

walkthrough



light reading

WHEN A COUPLE IN THE SWISS TOWN of Zollikon, an elite suburb of Zurich, decided to tear down their house and hire **Philippe Stuebi Architekten** to build another one, the project was particularly fraught for the wife, whose family had lived in the existing modernist house since 1947. Still, sentiment ultimately lost out to the allure of 21st-century amenities—fitness room, open-plan kitchen, elevator, subterranean garage—as well as one major requirement that

harked back to the pre-digital age: The couple's families had amassed thousands of rare books, many of them centuries old, and the pair themselves had added many more. A massive library would be needed to store and preserve them. →

From top: As dictated by the shape of this property in Zollikon, Switzerland, a rear library is narrower than the front of the house. Custom shelving of lacquered MDF distinguishes the library from the salon.





Clockwise from top left: Color segues to the garage, while Carrara marble flooring runs throughout. The top level of the double-height library is defined by a rail of polished stainless steel. A wool-carpeted stairway overlooks the entry atrium. Charles and Ray Eames designed the chair in the library. The salon's Pierre Paulin lounge chair pulls up to an Isamu Noguchi table.

Philippe Stuebi designed a library shaped like a ship's prow to echo the property's unusual shape. What makes the double-height room distinctive is not so much the form, however, but rather the fact that the entire bottom level is wrapped in glass. "These are the longest possible spans of glass, up to 20 feet, and we had to make sure they would not only block the ultra-violet rays but also insulate against heat," Stuebi says. "People normally don't do this with books, so we couldn't find any examples to copy."

The glass was cast in Germany, sent to Luxembourg for a treatment that blocks UV rays, and mirror-

finished back in Germany. On a bright spring day, the glass walls reflect the surrounding garden and its Japanese cherry blossoms. Sunlight also penetrates the glass to shine through the library's open shelves, nearly 550 linear feet in all. Meanwhile, the windowless upper level of the library is illuminated partially by a small circular skylight.

This top part of the library occupies about a fifth of the second floor, the rest of it being devoted to two bedrooms, a bathroom, an office, and one of the house's four balconies—three others are on the third floor, with the master suite. Some face the Zürichsee, others the Alps. →





Clockwise from top left: The second-floor balcony is reached via the stair hall. Vico Magistretti designed the balcony's ABS chairs. The library's mirror-finished glass protects the books from 99.99 percent of ultraviolet rays. The library and salon can be closed off from each other. Eames chairs also appear in the dining area.

DOMINIQUE MARC WEHRLI/ARCHITECTURBLD; STYLING: CHRISTINE HEIMGARTNER/PURSUCRE

Aside from those stunning views, the balconies also allowed Stuebi to maximize the house's 4,000-square-foot size, since local zoning laws govern enclosed volumes only.

While Stuebi did rely heavily on modernist materials—glass, marble, stainless steel, concrete—flamingo-pink accents banish the clinical aesthetic deplored by critics of Zurich's architecture scene. "I've done several public projects with very strong colors, like the bright orange that traffic cops wear," Stuebi says. "With a residence, though, I wouldn't have pushed it if my clients weren't receptive." Even if finding the precise shades required

much debate and experimentation, as bright red was toned down to pink, the result is a subtle standout in the conservative environs of Switzerland's finance capital.

—Marc Spiegler

DOOR SYSTEM (LIBRARY): **REYNAERS ALUMINUM**. SOFA, TABLE (SALON), CHAIRS (LIBRARY, DINING AREA): **VITRA**. CUSTOM RAIL (LIBRARY): **HELMUT BRESCHAN**. CARPET (LIBRARY, STAIRWELL): **VARIANTE B**. CHAIR (SALON): **ARTIFORT**. LAMP: **SANTA & COLE**. CHAIRS (BALCONY, TERRACE): **THROUGH DESIGNERMÖBELBÖRSE**. BENCH (SALON): **ZANOTTA**. READING LIGHT: **LUMINA ITALIA**. RANGE HOOD (KITCHEN): **MIELE**. RECESSED CEILING FIXTURES: **MODULAR LIGHTING INSTRUMENTS**. PAINTING CONTRACTOR: **MARC WARTMANN MALERGESCHÄFF**. MILLWORK: **MEIENBERGER + EGGER**. STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: **BONOMO ENGINEER**. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: **HFH METALLBAU**.

