

THE PRIZE-WINNERS // THE BEST HOUSE 2018

BURGENLAND: HAUS FÜR EINEN WINZER

The perky glass box running along the traditional roof is an indication that the old existing substance has been charmingly and practically intertwined with the new. Apart from this, hardly any intervention is noticeable from the road, the complete energy of this conversion is consistently directed inwards with all of the necessary radicalness. The narrow existing old building with adjoining houses and an extensive garden, typical of Burgenland, had stood empty for years. Architect Martin Mostböck linked small spaces into a new whole, contemporary in form, vocabulary and materials, and tailor-made for the client — including a pool and a fitness area. The removal of the core and opening of the existing substance up to the attic creates extensive interior spaces along the vertical axis, too. The lines of sight from the building to the garden are integral to the concept. The living area was enlarged with a winter garden. The connecting element, the ramp, forms an additional space as a transitory area, and ensures a barrier-free future for the client.

Architect: Martin Mostböck — www.martin-mostboeck.com
Brief: conversion and extension
Features: redensification with consistent modernisation, largely retaining the house's traditional appearance from the outside
Built-up area: 304.5 m²
Living area: 257 m²



Juror's comment:

„The typical Burgenland Streckhaus undergoes an unexpected and welcome transformation, the familiar view from the road has been largely preserved.“
(Klaus-Jürgen Bauer,
ARCHITEKTUR RAUMBURGENLAND)

CARINTHIA: HAUS SPQ

With Haus SPQ in the historic centre of Bleiburg, the history of the architecture continues to be meaningful. The existing residential structure was rebuilt except for that part of the historical substance worth retaining — the ground level zone with vaulted ceilings. Additional height has added an independent living area to the upper level, developed as an open structure with a concentration on the orientation and the views. The south-facing façade is fully glazed and includes a corner window facing West, while the East façade remains closed. The ground level workshop can be transformed into living space, and/or integrated and shared as a unit with the first floor. The delicate steel and wood construction orientates itself on regional types of circulation and fulfils a filter function between the building and a gravel-covered courtyard. The cube connects the old and the new with the coarseness of a thick, horizontal broom-finished rendering, needed to suit the local context. So too, precise execution of the details, for instance the window reveals, sliding panels and handrails, shows how modern living space can be created while making a positive contribution to urban development.

Architect: Reinhold Wetschko — www.arch-wetschko.at
Brief: renovation and rooftop extension in the historic town centre
Features: a remarkably calm contribution to enlivening the existing fabric
Built-up area: 91.89 m²
Living area: 60 m², workshop: 40 m²



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Juror's comment:

„An exemplary treatment of a contemporary development in the grown historical context, a gift for the architectural heritage of Bleiburg, a town of culture.“

(Markus Klaura, Architektur Haus Kärnten)

LOWER AUSTRIA: WOHNHAUS DR. RESCH

A large, listed 13th century farmhouse was renovated in stages and with great skill and sensitivity to meet contemporary living standards. Consistent separation between the old and the new renders all of the phases in the building's history appreciable, while the selection of materials and formal language shows that any pandering to the existing substance is not necessary. Stairs and a lift fit comfortably into the elbow of the L-shaped floor plan, elements such as windows and doors were conserved and thermally upgraded from inside. The hermetic façade remains unaltered, existing openings are effectively managed by skilful reinterpretation. Strategically set dormer windows in the roof, directed daylight, glass floors and galleries ensure a bright, homely ambience. Following the completion of the 3rd phase, the three storey farmhouse accommodates three generations of a family in a total of four units — showing that the integration of contemporary scenarios for use can function in historically grown settlement structures.

