

Wallpaper*

DECEMBER 2014

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Treats & Retreats

Keep on the sunny side with our guide to good times and wellbeing

The big chill

The best in rest and rub-downs in our spa special

Swiss roll

How the cantons keep cutting it

Sloane arrangers

Wallpaper* Composed takes on Chelsea

William Morris meets Warhol

Jeremy Deller's titanic two-man show

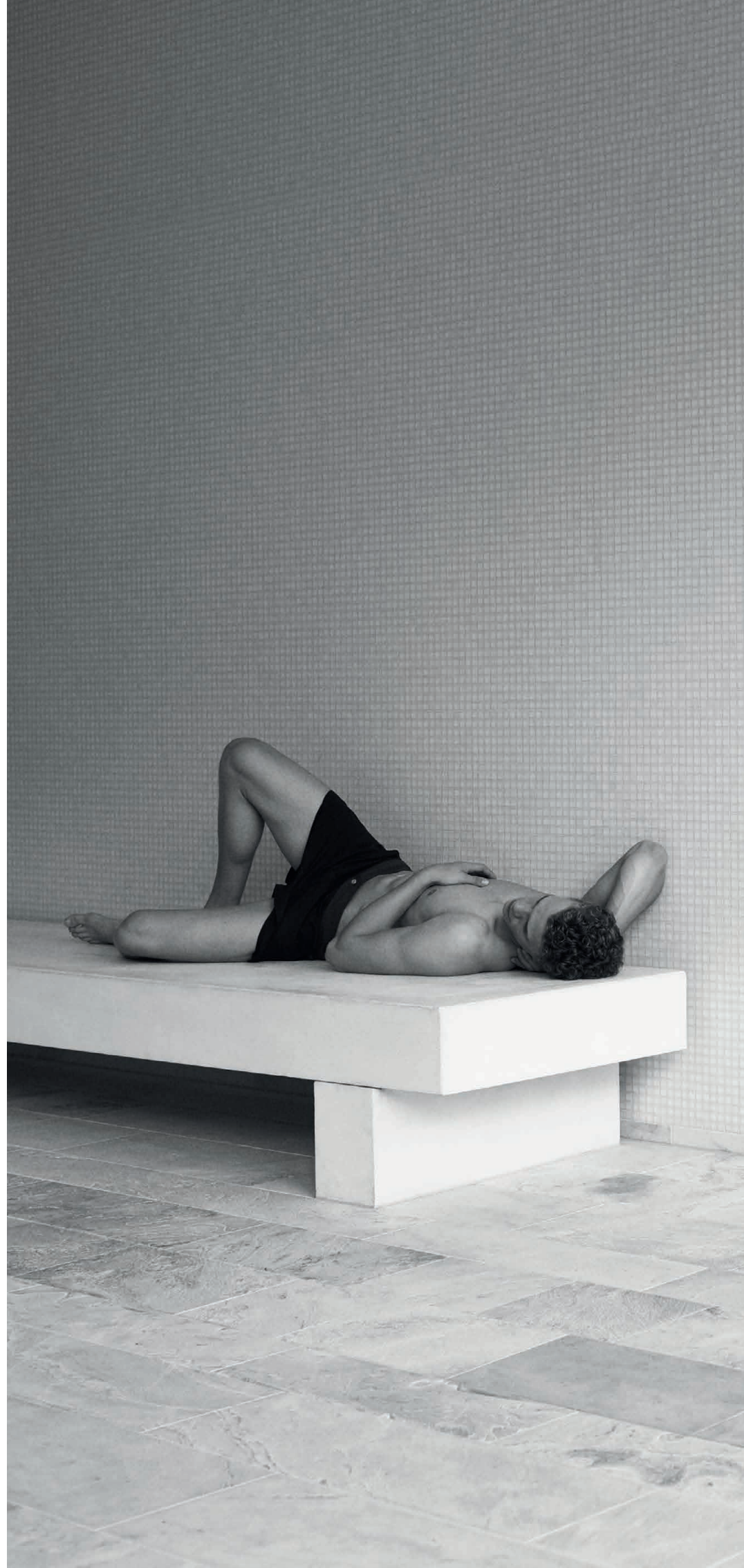


Our sweet fford

David Rockwell's group hug
Volcanically cool watches

Only in Switzerland, where motorway service stations look like beautifully bunkerish modern art galleries, would newly inaugurated public swimming baths become an architectural landmark (Zaha Hadid's Olympic pool in London was a landmark before it went public). But this is St Moritz, where tip-top topography and a 'champagne climate' (dry conditions, assured snow and sunshine 322 days of the year) have ensured its continued place as one of Switzerland's most exclusive winter holiday destinations since winter holidaying began.

Ovaverva, the resort's new public pool and spa complex in the Bad part of town (St Moritz has been celebrated for its curative mineral springs since the 16th century), was completed in July after nearly a decade in the planning. The work of Basel-based architectural firms Bearth & Deplazes Architekten and Morger + Dettli Architekten, the exterior is a Miesian low-lying glass, steel and stone box, unassuming perhaps until once inside. But then the vast light-filled volume, dissected by the shadows of the gridded steel framework, reveals a modern temple to bathing. There are six pools, serving all natational needs, from training to diving, hydrotherapy and play. Upstairs in the spa zone, there is a choice of saunas (ladies only, mixed at 60 degrees and mixed at 90 degrees, complete with towel-waving sauna-master), a steam room, an ice chute, a bucket shower and a salt room (suspended basket chairs in a space built from alabaster-like salt bricks, which emit lung-nurturing particles into the atmosphere). The treatment »



Wellness

The surrounds of one of Ovaverva's six pools, with silver quartzite flooring and mosaic-tiled walls

Trunks, £320, by Hermès. Swimsuit, £195, by Orlebar Brown

Great lengths

Delivering five-star decor at a public baths, the new Ovaverva pool, spa and sports centre makes a splash in St Moritz

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAN LEHNER WRITER: EMMA MOORE



programme, devised by spa manager Kirsten Gau, focuses on scrubs with local herbs and honey, and massage using products by Dermalogica and the locally manufactured brand Soglio, which features Alpine herbs in its formulae.

