

GAGOSIAN



See Candid Photos of Mick Jagger, Andy Warhol, Steve Jobs and Elon Musk
Art collector and tech investor Jean Pigozzi's latest book offers a behind-the-scenes look at the men who shaped him.

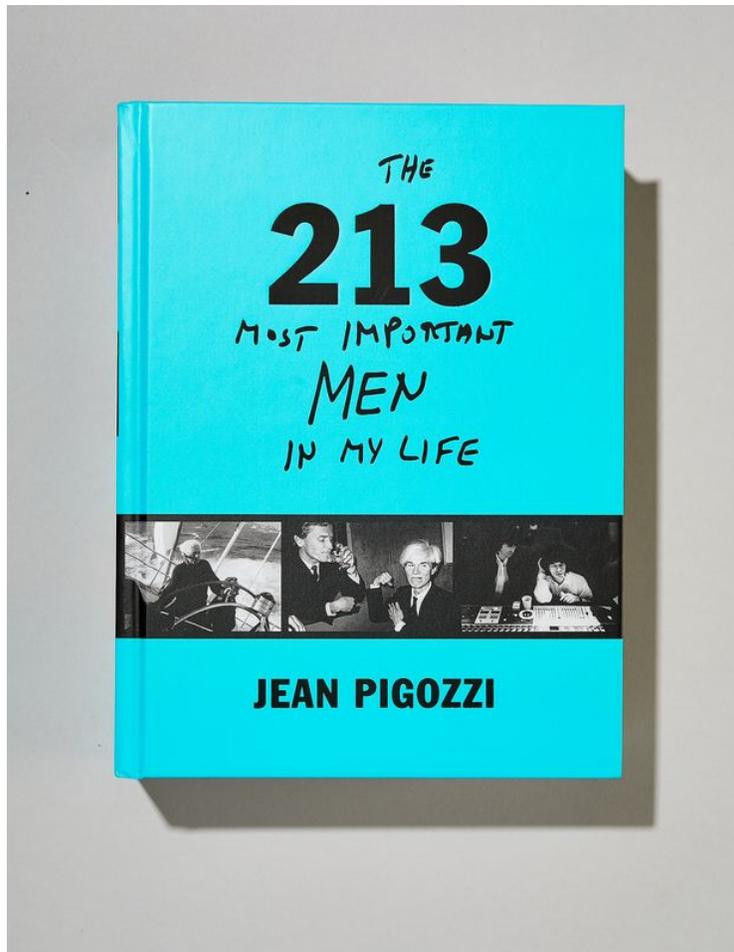
Alan Light



Keith Richards and Mick Jagger
PHOTO: © JEAN PIGOZZI

“Now everybody is a photographer — even my dog can take pictures,” says Jean Pigozzi. “But there are a lot of bad pictures. I use my iPhone to take a picture of a chair that I want to buy, or some car, but I never use it to take portraits.”

When Pigozzi was 9, his father — the founder of Simca automobiles — gave him a Brownie camera. He decided that he would document everything around him. “When I put my socks on in the morning,” he says on the phone from his home in Los Angeles, “I always put a camera in my pocket, and every day I take three or four pictures.” Sixty years later, these pictures have chronicled quite a life; Pigozzi is a tech investor and art collector (he has assembled the world’s largest private collection of contemporary African art) and has worked in film, hosted a TV show and designed a clothing line.



*Pigozzi's newest book of personal photographs, out this week from Vidoun.
PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN FOR WSJ. MAGAZINE*

Pigozzi's social circle is wide and eye-popping, as documented in his new book, *The 213 Most Important Men in My Life*, out this week. It collects candid shots of his close friends and men he has admired from a distance, representing his ease mingling with rock stars, movie directors, billionaires and artists — from Warhol to Bono, Pelé to Fellini, Belushi to Mandela. It seems like there's no after-party or VIP area Pigozzi has not been in.

He seems like a man with no regrets, but mistakes? He's made a few. "I remember going to a tech conference 25 years ago with 15 people in the room," he says. "This guy was saying, 'I was working in a hedge fund and I moved with my wife and two dogs to Seattle and I'm starting a company that's going to sell books.' I said, 'Does this idiot know about Barnes & Noble?' Amazon was at \$10 and you could buy as many shares as you wanted.

"When I met Jeff Bezos, I told him this and he said, 'Do you want to hear something even worse? I sold a quarter of Amazon for a million dollars to my friends, and each of them, when it went from \$10 to \$20, they sold. It would be worth \$300 billion.' So don't worry. We all do stupid things."

