

ADVENTURES IN DECORATING : HOUSES WITH A SENSE OF SELF

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HOUSE & GARDEN®



MOUNTAIN HIGHS
SWITZERLAND'S STYLISH
NEW ALPINE HOTELS

SPRING REVAMPS
THRIFTY TIPS FROM
AN INTERIORS EXPERT



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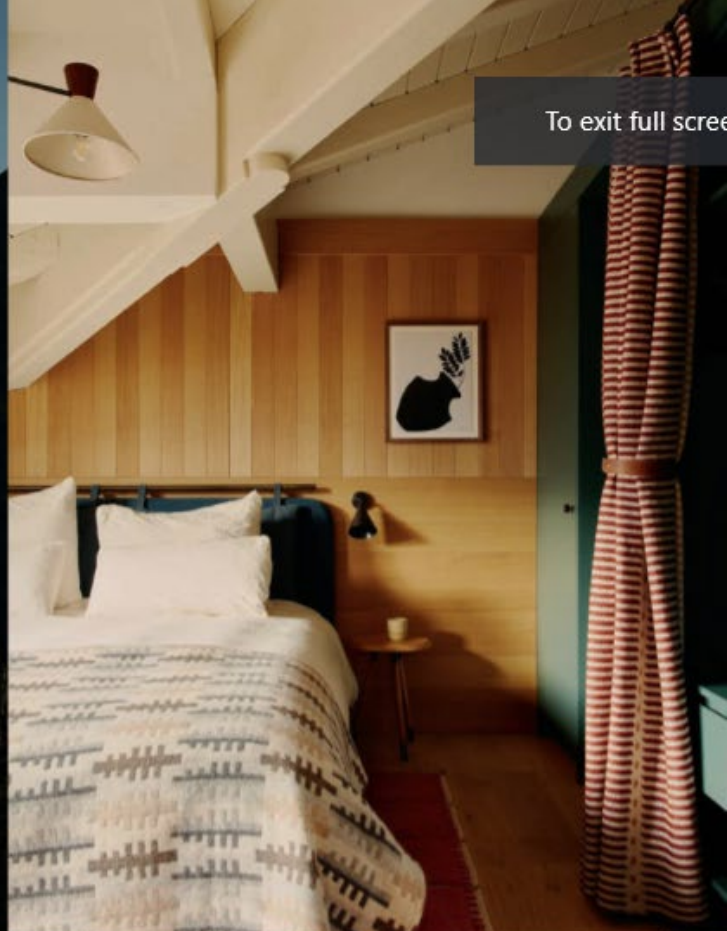
PAMELA GOODMAN presents the latest openings in Switzerland taking mountain hotels to new heights, thanks to the fresh approach of designers who are reviving belle époque and chalet style with modernist and 1970s elements

PEAKS

PHOTOGRAPHS ROBERT RIEGER

OPPOSITE View of the Adelboden valley and the high Lohner peaks from The Brecon. THIS PAGE The hotel's comfortably stylish seating area has a Simona Frigerio painting hanging above a sofa covered in a bespoke Zimmer + Rohde fabric



