

# MONOCLE

## HOW TO: START A FASHION BRAND, JOIN THE INDIE SPORTS TEAM AND LOOK HOT (in a considered way)

**M** **A to F** **AFFAIRS:** Merkel's next steps **BUSINESS:** Tips for the service industry **CULTURE:** Palm Springs' hot mod squad **DESIGN:** Ikea finds its missing part **ENTERTAINING:** The ultimate party mixer **FASHION:** Will Donald Trump save US fashion?



Bow-wow! What could be a better accessory than a shiba like me?

'I'm enjoying Monocle's new look. Now it's my turn for a refresh'

## TIME TO LOOK SHARP

PLUS:

On patrol with a more vigilant *Swedish army*, our inaugural *HQ Audit*, the *prime minister of Malta* on a tough *Brexit* and our *EXPO* on the juicy delights of *Thailand's blissed-out party Wonderfruit*

40 pages dedicated to hitting the season in stride

SEK 95  
JPY ¥2,200 (+tax)  
AUD \$13.00  
SGD \$19.90 (w/gst)  
CAD \$12.00 (est)  
ESP €11

UK £6  
US \$12  
GER €12  
ITA €10  
DKK 122  
BEL €11

0.4  
7 25274 22446 3

+ **i** **INVENTORY:** all you need for the month ahead. A guide to **BALI'S NEW BEACHES**. Ten quick steps to mastering **DALLAS**. **THE SCRUBDOWN** on **CLEANING**. **STATIONERY** in **MILAN**. City stockists: **RIO+**. Our pick of **FILMS**, **READS** and **GOOD TECH**.

**D**  
OBERHOLZ HUT/  
SOUTH TYROL

## Nicely spruced up

How do you win a design competition in the Dolomites? By coming up with a 'stube' that respects the landscape and yet dares to be different.

By Ivan Carvalho  
Photography Christian Flatscher

Located in Italy's northern extreme, the mountainous region of South Tyrol has long been a magnet for those looking to holiday at high altitude. Skiing and hiking are popular draws in the province of 500,000, which each year registers 28 million overnight stays and €3bn in business tied to tourism. It's no surprise then that locals keep busy by upgrading their offering, erecting ski lifts and digging road tunnels to provide easier access to picture-perfect valleys.

One successful approach has been to invest in attractive architecture to pull in visitors, with projects such as new wineries and hotels getting the design conscious chattering. The most recent example can be found high up on a panoramic hillside, where a pair of architects have come up with a new look for one of the region's



1

(1) Large glass façades afford spectacular views  
(2) The interior is a complex curvilinear wood structure



2

most common building types: the alpine refuge. Inaugurated at the end of 2016, the Oberholz mountain hut lies in the shadow of the striking Latemar massif, which stands at the western end of the Dolomites – a range renowned for its unique collection of craggy peaks.

The hut's owner is Obereggen, the company that runs the ski resort in the Eggental valley. It held a competition to find a firm that could make a standout structure; the winner also had to come up with a restaurant interior that avoided Alpine kitsch (read antlers on the walls and chintzy tablecloths).

The winning concept was a joint effort by Slovak-born, Bolzano-based architect Pavol Mikolajcak and Peter Pichler, a South Tyrol native who has an eponymous practice in Milan. As a starting point the

two took inspiration from the traditional Tyrolean *stube*: a wood-panelled parlour found in farmhouses. These rooms are usually square-shaped, have small windows and are heated by a masonry stove. The design from Mikolajcak and Pichler called for a trio of *stuben* set side by side, each under a pitched roof with a floor-to-ceiling window on one end to bring in natural light and maximise views of the stunning mountainscape.

Their most innovative push came with the building's overall shape, which was inspired by nature. Set into the hillside beneath one of the resort's chairlifts and a few metres from the ski run, from above the Alpine hut resembles a fallen tree trunk. Its curving offshoots fan out at the end, offering visitors a commanding vantage point. "We wanted to do a contemporary version of the *stube* where you wouldn't lose the essential element of having that cosy space where people can socialise and eat, while taking advantage of the hut's scenic location," says Pichler.

While they retained the peaked roof common to buildings in cold climates, the

pitch of it gradually shifts from 45 degrees at the nooks to 30 degrees over the bar. The three *stuben* merge into a single space, which then melts into the hillside. For the exterior cladding, strips of larch were treated with a grey finish for an aged look. “We didn’t want the new building to stick out against the landscape so we gave it the same dark patina you see on old barns around here,” says Pichler. “They have been weathered by the elements for decades and the wooden roofs are almost black in some places.”

