teacher relationship will thoroughly appreciate *Like a Flower*. —Michelle Frilot >>



### **Blissful Bites: Vegan Meals That Nourish Mind, Body, and Planet**

**By Christy Morgan**

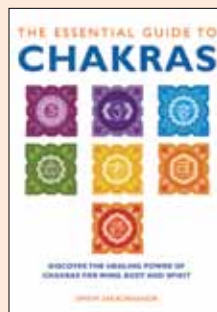
Professional chef and video blogger Christy Morgan’s first book, *Blissful Bites*, makes gourmet vegan food accessible to the home cook with 181 deceptively simple, mouthwatering recipes. Trained in vegan macrobiotic cuisine, Morgan lays out the steps to healthy plant-based eating—from dietary principles to cutting techniques to a survey of sea vegetables—and includes gluten-free and raw selections, like the zesty Zucchini “Pasta” with Mint-Cashew Pesto. Crisp food photography allows Morgan’s vibrant and seasonal recipes to jump off the page. Whether you are a veteran vegan or just wanting to lighten your diet, *Blissful Bites* will guide you down a healing path of joyful cooking all year long.

—Jessica Metcalf

### **Kirtan Kids: The Elephant, the Monkey, and the Little Butter Thief**

**By Jai Uttal**

Inspired in part by his young son, Jai Uttal has created the first chant album for children. *Kirtan Kids* demonstrates that call-and-response singing in the kirtan tradition can be a family affair. Led by children of all ages as well as “Poppa Jai,” each track offers a simple and uplifting melody accompanied by bells and harmonium. Uttal intersperses the songs with engaging stories from the Indian spiritual tradition—playfully introducing children to the true intentions of devotional singing. *Kirtan Kids* offers the perfect means of entertaining and educating the youngsters in your life—and you might even learn something new along the way. —Rachel Cama



### **The Essential Guide to Chakras: Discover the Healing Power of Chakras for Mind, Body and Spirit**

**By Swami Saradananda**

Out of the myriad chakra-related resources available—from your local bookstore to the app store on your smartphone—this pocket-sized guide stands out for its authenticity and user-friendly format. Introductory chapters include explanations of subtle body anatomy and preliminary exercises designed to

help practitioners viscerally experience chakra energy. The bulk of the book is comprised of seven chapters—one for each energy center—which include a breakdown of symbolism and iconography and accessible yet powerful chakra-specific practices. An ideal introduction for those looking to delve into the subtler dimensions of yoga. —Kathryn Heagberg