

DESIGN SPECIAL

VOLUME CONTROL

Get book smart and display your favourites in a library of your own

Words Miriam Methuen-Jones

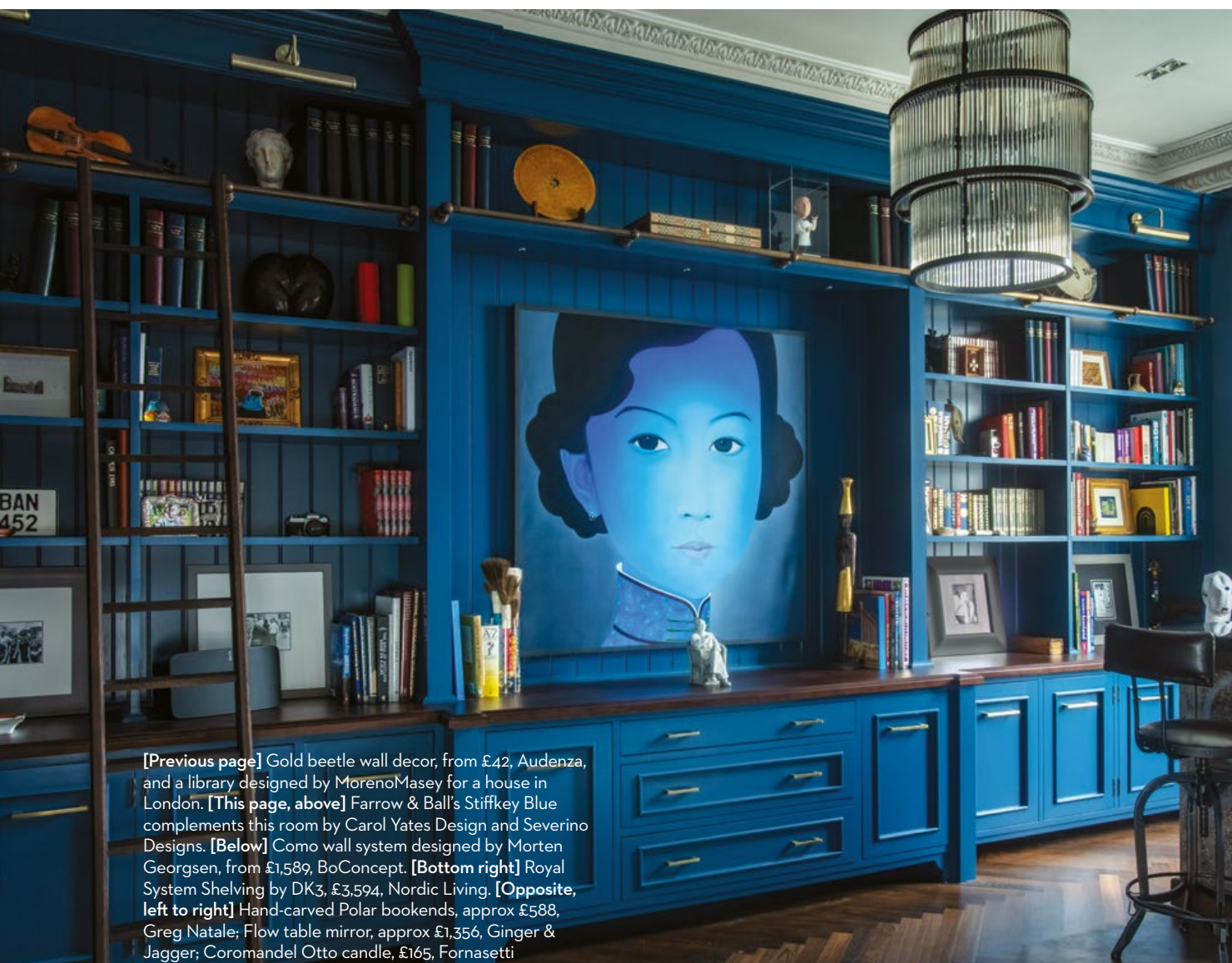


The digital age has been a blessing for minimalists. People who crave a clutter-free life must rejoice that they no longer need to find a home for their CDs, vinyl and DVDs when it's easier these days to stream music and films. But what about books? Reading on a Kindle or a tablet is fine for a thriller on the morning commute, but it's no match for the physical reality of a real book, whether that's a lavish volume of photographs or a treasured favourite with a dog-eared cover.

Genuine bibliophiles – and there are still many of us left – are always acquiring new books and can't let go of the old ones, so it's often a battle to stop them taking over. So where, and how, should we store them? Well, if you're lucky enough to have sufficient space, you could devote a whole room to them.

