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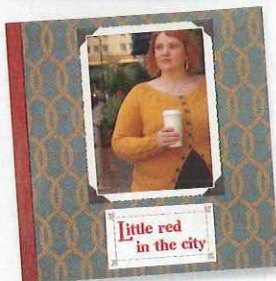


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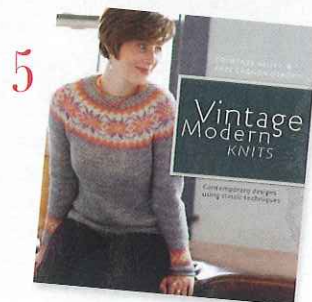
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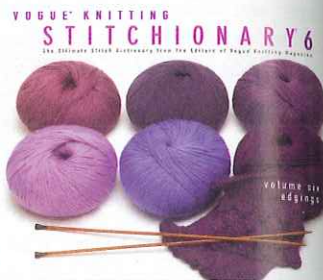
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# Knit Lit

By Leslie Petrovski

## 1. Knit Noro Accessories: 30 Colorful Little Knits By the Editors of Vogue Knitting (Sixth&Spring Books; \$24.95)

Who among us doesn't have balls or, if we're truly honest, bags of Noro stashed under beds, in closets and cordoned off in plastic bins because we fell sway to an irresistible colorway—or six? Following on the turned heels of *Knit Noro*, *Knit Noro Accessories* is an equally exuberant sibling, as suffused with color and clever tricks for using self-striping yarn as its predecessor. Consult this mostly beyond-beginner collection for gifts and skill-builders, including graphic entrelac projects (an iPad cover, mittens, a felted bag); modular knits; a short-rowed, undulating wrap; a smashing brioche scarf; striking pillows; and an eye-popping tea cozy guaranteed to outshine the dish towels.

## 2. 55 Christmas Balls to Knit: Colorful Festive Ornaments By Arne Nerjordet and Carlos Zachrisson (Trafalgar Square; \$24.95)

Speaking of gifts, you'll want to knit a few hundred of these ornaments for the holidays. Designed by Arne & Carlos, the masterminds behind *Comme des Garçons' Space Invaders*-inspired knitwear a few years back, the balls are Scandinavian knitting writ small—the perfect excuse to play with traditional patterns on a tiny scale. Traipse through this handsome book for the designs offered as well as for the holiday idea boards and glimpses into Arne and Carlos's life in northern Norway. Use them to mark place settings, delight hostesses, create centerpieces, festoon wreaths or adorn your tree—or all of the above. [For Leslie Petrovski's interview with Arne and Carlos, see page 36.]

## 3. Little Red in the City: An Ysolda Knitwear Collection By Ysolda Teague (Ysolda Teague; \$32)

The love for *Little Red* begins with the cover, which pictures voluptuous Lorna's Laces manager Amanda Jarvis, radiant in a gold-colored cardigan. It continues on the copyright page, where you'll discover that the book was printed in the U.S. on "paper from responsible sources" using vegetable inks, and that it's published—and largely written and photographed—by Teague herself. Clearly, this is not your average knitting book. Instead, *Little Red* deconstructs sweater sizing, showing where and how to place darts, alter cables and variously tweak garments for a perfect fit. Though

Teague includes only seven designs (two of them whimsical red riding hoodies)—photographed on both Amanda and Ysolda to show how the garments look on different body types and in different yarns and colors—instructions are given for bust sizes 28 through 60 inches. Beautifully photographed and charmingly laid out, this generous book gives knitters the tools to make sweaters perfect for their individual shapes.

## 4. Wendy Knits Lace: Essential Techniques and Patterns for Irresistible Everyday Lace By Wendy D. Johnson (Potter Craft; \$22.99)

What *doesn't* Wendy knit? Longtime followers of Johnson's blog ([www.wendyknits.net](http://www.wendyknits.net)) know she is no stranger to extreme knitting. That she has turned her attention to designing lace (and deconstructing it for those who think "lace" is a four-letter word) is hardly surprising given how she relishes exploring knitting's outer banks to reveal its secrets. In this pretty tome, the author of *Socks From the Toe Up* and *Toe-Up Socks for Every Body* does for lace what she did for feet-first socks. Serving up bits of wisdom—the Russian Join (there's a Russian Join?), the lace cast on, yarn-over techniques, and right- and left-slanting decreases—Johnson also delivers twenty wearable projects, from easy (the lovely Elizabeth's Cowl) to advanced (the perfect-for-the-office-or-opera Garden Party cardigan). There are no wedding-ring shawls here; instead you'll find mittens, gloves, a slouchy tam, wraps and, of course, socks, all knit with practical yarns that will stand up to the daily grind.

