

Funk & Soul Covers

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Taschen, \$40, 432 pages

You want to get a gift for someone who loves music, but it's like they've already heard or own everything you throw at them. They're kind of funky. They own a record player. When they hear the name Foxy Brown, they think voluptuous '70s sultress Pam Grier, not the ill-fated '90s rap nymph. Though they know her catalog too. If you were in New York and wound up on the trivia show *Cash Cab* and didn't know the answer to a music-related question, this person would obviously be your "phone a friend" selection. They need this funktastic collection. It's another hardbound home run hit from Taschen. The book has more than 500 phenomenal funk and soul record covers to consider. We get the art and the story behind it. Marvin Gaye and Michael Jackson are covered, as are the Temptations, Earth, Wind & Fire, James Brown, Prince, P-Funk and many more. These records were produced in an era when albums were king, and their 12 inch-by-12 inch canvases served as a visual gateway to the music. With the digitization that permeates modern music today, it's no wonder that vinyl is seeing a resurgence. What's more, the book features interviews with industry figures, including performers, producers, designers and writers, in an attempt to purport a cultural context while analyzing design decisions for each iconic cover. It's soul-satisfying. —TW