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Discovering Design on the Snowy Region

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For Europeans, wintertime is the holiday season where they enjoy winter activities in the Alps region such as skiing, snowshoeing and many others. With a total span of around 1,200 kilometres, this region stretches across eight Alpine countries; France, Switzerland, Monaco, Italy, Lichtenstein, Austria, Germany, and Slovenia. The European civilisation has been living in this area and with time, it has developed into a popular leisure destination in the wintertime. Indonesia Design had a chance to experience Val d'Isere in France and Lech in Austria and discovered an interesting design aspect in this snowy region.



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In this occasion, we discovered some great luxury chalets and resorts as well as the interesting design aspect of this region.

Val d'isère: The Legendary White World
Located in the heart of Savoie in France 1850m above the sea, the civilisation in Val d'Isere has existed since the Roman times with traces of Celtic tribes found in the area. The town received parish rights in 1637 and was the feudal territory of the House of Savoy during the 11th to 14th centuries. The town became a popular wintertime destination for skiing in particular ever since the 1930's, when a drag lift was built on the slopes of the Solaise that was followed by an aerial tramway (cable car). This high-quality cable car can reach the top in just six minutes and, with 24-place carriages, is one of the largest and most efficient in the world.

With its superb quality of snow-sure slopes, it is no surprise that Val d'Isere has



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One of the known design aspects from this region is the chalet architecture that has become a part of the typical design style of a building or house. Its traditional design is made of wood, with a heavy, gently sloping roof and wide, well-supported eaves set at right angles to the front of the house. The architecture term came from Switzerland where it was originally referred to as the hut of a herder. The chalet is

often embedded in the ground for the sake of temperature buffering.

With the rise of the Alpine region as a winter holiday destination, the term "chalet" transformed holiday homes, incorporating the element of modern contemporary and luxury. In many ski resorts, chalets play an important role in increasing the level of sophistication to the destination.

hosted the FIS (Federation Internationale de Ski) Alpine Ski World Cup for men and women as well as the 1992 Albertville Olympic Winter Games several times. This sophisticated winter town was built around a fine 17th-century church and a handful of stone farmhouses. However, the development of great hotels and luxury chalets in this area did not start until Autumn 2017, where the town embarked on an ambitious US\$ 200 million building



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project to redevelop the centre of the resort which will take at least five years to complete. This includes two new hotels and a new piste with an underground moving walkway linking the centre of town with the lifts.

During our stay there, we decided to try Chalet Skadi by Village Montana that was established in 2016. This luxury modern chalet has taken an apartment concept in all of its 36 rooms offering a selection of two bedrooms (60sqm) to five bedrooms that can fit up to 10 people in a 160sqm duplex with a fireplace. All the rooms are equipped with a little kitchen, dining area and a living room with a terrace that serves a magnificent scenic vista of the beautiful mountain view.

This contemporary chalet is housed in a four-story building and is named after the Scandinavian goddess of ski and mountains. This inspiration is translated through the domination of wood elements in combination with sombre mountain stones in beige and charcoal grey nuance. The element of luxury is done subtly though it is quite apparent. At the spa area lies the heated indoor swimming pool that is adorned with the presence of chandeliers. This area is also complete with a hammam, sauna, steam baths as well as facial and body treatments by Cinq Mondes.

As a ski resort, Chalet Skadi by Village Montana also offers a ski school, a ski



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storage room and ski equipment for ski lovers. It is also a walking distance to the city centre as well as to the ski area.

If you are not a ski enthusiast, then you can enjoy various great restaurants and apres midi places around town. You can discover a lot of the traditional chalet architecture around the old town as well as some historical buildings such as the church. With all its beauty and uniqueness, Val d'Isere has lived up to its reputation as the legendary white world.

Lech: A Sophisticated White Haven

To visit this mountain village in the Austrian state of Vorarlberg is almost like arriving in the living picture-perfect winter postcard. Surrounded by the Lechquellen Mountains that stretch within the Northern Limestone Alps of the Eastern Alps, Lech beautifully lies on the valley between these mountains together with other neighbouring villages of Zurs, Zug, Oberlech and Stubenbach.

The village that is located 1,450m above the sea was founded in the 14th Century



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by Walser migrants from the canton of Wallis in Switzerland. Originally known as Tannberg, this village subsequently transformed into Lech on the 19th Century. In the last decades, the small town Lech has evolved into a flourishing municipality and has become one of the most sought-after winter tourism destinations.

Lech's popularity for skiing has made it into one of the world's ski destinations and the home of a number of world and Olympic ski champions. The skiing scene in Lech is well connected via mechanical lifts and groomed pistes with the neighbouring villages of Zurs, St. Christoph, St. Anton, Stuben, Warth and Schrocken. These new lifts created the largest connected ski area in Austria and one of the largest in Europe.

