

# Speaking Volumes



**Branching Out** Inspired by reading rooms she'd seen in Europe, designer **Michael Del Piero** created this space for the 2009 Lake Forest Showhouse to put its users in the mood for exploration. "I sourced items from around the world, including Han dynasty pottery from China, books from several European countries, baskets from Japan, Native American ax heads, and more," says Del Piero. All of the furniture is from Michael Del Piero Good Design (1914 N. Damen Ave., 773-772-3000, [michaeldelpiero.com](http://michaeldelpiero.com)), and textiles include antique hand-spun linen. The designer's favorite pieces in the room are the oversize photograph by Janet Mesic Mackie that hangs above the fireplace and the blank white books that lie open on the table, meant to add textural interest and encourage creativity. "I'm of the opinion that a library or reading room should house more than books," says Del Piero. "The space should invoke a mood in the user of open-mindedness and inquiry."

—Amalie Drury

Photography: Nathan Kirkman

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**Untroubled Waters** Interior designer **Jillian O'Neill** (*312-286-8500, [jillianoneill.com](http://jillianoneill.com)*) created this room in the 2009 Lake Forest Showhouse with the idea that it could serve as a private retreat within the grand home. “It’s soothing and personal, yet uncluttered,” she says. O’Neill’s palette was inspired by the Lake Michigan views out the window; she layered monochromatic pieces while adding texture variations to create a look in harmony with the serene water below. A chaise she designed was meant to showcase the wallpaper mural from Trove, and she calls the Kartell Louis Ghost armchair evidence of “a personal addiction.” Any reading room should have “an alluring chaise or lounge chair, a great throw, and a round table that’s 30 inches high for writing or gathering around,” she says. O’Neill considers the seating options in this small space a personal victory: “There are so many places to sit depending on your mood, all equally cozy.”

—A.D.

Photograph: Nathan Kirkman

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**The Focal Point** When designer **Kim Scodro** (312-925-8023) combined two units in a prewar building for her new home, she found herself with a long hallway connecting the foyer to the private areas. To keep things interesting in the passageway, she created a cozy reading room at the end of it, with doors to bedrooms and a laundry room jutting off at its corners. “We walk through this room multiple times each day, so rather than fill it with useless pieces of decorative furniture, I wanted it to serve as a reminder of how important it is to make the time to stop and read,” says Scodro. Illuminated by an antique French chandelier that sparkles against understated damask Farrow & Ball wallpaper panels and home to a lovely painting by an Italian artist, the space also makes for a great view from the front door.

—Gina Bazer

Photograph: Werner Straube

Styling: Hilary Rose

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**The Nurturing Nest** Marilyn Vogel, owner of antiques and design source V Amsterdam (*Antiquarians Building, 159 W. Kinzie St., 312-527-0533*), envisioned this robin's-egg-blue room in her River North condominium as a place to have morning coffee over paperwork or relax in the evening with a book. "I chose a mixture of period antiques and more modern 20th-century pieces in order to create a comfortable, quiet refuge," says Vogel, whose musts for any home library include good seating, natural light (plus adjustable room lighting), and a quiet location. Vogel selected many pieces from her own store, with a few additions from Olde Chicago Antiques (*3110 N. Kedzie Ave., 773-935-1200, [oldechicagoantiques.com](http://oldechicagoantiques.com)*).

—A.D.

Photograph: Alan Shortall

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