

# MONOCLE

WINTER 2023

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## Rhapsody in cool

Lapland's orchestra keeps Finland's villages in concert.

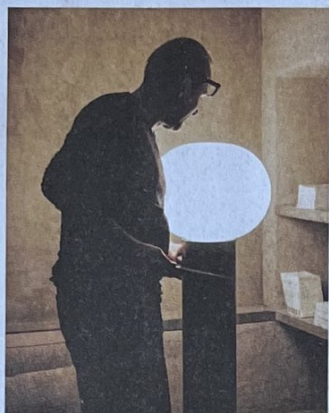
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## Glowing review

A new Berlin outpost that gets the light right by keeping it soft.

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## What to wear

Surefire gift ideas, looks to keep you warm and plenty of cosy knits.

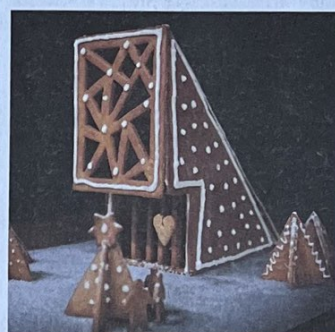
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## Sweet treats

Snohetta makes itself at home in a new medium: gingerbread.

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+ Visit MONOCLE's seasonal shop in St Moritz

HOSPITALITY / BRIXEN

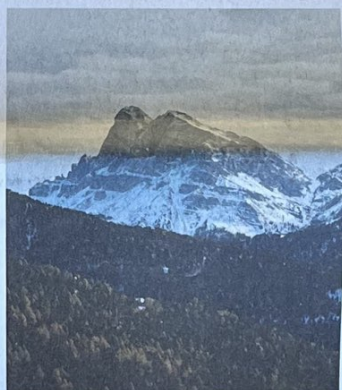
## The town with a new view on tourism



More than an hour south of Innsbruck by car, three from Munich or a slow train journey from Verona, Brixen isn't at the centre of much. That's what makes the small South Tyrolean town in the Dolomites so alluring – plus the fact that a new generation here is adding top design and excellent food to the area's traditions.

The Adler Historic Guesthouse is one of eight new properties since 2018, with five more on the way and another nearby on the Plose mountain. So what accounts for the town's unexpected pull and pitch-perfect taste in hospitality? Being a little harder to reach and able to balance time-tested customs with some new ideas is part of the story. Sound good? Then let us show you around.

• HUNKER DOWN ON PAGE 68



FASHION / GLOBAL

## High times Top looks

Getting dressed for the Alps is about more than just keeping warm and fashion brands are undertaking a push to conquer the mountains. The evolution of the alpine dress code has translated into massive growth in the skiwear sector, with fashion houses investing in developing new, technical materials and their own ski collections.

Luxury retailers are adding dedicated skiwear to their ranges and heritage labels are enjoying global traction on the pistes for the first time. Fusalp's chairman, Sophie Lacoste, tells us about the company's uptick in sales outside its home of France, while Perfect Moment's Jane Gottschalk shares a vision to grow the skiwear label into a fully fledged lifestyle business. As competition heats up, the winners will be the ones who are as committed to elegance as they are to high-performance materials.

We have ideas about what to wear on and off piste, plus a read on the industry's uphill battle.

• GET THE LOOK ON PAGE 44



Winter 2023 edition  
Monocle's Alpine newspaper



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## FOOD &amp; TRAVEL

SECTION 4

## SECTION 4

MONOCLE's bumper winter newspaper has saved the best for last, with top scoops from the world of food, travel and hospitality – plus plenty of present suggestions. Here you'll learn about Greenland's plan to tempt tourists and check in at its Charlotte Perriand-designed ski resort. We also share essays on the importance of local journalism in the high north, the diaries to buy for 2024 and the hotels you'll thank us for recommending. Shall we get going?

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Smart ideas on presents for the whole family and even your most discerning acquaintances. Plus: our Helsinki correspondent on the enduring allure of Finnish wooden toys.

SHOPPING / GLOBAL  
Gifts galore

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Meet the Danish restaurateur backing an Icelandic chef to rethink Baltic cooking. Then on page 75, our Swiss chef shares six sweet recipes to keep you warm this winter, from buns to chestnut cake.

F&B / LITHUANIA  
Winter warmers

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How have Norse myths shaped the way we think? What five lessons did an alpinist learn at 7,000 metres? When did the fireplace become an incendiary idea? Find out in our thoughtful essay section.

