



# CĂRTUREȘTI CARUSEL

BUCHAREST · ROMANIA

This fairytale bookstore in the heart of the Romanian capital has brought an enchanted palace back to life

Cărturești Carusel doesn't just tell the stories of the books spread across the four dazzling white floors of its history-steeped home. This extraordinary bookstore also relates the storied past of this building, which has recently been given a new lease on life. In the early twentieth century, it belonged to the influential Chrissoveloni banking family. "The building was nationalized during the communist regime," say Serban Radu and Nicoleta Iordan, who now run Cărturești Carusel. After the revolution, it stood empty for a long time, until—in a state of severe dilapidation—it was restored to the heirs of the Chrissoveloni family. Huge investment and over 20,000 hours of labor were required to save the building. The restoration project was entrusted to the firm of architects Square One, which gave the building its modern look while respecting its history. Having been closed for a quarter of a century, the doors were finally reopened in 2015. The delightful building has been open to the public as a bookstore ever since.

Spread across more than 10,000 square feet, Cărturești Carusel is a dream come true for

book lovers and fans of good design. On the top floor is a bistro, while the basement is home to a multimedia space. A gallery on the first floor hosts exhibitions of contemporary Romanian art. Together with Cărturești Carusel, Radu and Iordan also run a number of other bookstores in Romania. Their unique combination of carefully selected titles, design, and events, which range from book launches to wine tastings, have garnered them a loyal and largely young clientele. "We see ourselves as curators offering a cultural gathering place," they say. Their main achievement: "making reading cool again."

Buying books should be an "experience," they continue. "We have paid a lot of attention to architecture, interior design, lighting, and visual identity, so that each Cărturești has a unique design concept behind it, created by renowned Romanian architects and designers, or by young emerging artists." Radu and Iordan's establishments are increasingly featured in international →