

Il Salviatino
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travel

Literary tourism »



At Henry's Townhouse in London, each room is themed after a different Austen family member. Left, The Jefferson in Washington DC houses a children's book to the public library for every room booked. Photos: iStockphoto

Hotels with a story to tell

From Mediterranean villas to quaint London townhouses, Lucy Pearson shares six hotels that are perfect for book lovers

If the Auckland Writers Festival whet your appetite for all things books, you're not alone. Literary tourism is having a moment — and a lucrative one at that. Projected to reach US\$2.2 billion by 2024, the surge in popularity of literary travel reflects a growing appetite for travel that's as enriching as it is relaxing.

Whether you're a reader who loves to travel or a traveller who loves to read, bibliophilic-focused getaways are on the rise — from immersive retreats to hotels steeped in literary history. Think boutique stays with curated libraries, literary-themed rooms, and historic hotels that once hosted great authors. Each one offers something special for the story-seeker in search of a slower, more meaningful stay.

Henry's Townhouse, London

Tucked into quiet Marylebone street, Henry's Townhouse is a literary time capsule steeped in Regency charm. Once the London residence of Jane Austen's favourite brother, Henry, this exquisitely restored townhouse invites guests into a world of character and creativity. With interiors by Russell Sage Studio and the thoughtful eye of owners Steven and Jane Collins, the hotel is both whimsical and refined: think hidden honeycomb bars, antique curiosities and plush reading nooks.

Each of the six bedrooms is themed around a different Austen family member, while the elegant Monsieur Balmain's Pantry and the cosy Carriage Seat provide the perfect backdrops for a chapter — or a glass of something stronger. The Drawing Room is ideal for fireside reading or afternoon tea, while the rooftop terrace offers a view over London's skyline. It's not just a hotel — it's a literary saloon brought back to life.

Il Salviatino, Florence

Perched on a hillside above Florence, Il Salviatino is a 15th-century villa once owned by poet and artist the Epicurean, who transformed it into a haven for artists and writers, including Salvador Dali. That creative spirit still stands today across the villa's expansive grounds,



terraced gardens, and stocked library.

Guests can read in the atmospheric library — still stocked with literary treasures — or lounge in freestanding bathtubs with a book and a view. A recent refurbishment honours the villa's artistic legacy while making space for modern comforts, including the serene Aque Vitali spa. Il Salviatino is a place where the past and present weave seamlessly together.

The Jefferson, Washington DC

If you're after a hotel that blends literary tradition with social impact, The Jefferson in Washington DC is a must-visit. Its elegant Book Room features dark wood paneling, plush seating and an open fire — an inviting setting for anyone with a penchant for history, politics and prose.

But it's not just for grown-ups. Through their First Library Book Program, the hotel donates a children's book to the DC Public Library's Books from Birth programme for every room booked, in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. At The Jefferson, reading isn't just a pastime — it's a legacy.

Hotel Belles Rives, Coté d'Azur

Formerly Villa Saint Louis, Hotel Belles Rives is where F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald lived in the 1920s while Scott began writing *Tender is the Night*. Perched above the glittering Mediterranean in Juan les Pins, the hotel is a paean to Art Deco elegance and Jazz Age decadence.

Still run by the same family, Belles Rives celebrates its literary past with Fitzgerald-themed suites, cocktails at Bar Fitzgerald, and a year-long centenary celebration of *The Great*



Gatsby this year. With themed dinners, expert-led tours and curated menus, it's an immersive experience for anyone who's ever been swept away by the glamour and tragedy of the Riviera's most famous literary couple.

Grand Hotel Central, Barcelona

Barcelona's Grand Hotel Central is a gateway to Catalan culture — and a hidden gem for bibliophiles. The hotel's heart is a historic library featuring the personal collection of its founder, politician and cultural patron Francesc Cambó, as well as books from authors who have visited over the years. Reopened in 2024 after a sweeping renovation, the hotel blends luxury with legacy. From its rooftop pool and wellness suite to the curated gallery in its entrance hall, Grand Hotel Central offers book lovers a rich taste of Barcelona's artistic soul.

The Book Village Inn, Hobart, New York

In upstate New York, the charming Book Village Inn is nestled in Hobart's famous Book Village — home to seven independent bookshops, cozy cafes, and a thriving literary community. The inn's five rooms are named after iconic authors such as Austen and Hemingway, with vintage furnishings, historic details and modern comforts.

Every June, Hobart's Festival of Women Writers draws readers and writers from across the country for a weekend of readings, workshops and discussions. Year round, guests can browse rare books, attend public lectures, and stroll among the village's shelves. Don't miss Liberty Rock Books, which boasts 80,000 volumes, or Creative Corner Books for vintage cookbooks and DIY inspiration alike.

From top, Book Village Inn is located in an upstate New York town with seven indie bookshops; Barcelona's Grand Hotel Central houses founder Francesc Cambó's private book collection; Belles Rives hosts centenary events for *The Great Gatsby* this year; Il Salviatino's former owner hosted artists and writers including Salvador Dali. Photos: iStockphoto

If the Auckland Writers Festival whet your appetite for all things books, you're not alone. Literary tourism is having a moment — and a lucrative one at that. Projected to reach US\$3.3 billion by 2034, the surge in popularity of literary travel reflects a growing appetite for travel that's as enriching as it is relaxing.

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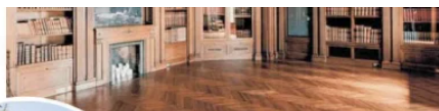
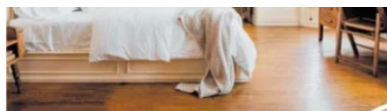
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