OPINIONS / GLOBAL  
Fresh reads



# Peak hospitality

HOSPITALITY / SOUTH TYROL

In some ways, South Tyrol has it both ways: it has Teutonic orderliness and an Italian elan. That's one reason why the small town of Brixen is beguiling guests and tempting footfall. Our correspondent heads to town to meet a new crop of hoteliers starting smart new hospitality businesses in the shadow of the Dolomites.



## TRAVEL

# Quiet revolution

HOSPITALITY / SOUTH TYROL

In the Italian town of Brixen, a subtle reinvention of hospitality is under way. Alongside smart new-builds, historic establishments are receiving tasteful makeovers by a new generation of hoteliers and architects eager to offer cosy stays and an elevated view.

By *Ed Stocker*  
Photography *Andrea Pugiotto*



There are few more gratifying ways to enjoy Brixen after dark than by heading up to the roof of the historic Adler guesthouse. If it's cold enough outside, wisps of steam will be rising from the swimming pool, heated to 35C in winter, as you shed one of the hotel's earth-hued dressing gowns and step into the warming water. Behind the pool, the dark shadow of South Tyrol's snowcapped Plose mountains loom; in front, and seemingly within touching distance, the floodlit spires of the White Tower and the cathedral stand to attention in the town's picture-postcard historic centre.

Despite several name changes and a few brief interludes, the Adler has operated as a hotel for more than 500 years on a plot of land next to the river where the town was first founded. But until recently, it was just another traditional spot in the majority German-speaking town, which is known as Bressanone in Italian and has a population of 23,000. That is, until extensive five-month renovation work finished in summer 2023 that installed a pool on the roof, as well as overhauling the sauna and moving the reception. Out went the old-school yellow curtains, the mishmash of furniture styles and the busy walls. In came a more understated aesthetic, with the curved shape of the vaulted ceilings given centre stage. Neutral tones dominate the 43 bedrooms and oak, travertine and glass are the prevailing materials.

"I love the minimalist style," says Silvana Messner, originally from Germany, who runs the hotel along with her Tyrolean partner Christoph Mayr. "Before you couldn't see the walls." Mayr's family has owned the Adler for almost 40 years but its recent makeover is part of a bigger change in the northern Italian town. In fact, a decidedly quiet and impeccably tasteful revolution is taking place throughout Brixen as hoteliers pass the baton to children intent on doing something different. It's turning this small Dolomites town into an unlikely hospitality hub.

The overhaul of places such as the Adler is being watched keenly by local councillor Sara Dejakum who,



An impeccably tasteful revolution is taking place throughout Brixen as hoteliers pass the baton to children intent on doing something different





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**Brixen address book**

**1. Adler Historic Guesthouse**  
Recently refurbished in a subtle way that stays true to its historic roots. The pool, steam room and sauna are beautiful – as are the views. Check out the café too. [adlerbrixen.com](http://adlerbrixen.com)

**2. Anders Mountain Suites**  
The huge terrace looks onto the Dolomites, offering incredible views of the Peitlerkofel and Geisler mountains. Rooms are consciously private and set across two floors. [anders-suites.com](http://anders-suites.com)

**3. Lasserhaus**  
A beautiful new hotel overseen by Milan's Vudafieri Saverino Partners features 10 rooms, three of which are suites. Includes artwork by the likes of Esther Stocker and Ingrid Hora. [lasserhaus.it](http://lasserhaus.it)

**4. Santre**  
Up above Brixen, Santre was founded by three brothers with the help of family. Using land that once belonged to their farmer grandfather, there are 62 suites here, two pools and an extensive wine and cocktails list. [santre.it](http://santre.it)

**5. Fink**  
A clean, modern vaulted restaurant with a menu inspired by the simple food of the monastic tradition. Try locally grown risotto with Jerusalem artichoke, a Brixen vegetable tartare or slow-cooked beef washed down with a crisp South Tyrolean red wine. [fink1896.it](http://fink1896.it)

**6. Decantei**  
A former butcher's shop, this space was completely refurbished in 2019. Today it functions as a meat-focused locanda (they still make their speck in-house) that somehow manages to be both modern and traditional. The owners are planning to add guest rooms soon. [decantei.it](http://decantei.it)

**7. Vitis**  
A wine bar with hundreds of bottles from South Tyrol and beyond. Owned by the family behind the Adler, the food is also excellent. The refurbishment was overseen by Bergmeisterwolf. [adlerbrixen.com/vinothek-vitis](http://adlerbrixen.com/vinothek-vitis)

**8. Pur Südtirol**  
A market featuring products from South Tyrol, from fruit and vegetables to wine and beer. Also sells a select number of handmade products. [pursuedtirol.com](http://pursuedtirol.com)

**9. Degust**  
Located just north of Brixen in Varna, Degust is an excellent cheese shop founded in 1994 by chef Hansi Baumgartner and his wife, Edith. Focused on raw-milk cheese. [degust.com](http://degust.com)

