

An American Bookshelf in London

When Russian-born architect Andrei Saltykov designed his home in the UK, he put his love of the USA on the shelf.

Andrei Saltykov came up with the idea for his highly functional work of wall art after living in Washington, DC, while working on a building for Richard Rogers. He saw a map of the country made from license plates and eventually put the concept to use in his new house in London, the first project of his practice Saltykov & Lacey. American geography, it turns out, was just perfect for what he had in mind. "I thought about doing Britain or Russia," he says, "but there weren't so many sections, and the United States has lots of straight-lined divisions—great for holding books." Showing off his library wasn't

Saltykov's only aesthetic aim, though. Within the map he fastened 600 tiny Christmas tree lights that represent the nation's major cities.

The shelf, which hangs in the living room, is also ideal for a geography lesson: Friends who have traveled recently to the USA chart their route through the country on it, and the architect reports using the map to educate his five-year-old daughter, Gina, about places in the States. And as for the far-flung 49th and 50th states, a shelf based on Hawaii hangs in the kids' bathroom (each island is a hook), and Alaska is suspended in the upstairs bathroom over the tub. ■■■

By Phyllis Richardson
Photo by Will Pryce

