

PLAYING WITH NATURE



The three company owners - Bernd, Ruth and Philipp - of design studio Bernd Gruber Kitzbühel constantly strive to go further where others stop. Imagicasa takes you to a project called 'Villa Luxembourg'. It took one and a half years to turn the house into a gem. But it was worth the wait.



Bernd Gruber runs the interior design company together with his wife Ruth and creative director Philipp Hoflehner. With the new production facilities in Stuhlfelden, Austria, and the workshop and exhibition in Aurach near Kitzbühel, both craftsmanship and design remain in the region. Gruber's vision is as follows: individual concepts whose beauty touches and enriches people. This was no different for the following project.

What began with a cosy lounge for the large new villa in Luxembourg became a holistic design concept. Big things often start small - or at least a bit smaller. The Kitzbühel-based interior design firm Bernd Gruber had a similar experience when a couple commissioned the creation of a meeting room in the basement of their planned villa in Luxembourg. It was not long before it became clear that the entire interior design concept of the villa would have to be worked out together - and with 1,000 square metres of living space, this was no longer a small task. The spacious residence is spread over three floors: while the basement houses a wine cellar filled with pride of place, the ground floor houses the kitchen, living and dining areas, a bar and a separate fitness and wellness area. On the upper floor, there are four bedrooms with adjoining bathrooms and dressing rooms, as well as an office. From the outset, it was particularly important to the owners that, despite the size and modernity of the interior, a cosy and safe atmosphere should prevail all around.