"Libraries are one of my favourite spaces to design," says Henriette Von Stockhausen, co-founder of VSP ▶





[Previous page] Gold beetle wall decor, from £42, Audenza, and a library designed by MorenoMasey for a house in London. [This page, above] Farrow & Ball's Stiffkey Blue complements this room by Carol Yates Design and Severino Designs. [Below] Como wall system designed by Morten Georgsen, from £1,589, BoConcept. [Bottom right] Royal System Shelving by DK3, £3,594, Nordic Living. [Opposite, left to right] Hand-carved Polar bookends, approx £588, Greg Natale; Flow table mirror, approx £1,356, Ginger & Jagger; Coromandel Otto candle, £165, Fornasetti

Interiors. “There is something so special about the quietness that a wall of books suggests – plus the smell of old books transports me to another world. I try to stay traditional, yet I will always introduce some colour either inside or outside the bookshelves, depending on the scheme of the rest of the room. These rooms lend themselves to more comforting deeper colours – think smoky greens, deep dark reds and whisky tones.”

A space dedicated to contemplation will often take on the personality of its owner. If the room is intended for philosophising in the company of others, a hint of showmanship can go a long way – think large open spaces with dedicated corners for curling up in, bespoke ladders and muted tones that call to mind the traditional mahogany-lined libraries of old.

If the room is for you alone, seize the opportunity to decorate it as you please. Go bold with colour and use rich jewel tones to create warmth. Or take the opposite approach: all-white can be the ideal backdrop for a collection colour-coded by spine. Some designers can't cope with ▶



“We live in an age of contradictions. On one hand, it is possible to access any text at the touch of a button. But on the other hand, this limitless access has decayed the value of the printed word. The secret I think is not really in reading books (although it is essential), but in the joy of owning them. Library spaces in homes become beacons for a life less ordinary, somewhere you might go to escape, both physically and mentally. Creating a place to dedicate to literary escapology has become the greatest luxury in a home straining under the practical demands of everyday life.”

Rodrigo Moreno Masey, architect





[Above] Hampden House library designed by VSP Interiors. [Top right] Room for a collector of rare books, designed by O&A Design. [Bottom right] Room with a secret door leading to the drawing room, designed by TOR Interiors. [Inset] Guinevere chandelier, from £3,998, Joe Scog

a rainbow of covers messing up their neutral scheme, so they turn the spines to the wall. We're not convinced. Part of the beauty of books is their diversity. Plus you don't want it to look like you're trying to hide an obsession with Dan Brown or EL James.

Talking of diversity, bookcases can display far more than just books. Bespoke shelving is often the best place for collectables – higher slots allow that horrendously expensive vase to be exhibited without the risk of destruction. Large lower shelves, meanwhile, could even serve as workspace. Leave room for your collection to grow, but be sure to give everything you already love a home as this will help keep things tidy – clutter will ruin your carefully curated collection.

Lastly, if having your own library is the fulfilment of a lifelong dream, you might as well go the whole hog and put in a secret door: this is a room dedicated to the imagination, after all. ■



KIDS' BEDROOMS



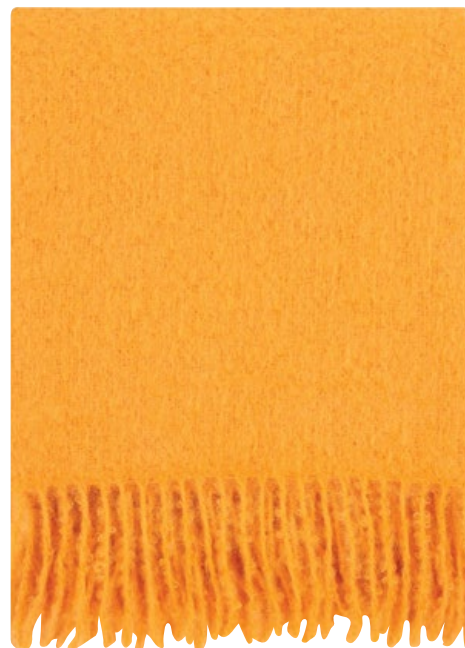
[Clockwise from top left] My World collection, from approx £21.36 per m, Prestigious Textiles; bespoke Alice in Wonderland bedroom by O&A Design; Mrs Bunny Easter decoration, £10, Ella James; bedding: Two by Two, Harley, Multi Stars, and Abacus, all from £22 per m, ILIV



Wee spaces

In the age of self-expression, we're all getting that bit more daring with our interiors but there are places in the home where the rulebook can truly be torn up. Childrens' bedrooms are adventurous spaces by function, so the design should match this spirit. A grand idea to keep explorative minds amused is to mix prints and textures like Prestigious Textiles (above) has. A bright geometric mural from ILIV (right) is a great way to mesh the tastes of two young ones sharing a room. Combine favourite colours to create a look to suit them both.

Or, perhaps your kid is a sophisticated old soul at heart. Looking to move on from the garish hues and heaped piles of plushies, a neutral palette can work well. This idea from O&A Design (top right) is elegant, but age-appropriate as it includes a sweet mural and shelving for storing those still-treasured toys.



[Clockwise from left] Royal Select Matte paint in Blue Danube, and Windmill Wings, from £23 per 0.94l, Benjamin Moore; Lapuan Kankurit Mohair Blanket, £119.90, Cloudberry Living; Dove chest of drawers, from £2,495, Dove cot bed, from £1,365, Dragons of Walton

