

Sunday Entropy List: Best Bookstores

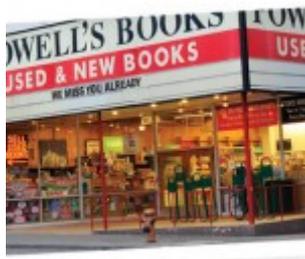
written by Alex Kalamaroff | September 7, 2014



Consider them second homes.

Or read this as a transcontinental road map – with destinations that have all been given a hearty thumbs-up by us here at Entropy.

Whether you need a novel to read, or a cat's belly to scratch, or are just in the mood for some erudite ambiance (what one might call "book porn"), then stop by these swell establishments.



David S. Atkinson

- 1.) Tattered Cover Book Store (Denver, CO)
- 2.) Shakespeare and Company (Paris, France)
- 3.) Powell's Books (Portland, OR)

Byron Campbell

- 1.) Bart's Books (Ojai, CA) – I've only been inside Bart's a few times, but I could see they had a great stock of secondhand books catering more toward the collector than the bargain-hunter. Of more note is their

bottomless supply of mass market books kept on shelves outside the store, available to browse and buy on the honor system. And they have a sweet bookstore cat!

2.) **Twice-Sold Tales (Ojai, CA)** – Connecting to the local library, this used bookstore offers yard sale prices for books that have been taken out of circulation or donated by customers. Get your fill of 50-cent paperbacks or dollar hardcovers!



Where to Go in Ojai

3.) **Pop Hop Books (LA, CA)** – Totally curated collection of literature, children's books and curiosities.

Eddy Rathke

1.) **Magers & Quinn Booksellers (Minneapolis, MN)**

2.) **Chapters Bookstore (Dublin, Ireland)**

3.) **Common Good Books (St Paul, MN)**



Berit Ellingsen

1.) **CDON.com (Scandinavia / the internet)** – Ok, it's a Scandinavian online store, but they have a lot of books along with games and music and surprisingly, beauty products, although I don't buy that from them (maybe I should).

2.) **Powell's Books (Portland, OR)** – A place that was just amazing to visit and spend hours inside.



Beloved Powell's

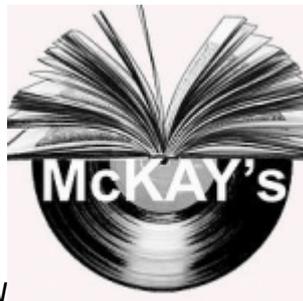
3.) ? (Norway) – I should put something here but I can't as all Norwegian bookstores now seem to be part of a chain. Cappelens Forslag is not a chain, but I haven't actually been there, just know the owner a little.

Nicholas Grider

Woodland Pattern Book Center (Milwaukee, WI) – It's got about 30k titles, entirely small press/micro press/handmade.

WOODLAND  PATTERN

Quincy Rhoads



Sticking to Nashville, TN

- 1.) McKay's (Nashville, TN)
- 2.) Parnassus Books (Nashville, TN)
- 3.) Davis-Kidd Booksellers (Time travel back to 1996 / Nashville, TN)

Janice Lee

With a caveat that her purview here is limited to LA:

1.) **Kinokinuya (Little Tokyo, LA)** – This is a chain, but it's awesome. I get all my special pens here. Plus awesome selection of notebooks and

notepads, stationary, gifts, art books, and cards. One of my happy places.

2.) Iliad Bookshop (North Hollywood, LA) – It's one of the largest used bookstores in the country, and really, in my opinion, the best used bookstore in LA. The selection is phenomenal, huge, and diverse. You can spend hours in this place. (One of my other favorite used bookstores used to be Brand Bookshop in Glendale, which sadly closed recently.)



Homer Would Be Happy – At Iliad Bookshop

3.) Alias Books East (Atwater Village, LA) – A really cool, curated bookstore

Leif Haven

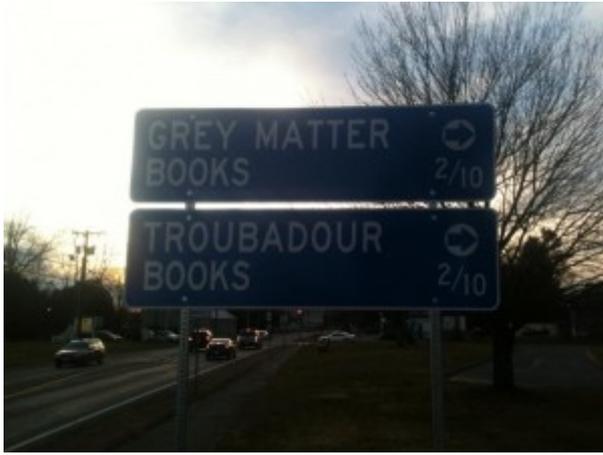
1.) The Seminary Co-op Bookstore (Chicago, IL)

2.) Powell's Books (Portland, OR)

3.) Book/Shop (Oakland, CA)

Thomas Cook

Grey Matter/Troubadour (Hadley, MA) – It never disappoints me or my guests!