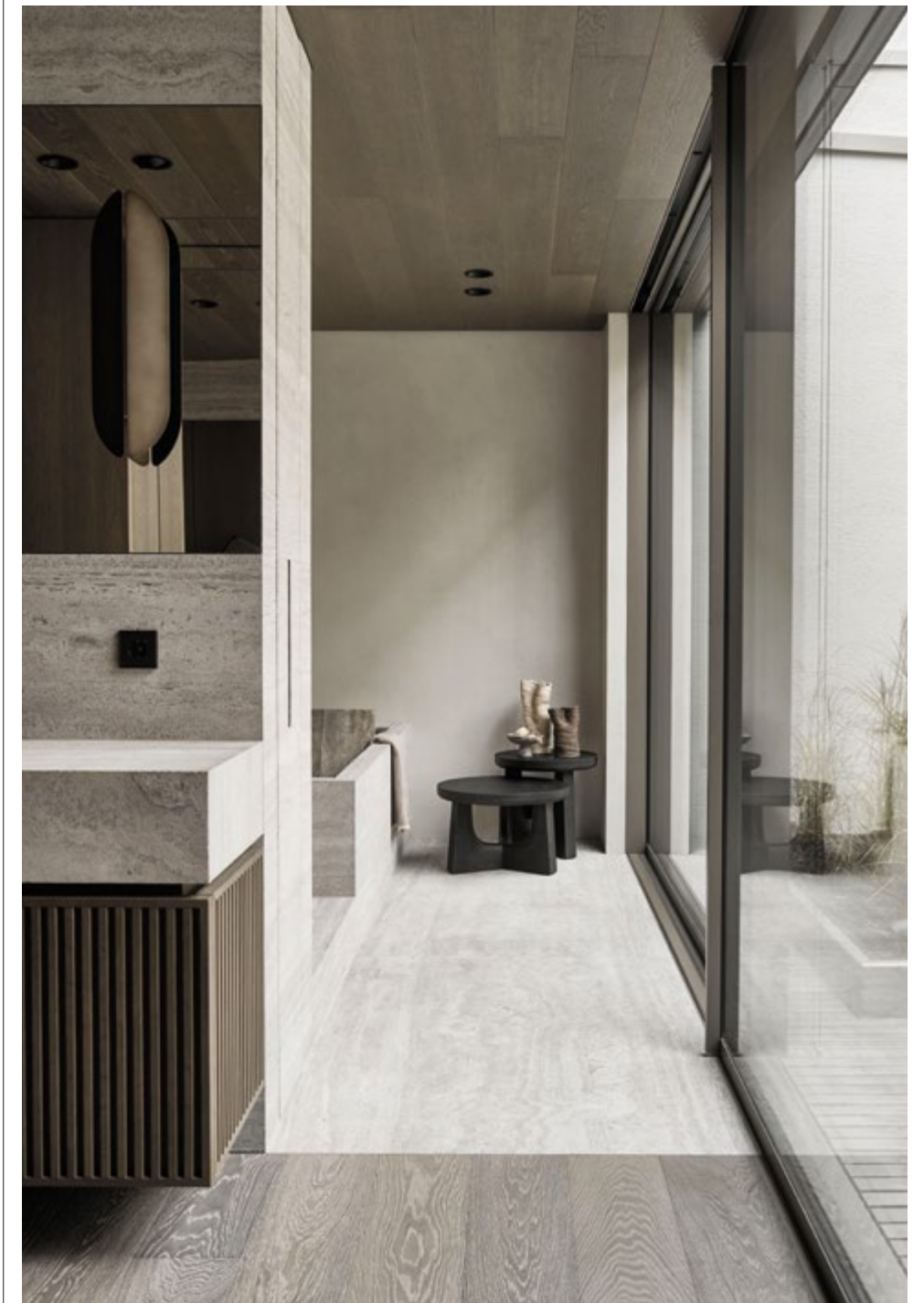


The project stands out because the design team worked with the four seasons. Warm and cosy in autumn and winter, and minimalist in spring and summer. Using a sixth sense for combining materials, the interior designer has combined modernity and security under one roof in this spacious newly built villa. When you enter the impressive entrance hall, you immediately feel the 'art de vivre'. You can clearly see that endless hours of meticulous craftsmanship have been put into it. For example, each wooden table was made in their own factory. The fine metal quality that frames the smooth kitchen fronts is a special style element. Despite the characteristic wood panelling, the overall impression is characterised by restraint and attention to the essentials. The many glass surfaces and open spaces, combined with the cosy furnishings, make this house a feel-good cosmos that lives in harmony with the seasons. The main elements are oak and travertine, which immediately results in cosiness. In order to fulfil the feel-good wish, the Bernd Gruber designers allowed themselves to be guided by the immediate surroundings - all year round. Under the guiding principle of the four seasons, an overall concept was therefore developed that used fewer, but perfectly matched materials. Thus, the materials became the leitmotiv in this project, while the rest of the decor alternates between different shades of taupe. The designers also chose natural materials such as wood or natural stone for the kitchen, the washbasins in the bathrooms or for the custom-made tables, in order to make the environment even more present in the house. A careful selection of art, furniture and lighting objects, such as the Pacha Lounge Chair by Gubi in the entrance area or the spherical pendant lamp 84 by Bocci, which dangles like clouds above the dining table, give the largely open rooms an individual touch that harmonises cosiness and modernity. The floor-to-ceiling windows contrast with dark wood panelled ceilings, creating the sense of security desired by the homeowners without being oppressive.

The wood-paneled staircase leads to the upper floor of the villa. Here, minimalist furnishings dominate the rooms, adding to the atmosphere of a cosy lounge. A wallpaper with a snow-covered mountain range

adorns the wall, and cosy bouclé armchairs invite you to take a seat in front of the fireplace. On the upper floor, in addition to the bedrooms and bathrooms, there is also a study with a bookcase. The spectacle of nature provides a wonderful panorama in the carefully furnished bedrooms. Gruber was also inspired by the colour of the fur of the owners' dog. This led to the taupe colour palette of the rooms. In addition to the various rooms, the project also comprises several relaxation zones, such as a wellness area, including a sauna and a whirlpool bath, and a fitness room. What's more, during the sum-

mer months, an embedded outdoor pool on the villa's terrace provides cooling. The large, well-stocked wine cellar, separated only by a glass wall, is the perfect icing on the cake. Thanks to the targeted use of selected materials and colours, Bernd Gruber's designers have succeeded in combining modernity and security under one roof.





This villa in Luxembourg stages the four seasons

Bernd Gruber was able to realise another impressive project, which is most probably due to his many years of experience. In 1992, he took over his father's existing joinery business and restructured it. To this day, the designer is one of the most exclusive interior designers in Austria. But how does he distinguish himself from the rest? "The high standards of the people who have been building their homes in Kitzbühel for many years have constantly raised the standards in the region. This has also meant that many building owners are now aware that without good interior design, no consistent design or quality is possible. Together with my team, we have managed to adapt our interi-

or design department to this demand. To this end, we have recruited architects and designers who have learned this trade from the ground up. Many of them have international experience and bring the corresponding knowledge and thinking," he says. Although every project is different, there is always a clear, recognisable thread in his designs. This is undoubtedly the result of Bernd Gruber's approach and creativity. It can be read as DNA and will usually be recognisable to the trained observer. Still, sometimes it remains difficult and a challenge to bring new thoughts into someone's concepts, he tells us: "Creativity is not always available on demand and therefore I see it as a challenge to take the time to be creative. Furthermore, I see the biggest problem in convincing the clients and especially the executing companies that new paths should be reconsidered and that ideas off the beaten track should not be critically examined as a matter of priority. Moreover, I believe that it is important to overcome new challenges and take new paths'. We are happy to conclude with these wise words and will keep an eye on him for undoubtedly more inspiring projects in the future. Whether in Los Angeles, Vienna, Berlin or Kitzbühel, the holistic approach - from the coordination of individual crafts to construction supervision and execution - as well as the uncompromising commitment to value and quality is reflected in every work by Bernd Gruber. This is thanks to his unique interplay of local materials and the latest developments in contemporary interior design. As well as his good sense of customer needs and strong planning skills. (Text: Elke Aerts)

Images courtesy of Bernd Gruber gallery, photography by Alexander van Bergep, styling by Brigitte Nix

The craft of a master painter



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Anyone who chooses lime and mineral paints and techniques such as plastering, liming and patination, will give their home a natural, lived-in look. The result of painting from the heart. "We make our own paints and work exclusively with brushes. That always results in more beauty, more nuance. We use natural pigments and minerals as much as possible. A traditional colour palette can never match that. For some clients we have even used earth from a neighbouring forest or sand from a nearby beach. Every home is unique."



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