

\$50.00 US

BISON

PORTRAIT OF AN ICON

THE FIRST BOOK OF ITS KIND, *Bison: Portrait of an Icon* tells the story of the bison—its history, majesty, cultural significance, and comeback—through the stunning photography of Audrey Hall. Woven throughout these visually captivating images is an extended essay by Chase Reynolds Ewald; writings and poetry by Henry Real Bird, a member of the Crow Nation and a former poet laureate of Montana; a foreword from filmmaker John Heminway; and quotations from Yvon Chouinard, founder of Patagonia; Sally Jewell, former U.S. Secretary of the Interior; Kirk Johnson, Sant Director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History; and Todd Wilkinson, author and environmentalist.

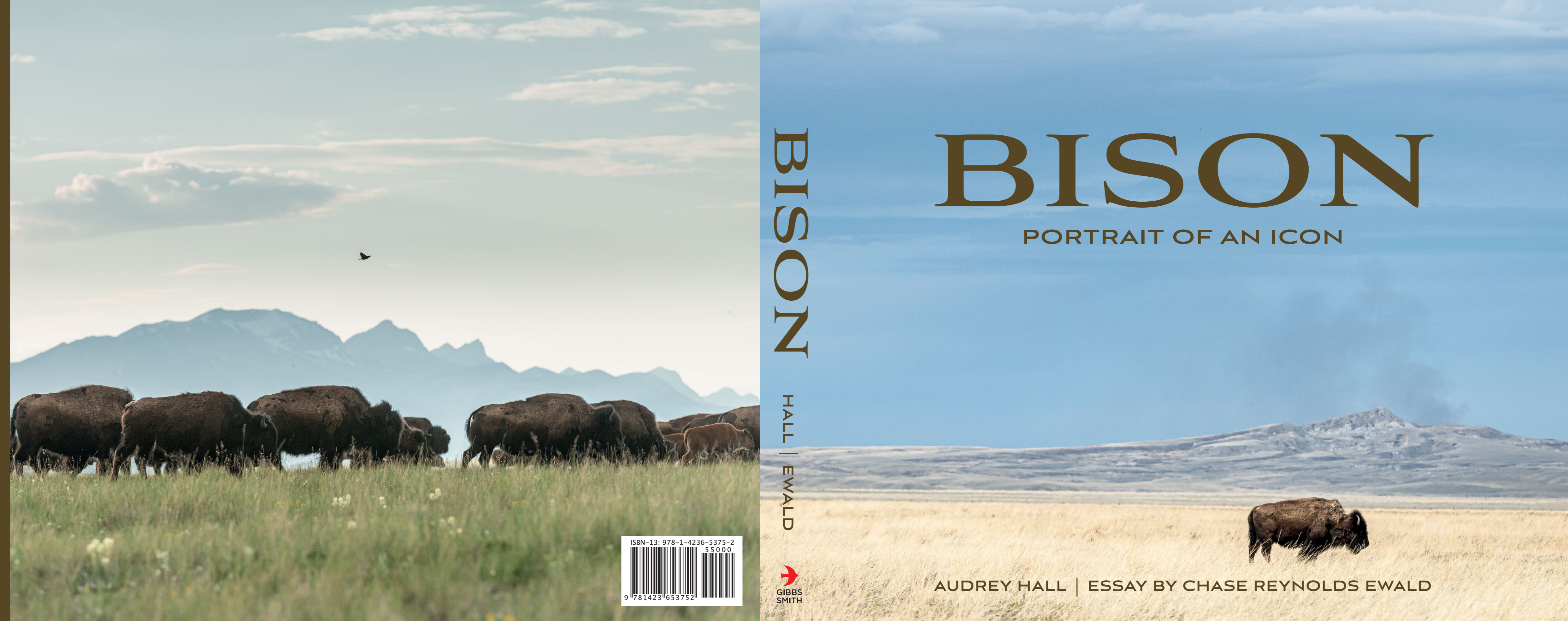
Brought back from the brink of extinction, the bison today—with its rugged, primitive build, its remarkable speed and hardiness, its primeval woolly hide, and its sheer strength—is an icon as distinctly American as the bald eagle.