- 01 The beautiful natural mountain view of the Val d'Isere region in wintertime
- 02 Interesting architectural scene from Val d'Isere city centre
- 03 The ski area featuring the ski jump line on the background
- 04 Another city centre view of Val d'Isere where the buildings are dominated by wood and stone
- 05 The warm ambience inside one of the room of Chalet Skadi
- 06 Luxurious heated pool area inside the chalet
- 07 The facade of Chalet Skadi that is dominated by wood
- 08 The aerial view of Lech
- 09 Inside James Turrell's Skyspace
- 10 Church of St Nicholas that was built in 1390



Besides its popularity as one of the ski destinations in Europe, Lech is also known for some iconic landmarks that spanned from the Gothic era to the present time. These icons that have become a cultural interest include the Church of St Nicholas, which was built in 1390 and features a fantastic rococo interior dating from 1791. This gothic style church is known for its 33-metre-high tower with its distinctive onion-shaped dome and bronze bells from the beginning of the 16th Century.

The historic Huber House, which is now a museum, was built in 1590 as the residence of the Huber family and it is a great example of typical traditional Walser architecture predominantly made of wood. In this museum, we can discover the village history as well as the rural way of living. It is currently the oldest dated building with an original six-cell ground plan organisation on the Tannberg.

On the contemporary side, Lech is also the town where you can find one of the

iconic art installations by James Turrell called Skyspace Lech. Located at Tannegg/Oberlech in Vorarberg, this art installation is an enclosed space which opens to the sky through a large elliptical hole in the dome-shaped ceiling. It is a walk-in art installation that is large enough for about 15 people. The whole 45-minute experience is accompanied by a colour-changing light at the walls while we are gazing the Biberkopf summit from the open elliptical hole on the dome.



As a destination, Lech is run by families who have been the original inhabitants. Collaboratively, they bring the luxury level into this winter destination through a series of wonderful resorts as well as points of interest. At Hotel Gotthard Lech for example, we met with Clemens Walch who introduced us to his artisan beer brewery called Omes made on the underground of the hotel. The name Omes was inspired by one of the mountain peaks called Omeshorn; natural, pure and full of character in flavours. This well-designed artisan brewery produces four types of beer including Arlbeer, Pale Ale, Weizen, and Helles.

Out of the great resort collection that can be found in this town, the five-star historical Hotel Gasthof Post Lech came to our attention. A member of the Relais

& Chateaux Hotel, this beautiful heritage hotel was originally built as a Post Inn dating back to around 1650. The faith of this place changed when it was bought by the Moosbrugger family in 1937 and changed it into the hotel that we know now. With all its 48 all-suite rooms, The Post is one of the most iconic hotels in this area. The facade is adorned with an olden style mural and the hotel interior brings that charming mountain chalet feels with many great antique bric-a-brac pieces.

The guest rooms are divided between original rooms featuring ornate ceiling plasterwork and gilt accent. Each suite has its own combined living room and dining room with a fireplace, a bedroom featuring a four-poster bed and a spacious bathroom. The modern side of the room embraces a warm red or green colour

scheme with a high-beamed ceiling, giving a juxtaposition between the classic and contemporary. Like in the original rooms, the room in the modern section is spacious has a similar layout with a great double-sided fireplace feature.

Last 2017, the Moosbrugger family decided to give a generous panoramic window up the restaurant's entire exterior. They worked together with architect Christian Prasser, who has been responsible for the interior design of Relais & Chateaux Hotel since 2010. As a result, the restaurant is now flooded with beautiful natural lighting during the day as well as a direct view of the great mountains thanks to the floor to ceiling windows.

Another great highlight of this hotel is none other than the Post wellness area featuring not only a state-of-the-art gym, sauna and steam bath area but also a stunning heated outdoor panoramic pool overlooking the Omeshorn. This stunning contemporary-designed wellness area is located adjacent to the hotel on a timber structure, bringing all the wellness activities from spa to indoor pool along with a relaxation lounge and massage treatment rooms together. It is without a doubt that Hotel Gasthof Post Lech is on a level of its own.

Lech in Austria is simply one of the most sophisticated and perfect white haven destinations, perfect for anyone to have a truly memorable winter holiday. ¹⁰

- 11 The founder of Omes artisan brewery Clemens Walch
- 12 The four variants of Omes brewery from Lech region
- 13 Outlook of the historical Hotel Gasthof Post Lech
- 14 The interior inside Kaiser Suite, one of the signature suites at Hotel Gasthof Post Lech
- 15 A stunning outdoor pool at the hotel that is surrounded by the mountain view