**10. Finsterwirt**  
The Adler family's original hotel sits above Vitis. Dating back to 1870, the restaurant is another world, with rifles in cabinets and lots of dark wood panelling. The food is highly refined. [adlerbrixen.com/restaurant-finsterwirt](http://adlerbrixen.com/restaurant-finsterwirt)



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among other roles, helps to develop Brixen's tourism policy. She meets MONOCLE at the fresco-filled *rathaus* (town hall) to explain how the town has been looking to increase visitor numbers while steering away from day-tripping mass tourism and encouraging a more discerning demographic. In 2019, Brixen came up with what Dejakum calls a "model client": between 40 and 50 years old, with a medium to high income and interests spanning architecture to food.

Dejakum says that eight hotels, either new or refurbished, have been completed in Brixen since 2018, while there are a further five projects in the pipeline and an additional one up on the Plose mountain range. She talks about a new breed of hotelier "doing things with good taste and refinement" but the boom in hotels is about much more than tourism policy. "There's a whole circuit of people involved, from entrepreneurs to bankers," she says. "And they feel the municipality is giving them the right support." Thanks to this ecosystem, there's still no chain hotel in Brixen despite plenty of interest; the nearest one is down the road in Bolzano.

The latest generation of hoteliers tinkering away on historic properties wouldn't go anywhere without the architects helping to realise their visions. Over in a 15th-century building filled with maquettes and split by a mezzanine floor, Gerd Bergmeister, co-founder of Bergmeisterwolf architectural studio, has his own theory about the recent flourishing. Like many people who speak to MONOCLE, Bergmeister mentions the recently departed mayor, Peter Brunner, as being a catalyst during his tenure. But the architect also cites Brixen's long history of domination by the church as an episcopal town dating back to the Holy Roman Empire. As the church's grip has loosened, says Bergmeister, Brixen has become less traditional. "There are lots of architects working with what is beautiful and adding to it," he adds.

Bergmeisterwolf oversaw the Adler's revival, diving into the building's history to return the façade to its original colour and studying plans from 1720 that



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(1) One of the nooks at Lasserhaus (2) Views of the Dolomites from one of Santre's two pools (3) Lasserhaus is inside a historic Brixen building (4) Anders Mountain Suites (5) Anders' suites are set over two floors, with views of snowy peaks (6) Heated roof pool at Adler Historic

Guesthouse looks onto the old town (7) Lissi Tschöll from Viertel Group, behind Lasserhaus and new-build Badhaus (8) Room at Adler, with its contemporary bay window (9) Gerd Bergmeister in his Brixen architecture studio (10) Fink's Jerusalem artichoke, red apple and hazelnut risotto

showed that the exterior was once covered in bay windows, an architectural hallmark of Brixen. The studio set about returning these features to the building while giving them a modern twist; the triangular metal-framed windows, for example, are a clever way to honour the past while also looking forward.

Bergmeister is also working on a rarity in Brixen's centre: a clay-brick, new-build hotel called Badhaus, which is set to open in March 2024 and will include a public plaza. It will be managed by Viertel Group, an enterprising local company that also includes a beer brand and Lasserhaus, an art-focused hotel.

Clearly there's a confidence to Brixen's hotel scene as the latest generation shakes up the status quo. Take Fink, a stunning addition set in a 15th-century building that combines a seasonal, vegetable-focused restaurant with nine upstairs suites that feature lime-washed walls and terrazzo flooring in the bathrooms. The Fink family had long operated a bistro downstairs but when Florian Fink and his wife Petra took over, they wanted to offer something that they thought the town currently didn't have. "I said, if it stays the same, I'm not sure if I'll come and be part of it," says Petra. Today the restaurant is full and the rooms upstairs are starting to get traction.

Perhaps the most radical rethink has come at Anders Mountain Suites, about a 30-minute drive above Brixen. Andreas Plattner had a different vision to his parents, who had long operated a traditional mountain lodge on the same spot. He convinced them to demolish the lodge and build a highly modern, wood-dominated structure overseen by Brixen architect Martin Gruber. In the process, the establishment went from 22 rooms to just seven suites, each with its own sauna and views of the snowy peaks. As he makes a few fixes at the property ahead of winter high season, Andreas's father, Johann, admits that change was hard but he realises that it was the right move. Andreas, meanwhile, was never in any doubt. "We wanted to do something that no one else had done," he says with a smile.

**Time to say good buy**



Browse print, clothing, homeware and more at our pop-up shop in Hotel Steffani, St Moritz, until 31 March 2024. [monocle.com](http://monocle.com)



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