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HALL | EWALD

AUDREY HALL | ESSAY BY CHASE REYNOLDS EWALD



AUDREY HALL'S relationship to cameras, of all shapes and models, dates back to 1991 when she traded in her mechanical eraser from an architectural drafting desk for a life of looking through a lens as a visual artist. Since then, her work of fine art, feature, commercial, documentary, and editorial projects has appeared in a variety of media across the globe. Her images of culture, music, style, travel, and social justice range widely from social campaigns to museum installations.

Audrey is known for her poignant landscapes, ethereal images of wild places, and luxurious interiors. Her work is part of the TIA Collection, a distinguished private collection whose unique purpose is the lending of significant works of art to museums and institutions.

Born in Brazil and transplanted to Montana, Audrey grew up in a multicultural family deeply rooted in both arts and science. A Rotary scholar, she studied fine art photography under Thomas Joshua Cooper at the renowned Glasgow School of Art in Scotland. The diversity of her upbringing and education continues to be an influence as she plans her next projects and commissions. She keeps one toe in Montana and another in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and considers the West home and profoundly inspiring to her personal work.

CHASE REYNOLDS EWALD is the author of twelve books on architecture, interior design, traditional craftsmanship, and cuisine. She also wrote two Western Design Conference Sourcebooks and edited the executive recruiting memoir *Heads*. A graduate of Yale and the Graduate School of Journalism at Berkeley, Chase has been writing and photographing for lifestyle publications for three decades. A blogger and contributor to *Mountain Living*, she is also senior editor of *Western Art & Architecture* and the design columnist for *Big Sky Journal*.

American Rustic, one of Chase's many collaborations with Audrey Hall, was named one of the Best Home Design Books of 2015 by *Architectural Digest*. Their most recent collaboration was *Cabin Style*. Visit her at chaserenoldsewald.com.

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BUFFALO TALK

*On the second night of a Sun Dance,
in a dream I looked over my shoulder
to finally turn for a glance
at a buffalo bull big as a boulder.*

*I looked him in the eye to pause
and turned to run for my life
out on the flat plains (no coulees or draws
at that moment in time, no help from a knife).*

*The bull swooped me up from behind my knee
to toss me high up in the air.
It was like I knew nothing to be,
lying on the ground without a care.*

*Then the bull approached from my left
to brush softly against my shoulder
and licked my cheek in his warm breath.*

*"I am here to watch you
and help you in your life," he said.*

—HENRY REAL BIRD



BISON: PORTRAIT OF AN ICON

I M A G I N E T H E S C E N E . You're picnicking at a table next to the Yellowstone River on a sunny summer day. Suddenly aware of a disturbance, you turn, only to see a mass of heaving, snorting, splashing creatures swimming forcefully, inexorably, and directly at you. Retreating to cover is not an option; you're already becoming engulfed in a powerful mass of animals whose soft grunting and collective rumbling and scabbling hooves momentarily drown out the sounds of birdsong and rushing river. They pass by so closely you could reach out and touch their prehistoric-looking leathery sides. Then they move on, ignoring you, singularly focused on staying with the herd, following their leader to some unknown destination.

Bison are creatures of contradiction. They may look like a cartoonist's vision of a prehistoric animal, with their dense, humped, compact bodies on overly short legs; their curved horns and jaunty beards; their robes' worth of fur (impossibly luxurious in places, but in others hanging off their bodies in ragged strips); and those ageless, knowing eyes. But bison are nimble, fast, and strong. They're capable of sprinting thirty-five miles an hour, clearing fence-high obstacles, fording glacier-fed rivers with their calves during the height of spring run-off, and—as

anyone can witness by watching the warning video on Yellowstone National Park's website—tossing a tourist with merely a flick of their massive heads so that he lands, overhead and upside down, in the branches of a lodgepole pine.

The animals are tough, durable, and resilient. They're smart (despite having not received the memo on the dangers of men with guns as soon as they might have). They have matriarchal leaders who employ the strength of the group to protect its young. And they evolved in perfect adaptation to life on the Great Plains.

These evolutionary strategies include a metabolism that slows down in the winter so they need less forage, and a habit of walking into and through storms instead of drifting with them which prolongs exposure. The immense size of the herds and their patterns of movement and intermittent grazing behavior actually helped shape the grassland ecosystem itself.

Yet in a short couple of decades late in the nineteenth century, these iconic creatures barely survived an assault that took their numbers from an estimated twenty-five to sixty million to fewer than one thousand. Bison came within a horn's width of disappearing forever, and this makes their comeback all the more remarkable.





