



WHAT I READ

Today: **Mei Xu:** Owner and CEO of Chesapeake Bay Candle and Blissliving Home.



By Patrice Gaines, Special for USA TODAY
Mei Xu Owner and CEO of Chesapeake Bay Candle and Blissliving Home.

What she's reading now

I just started reading a book called *The Quest for Global Dominance: Transforming Global Presence into Global Competitive Advantage* by Anil K. Gupta and Vijay Govindarajan. This book is full of insights about globalization. I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in learning about global business.

Recently read

A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule The Future by Daniel H. Pink. This is a fantastic read about the importance of design and story-telling in the business world.

Her most favorite book

The Last Song of Dusk by Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi. I was so fascinated by this spellbinding love story, set in 1920s colonial India, and by the author's superb use of language. Shanghvi was barely 26

years old when he completed *The Last Song of Dusk*, his debut novel. I could not believe he was that young — his storytelling is that of an old soul.

Three other favorites

The Seat of the Soul by Gary Zukav has helped me keep perspective in today's busy world where there is little room for spiritual thinking. Reading *The Seat of the Soul* is helping me to restore a connection with my inner self, and to break free from my daily routine. I love how this book provides inspiring spiritual thinking without drawing from religion.

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference, by Malcolm Gladwell, has changed the way I think about branding and marketing. It has changed the way we conduct business. I truly believe in

Gladwell's thesis of word-of-mouth marketing campaigns, with opinion leaders spreading the word about an idea, a product or a message — and the word traveling across country or even around the world until a crucial "tipping point" is reached.

When I started the company I was extremely focused on growing sales and strengthening our operations. Reading *The Tipping Point* contributed to our decision to invest in branding to establish Chesapeake Bay Candle as a household name for fabulous fragrances, stylish designs and affordable prices.

Perfume: The Story of a Murderer by Patrick Suskind. This is a fascinating — and horrifying — tale set in 18th-century France of a man with an extraordinary sense of smell, who becomes obsessed with producing the perfect scent. Because of my background in home fragrance development, I relate to this story. And Patrick Suskind's language and the way he describes the power of fragrance are just amazing.



Getty Images
Vicente Wolf

The book that has influenced her most

Crossing Boundaries: A Global Vision of Design by Vicente Wolf. Wolf demonstrates how travel can be translated into design. It is fascinating how Wolf uses his travel impressions to express his creativity. I strive to deliver authentic cultural experiences through fragrances, design and textures to our customers — and this is exactly how Wolf works, as well. I am fascinated by his language to describe his creative work. I get inspired every time I open this book.