Close Now

Megan Milks

- 1.) Quimby's (Chicago, IL)
- 2.) Rainbow Co-op Bookstore (Madison, WI)
- 3.) Giovanni's Room (Philadelphia, PA) – ... RIP



Will Vincent

- 1.) **Greenlight Bookstore (Fort Greene, Brooklyn)** – I worked at Greenlight Bookstore for a year. They were a no-frills place that just kinda ignored Amazon and forged ahead through the recession, internet, and Nook. They're doing pretty well and they just seem to have whatever you want, despite their seemingly small space. They have a podcast: <http://greenlightbookstoreradiohour.com/> and author events every other night. Jarrod Annis, who still works there, is the greatest bookseller I've ever met. He could hand-sell an obscure César Aira title to a Prospect Park mom in a rush; he fought until there was a formidable

small press table established in the center of the store; and he was an anecdotal machine with stories on anything from off-the-beaten New York School poets to whatever Japanese prog.-punk band he had on the box that day. Also, Angel Nafis, a fierce-ass poet in her own right, curates an incredible reading series at Greenlight with poets like Cornelius Eady, Jamaal May, and Bianca Stone regularly on the bill.

2.) Unnameable Books (Brooklyn) – It's got the best poetry selection of any bookstore, used or otherwise, other than maybe City Lights. They've got scandalously cheap copies of books that just came out (uncorrected proofs or otherwise), strange little graphic novels, and tinny music playing at the perfect volume, so that you can still read (they were playing some wartime banjo music with propagandist lyrics last time I was there).

3.) Molasses Books (Bushwick, Brooklyn) – You can trade old books in for beer. Enough said.



Molasses Books' Sophie's Choice:
Book ... Or Beer?

Robert Vaughan

- 1.) The Strand (Manhattan, NYC)
- 2.) Small World Books (Venice Beach, CA)
- 3.) Powell's Books (Portland, OR)

Alex Vladi

OK, as for me, a Russian writer sitting here in Germany, I'd say:

1) Junkudo + Maruzen (Osaka, Japan) – Two huge bookstores merged to one paradise for everybody loving books. OK, most of them are in Japanese, but, heaven!, why not? Here was the only bookstore in my life with a huge shelf about Dadaism and the literary avant-garde. Usually you find just a small part of a shelf (if at all)

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/.../books/maruzen-junkudo-umeda>

2) Kanda (Tokyo, Japan) – If we still remain in Japan, then please save this location in your memory: A book shops district. Just give me a minute to savor this. A – book – shops – district. I know, it isn't really answer to the question about "Top 3 Bookstores," because here you can find just everything to all topics, in all languages. And – as a nice bonus – they have even bookshelves outside the shops. As I asked a shop owner, whether he isn't afraid about folks stealing his books, he said, he never had such cases here. Well, it's Japan. Just look at a pic I took some years ago:



In Kanda

3) Buchhandlung Walther König (Colonia and Frankfurt, Germany) – But back to Germany, we have here a very nice bookstore in Colonia and Frankfurt (and perhaps they have another branch shops too). This is my paradise here; they focus in visual arts and media (in theory and practice), and they have everything.

Alex Kalamaroff

1.) Book Centre (Spencerport, NY) – First bookstore I really frequented; I could walk there from high school. The place was a mess, just a disaster. Most people would walk in, accidentally knock over a stack, and then scamper off. The shelves were double and triple deep in books, so you'd really have to dig, which made it into a biblio-archaeological adventure.

2.) Porter Square Books (Somerville, MA) – This is tough. I'm a 10 minute walk from of a bunch of good bookstores (Raven Books, Harvard Bookstore, and the Co-Op), but Porter Square is the closet and it's got the most character. They have a fair number of indie picks, bring in a range of authors to read, have an over-priced coffee shop, and hawk cute little gifts for when I forget a family member's birthday and need something but

quick.

3.) Dom Knigi (St. Petersburg, Russia) – Whether you're in the mood for books, blizis, or tea, this place is great and the second-floor cafe has a fantastic view of Nevsky Prospekt, where Gogol's ghost goes for a stroll every afternoon.

For those keeping score at home, [Powell's Books](#) in Portland, Oregon, won – with thumbs-up from David Atkinson, Berit Ellingsen, Leif Haven, and Robert Vaughan.

For some slightly weird YouTube videos, definitely be sure to check out Thomas Cook's pick: [Grey Matter/Troubadour](#).

For cool Podcasts, tune into Will Vincent's recommendation: [Greenlight Bookstore Radio Hour](#)

And for an all-around good time swing by any of these awesome book emporiums.