## 5. Vintage Modern Knits: Contemporary Designs Using Classic Techniques By Courtney Kelley and Kate Gagnon Osborn (Interweave Press; \$24.95)

In this sweet old-meets-new collection, Kelley and Osborn riff on the classics: The Aran is reinterpreted as both a cropped celery-green jacket and a handsome cardi made less bulky by set-in sleeves; the Rhodes Point Gansey is a softer and girlier version of the fisherman's pullover; Selbu mittens become hand warmers; and a '50s-inspired boyfriend sweater is transformed into a beautifully tailored, feminine cardi, while traditional Icelandic gear gets a trimmer silhouette and modern palette. For experienced, stylish knitters who love how

Arne &amp; Carlos

# Deck the balls

*A Scandinavian design team ignites an ornament craze.*

By Leslie Petrovski

Since *55 Christmas Balls to Knit* (Trafalgar Square Books) debuted in Norway a year ago under the title *Julekuler*, more than 37,000 copies have been sold—37,000 knitting books in a country whose population approximates that of Alabama or Colorado.



The book is the brainchild of the Scandinavian design duo Arne Nerjordet and Carlos Zachrisson, whose design company, Arne & Carlos, has developed a reputation for handsome Nordic-inspired knits. In 2008 the pair designed a cheeky collection of holiday knits for the Japanese fashion label Commes des Garçons, which mixed the look of the iconic Norwegian Marius sweater with imagery from Atari's *Space Invaders*,

the Japanese video game popular in the early 1980s.

When Commes des Garçons founder Rei Kawakubo asked for additional items, Arne and Carlos showed her the knitted Christmas ornaments they had been playing with. Kawakubo picked up four for the collection. When Arne and Carlos visited the Commes des Garçons store in Paris,

they were astounded to find that their humble ornaments were selling for 100 euros apiece.

"That's a high price for something so easy to make," Carlos observes. "So we got the idea that we should go the other way and do a book so people could knit them themselves."

Improvising on their Scandinavian heritage—Arne is Norwegian, Carlos is Swedish—they began using the sphere as a canvas upon which to develop ideas culled from vintage sweaters and mittens, nature, religious iconography, Nordic textiles, china patterns, old Christmas cards and other sources. The result is an exhaustive collection of mostly two-color ornaments emblazoned with striking geometric patterns and whimsical motifs.

That the book has caught on to such a degree (it's now available in eight languages) both puzzles and amuses the design duo. "We've taken the idea of the ball and given it a Scandinavian twist, using Norwegian patterns that we took from something old or that we created ourselves," Carlos explains. "It's an easy project, and you only need a little bit of yarn.

Arne can do one in the morning while drinking coffee, but he's a very professional knitter. And it's quite addictive. Once you do one, you can't stop."

As cute and graphic as the balls are, one wonders how sweater-patterned ornaments were able to foment a global sensation. But *55 Christmas Balls* is about something more: It denotes a lifestyle in miniature form. The many darling Christmas ornaments to knit open a window onto a world that looks more romantic, charming and vital than those defined by cubicles, smartphones and long hours at work. Not only do the ornaments themselves hark back to ghosts of Christmas past (and make no mistake: the book isn't referencing the winter holidays as observed by other faith traditions; it unabashedly celebrates Christmas), it also presents, through beautiful imagery and glimpses of the designers' inspiration notebooks and quaint farmhouse, an idealized season of snow, cozy evenings and creative magic.

"What we do is take a look back at our cultural heritage and create something modern," says Carlos. "Our aesthetic is very colorful and patterned and rustic. We like *more*. We do not take a minimalist approach." (To watch Arne and Carlos in action, visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=g54tJWw2-6c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g54tJWw2-6c).)

A second book by Arne and Carlos, *Strikkedukker* (*Knitted Dolls*), hit Norwegian bookshelves in August.



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