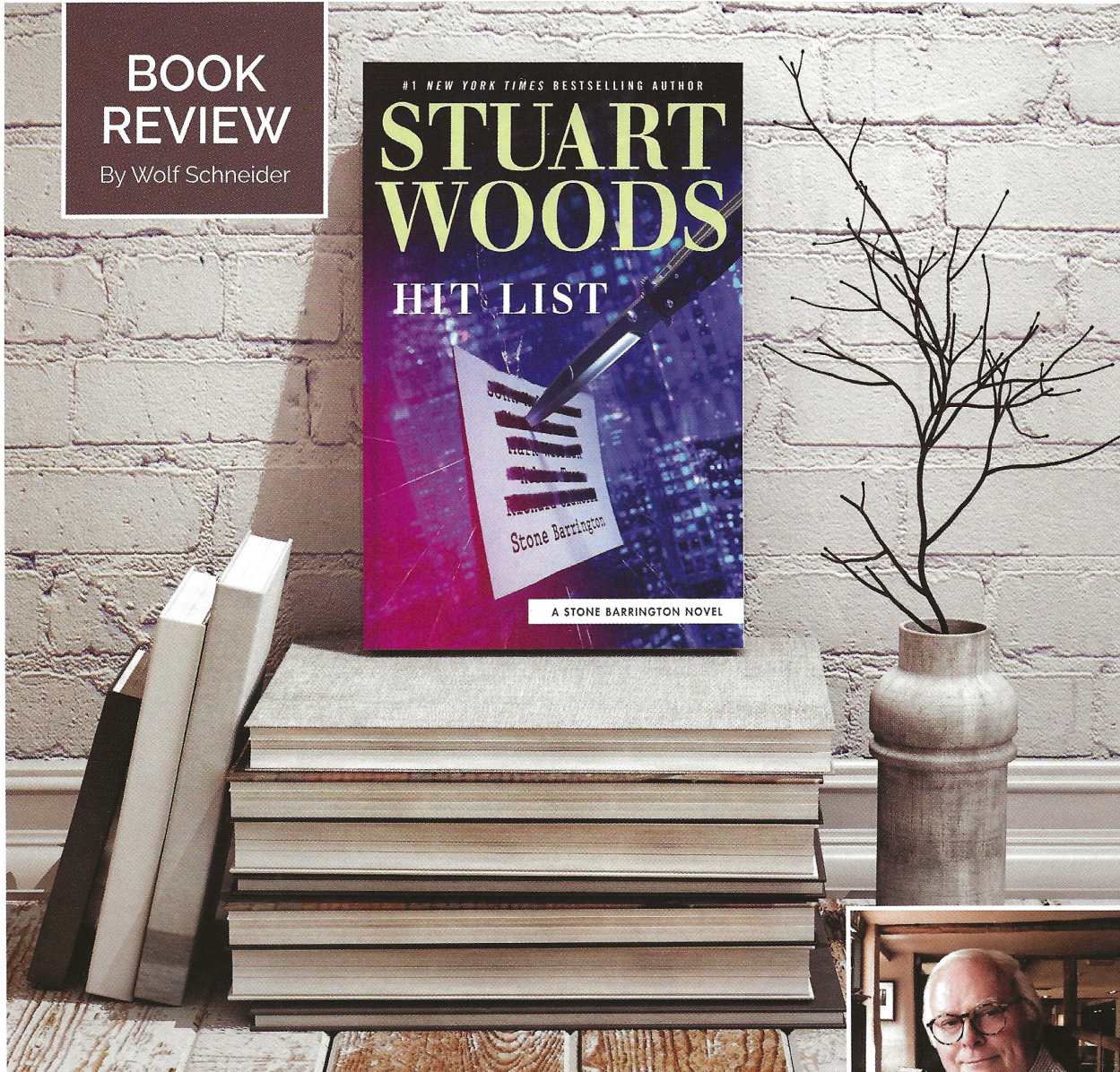


BOOK REVIEW

By Wolf Schneider



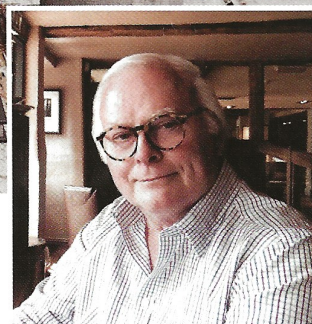
HIT LIST

UPSCALE THRILLER SHOWS OFF SANTA FE SETTINGS

THE WRY, SUAVE SOMETIMES-ATTORNEY STONE BARRINGTON pilots his own jet. He owns a lavish townhouse in Manhattan, a sprawling country estate in England, and a coastal getaway in Maine. He pals around with the New York City police commissioner, who gives him a lift up Third Avenue in his armored SUV. When alone, Stone is driven around Manhattan in his own armored Bentley by his factotum Fred, who generally packs a weapon. When Stone visits Santa Fe—arriving of course by private jet into Santa Fe Airport—he stays at his colleague Ed Eagle's house in Tesuque. There, a houseman relieves Stone of his luggage, and dinner consists of a grilled porterhouse served with a rare California cabernet like a Screaming Eagle. "We had two murders and one attempt today. That sort of takes it out of you," is Stone's brand of dinner conversation.

You get the idea. The unflappable Stone lives the high life. Some might think that Stone, who is the hero of a bestselling thriller franchise, is an alter ego for Woods himself. The prolific novelist has written more than 75 mysteries. He flies his own jet. He lives mostly in Florida and Maine, but has at times called Santa Fe home, too.

In *Hit List*, the novelist shows off his Santa Fe savvy, setting scenes at the Tesuque Village Market, Ten Thousand Waves, and a guest house where Stone dozes off to yipping coyotes. The plot? Stone finds his name on a mysterious hit list and escapes from Manhattan to England, Maine, and Santa Fe to shake off his wannabe assailant, who has an uncanny knack for showing up wherever Stone does. It's a fast, suspenseful ride through fabulous locations peppered with snappy dialogue and self-assured plotting. You won't be able to put it down. ■



Stuart Woods
Photo by Jeanmarie Woods