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Southwest Homes

inspiration ideas resources

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bold and beautiful

a custom builder creates
her own stunning space

home libraries

create a place to unwind
with a good book





at home in a world of words

unplug with style in your home library

No matter the size and style of your home, a designated reading space is an exemplary way to unplug from technology, abscond with a good book and slip into the world of words. It may feel like a luxury, but the elements of both a full-blown library and a simple reading nook are basic—comfortable seating, quality lighting and shelving. Plus books, lots and lots of books.

Home library design options are nearly limitless if you have the space to dedicate an entire room to the purpose, especially when it comes to shelving. The higher the ceiling, the higher you can go with shelves, which is a great use of space and adds a degree of sophistication to any room. Throw in a rolling ladder and you're on your way to a scene right out of Harry Potter.

If you'd rather not dedicate a full room to a home library, rooms can easily be multifunctional. When Rita and Scott Karns moved from one home in Santa Fe to another, they downsized their home from about 7,000 to 4,000 square feet.

"In our previous house, we had separate rooms for reading, media, office and sewing," Rita said. "When we moved, we met all these requirements through one large room. It's a very thought-out use of interior space which serves our purposes quite well." The Santa Fe interior design firm of Tierra Concepts helped design the room.

About half of the 450-square-foot room is given to a cozy corner reading space with a floor-to-ceiling bookshelf, two loungers, coffee table, ample overhead lighting and an oversized panoramic window. The large bookshelf unit also serves

Wendy McEahern



Above: Make your cozy reading nook special with spots to curl up, a comfy chair and top it off with a fireplace for oodles of ambiance.

as a room divider, cordoning off his home office and her sewing room.


Shelving can run the gamut from free-standing to built-in. Free-standing may be more mobile but built-in shelving needn't be staid or uniform. You can vary the size and shape of shelves and cubicles. Place the books in interesting ways. Line them up by color. Stack them horizontally with spines facing out. Let them fall a little askew for a more assessable, welcoming look. For a sleek look, closet-style cabinetry can incorporate shelving behind multiple doors and add drawers for additional storage options.

To further personalize and accentuate your reading room add some art to the mix. Paintings, sculpture, vases and framed photographs put the "home" in home library. If you're big on books but low on space, you can create a hideaway library behind a curtain that opens and closes as necessary to reveal or conceal books.

Try incorporating comfortable seating right into shelving with a built-in bench.

This space-saving option also puts books within easy reach. Add a comfortable reading chair and footstool. Or maybe a pullout sofa or futon in spaces doubling as a guestroom.

For a high-end look, add lighting for reasons other than to just read by. While a strong reading lamp is a must, accent lighting can spotlight select areas on a shelf or send an entire bookcase wall awash in illumination. Battery-operated LED lights and light strips can work in lieu of recessed lighting for that special effect.

A strong focal point helps give your reading space an identity. The best of all focal points is a fireplace. Fireplaces add ambiance and coziness to any room. Install bookshelves on either side of a fireplace, add a couple deep chairs or cushy sofa, well-positioned lamps, a throw rug, pillows, a soft blanket, and *voilà!* Capture a nook or room in your home, and transform it into your personal no-tech, relaxing and awe-inspiring home library. 



a palette for art

When Jay and Mary Jordan of Vail, Colorado, bought a second home in Santa Fe, their extensive art collection was top of mind. "I was seeking a palette for art," says Mary. "I have a lot of art, and it shows so well in this house." The home, built by Tierra Concepts, has smooth white walls that lend a museum-quality feel to the space. Rustic touches including custom iron furnishings and a 17th-century French armoire juxtapose its modern bent.

The Jordan's art collection includes many works by close friend and local artist Roseta Santiago. Mary loves how she weaves hints of her life into her work. The subject of the painting shown here is wearing the red scarf that belonged to Santiago's father, the personal chef to President Harry Truman. Whenever Mary hangs a Santiago painting, she says, "The room comes alive!"

Tierra Concepts, tierraconceptssantafe.com

