

BRITS ARE BECOMING A NATION OF SHELF-CONSCIOUS BOOK BUYERS

New research reveals Brits are buying books for their design and subject matter rather than to be read

- New data¹ from leading flatshare site SpareRoom reveals one in six (16%) renters have bought a book without intending to read it, with more than half (58%) using books as décor
- In fact, one in three (32%) renters have read less than half the books they own
- Almost a quarter (23%) of renters admit to re-organising their bookshelves to show off the books they think are most impressive and 23% have re-ordered the books on their bookshelf by the colour of their spine
- Art, design and photography books are deemed the most likely to impress house guests (42%), followed by travel (31%) and literary classics (29%). Conversely, romantic fiction (21%) is the genre that renters are most likely to hide
- Chanel, Vogue and Harry Potter books are the top three books that renters have most recently bought primarily for display

08.08.22 - Brits do judge a book by its cover, according to a new study that reveals we also want to be judged by the covers on our shelves. With lockdown Zoom calls having opened our homes to friends, family and even work colleagues, our bookshelves and how we curate them have been more on display than ever before. Given in many rental properties you're not allowed to re-decorate or hang things on the walls, expressing yourself and decorating with books makes total sense.

A survey of over 4,000 renters, carried out by leading flatshare site [SpareRoom](#), reveals that one in six (16%) renters have bought a book without ever intending to read it purely because they think it will look good in their home, with more than 58% using books as décor. A further one in eight (12%) say they either have bought, or would buy, a fake book that doesn't have any contents, purely for decoration.

Brits are a nation of book lovers, having bought over 200 million of them in 2021². Yet, the study also reveals that over one in five (21%) admit to buying a book to impress others, whilst almost a quarter (23%) of renters have re-organised their bookshelves to show off the books they think are most impressive.

According to SpareRoom's research, the top 10 genres considered most likely to impress are:

1. Art/design/photography (42%)
2. Travel (31%)
3. Literary classics (29%)
4. History (29%)
5. Food and cookery (26%)
6. Architecture (24%)
7. Philosophy (23%)
8. Psychology (20%)
9. Health & Wellbeing (18%)

10. Biographies (16%)

By contrast, two genres people admit to being most likely to hide are romantic fiction and self-help, with almost half (42%) saying they'd hide these titles.

Some people don't even get as far as judging a book by its the cover, with almost one in four (23%) saying they'd arrange their bookshelves according to the colour of the books' spines, and a further 23% of those admitting to having bought a book specifically because of the colour of its spine.

One in three (32%) renters also admit to having read fewer than half the books they own, whether it be a case of not having got around to reading the book or having purchased it with no intention of ever reading it.

SpareRoom spokesperson, Miriam Tierney, comments: "Arranging our shelves and coffee tables to impress isn't a new idea. But with video calls meaning our homes are suddenly open to people who wouldn't normally see them, it's no surprise people are thinking more carefully about what's on view. That might mean hiding the beach reads and carefully positioning the Jane Austen, depending on how you want people to see you.

But books are also a great way to decorate. Many renters don't have the option to hang a picture or re-paint their walls. Books can add colour and interest to almost any space. What's more you can actually read them if you like!"

- ENDS -

Notes to editors

¹Survey conducted by SpareRoom between 15.06.22 and 23.06.22 of 4,623 renters

² Number of books sold in the United Kingdom 2009 to 2021 (February 2022), noted at 212 million in 2021 according to Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/261278/number-of-books-sold-in-the-uk/#:~:text=The%20year%202020%20marked%20the,books%20sold%20nationwide%20that%20year.>

About SpareRoom

SpareRoom is the UK's leading flatshare site with over 11 million registered users. Founded in the UK in 2004, the company expanded into the US market in 2011 and has had nearly 1.5 million registered users.