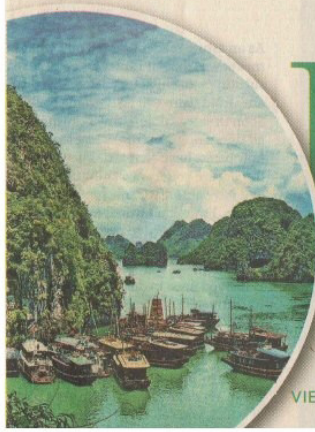


House & Home

FTWeekend



Don't miss the boat

Why now could be a good time to buy in Vietnam

VIETNAM PROPERTY PAGES 8 & 9

One for the books

Houses for sale with great libraries

HOT PROPERTY PAGES 18 & 19



Japanese knotweed

Origins of a plant invader that can destroy buildings

GARDENS PAGES 22 & 23

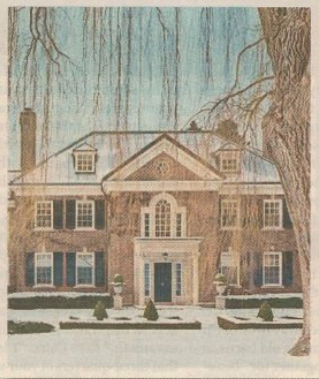
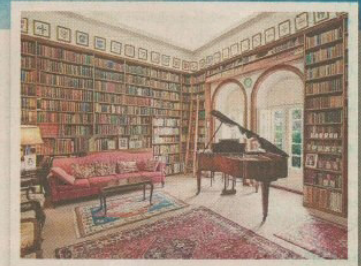
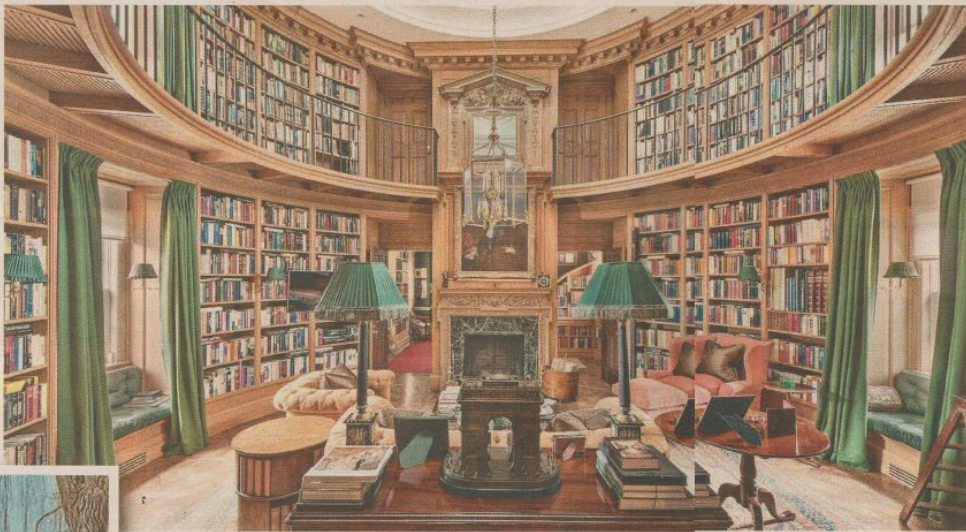


Hot property Libraries

By Nicola Davison

► 26 Park Lane Circle, Bridle Path, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, for sale at auction, previous price C\$21.8m (\$16.3m)

Where In the upmarket Bridle Path neighbourhood, 15 minutes from Toronto's centre. Toronto Pearson airport is 30 minutes by car.
What A Georgian-style house with nine bedrooms, an indoor pool, more than six acres of gardens and a copper-domed chapel consecrated by two cardinals.
Why It has two libraries, each with book-lined mezzanines. The property is owned by former media tycoon Conrad Black. Previous guests have included Richard Nixon, Margaret Thatcher, the Duke of Edinburgh and Elton John.
Who Concierge Auctions, conciergeauctions.com, tel: +1 212 202 2940



► 456 Sheffield Estate Drive, Creve Coeur, Missouri, US, \$3.5m

Where In the small city of Creve Coeur, 20 minutes west of St Louis. Lambert-St Louis international airport is 15 miles away.
What A seven-bedroom house, built in the traditional style of St Louis' grand homes, on more than five acres of land.
Why The library cabinetry was

brought to the US from France in the late 1760s by Pierre Laclède, a fur trader and founder of St Louis, by way of a 700-mile journey up the Mississippi river from New Orleans. It was bought in the 1960s at auction and was later installed in its current home.
Who Dielmann Sotheby's International Realty, dielmannsothebysrealty.com, tel: +1 314 725 0009