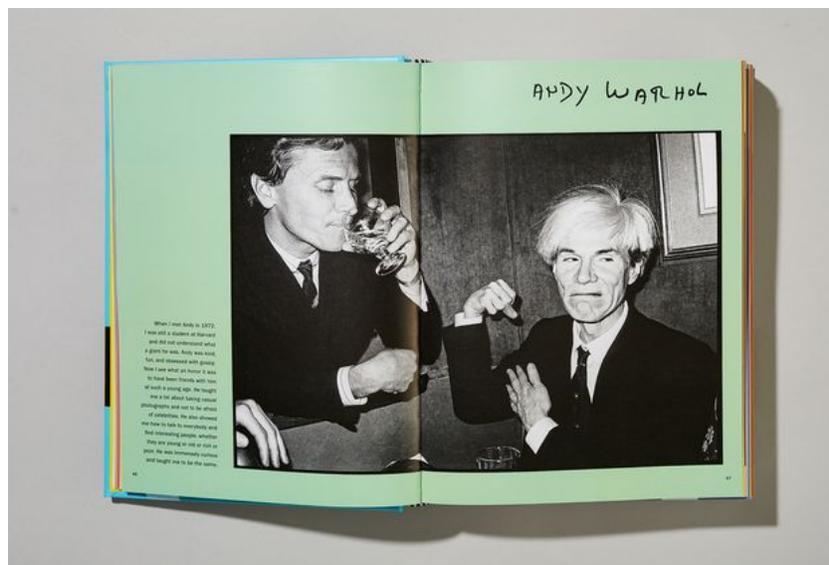


Jean Pigozzi (right) with Chuck Berry. PHOTO: © JEAN PIGOZZI

How did you choose these 213 men?

My father passed away when I was 12. He was a big businessman, and he was very busy and not that present. When I finished school, by a pure miracle, I managed to go to Harvard, but then when I finished, who was going to guide me in my life? I have no uncles. My mother was a very nice lady, but she didn't really know this kind of thing.

So I would always seek advice from older men around me, and I was very lucky that I had perhaps 10 very, very important men in my life who really helped me a lot. So the book started as an homage to these men. Then I said, there's other people who I also learned from, who I admired. So this was how the book was born.



Andy Warhol (right), whom Pigozzi met in 1972, when he was still a Harvard student. PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN FOR WSJ. MAGAZINE

But the hardest part wasn't selecting the pictures, it was writing the little notes on every person. Because sometimes I said, "I really like this person, but what did I learn from him? Why do I

want to include him in this book?” There’s some people that I’m close to, but they’re just friends — they didn’t really change or do anything in my life. So I didn’t put them in the book, and I made a few enemies.

How do you get yourself into these situations where we see things like David Geffen napping on a couch?

It’s on a private plane, which makes it even better! I met Ahmet Ertegun, and we became friends very quickly. We went from New York to Barbados — those are the years where Warner Bros. was very generous with their planes. David was running Elektra Records, and he was on the flight, and he fell asleep on the couch.

Usually you have these important businessmen behind a big desk, with 10 Oscars behind them and all that, but I thought it was fun to show him more human. These big billionaires have naps like everybody else — but on a private plane.



Elon Musk (right) with two partygoers.. PHOTO: © JEAN PIGOZZI

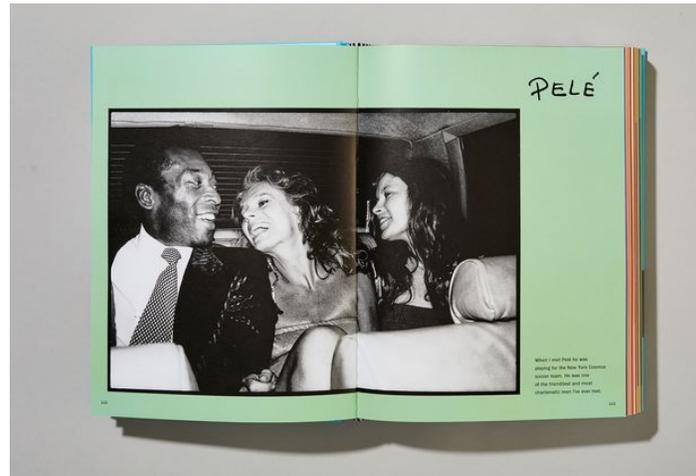
You point out Mick Jagger’s discipline, which is not necessarily what the world associates with him.