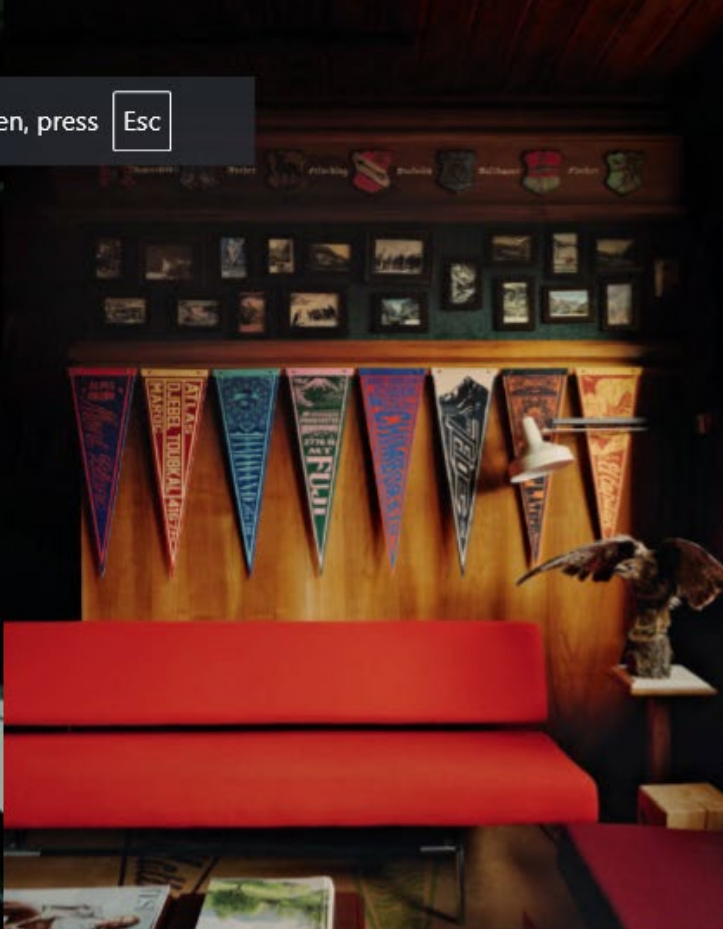


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TOP ROW FROM LEFT The Eiger and Mönch mountains of the Bernese Alps, as seen from Mürren. One of the Forest Cosy rooms at The Brecon. In the lobby of Drei Berge, custom-made pennants feature the world's most famous summits. Hearty local dishes are served on the hotel's bespoke tableware. BOTTOM ROW The Brecon's elegant dining room. Welsh chef Bryn Williams heads up the kitchen. Candy-stripe shutters enliven the dark green façade of Drei Berge. One of the hotel's atmospheric panelled bedrooms





Tales abound of how three of Switzerland's great peaks got their names. The favourite one involves an ogre who tried to seduce a young maiden, before a kindly monk intervened and an old sorcerer turned all three of them to stone. There is poetic licence here, for sure. The origins of Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau are undoubtedly more prosaic, but who can deny a fairy-tale narrative for such a revered and magical landscape?

Wengen, one of several villages and hamlets laying claim to a backdrop of these mighty peaks, is perhaps the ultimate picture-book destination. It clings as tightly to the Swiss Alpine vernacular of decorative wooden chalets, heart shapes and lace curtains as it does to the mountainside, up which chugs a yellow, cogwheel train – the only way in and out for residents and tourists alike.

At the western end of the village, however, change is afoot – less of a wind of change than a gentle breeze, blowing new life and a new look into one of its oldest establishments. The Grand Hotel Belvedere – aptly named for its astonishing views down the Lauterbrunnen valley – has been swept up by Beaumier, the hotel group that owns, among others, Les Roches Rouges in Saint-Raphaël and Le Moulin in Provence. As part of the package came the nearby Hotel Wengener Hof, the two now becoming one, joined by a tunnel underground and landscaped gardens above.

The Belvedere building, a belle époque gem, is the prettier and more historic of the two, with a wooden-balconied façade and green shutters; the lobby stripped back to reveal the original, carved pine panelling; and a lovely brasserie-style dining room with a vaulted ceiling and restored hand-painted dining alcove.

The bedrooms are where the new really kicks in: 90 in total and redesigned from scratch, in part to provide a uniformity across both buildings, in part to introduce a retro 1970s look (how the wheel of fashion turns), defined by the olive greens and toffee browns of locally sourced stone and wood. Most striking of all is the new spa, brutalist in its angular, raw-stone simplicity, which must have had Wengen's old guard reaching for their schnapps.

