

Bookshelves – and their contents – speak volumes about their owners. Nick Foulkes stacks up the evidence. Illustrations by Chris Burke.

THE BACHELOR

HELMUT NEWTON'S SUMO ON A STAND

"The only books I'm interested in are the ones you can cook," says the young bachelor with what he believes is almost Wildean wit. Be clear about one thing: the bachelor is no bibliophile but he is being slightly self-deprecating about his interest in literature. He does possess one book, and it is very large and expensive (the bachelor understands size and money). Helmut Newton's book of photographs is all the literature (and, for that matter, culture) that he needs in one, admittedly far from handy, volume.

The bachelor is a perfect evolution of post-literate modern man. For him, reading is not a pleasure, it is a method of inputting information which is then processed in the Gillette-sharp, Intel-fast, money-making machine that is his brain. His spelling (not to mention punctuation and grammar) owes more to the school of SMS text messaging than anything he might have picked up while undergoing more formal education. The sort of objects that make a house a home for the bachelor are a television with the dimensions of a tennis court; an encyclopedic library of X-box, PS3 and Nintendo Wii games; one fridge full of beer (for himself) and another full of Louis Roederer Cristal (for the female company he encounters in the numerous lounge bars of which he is an habitué); and the Helmut Newton *Sumo* book, opened at a suitably erotic image and displayed with some pride in the middle of the sitting room of his blazingly new Candy & Candy apartment.