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From country house grandeur to modern simplicity in the Alps





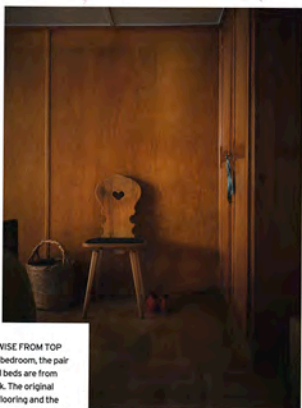
# No half MEASURES

This seventeenth-century chalet in the Swiss Alps has been imaginatively modernised by architect Jonathan Tuckey, who has imbued it with comfort and character

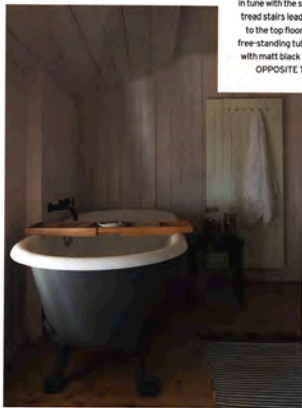
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OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The snow-clad chalet, which is a halbhäus (half house). Jonathan merged the second floor and attic to create a double-height space at one side of the house with a study on the mezzanine. Timber panels line the open-plan living area (opposite and this page), and a wood-burning stove from Austroflam adds warmth. A stained-larch kitchen counter has open shelves for storage



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT In the first-floor bedroom, the pair of Fifties rosewood beds are from Modernistiks.co.uk. The original plywood walls and flooring and the wooden furnishings in the bedroom are in tune with the subtle decoration. Open-tread stairs lead from the games room to the top floor. The bathroom has a free-standing tub from Aston Matthews with matt black taps from Dornbracht. OPPOSITE The main bedroom



**T**he Halbhäus is a distinctive presence in the old quarter of Andermatt. At some point in the Sixties, a fire damaged the Siamese twin that stood next door and it was demolished leaving a half house, or a *halbhäus*, with its curious, angular roofline. Dating back to the seventeenth century and coated in larch shingles, it is a house of great charm, individuality and character and was just the sort of thing to catch the eye of architectural designer Jonathan Tuckey, who has been commuting between London and the Swiss village for the last six years.

'We found this house through word of mouth,' says Jonathan. 'Our former landlady, who also runs the local newsagents, knew that the house was coming up for sale. It is a very small community and there are still a lot of interesting buildings awaiting transformation, because the village didn't have a boom in tourism in the Eighties and Nineties like other parts of the Alps.'

Jonathan, along with his wife Annabel, a psychologist, and their two daughters, first came here on a skiing holiday back in 2008. A chance meeting eventually led to a commission to radically rebuild a holiday home on the outskirts of Andermatt, followed by a number of other commissions for performance spaces and residences. Jonathan established a small office in the village – a satellite of his practice's London base – and then the whole family moved to Switzerland for two years.

'The children, Tasmira and Thea, went to the village school and they enjoyed it enormously,' Jonathan says. 'It was a significant cultural shock, not least because they didn't speak German and this is a German-speaking part of Switzerland.'

The house is arranged over four levels, with a timber-frame structure sitting on a stone base, which is normally encased in snow during the winter. Ladder-like wooden stairways connect the different levels of the house but without landings and corridors, so that each living space flows directly into the next.

'It's a vernacular hybrid of stone and wood and hadn't really been modernised for 60 years,' says Jonathan. 'It had been looked after but hadn't been updated, so there was one light bulb per room, one plug socket per room and one bathroom the size of a dining table.'

The greatest challenge lay in the low ceiling heights, which were 1.9 metres high at best. Jonathan's solution was to remodel the top two floors by

carving out a double-height space to one side of the house, creating an open living area holding a sitting room and kitchen with a dining table. A mezzanine level holds one of three bedrooms plus a small study. At the same time, Jonathan was able to super-insulate the house from within and add a wood-burning stove for warmth and as a focal point for the sitting room.

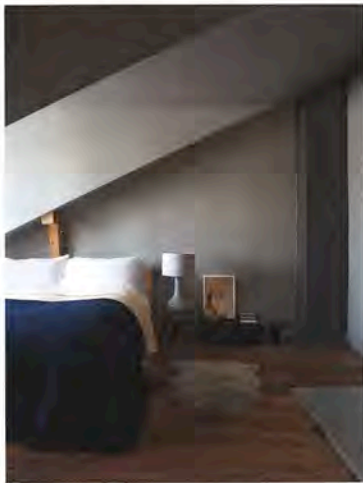
'We put this super-insulated hat on top of the house so we could retain all the heat,' says Jonathan. 'Everything within that hat is new and then we designed other things to complement the spirit of the original house.' That includes the bespoke kitchen and fitted seating around the wood-burning stove. The original flooring was preserved and restored throughout and the services modernised to create a home that combines twenty-first-century comforts with seventeenth-century character. The junctions between old and new are kept purposefully visible, as in the kitchen and dining area, where the original timber wall panelling stops at head height and a pristine layer of painted plaster begins.

Jonathan and his family were offered the pick of the previous owner's furniture, which had been stored up in the old attic. They were able to find a dining table and chairs, blanket boxes and other Swiss pieces rich in patina, which add another layer of interest.

'The approach we took to the furniture was rather like our approach to the house as a whole,' says Jonathan. 'We really liked a lot of the things that were in the house already and decided to hang on to them. But then there were other elements that we designed specially, such as the beds which are now really close to the ground and more informal.'

The house is now used by the family as a second home both in winter and summer, and rented out for part of the year. It also serves as a regular base for Jonathan during his working visits to Andermatt, as he has a number of new projects in the region underway. 'It's a place that is waiting for things to happen,' he says. 'The skiing, walking and hiking are as good as anywhere in the Alps, but you are not surrounded by thousands of other people. It's still pretty quiet and that's the great attraction' □

Jonathan Tuckey Design: 020-8960 1909; [www.jonhantuckey.com](http://www.jonhantuckey.com)  
To rent the Halbhäus, visit [www.andermtthal.ch/en](http://www.andermtthal.ch/en)



The junctions between old and new are kept visible; this is a home that combines twenty-first-century comforts with seventeenth-century character