The interior is a more modern affair. Made from untreated spruce, the framing becomes a conversation piece, with supports that taper off into walls that are fitted with slightly curving benches and simple grey square backrests in loden. “The important thing was to show off the exposed wood frame so people can understand the geometry and see how the structure folds into the hillside,” says Mikolajcak. He runs his hand along the sleek linear backrest of one of the *stube* chairs, a design that was based on a classic model from chair manufacturer Plank.

To show off the ceiling to maximum effect, the architects chose the slender Unterlinden suspension lamp from Milan’s Artemide, one of only two furnishings sourced from outside Tyrol; the other is a set of grey upholstered chairs from Denmark’s Hay that stand in front of the refuge’s cosy fireplace.



“What struck me about this building is how the architects paid respect to tradition yet still gave us something that looks contemporary”

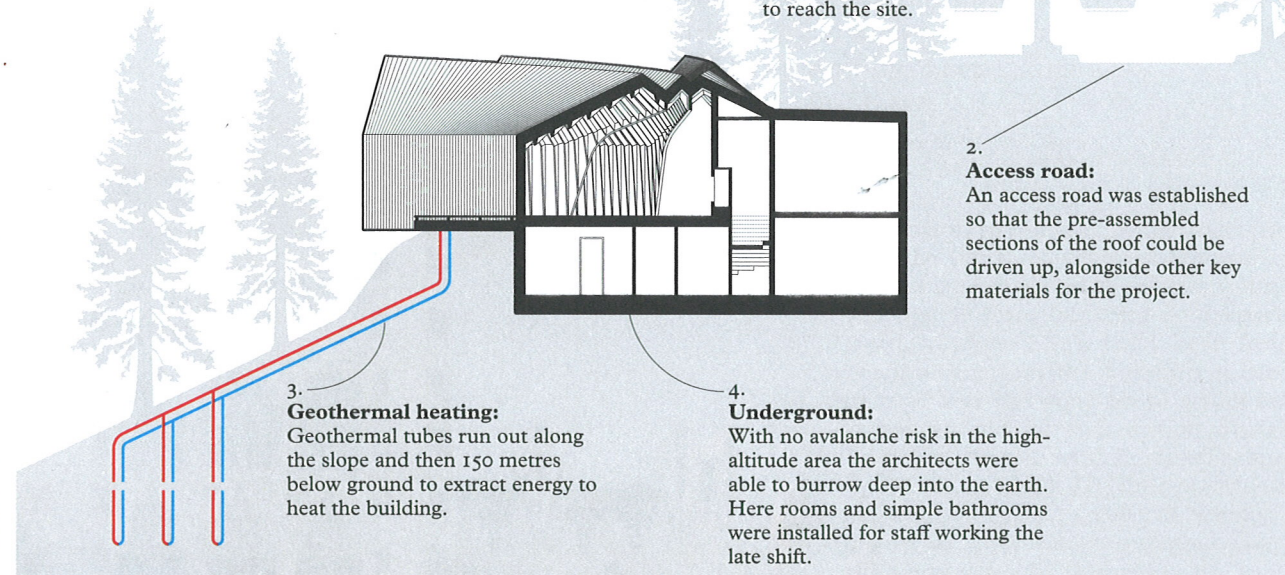


(1) Architect Peter Pichler (2) The hut’s co-architect Pavol Mikolajcak (3) Lunch is served (4) Oak table and chairs (5) Streamlined yet cosy interior (6) Stunning views across the Alps

DESIGN DETAILS

How they did it

Explaining the more challenging aspects of alpine architecture.



Given the region’s wealth of carpentry and engineering know-how the architects didn’t have to look far for help: the six geothermal pumps used to provide the hut’s energy are from a local supplier. The same goes for building materials. Regional porphyry stone was used in the concrete to give a warmer tone to the 30-metre-long curving wall that runs from the bar to the lounge. The concrete was sandblasted to create perforations to better absorb sound in the 120-seat restaurant during peak hours. There’s sturdy oak flooring to cope with visitors trudging through in ski boots and the entrance has rough Luserna stone tiles that have been flame-treated to prevent slippage when wet from melted snow.

Seated at one of the oak tables inside, Richard Pichler (no relation to Peter), vice-president of Obereggen, admires the final product as a couple of German tourists at an adjoining table order a plate of Tyrolean dumplings. Out on the south-facing terrace, a producer from the Eggental valley serves guests samples of his hunter’s cheese that he pairs with a sauvignon from a South Tyrol vintner.

“What struck me about this building is how the architects paid respect to tradition yet still gave us something that looks contemporary,” says the VP as he gestures to the ribbed sections of the ceiling. “It’s a modern building rooted in something local.” — (M)