Architect: Franz Sam — <http://sam-architects.at/>
Brief: conversion of a medieval house from 1250
Features: contemporary living comfort with the greatest possible respect for the historical substance
Built-up area: 430 m²
Living area: 500 m²



Juror's comment:

„The client's courage and years of dedication, as well as the farsightedness and diligence of the architect have conserved a valuable property from decay, and created an exceptional and very personal residential complex.“
(Martina Barth Sedelmayer, ORTE — Architekturnetzwerk NÖ)

UPPER AUSTRIA: HAUS AM TEICH

This house is a successful response to the question of how little volume one needs to live, and a prime fourfold example of sustainable development. Firstly: The large parental property was redensified with a residential building next to the swimming pond. Secondly, environmentally friendly raw materials and insulation were used, and — thirdly — to a minimal extent. Fourthly, the house is, when required, mobile. The statics and dimensions allow its transportation and reassembly at another location. Being on stilts, the house closely follows the topography without altering the existing lie of the site's terrain. There is space for cars and firewood underneath the house. The façade of rough sawn spruce boards is coated with Swedish paint. Inside, the surfaces of the floors, ceilings, walls and furnishings are in white oiled birch plywood.

Architect: Hammerschmid, Pachl, Seebacher - Architekten — www.hpsa.at
Brief: transportable redensification in the parental garden
Features: mobile redensification with minimal foundations, top sustainability
Built-up area: 63 m²
Living area: 50 m²



© Dietmar Hammerschmid

Juror's comment:

„This house could be simply removed without trace at the end of the cycle, until then the beautiful building is situated quite naturally next to the pond. Even the colour scheme is very restrained.“

(Ulrich Aspetsberger, architekturforum oberösterreich)

SALZBURG: LESEHAUS

In the beginning were site inspections with very open conversations about architecture, the client explained their ideas, needs and the financial framework to the architect Thomas Lechner. Now the Lesehaus stands on the slope with its rough sawn wood façade, fulfilling the wish for restraint and conveying the intimacy of the living space to the outside. Over a small bridge, one enters a building with a very independent and individual spatial concept, deep openings create a connection to nature with different views. Areas for various uses are lined up over two storeys, as is the centre of the Lesehaus (Lit. reading house): the bookshelves. The materials wood, concrete, glass and plaster complement one another harmonically in construction and surface. The reduction and clarity of form of this retreat in the context of the setting is satisfying. A quote from the client: „I see myself incredibly understood by the architectural concept, and it's a reflection of me as a person.“

Architect: Thomas Lechner — www.lparchitektur.at
Brief: a new development as a retreat
Features: an individualised spatial concept, reduction and clarity of form in the context of its setting
Built-up area: 91.4 m²
Living area: 105 m²



Juror's comment:

„Very personal space connects with the setting from inside by virtue of views that suggest it is a remote dwelling in the mountains, although actually located on a rural housing estate.“

(Eva-Maria Brunbauer, Initiative Architektur Salzburg)

STYRIA: HAUS T

Despite an exposed position, Haus T forms a unity with the surrounding vineyards by virtue of its materials and its formal constraint — to match the client. The vintner couple had commissioned their own daughter, architect Ulrike Tinnacher, to plan a house as a residence for their retirement. The existing substance from the 1960s was too shabby but the 350-year-old vaulted cellar was conserved as the starting point for the new building. The house is divided into two formally different parts: a minimalistic gabled house executed in lightweight concrete stands in place of the original winegrower's house, supplemented by an elegant cubic volume. Inside, the functions flow into one another, flexible partitions enable the creation of new spatial situations easily. Generous glazing and carefully positioned openings in the solid walls frame the view into the vineyard. The client sums it up: „As soon as I get home, I'm on holiday.“

Architect: Ulrike Tinnacher — <http://ulriketinnacher.at>
Brief: a new house on an old vaulted cellar
Features: the cosy and functional building appears, like the surrounding vines, to be growing out of the ground, yielding to the natural setting
Built-up area: 175 m²
Living area: 150 m²



Juror's comment:

„Haus T fits extremely successfully into a sensitive landscape. With care and a love of detail, a tailor-made home with a high quality of life has been realised for the clients while also superbly doing justice to local expectations.“

(Markus Bogensberger, Haus der Architektur Graz)

