A PLACE TO UNWIND

When you drive into **COURMAYEUR**, *you immediately sense that this is a place where nature sets the tone. The charming town, located* **AT THE FOOT OF MONT BLANC**, *exudes mountain culture, authenticity and refinement. Here, where the snow provides the perfect backdrop for the chalets and the air is clear and pure, Maison Osaïn has realised its latest project: House Montagna. A chalet that is not just a second home, but an oasis of tranquillity, simplicity and connection,* **RIGHT ON THE SKI SLOPE**.

The story of House Montagna does not begin with concrete, wood or plans, but with the mission of the duo behind Maison Osaïn: architect Thomas Maria Verschuren and designer Ann Butaye. Since its foundation in 2022, they have had a clear vision: to create houses that are more than just walls and roofs. Their projects are living spaces where nature, craftsmanship and care come together. Where authenticity prevails over trends, and where every detail exudes the love and attention that went into its creation. This project is not a standard new-build project, but a carefully renovated mountain chalet. 'The most important thing was that we wanted to work exclusively with local craftsmen,' Butaye tells us. 'We sourced the wood from a local carpenter. Beautifully refined, so that the grain remains visible and every plank tells a story.' That local craftsmanship can be seen in every detail. Old, authentic elements were preserved and integrated into the design, so that the soul of the house remains tangible. At the same time, it was given a contemporary upgrade with sleek concrete structures and a modern layout. The result? A perfect balance between tradition and modernity. When you step inside, you are embraced by warmth. Not the warmth of a thermostat that suddenly kicks in, but the deep, layered warmth of living wood, of spaces that embrace you. The combination of wood and concrete feels surprisingly natural: robust yet soft, powerful but not overwhelming.

What makes House Montagna truly unique is its location. The chalet is literally on the ski slope. Just swing open the door and you're standing in the snow with your skis on, surrounded by nothing but mountains, trees and sky. From the living room, you can enjoy a panorama that changes every hour of the day: morning light gently gliding over the slopes, skiers passing by, or a quiet evening when only the mountain wind can be heard.

The surrounding nature is so overwhelmingly beautiful. 'That's why we didn't really need any art in the interior. The view itself is the work of art. And honestly? It was sometimes a challenge. In high season, it wasn't always easy to get back and forth. And when the Mont Blanc tunnel was closed, we were stuck. But that also had its charm; it slowed us down and brought us closer to the rhythm of the mountains,' Ann Butaye says with a wink.

COMPACT BUT COMPLETE

With a living area of around 280 m², House Montagna is not a huge project, but that is precisely what makes it so special. Maison Osaïn proves that you don't need a gigantic scale to create a feeling of luxury and security. Every square metre has been cleverly utilised and feels well thought out. The layout follows a clear logic: compact bedrooms that radiate tranquillity and intimacy, an open living space where cooking,

eating and socialising take centre stage, and a spa-like bathroom where you can unwind after a day in the snow. The designers' touch is evident throughout: understated luxury, a refined colour palette, natural textures and carefully chosen objects that tell a story rather than being mere decoration. The kitchen is the heart of the chalet. A place where local materials and craftsmanship come together in a minimalist but warm design. Here, people cook, laugh and share, with the fire crackling in the background and the beautiful nature visible through the window.

'THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WAS THAT WE WANTED TO WORK EXCLUSIVELY WITH LOCAL CRAFTSMEN'

The design duo worked exclusively with local partners, carpenters and craftsmen. This was not a practical choice, but a conscious philosophy. 'We want our houses to be rooted in their surroundings. That's only possible if you work with local materials and people. You can feel it. The wood carries the scent of the forest just behind the mountain, the stone comes from the region itself,' we hear. This local anchoring also reinforces the sustainability of the project. Less transport, less pollution, and more respect for the place itself. It fits perfectly with the duo's mission to not just build houses, but healthy and meaningful living environments. House Montagna was designed first and foremost as a place of tranquillity. Everything in the chalet invites you to slow down. The soft carpets, the wooden ceilings, the crackling fireplace: it is a house that slows you down, that forces you to put down your phone and just be.

Every room overlooks nature. Whether it's the ski slope bustling with activity during the day or the mountains glowing in the blue light of dusk, the view is part of the architecture. Here, you feel connected to something bigger, something timeless.

MORE THAN JUST AN ARCHITECTURAL DUO

To fully understand House Montagna, you also need to understand the philosophy behind Maison Osaïn. When Thomas and Ann founded the firm in 2022, they did so out of a shared desire for meaningful living. After several personal turning points, they decided to radically opt for a way of working that revolves around authenticity, care and sustainability. Their approach is unique: they purchase properties with character, often outdated or forgotten, and renovate them completely in collaboration with local partners, artists and craftsmen. The result is then put back on the market as a complete project, fully finished and furnished. What you buy

is not a house, but a fully thought-out living experience. The name Maison Osaïn is telling. Osaïn refers to a deity from Yoruba culture who symbolises healing and the power of nature. You can feel that healing power in every project. These are houses that bring peace, restore balance and invite you to breathe more easily.

Their latest project, House Montagna, is a perfect embodiment of that DNA. The chalet exudes understated luxury, with a focus on quality rather than quantity. No loud colours or excessive decoration, but a carefully composed whole of natural materials, soft tones and tactile elements. The project shows how architecture, design, art and craftsmanship can be woven together into a harmonious whole. House Montagna is not a project that leaves you indifferent. The chalet invites you to leave the hustle and bustle of everyday life behind, put on your ski boots and immerse yourself in nature. It lets you experience that luxury does not lie in excess, but in simplicity. In wood that lives, in silence that speaks, in the knowledge that what surrounds you has been made with respect. Courmayeur itself reinforces that feeling. This is not a mass tourist destination, but a charming town where Italian flair blends with pure mountain culture. With this promising project, Maison Osaïn once again demonstrates what they stand for: meaningful homes that are rooted in their surroundings and exude a sense of tranquillity and authenticity. It is a chalet that fits perfectly with the mountains of the region: strong, timeless and yet surprisingly soft. In short, Thomas and Ann prove that architecture can be much more than just building. It can be a way to tell stories, to keep traditions alive and at the same time offer a forward-looking vision. House Montagna is one such story. A house that not only wants to be inhabited, but also lived in. (Text: Elke Aerts)

A CAREFULLY COMPOSED WHOLE OF NATURAL MATERIALS, SOFT TONES AND TACTILE ELEMENTS

Photography by Tijs Vervecken

GHOST armchair | Cini Boeri
MAGNIFICO mirror | Marcel Wanders

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