

MONOCLE

THE ESCAPIST

1 News and Views

- Tracking luxury in Asia
- Rethinking airline rewards
- Why the cruise isn't sunk
- Hanky panky at altitude

2 Journeys

- The new breed of hotelier
- Where next for Lufthansa?
- Apparel for your travels
- The Concierge reveals all

3 The Wishlist

- Athens Riviera redux
- Swartland's best stop-offs
- A bold Bavarian bolthole
- Manhattan's smartest bar

Ready. Set.

...GO!

 Time for take-off

Five destinations to see,
explore and enjoy.

Marbella
Luberon
Costa Verde
Nagasaki
Marrakech

+ Travel Guides

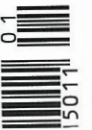
Scotland
Hong Kong



UK £15
USD \$20

CHF 20
ES/IT €20
FR/B €20
AUS \$25

DE/LU €20
CAD \$22
SGD \$29.95
DKK 199.95



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BAD GASTEIN, AUSTRIA

Take the waters in a belle époque town on the up

14

For decades the Alpine town of Bad Gastein was in a deep slumber. Once celebrated by emperors and empresses for its pristine, restorative waters, the Austrian town's belle époque buildings began to crumble in the 1980s. About 10 years ago, however, a wave of entrepreneurs began to shake things up. First there were smaller hotels such as Haus Hirt, Hotel Regina and Miramonte, mainly catering to a creative crowd. Then Berlin-based architect Barbara Elwardt opened The Comodo, a former health resort turned alpine retreat, in 2023. "What is happening here feels like a new beginning," she says.

Fittingly, the town's historic centre, next to Bad Gastein's waterfall, has just been restored. Among the buildings that have been reimaged is the Grandhotel Straubinger, built in 1840 and once Bad Gastein's largest hotel. When its current owner, Munich-based Hirmer Group, commissioned Vienna's BWM architects to revive it, they found tables still laid and beds still made. The building was renovated alongside the old Badeschloss opposite, adding 148 rooms to the town.

The buildings tell a story of revival. Historic features, such as antique parquet flooring and Lobjmeyr chandeliers, have been juxtaposed with modern elements, including an extension with a rooftop infinity pool. With thermal baths, panoramic saunas and a three-storey spa, the new Alpine Swim Club sets the scene for a new beginning. — FS gastein.com

