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Magical escapes

FROM SPECTACULAR
MOUNTAIN RETREATS TO
A CHIC CITY BOLTHOLE

RECALL: 3/1/18





SITTING ROOM

'Each room is two or three steps higher than the last and all are situated around a central axis, which helps create an intimate, connected way of living,' says Barbara.

Grandpa Ears armchair, around £2,122, Bokja Design, bokjadesign.com. Arne Jacobsen floor light, £630, The Conran Shop, conranshop.co.uk.

SWISS CHALET

MODERN THINKING

A desire to use traditional materials in a contemporary way has given this mountain bolthole its distinctive sense of style, comfort and fun

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KITCHEN AND DINING AREA

An open fire in the kitchen (left) warms the dark grey soapstone surface, which retains the heat, making the space feel wonderfully cosy. Handmade raku-fired floor tiles add texture and pattern to the look and kitchen equipment is neatly hidden in a wall-mounted cabinet behind a curtain (below left). An integrated window bench means the Schneiders can seat up to 12 people around the table (this picture and below far left), which is lit by low-hanging pendant lights for intimate dining.

Moser 1-253 chairs, around £471 each, Horgenglarus, horgenglarus.ch. Dornbracht Tara three-piece cross handle basin mixer in matt Black, £1,220, CP Hart, cphart.co.uk. KuQua-Hex tiles with Turquoise glaze, around £29 per tile, Karak, karak.at. Task wall lights, £199 each, Original BTC at Heal's, heals.com.

CHILDREN'S DEN

Soapstone steps lead up to the children's play area (far left), situated above the kitchen.



Although Barbara and Andrea Schneider's Swiss chalet might appear remote at first glance, you would be mistaken. 'It's actually easily accessible by road,' says Barbara, 'although in the summer, we do find ourselves surrounded by grazing cattle.' Perched above the village of Wergenstein, the chalet, which the family of five describes as its 'hiding place', is encircled by mountain pasture and enjoys spectacular panoramic views.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

'We spent many seasons coming to Wergenstein for ski touring and we loved the village so much that when a friend told us about a plot of land for sale, we didn't hesitate,' says Barbara. Keen to create a building sympathetic to its environment but avoid the clichés of Swiss mountain architecture, the couple enlisted the expertise of architects Miller & Maranta. 'We wanted a modern interpretation of a

classic chalet, but we thought it important to preserve some mountain character as we didn't want anything too sleek,' says Barbara. The house was built in 2013, and the family has spent weekends, holidays and Christmases there ever since.

MIXING THE OLD AND THE NEW

The exterior is clad with a locally sourced, dark-stained wood, while the interior is lined in spruce pine, with windows strategically placed to provide enthralling views. Perhaps the most exceptional detail, however, is the use of soapstone for the oven and open fire. This heat-retaining black stone, which is part of the vernacular of traditional Swiss chalets, has all but disappeared from new builds, but for Barbara and Andrea, it was a logical choice. 'The soapstone extends into the sitting room and provides heat for the whole house, drawn from the fire that is constantly alight,' says Barbara.

The kitchen is the heart of the house and is where family and friends convene. 'We've hosted as many as twelve around



EXTERIOR

The chalet perches on mountain pasture above the Swiss village of Wergenstein. 'In summer, the surrounding area is full of alpine flowers,' says Barbara.

Architect. Miller & Maranta, millermaranta.ch.

HOME OFFICE

Shelving frames a reupholstered sofa (above right), which introduces a pop of bright colour to the pale pine interior, while a built-in desk (right) maximises the use of space, ensuring that this compact room between the sitting room and balcony retains a sense of flow.

Arne Jacobsen table lamp in White, £547, The Conran Shop, conranshop.co.uk. **Ludde sheepskin rug**, £30, Ikea, ikea.com.

the table,' says Barbara. Although some windows are kept small to retain heat, the huge pane of glass in the sitting room ensures the views are given the admiration they deserve.

DECORATIVE MATTERS

A Zürich-based interior designer, with whom Barbara and Andrea had previously worked, was invited to help the couple decorate the mountain home. The brief they gave Claudia Silberschmidt was to create a cosy yet lively and bright scheme that the children would enjoy. A multitude of textures, from the long shaggy pile of a cushion to the thick cable knit of a pouffe and soft sheepskin rugs, add particular interest and playfulness. Barbara explains: 'We chose cushion covers made locally in the Alpine tradition, alongside others handmade in India, for an artisanal feel.'

With such warmth and comfort on hand, and barely a telephone signal to disturb them, 'Sometimes, we don't leave the chalet for days,' says Barbara.





ENTRANCE HALL

'We haven't hung many pictures because we wanted to draw attention to the natural beauty of the spruce pine walls (above),' says Barbara. Similar pouffe, Bug pouffe in Ash Grey, £85, Loaf, loaf.com.

CHILDREN'S ROOM

'The built-in furniture was designed by the architects and interior designer,' says Barbara. 'The children spend hours in the fortress.' Karo pillowcase and duvet cover, around £27 set, Hans Textil Shop, hans-textil-shop.de. Interior design, Atelier Zürich, atelierzuerich.ch.





BATHROOM

Vintage mirrors have been given a new lease of life with a coat of white lacquer for their frames, and hung at various heights (this picture) for ease of use by different family members. 'We brought some pieces from our townhouse, including this cabinet (below left), to give an immediate sense of belonging,' says Barbara. Vero rectangular washbasin, £562, Duravit, duravit.co.uk. Reclaimed roll-top cast-iron bath, €3,210, Replicata, replicata.com.

GUEST BEDROOM

The knitted light (left) is a versatile option as it can be moved according to the needs of the user. Matt knitted pendant light in Azul, around £276, Lot Llov, llotllov.de.

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