The Grand Hotel Belvedere is a five-star property, Wengen's first in fact, and with that comes a certain sense of propriety. On the opposite side of Lauterbrunnen valley, in the mountain village of Mürren, the French/Moroccan creative polymath Ramdane Touhami does not give a fig about stars. He opened Drei Berge Hotel in December 2023 in the former Hotel Bellevue. He, too, has followed a 1970s aesthetic, packing the place with personality and passion, pushing the boundary of Swiss tradition to its limit, and introducing a distinctly Wes Anderson vibe with the forest green exterior and candy-cane-striped shutters. His crowd is a younger, less affluent and more fashion-conscious one, hence his latest collaboration with his close friends Aaron Aujla and Emily Adams Bode Aujla, the duo behind New York fashion brand Bode.

Between them, they have designed two brand new suites at Drei Berge named after champion horses, each one with the walls and ceiling entirely clad in wood, yet with the same pops of zing and zest as in the rest of the 19-room hotel. 'We are in the business of innovation,' says Ramdane of his hotel. 'It's the only place I can express myself from A to Z, to do things totally my way.'

Perhaps the same could be said of English artist and interior designer Luke Edward Hall, whose recent partnership with the Peruvian chef Claudia Canessa has seen the launch of Amaru, one of three restaurants in St Moritz's Kulm Hotel. 'I wanted to keep a tangible connection between the landscape, the cooking

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OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Traditional Stabellen chairs at Drei Berge. An eye-catching wall hanging created for the hotel by Ramdane Touhami's art direction agency, representing the three great mountains. The Swiss Alps are known for their cheese. Adelboden church

and the interior,' Luke says of the dining room that displays his favourite palette of greens, yellows and pinks. His handling of the Swiss aesthetic is playful rather than challenging, with hand-woven carpets designed to look like deer hide and a vaulted ceiling that is painted with local flowers of the Engadin.

Amaru aside, the trend for new and reimagined hotels in the Swiss Alps seems distinctly retrospective – a conscious drawing on 20th-century inspiration to guide the colours, textures and raw materials of traditional mountain style away from cliché. Certainly, Italian designer Fabrizio Casiraghi, who has turned his hand to new hotel Experimental Chalet in Verbier, takes the combination of dark green lacquered wood and snow-white paint as the design staple in each of the 39 rooms, against which he has set the art deco-style furniture and fittings.

Taking the prize, however, is a small new hotel in the mountain village of Adelboden. Grant Maunder, co-owner of The Brecon, describes it as 'the ultimate private chalet with hotel standards' and hopes that guests might take it over for private parties as well as booking it room by room. Lotti Lorenzetti of Nicemakers interiors studio, who cut her hotel-design teeth with both Martin Brudnizki and Soho House, has worked with Grant to create 'a high-end version of someone's home' where there are no TVs or minibars in the bedrooms and no children are allowed.

This is a hotel that feels deeply comfortable, where Grant's Welsh roots combine neatly with Switzerland – 'Swelsh' he calls it – and where the 22 rooms and the public spaces blend chunky fabrics with vintage finds and bespoke pieces, again in that fashionable mid-century style. No clichés here, just an earthy connectedness to the blockbuster view from every window – not, mind you, of the three great peaks, but still from the same Swiss picture book □

WAYS AND MEANS

Rooms at Grand Hotel Belvedere cost from £391, B&B (beaumier.com); at Drei Berge Hotel from £355, B&B (dreibergehotel.ch); at the Experimental Chalet from £400, B&B (experimentalchalet.com); and at The Brecon from £670, all inclusive (thebrecon.com). Swiss (swiss.com) has flights from UK airports to Zurich and Geneva. Travel Switzerland (travelswitzerland.com) offers unlimited access to the rail, bus and boat network, plus local trams and buses; it also includes the Swiss Museum Pass, which grants free entry to more than 500 establishments. Prices start at £229 for a three-day, second-class ticket. For more information, visit switzerland.com.



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