

# MONOCLE

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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.

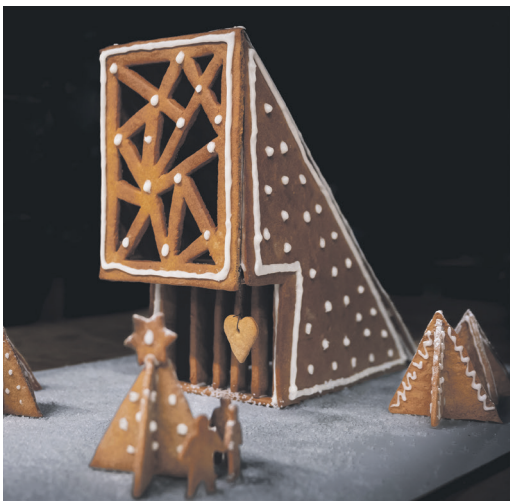
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## Sweet treats

Snøhetta 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



❄️  
Winter  
2023 edition  
Monocle's Alpine  
newspaper



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.

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DESIGN

Bright ideas



1 (1) LEDs can give off a warm glow too (2) The PSLab library (3) PSLab's Mario Weck and Valeria Hoffmann (4) Charles O Job (5) Working on a prototype (6) The Sketch armchair

LIGHTING / BERLIN

The exterior of PSLab's new Berlin outpost might appear austere but it houses a bespoke studio that is rethinking lighting design and leaving guests with a warm, fuzzy glow.

By Stella Roos  
Photography Ériver Hijano

The newest outpost of Lebanese lighting brand PSLab could almost be mistaken for an empty shopfront. On a leafy street in west Berlin, a pair of large windows reveal a bare room with untinted plaster walls. When the door is slid shut and the space darkened by mechanical shutters, the rationale becomes clear: what is being sold is not a physical object but a feeling created through the distribution of light. Arranged onto a steel grid in the ceiling and controlled via a display on the wall, PSLab's luminaires bring the room to life in golden-hued beams. The showcase suggests that the future will not be bright, in the literal sense; it will be low-lit, warm and extremely flattering. "People think of light as an object," says Mario Weck, managing partner of PSLab in Germany. "It's the biggest mistake in the world."

The Beirut-based company is odd in that it has no readymade product offering but instead works in tandem with architects and interior designers to create bespoke lighting systems. The degree of customisation is possible because all components, including shades and fixtures, are manufactured in the company's factory in north Lebanon. PSLab's real strength is in a category that Weck calls "invisible light": where the point is not the

fixture but the illumination itself. The company makes more than 30 different kinds of light sources in-house: indirect and direct, accent and diffused, warm and cold, and everything in between.

The Berlin outpost is the most scaled-back of PSLab's studios (don't call them "showrooms"), which can also be found in Beirut, Stuttgart, London, Antwerp, Bologna and Dubai, with Paris and Amsterdam under construction. Weck, who teamed up with PSLab's founder, Dimitri Saddi, to launch the brand's German business in 2009, had searched for a space for more than a year until he saw the potential in a former Charlottenburg nail salon. Working with Antwerp-based architects B-bis, the renovation was minimalist but thorough, inserting windows and punching through the floor to create a more intimate conversation pit on the lower level. A library has the company's components displayed on wall racks and a central table where staff are hard at work on design concepts.

PSLab taps into the gap created by the worldwide phase-out of incandescent bulbs and the subpar quality of their energy-efficient replacements. Most LEDs on the market produce a garish white light and screw into existing E27 sockets. "It's like putting a smartphone in a case with a rotary dial," says Weck. It has been left to the likes of PSLab to innovate. The company's light sources are called "engines" (after all, LEDs aren't bulbs) and boast minimal glare, so they now rival the warm glow of halogen bulbs or candlelight. The product line develops with each bespoke project. "The advantage of thinking of it as a growing library, not a fixed offering, is you can always tweak the detail," says Weck.

A visit to PSLab's studio provides reassurance that the era of bad LED lighting will soon draw to a close. But it is also a reminder that the new technology requires a little more thought, time and investment to get right. "Before, you had a cable hanging from the ceiling, a light bulb and a dimmer, and you were done," says Weck. "Now you need a system." We know who to call.



**Creating cosy lighting at home**  
When it comes to lamps, you can never have too many. Furnishing a room with a variety of floor, table and ceiling lamps makes it easier to adjust the light, from energising to atmospheric, over the course of the day. When shopping for bulbs (or, in the case of PSLab, "engines") pay attention not only to the wattage but also to the colour temperature and glare. Unfortunately, the range of consumer LEDs on the market still leaves plenty to be desired. Hence Mario Weck's rather blunt advice for a quick fix: "Buy a good candle."



INSIDE JOB'S STUDIO WORK:  
FROM ANGOLA TO ZÜRICH

DESIGN / ZÜRICH

With a list of new projects spanning three continents, Charles O Job has learned to keep his designs simple and his production teams close to home.

By Grace Charlton  
Photography Joel Humm



Charles O Job is a Lagos-born, Zürich-based architect and product designer. His portfolio is impressive, including the utilitarian Flip Desk, created with Dutch design brand Vij5, and a playful plywood armchair, Sketch, which is part of the permanent collection at the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany. When he isn't designing, Job also lectures in architecture and design theory at the Bern University of Applied Sciences.

**What are you currently working on?**  
I don't actually have clients; I normally create items and sell the ideas to producers. I'm currently working on three such projects. The first is seating for a museum in New York. The second is a family of products for a producer in Bangalore, which will hopefully come out in a few years. And I'm also working on a project in Angola, where I will design products to be made and sold in Africa.

**What design-world trends are you noticing and appreciating?**  
When I was a child in Lagos, we made our own toys from items that we found in the streets, like *objets trouvés*. We took tin cans and transformed them. These days it's called recycling or upcycling, and it's everywhere. Sustainability has become a trend but we grew up doing that.

**How does this apply to your work?**  
What I do now is produce products minimally; I call it resourcefulness. For example, the idea for Sketch was to see how I could make the simplest product. When you make bent-plywood chairs, the most expensive part of production is the mould, so I conceived a way to make a bent-plywood chair using one mould for all the components. It means that the seat is the same shape as the armrests, which is the same shape as the backrest. Then, I cut the pieces to make them fit together like a puzzle.

**How does Zürich inspire you?**  
Nigeria and Switzerland are very different. But when I started designing in Zürich, I found that there was a similarity, in that people still make products here. If you're a designer and you're looking for somebody to make your chair, there are many workshops to choose from. It's actually closer to what I grew up with in Lagos. I have friends in London who come to Switzerland because there's know-how here, people value details and everything's fantastically made. They pay craftspeople living wages too – and while it costs more than elsewhere in Europe, you get value for your money.