I met Jagger, I think, in 1975, and we immediately clicked. I have traveled with him, and he has stayed with me. Every morning, he exercises for an hour and a half very, very seriously. And then in the afternoon, you hear him training his voice.

I spoke to him three days ago, and he cannot wait to go on tour [again]. You would think that at 77, with eight children, 95 grandchildren [laughs], he would say, “OK, I’m going to rest, write my memoirs” or whatever. And going on tour is incredibly complicated — the Rolling Stones have, you know, 50 trucks, 200 people, accountants, bodyguards, makeup people, cooks, sound people. So many things can go wrong, and he really is the brains of this entire thing.

But I never saw him get angry. I’ve been in situations where Keith was not there, it was raining, everything was going wrong, and I never saw him lose his temper. If my Uber is three minutes

late, I go crazy. Obviously, I can't learn how to sing like [Mick], but I can learn his discipline and how he keeps his cool. That was really the lesson I learned from him.



Pelé (left) with friends.. PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN FOR WSJ. MAGAZINE

You have all the tech icons in the book — Steve Jobs, Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk. Is there something that characterizes all of those men?

I am obsessed by the future, I have very little interest in the past. I don't know anything about Napoleon or Julius Caesar. By pure luck, I met Steve Jobs when his company was small, and we became friends. He used to show me all the new products, and we went out with girls, we went to Jamaica to see [Island Records founder] Chris Blackwell. I spent a lot of time with [Steve], and he really opened my eyes to a world that I knew nothing about.

When I met Steve, he said, "Jean, have you ever taken LSD?" And I said, "No, I don't drink and I don't smoke and I don't take drugs," and he said, "Forget it — you can be an investor, but you'll never understand how computers work." But I learned about these people who are incredibly positive about the future. They sound crazy, but one out of 20 will produce an incredible company, and it is so exciting to be part of this new world and these new people.



Steve Jobs. PHOTO: © JEAN PIGOZZI

But they are odd. They're not great on small talk, they're kind of weird with people. And then when they become rich, they don't really know how to spend their money. They buy these crazy, often very ugly houses. And then they spend all the money to go to the moon, they're obsessed with that. One day, I had dinner with Elon Musk. He was not really listening to me, so I said, "What are you thinking about?" And he said, "Oh, Johnny, I'm sorry—I resolved how to make flying cars during dinner." So these people are on another planet. But it's fabulous, I absolutely love them.

There are some guys in here like Joel Silver, Brett Ratner, who have come under fire in the last couple of years.

I know, I know. First of all, it took a long time to do this book, so some of the selections were pre-#MeToo. And the other thing, these people are my friends. They might have made mistakes, it's possible, I don't know. I had to take some other people out, but I will not tell you who they were. But I'll give you an example — Woody Allen. OK, I really like Woody a lot and I know him very well.... He made me laugh, he told me some incredible stories. So I left him in the book, and that's it.



Gianni Agnelli. PHOTO: F. MARTIN RAMIN FOR WSJ. MAGAZINE

You write that Prince shot some of his movie Under the Cherry Moon in your house, but didn't say a word to you.

Never! He shot part of the movie in my house in the South of France. In one of the scenes — I don't think it's in the movie — they moved this giant white piano into the living room. I was sitting in there reading the newspaper, and Prince came in and played the piano for one hour. And then he walked out. He didn't say hello, he didn't say goodbye. Zero! But I think it was a way to thank me. He played for one hour, incredible music alone on the piano, and walked out.



From left: Martin Scorsese, Fran Lebowitz and George Lucas PHOTO: © JEAN PIGOZZI

So now everybody has a camera all the time on their phone. But when you were shooting these celebrities, industry titans, collectors, were they always OK with you pulling out a camera?

I'll tell you one thing. There's a big difference between men and women. If you take a picture of a woman between the ages of, say, 12 and 30, they always say, "Show me the picture, I want to see the picture." They get very nervous. Men are always happy you take their picture—very, very rarely do they say, "Can I see it?" or "Erase it, I don't like it."

I think people trusted me that I would not take pictures of them puking or having sex. And they knew that if I took a picture, I wouldn't sell it to the National Enquirer or something. And the funny thing now is that if I go to a party and I don't take pictures, they say, "Is my party terrible?" They get upset.