

THE WORLD'S LEADING HOMES MAGAZINE

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# ELLE DECORATION

## ESCAPE

*Modern mountain hideaways  
and must-see architectural icons  
from Paris to Pondicherry*

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DETOX**  
*57 imaginative  
ways to sort and  
store your stuff*

**STROKE  
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*How Farrow & Ball  
coloured our world*

**PLUS:** *Sandi Toksvig dodges a wardrobe malfunction, Tord Boontje conjures up a magical universe and eccentric rugs stage a comeback*



# *COLD COMFORT CABIN*

*Drawn by the region's majestic Alpine scenery,  
one entrepreneurial couple set up home in this  
contemporary chalet in a small Swiss hamlet*

*Words* **TESSA PEARSON**

*Photography* **MARTIN GUGGISBERG/LIVING INSIDE**

*Production* **BERGDORF AG**





**S**wiss fashion designer **Ruth Kramer** and former ad-agency owner Thomas Schacht moved from Denmark to the hamlet of Leis in 2010 to start a new life in the Swiss Alps. 'We fell in love with the place after visiting the mountain on a motorcycle holiday. It was day two of the trip. It rained on day one,' says Ruth.

Within a year of the move, the couple had set up a joint business – contemporary bed-and-breakfast Brücke 49 (Bridge 49) in the municipality of Vals – and Ruth had launched her own fashion-lifestyle store, Moshi Moshi Mind, in the same resort. The pair initially rented a home that was owned and designed by architect Peter Zumthor, but moved in to this purpose-built property on a plot of land in 2012. Due to the strict planning laws of the region, the new-build is constructed in a wooden-cabin style that complements both the few contemporary buildings that are scattered on the slopes and the region's architecture. However, the construction is far from traditional. Architect Simona Pribeagu Schmid has created a Modernist chalet in spruce, perched on a hammered concrete base.

The natural beauty of this unspoilt location has influenced the couple's choices for their home's 280-square-metre interior. A pared-back scheme ensures that the dramatic views, which are visible through floor-to-ceiling picture windows at the front and the back of the house, are the main attraction. The simple colour palette could be austere, but an abundance of wood and sheepskin brings warmth



'Flag Halyard' chair by Hans J Wegner

and texture to the space. Elsewhere, a selection of modern 'hero' designs lend the home an air of understated elegance. Ruth's treasured 'Flag Halyard' chair by Hans J Wegner sits beside open shelving, making a cosy reading spot, while Verner Panton's 'VP Globe' pendant light hangs above the large dining table.

A long living area slices through the centre of the home's top floor. To one side of this open-plan space is a snug and a kitchen; to the other, a timber staircase leads down to the bedrooms and the office. On the upper level, the look is light and spacious, but downstairs this aesthetic is reversed; decorated in graphic shades of grey, the rooms are dark and cocooning.

With its open fire and incredible views across the valley, Ruth's favourite spot is the living area. 'The colours remind me of the work of Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi,' she says. 'It has an air of quiet that draws you in. Every time I pass through, I have to resist the urge to sit down and just do nothing for a while.'

The epitome of low-key luxury, this house offers Thomas and Ruth a peaceful retreat from a busy but satisfying work schedule. Ruth makes regular trips back to Denmark for freelance projects, but she's always relieved to return to this mountain abode, which she fondly describes as *hyggeligt*. It's a Danish term that has no direct translation in English, but is best understood as a fusion of comfort, cosiness and camaraderie.

[brucke49.ch](http://brucke49.ch); [simona-pribeagu.ch](http://simona-pribeagu.ch)



Swiss architect Simona Pribeagu Schmid designed this open-plan living space with a central dining area located between the modern kitchen and the entrance hall