Words TRISH LORENZ
Photography BRUNO HELBLING FOR
BERGDORF AG / LIVING INSIDE

MOUNTAIN MODERNISTS

There is no need to sacrifice modernity in a rural location: sometimes it can be the best way to appreciate the natural world, as this Swiss home in the forest illustrates

This 170-square-metre modernist-style home, situated on a high plateau surrounded by mountains in the Davos region of Switzerland, is a rarity in more ways than one. Built in 2011 as a holiday retreat for Andre Hauser and his family, the house has a striking contemporary design but what makes it most unusual is its location. Despite the country's strict environmental laws on green-field construction, the property is situated in the middle of a forest and only came into being thanks to a lucky planning break and a design that sensitively integrates it into its woodland location. 'The family that owned the land had planning permission to build on it dating back to the 1940s,' says architect Christoph Cavigelli.'The local council initially objected but changed its mind when it saw our plans. We designed the house so that not one single tree was disturbed, even during construction.'

Every feature is sympathetic to the surroundings, from the 'green' roof that blends into the forest in summer to the strategically placed windows that enable the Hausers to take in the views, even when showering.

Access is through the garage, some five metres under the main house. A deliberately pared-back concrete staircase leads to the ground floor, where the light and views stop visitors dead in their tracks. With glass walls on three sides, the space draws the gaze outward and gives this house a sense of floating in the forest high among the treetops: from every viewpoint there are only trees, mountains and sky.

The ground floor is dedicated to the main bedroom with a free-standing bath that sits in front of an expanse of glass and overlooks the forest and valley beyond. Up one more flight of stairs are the main living areas: an open-plan living, dining and kitchen space and a detached guest room with bathroom.

Throughout the house, oak and exposed concrete predominate and the decoration is generally spare: a hide rug on the floor, the textures of a woollen sofa and one or two paintings on the walls. In such a cool climate, this minimalist style could be chilly but under-floor heating and the vast fireplace, which is one of Andre's favourite features in the house, ensure it feels snug. 'The house is very well insulated and warm even in the middle of winter and the fireplace really helps make it feel very cosy. It's a great place to relax or invite guests for a Raclette and a glass of wine,' he says.

The family primarily use the house as a weekend retreat and holiday home and it has also been designed with that in mind – there's even a separate sauna and wellness room on the ground floor that is perfect for unwinding after a long day on the ski slopes.

'This is a place where we get away from work, for rest and relaxation,' says Andre. 'When we wake up we have a glimpse of the mountains and the rising sun and we can see what kind of weather awaits us for the rest of the day. We like to spend the day skiing or hiking, then we enjoy the open fire, a delicious dinner and maybe an

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