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CHAPTER AND VERSE

How to create a beautiful library in your home, from conception to reality

BY FRANCES HEDGES



WHEN THE POET AND ARTIST ARCH HADES embarked on the renovation of her country home back in 2022, there was one room that she prioritised. 'I've always felt at peace in libraries, so it was my dream to have my own,' she says. 'It took two years to build because I had a really specific vision.'

Her two chief inspirations came from Strawberry Hill House – Horace Walpole's

Gothic Revival villa in Twickenham, known for its grandiose architecture – and Vienna's Austrian National Library, whose highly decorated State Hall is a baroque masterpiece. In Hades' space, spiral staircases with ornamental balustrades, stained-glass windows and a vaulted ceiling set a dramatic backdrop for her collection of almost 2,000 books, which include rare editions by favourite authors such as F Scott Fitzgerald, W Somerset Maugham and Kurt Vonnegut. 'It's the place where I come up with all the ideas for my work,' she explains.

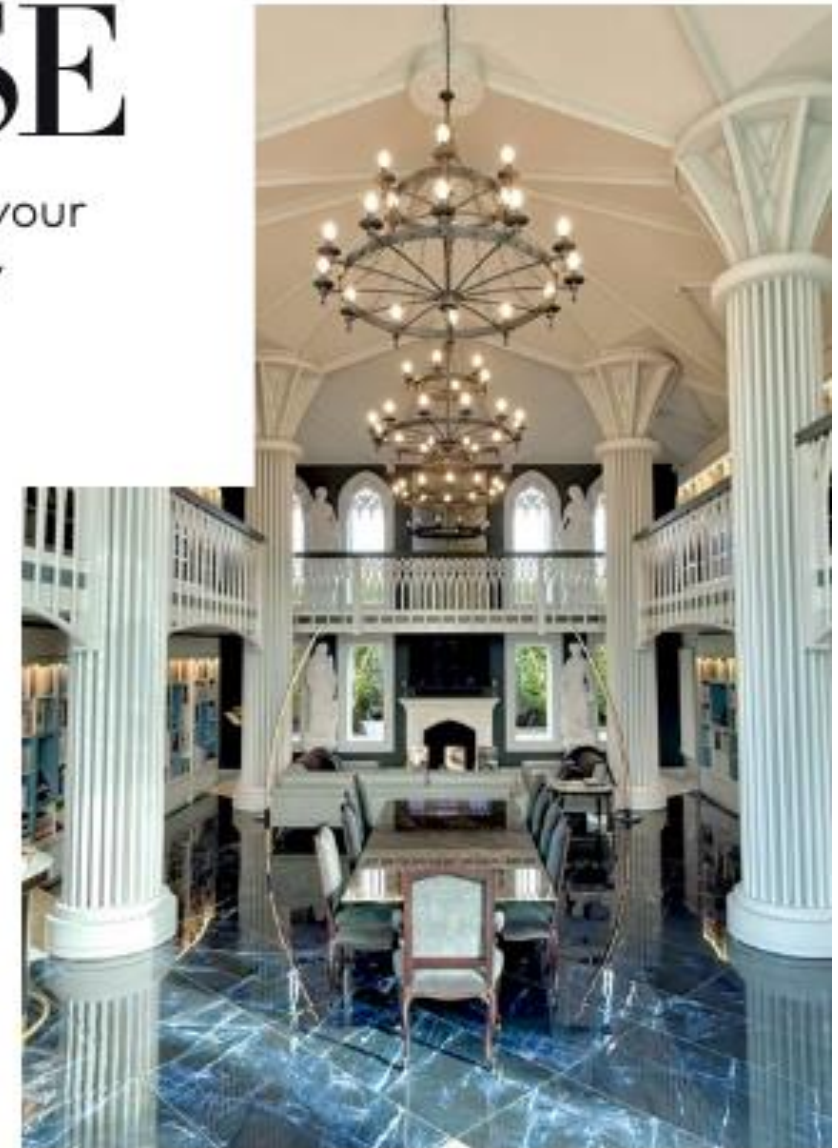
While few of us have rooms large enough to execute a project of this scale, the allure of a home library remains strong. The interior designer Nicola Harding transformed her husband's study into a room she says 'makes reading feel like a ritual', with built-in bookshelves lit from above. Meanwhile, in a recent Sims Hilditch project for a Grade I-listed Regency town house in Bath, the team took advantage of the drawing-room's south-facing aspect to create a tranquil space. By day, natural light floods in through the tall, arched window, while wall sconces, table lamps and overhead fixtures create a cosy ambience after dark falls. 'Smoky-blue paint on the walls completes the cocooning feel,' adds Emma Sims Hilditch.

Kate Aslangul, the founder and creative director of the interior-design studio Oakley Moore, maximised storage space for a Paris-based client with a 'voracious reading habit' by building ceiling-height shelves behind the staircase. 'We staggered the shelving to avoid a sense of monotony, and left spaces between volumes to display decorative objects,' Aslangul says. 'Every room tells the story of a life, and nothing tells it better than books and art.'

To see more inspirational home libraries, visit [harpersbazaar.com/uk/home-libraries](https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/home-libraries). □



From top: the interior designer Nicola Harding's book-filled study. Oakley Moore's Paris-based project. A library designed by Sims Hilditch for a home in Bath



Arch Hades' home library

BETWEEN THE STACKS

Treasures to bring your library to life



Globe, £6,490, Bellerby & Co at Abask



Library stairs, £826, Vinterior



Bookends, £395, Jonathan Adler