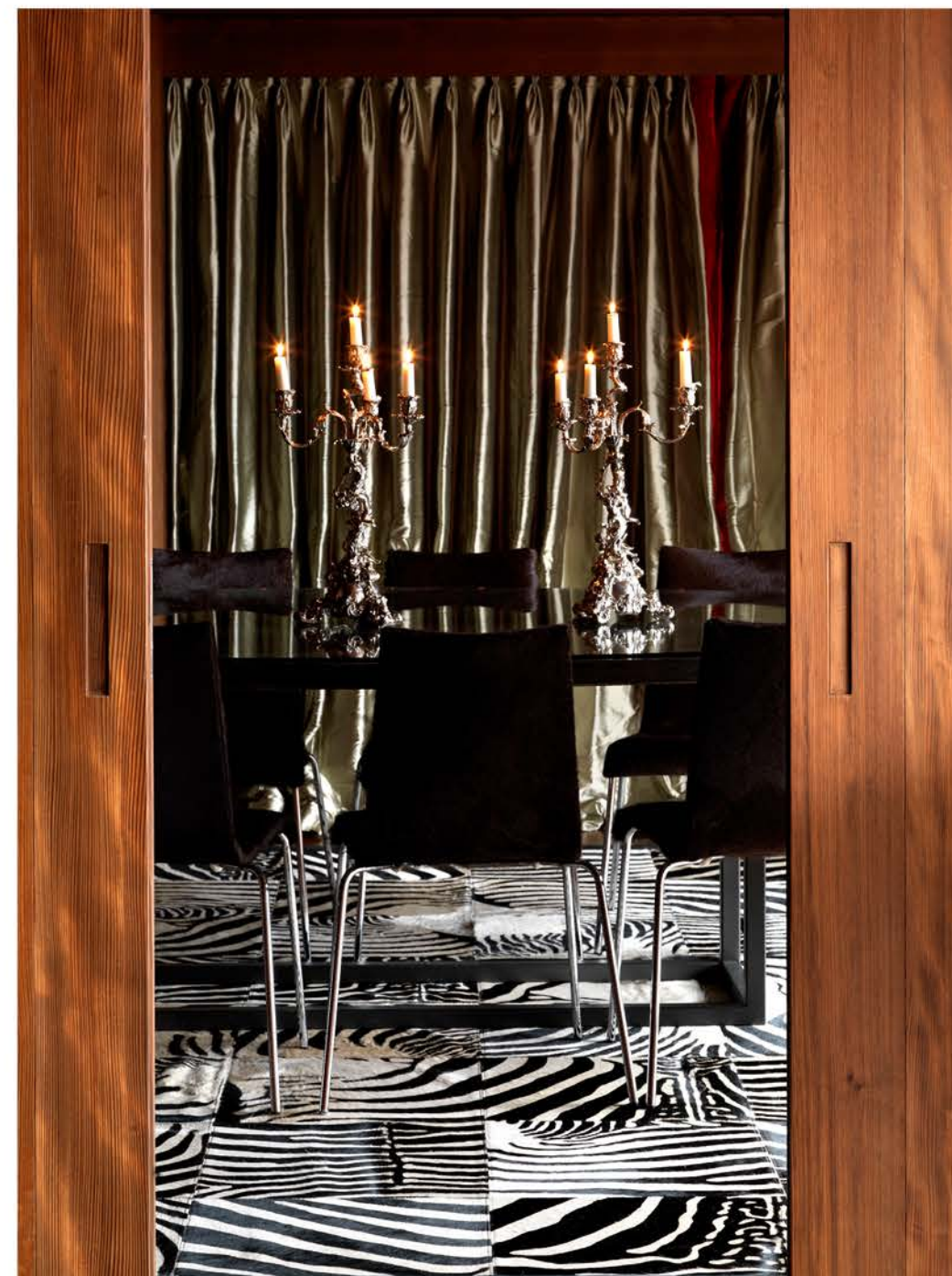


**SIMONE SPECIALE LUCHINAT**  
FORMED S&L ASSOCIATES IN 2002.

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# GSTAAD VILLA

DESIGN BY SIMONE SPECIALE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MASSIMO LISTRI



Something is changing in mountain architecture. Once upon a time, every chalet was uniform, made to a particular style, and followed an established tradition in design. Nowadays, the growing market in interior design and private chalets has opened the door to new decorative inspiration, with stunning results.

This private chalet in Gstaad, located in the Swiss Alps, which was designed by Simone Speciale Luchinat, is a prime example of this change in tradition. As Luchinat says: "The owner, a high society lady, already lived in an ancient and highly decorative chalet. Therefore, she wanted a modern one, detached from the typical local characteristics."



If someone asked you to describe typical chalet style, chances are you would come up with words like “twee” or “(delightfully) old-fashioned”, so to hear someone describe a chalet as modern is certainly out of the ordinary.

But to see the Gstaad chalet is to witness a melding of contemporary design and traditional chalet architecture.

Luchinat worked by removing unnecessary features from the design, really paring it back to basics before building up the features by playing

with materials and details, preferring subtle allusions through colours typical of the scenic mountains outside.

Though the chalet is modern in design, Luchinat has given a nod to the traditional chalet culture by using wood throughout the design, with a few twists to keep the feel contemporary.





Whereas generally darker wood is used on the exterior and lighter within, Speciale has reversed this, using dark wood on the interior where it is complimented by large windows to flood the room with the crisp mountain light.

The design of the building itself was conceived by architect Chaletbau Matti, who wanted to create a chalet of unexpected elegance: "The villa is spread over four floors, and the leitmotif of the different spaces is one of basic elegance, unexpected in the mountains; a choice that creates a feeling of surprise."





Luchinat has continued this feeling of the unexpected by the abundance of shape and colour in the interior design. In the context of chalets, where excess decoration is the norm, this choice creates an unusual precedence, one that is looking likely to become increasingly popular in time. "Once, the traditional decorations and majolica fireplaces were an obligation rather than a choice," comments

Luchinat. "Now we are moving towards the modern." One example are the stairs, which span the whole four floors: "They are made of glass and steel, and look like a sculpture suspended in space," says Luchinat. "Within the steel ribs of the structure, there are LEDs that illuminate the glass cutting."

These are the design features that truly make the difference, that make this mountain home wonderfully unconventional. However, the minimalist chalet surprises do not stop there; as well as a cinema room and a small basement gym, less obvious changes have been made to enhance the theme of contrasts.

On the top floor, contrary to the use of dark wood in the rest of the house, wood panelling and carpets are all in lighter tones, ranging from white to dove-grey, proposing a further reinterpretation of a brand new Alpine style - succeeding to impress without falling back on the easy and unchallenging charms of tradition.