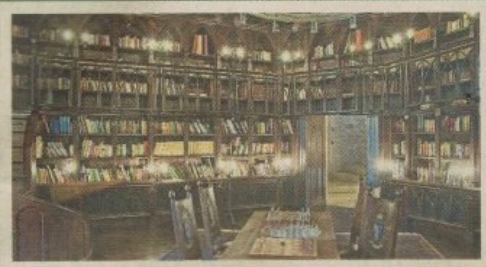
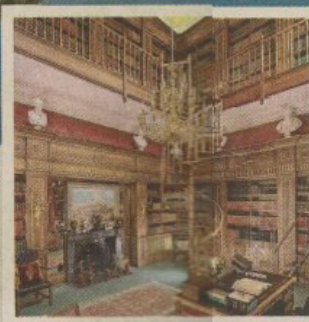
► **Castlehyde, Fermoy, County Cork, Ireland, €20m**

Where On the banks of the river Blackwater, which is renowned for its salmon fishing, close to the town of Fermoy. Dublin airport is two-and-a-half hours by car.

What A 150-acre estate with a 10-bedroom, Palladian-style house, built in 1801, with shooting and fishing facilities, a golf course, indoor pool and tennis courts.

Why The two-storey library has been restored to its former glory, with a fireplace and wooden spiral staircase. The house, and its library, once belonged to Douglas Hyde, who became Ireland's first president in 1938 and was founder of Irish nationalist organisation the Gaelic League.

Who Knight Frank, knightfrank.com, tel: +44 20 7629 8171



▲ **Château de Montbrun, Dournazac, Haute-Vienne, France, €16.8m**

Where On the border of the Dordogne, 350km south-west of Paris. Limoges-Bellegarde airport is five minutes away by helicopter.

What The castle was built in 1179, though much of the existing structure dates from the 15th

century. There are 16 bedrooms, a grand hall with seating for 100, crenellated towers and a moat. **Why** The library retains many medieval features such as thick stone walls, a stained-glass window and a grand fireplace with a coat of arms on the chimney breast.

Who Home Hunts, home-hunts.com, tel: +33 970 446643



◀ **Queen's Gate Place, South Kensington, London, UK, £35m**

Where In South Kensington, close to the Royal Albert Hall. Heathrow airport is 14 miles away.

What Built in the 1860s in an Italianate style, the six-bedroom house features original cornicing, with a stone staircase and restored metal balustrades. There is also an enclosed roof terrace, steam room, cinema and gym.

Why The house was renovated, designed and furnished by Armani Casa. The ground-floor library is contemporary in style, with dark-wood flooring and shelving. **Who** Knight Frank, knightfrank.com, tel: +44 20 3813 5923



Every home should have a library

However tough you are, it can be tough to admit to building a library, writes **Alexander Gilmour**.

Critics will assume your new home is very large — too large — and that the library is merely a symptom of too much space.

As if, mid-renovations, you made the awful discovery that you possess too many rooms. As if your partner turned on you one day and demanded: "Well, what shall we do with this one?" And you — at a loss, worn out — just said: "Oh, darling, let's build a library." And so you did.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Your library is no weary afterthought, but always part of the plan — the best part, too.

Indeed, it is the most important room in the house. You even sacrificed a third bedroom to build it.

Other rooms have their supporters. The kitchen is a good place to feed, the hall to keep coats and the bathroom to wash. (By the same token, the TV room is good for TV and the bedroom for sleep.) Yet this is flimflam compared to what the library is good for.

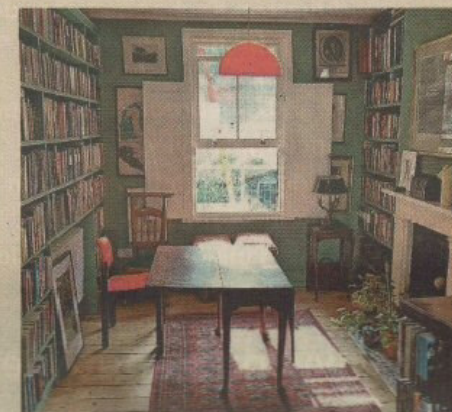
It is useful, of course. Here, a chap may write a letter to his aunt, or polish his memoirs. He may host light literary lunches or lapse into a snooze at teatime. He may even read.

Yet the library's merits are more than merely practical. No other room carries such hope. It is a place to aspire to — to keep books you have never opened but just might if life stopped interfering. It contains your best potential. It is your better, more charming self.

My library is only a week old and very small, but I am in love with it. Here, I shall read Louis-Ferdinand Céline. I shall play poker by firelight and snooze at teatime.

If we have offspring, we may need that third bedroom back, of course. No problem. The TV room will cease to exist; the TV will go in the kitchen and the library will stay intact. And one day, when I am old, I shall move my bed in here and try not to leave.

Alexander Gilmour is deputy editor of House & Home



Alexander Gilmour's new library — Alexander Gilmour