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SWISS CHALET

# *Moving* MOUNTAINS

*This remarkable six-level home is a lesson in how to soften  
modern architecture with an intimate and welcoming interior*

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**VIEW OF VALLEY**

Built into the side of an Alpine mountain, the chalet has far-reaching views of the Engadine valley (opposite).

**SITTING ROOM**

Natural fabrics and curved wood pieces contrast with the chalet's horizontal lines,

while the long, low seating complements the architecture. Interior designer Michela Curetti used motifs seen in the plasterwork of local chalets on the coffee table. Interior design, Michela Curetti, [michelacuretti.com](http://michelacuretti.com). **Chinotto chairs** by Luigi Caccia Dominioni.





**P**erched high above the Engadine valley in the Swiss Alps, this chalet is a stunning example of modern architecture at one with its surroundings. Key to the project's success was ensuring that the building met with strict private housing regulations that permit only a small amount of above-ground construction. These restrictions ultimately dictated the entire character of the property, imbuing it with an extraordinary layout over the incline of the mountain. Built over six levels, the master bedroom, sitting room and study are above ground, while the kitchen, dining area, guest rooms, swimming pool and wellness centre are below.

#### **PROBLEM SOLVING**

For Rome-based architects, Lazzarini Pickering, respecting the local architectural style was as

important as adhering to the owners' unique vision. 'We managed to use the restrictive building regulations by turning them into architectural solutions, and the whole project is a creative and contemporary reinterpretation of local traditional architecture,' explains Carl Pickering.

The chalet has a substantial underground footprint and the architects worked hard to create a feeling of intimacy, with masonry vaults and skylights letting as much natural light through as possible. 'The idea was to design the spaces below ground level so that they would not feel like an underground bunker,' says Claudio Lazzarini.

Above ground, the typical Swiss chalet timber construction has been reinterpreted using glass instead of wood for the walls between some structural pillars. The extensive glazing gives the house a connective feel internally, as well as masses



**BALCONY**

The chalet has several balconies, all designed using transparent glass to make the most of the stunning views.

Architecture by Lazzarini Pickering, [lazzarinipickering.com](http://lazzarinipickering.com).

**SITTING ROOM**

Minimal decoration was needed in this double-height space as the steel beams provide visual interest.

Pleasure sofa, Flexform, [flexform.it](http://flexform.it); upholstered in Hodsoll McKenzie fabric.





#### DINING AREA

This informal dining space is located underground. Sheets of glass separate the rooms in the subterranean level to help maximise light.

Zinc-coated Sorgues dining table, £329, Maisons du Monde, [maisonsdumonde.com](http://maisonsdumonde.com). Ghost 23 chairs by Paola Navone at Gervasoni, [gervasoni1882.it](http://gervasoni1882.it).

#### KITCHEN

The sole embellishment in this sleek space is the Italian artisan hand-painted concrete tiles. These, together with the natural warmth of the wood cabinets, soften the rigidity of the scheme.

Similar tiles, from £89.70sq m, Fired Earth.







of exposure to the winter wonderland found in this beautiful area on the southern side of the Swiss Alps. 'When you live in a place like this with so many incredible views, you risk becoming immune to them,' says Carl, 'so framing a specific part of a view makes it special and avoids this happening.' An overhanging roof along the triple-glazed glass walls protects the living areas from intense sunlight during the summer, but at the same time allows for the maximum amount of light to enter the chalet during the winter months.

#### **OUTSIDE THE BOX**

Michela Curetti, who had worked with the owners on three previous properties over the course of 15 years, was enlisted to provide the interior design. 'I wanted to soften the rigours of the contemporary lines with fabric – tartans, wool and patterns,' she

explains. 'The aim was to create a welcoming feeling of warmth and comfort. For me, a Swiss chalet in the Alps should be a cosy and traditional environment to share with friends and family.'

'The architectural materials are what you would normally find in the mountains, yet less rustic,' Michela elaborates. 'The environment, the box, was already created by the architects. My idea was to make the rigid, hard lines softer, more liveable with and cosy. The materials and colours for the interior scheme were chosen to have a local imprint that was personal to the location.'

Much of the furniture was designed by Michela herself, using local wood and craftsmen. The chalet combines elements that are both natural and intimate: above ground the sense is of living within the forest, while the underground space, with its pool and relaxation areas, provides snug intimacy.



**MASTER BEDROOM**

The carved motif seen in the woodwork is a traditional design typical of the area and defines the sleeping area.

Bed designed by Michela Curetti, [michelacuretti.com](http://michelacuretti.com);

upholstered in Fyfield Plaid Woodland by Ralph Lauren, £116m, [Designers Guild, designersguild.com](http://DesignersGuild.com).

**SITTING ROOM**

A variety of intimate seating areas, including this one by the fire, were created to zone this large, open-plan space.

Fly SC1 lounge chairs by Space Copenhagen, from £1,835 each, [andtradition.com](http://andtradition.com);

upholstered in Caledonia Broom Juniper, £84.50m, [Kirkby Design, kirkbydesign.com](http://KirkbyDesign.com).











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**Picture windows throughout  
the chalet give glimpses of the  
beautiful scenery outside”**

**STAIRCASE**

Michela designed the steel and wood screen around the staircase, which stretches over five floors. ‘The wood pieces are flexible and they give this architectural feature a lovely sense of mobility,’ says Michela.

**BATHROOM**

Engadine sgraffito created by local artisans embellishes all the bathrooms. Typically used on the exterior of houses, Michela describes the technique as ‘a sort of bas-relief obtained from the incision of the plaster with a metal tip’.

**Washstand** designed by Michela Curetti, [michelacuretti.com](http://michelacuretti.com), with base made from local wood and basin created using local stone. **Taps**, Zizzeri, [zizzeristore.com](http://zizzeristore.com).





**GUEST BATHROOM**

This is the perfect place for a long soak after a day on the slopes, the simple fittings allow the wood construction of the chalet to be the focus. **Stone One freestanding bath**, £7,680, CP Hart, [cphart.co.uk](http://cphart.co.uk). **Mirror and washstand** designed by Michela Curetti, [michelacuretti.com](http://michelacuretti.com).