TYROL: EIN SCHMALES HAUS

Building land is scarce in Tyrol. But architectural greatness also thrives in cramped space in particular, and this house is proof of that. The site: a narrow leftover plot, 50 metres long by 11 metres narrow. A practical building stands here like a wave-breaker, the metropolitan Japanese design idea of the Minimal House also functions in the densification of the fabric of rural life. Inside, the spaces twist from bottom to top by hierarchising the daily routine in the design concept. Every square metre is optimised for use, suits the occupants' lifestyle and so is generally valid. Even in the narrowest parts of the house — 1.2 metres in the North, 1.6 metres in the South — the spaces never feel cramped. Split levels allow the use of both halves of the floor plan over 6 levels, including the roof terrace. Well positioned openings provide expansive views, framing the countryside in all directions. The house can only be reached via a wooden footbridge. The latter leads over a stream that feeds the house's own turbine, providing the house with all of its energy requirements. The lush vegetation on the site was largely conserved.

Architect: Geri Blasisker — www.blasisker.com
Brief: a new house on an extremely narrow site
Features: this house uses every square metre on a site only 11 metres wide without ever feeling cramped
Built-up area: 65 m²
Living area: 105 m²



Juror's comment:

„Proof that spatial compromise is not only made without loss but can make architecture even stronger is a first-hand experience in this Narrow House.“
(Teresa Stillebacher, Aut. Architektur und Tirol)

VORARLBERG: OECONOMIEGEBÄUDE JOSEF WEISS

The old barn, built in the Dornbirn station district in 1889, had previously been empty for decades. The conservation authorities prevented its demolition and made the building affordable for the architect Julia Kick despite its central location. With a great love of detail, she makes of it a conceptually varied loft with living and working spaces that can be partitioned off. Prostheses were made for structural elements to conserve as much as possible of the old substance and so new elements are deliberately recognisable as such. Existing wooden floorboards were numbered, removed, cleaned and put back, visibly old wooden structural elements were scrubbed by hand. Cellulose and wood shavings, also particle board, were used for the insulation. The extensive glazing inside suggests breadth and openness, see-through slits in the façade reinforce this, the living area is protected and cosy despite the close proximity of the road. Conclusion: With consistency and sensitive formulation, a centrally located gap has been furnished with a new use, whereby the special house can continue telling its story.

Architect: Julia Kick — www.juliakick.com
Brief: conversion of a listed farm building into a residential house with studio
Features: the building remains almost unaltered from the outside, the adapted interior provides modern living and working spaces
Built-up area: 100 m²
Living area: 200 m²



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Juror's comment:

„A sensitive revitalisation in a healthy dialogue with the conservation authorities. Respectfully retains a piece of the town's history and transforms the interior into a place with a homely urban atmosphere.“ (Verena Konrad, vai Vorarlberger Architektur Institut)

VIENNA: HAUS W

The treatment of single-family houses from the postwar period is gaining in significance for clients and architects. By today's standards, many existing buildings are small, cramped, dark and insufficiently energy efficient. Architect Sebastian Illichmann shows how to complete a contemporary feeling home with open spaces and a relationship to the natural setting. Additions were made in three places, the new parts have been realised in wood. The result is flowing and yet diverse spaces, from the large kitchen-cum-living room to the cosy alcoves. The garden is brought inside the house, visually. Several terraces extend the space, the one on the flat roof of the west-facing extension provides a wonderful view into the distance. In the course of the conversion, the existing substance was fitted with under-floor heating, new insulation and lagging with natural materials — ultimately, the idea of sustainability was a key argument in favour of renovating the old house rather than knocking it down. To quote the family: „The house meets our expectations perfectly.“

Architect: Sebastian Illichmann — www.illichmann-architecture.com
Brief: a detached house
Features: exemplary renovation of a single-family house from the postwar period
Built-up area: 124 m²
Living area: 180 m²



© Kurt Kuball

Juror's comment:

„The improvement is enormous and yet the house continues to fit in the context of the postwar housing estate. The high quality transformation is only visible on a second look.“

(Angelika Fitz, Architekturzentrum Wien)