The project took root after the former public pool was closed in 2003. The building served as the World Ski Championships' media centre that year and was then demolished. The city council set about conducting a survey of what people might want from a future public bathing facility in St Moritz. It had to serve locals and tourists, young and old, for their fitness and recreational needs in poor weather, alongside the needs of professional sportsmen who come to the region for high-altitude training. With a budget of CHF67.5m (€55.7m) at its disposal, a committee was formed that included the city council, the architects and spa consultant Dominik Keller of Bad Zurzach, and work began in 2011.

'The project required a high architectural quality that would fit in with the surrounding historic area of St Moritz Bad, and it was crucial to arrange the various functions of the building in an efficient manner to ensure an optimised sequence of>>

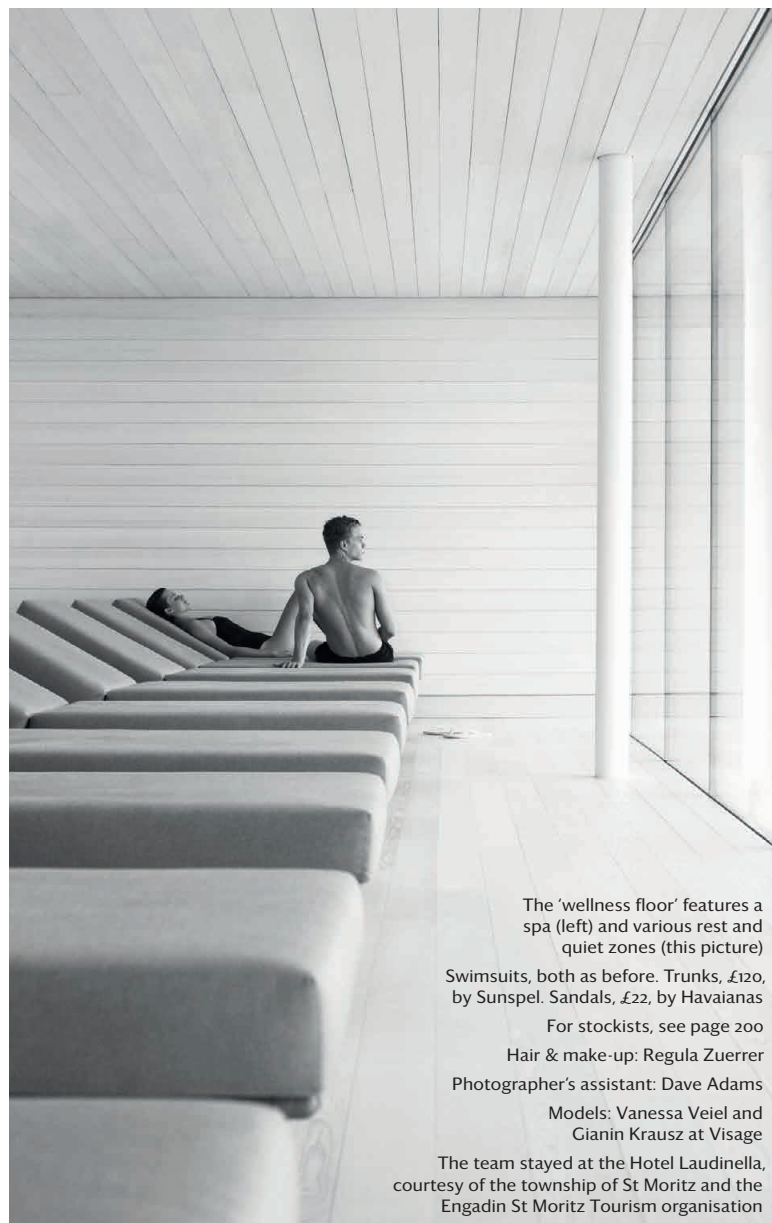
As well as a diving pool (above), the complex features relaxation zones complete with Kettal sunloungers (right) and views of the surrounding mountains from the poolside (opposite)

Trunks (above), £320, by Hermès. Swimsuit (right), £383, by La Perla. Swimsuit (opposite), £195, by Orlebar Brown



A black and white photograph of a woman in a white one-piece swimsuit sitting on the tiled edge of a swimming pool. She is looking out a large window that shows a tiled patio and a swimming pool outside. Her reflection is visible in the water of the pool. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

**The facility had to serve locals
and tourists, young and old,
for their fitness needs, alongside
professional sportsmen**



The 'wellness floor' features a spa (left) and various rest and quiet zones (this picture)

Swimsuits, both as before. Trunks, £120, by Sunspel. Sandals, £22, by Havaianas

For stockists, see page 200

Hair & make-up: Regula Zuerrer

Photographer's assistant: Dave Adams

Models: Vanessa Veiel and Gianin Krausz at Visage

The team stayed at the Hotel Laudinella, courtesy of the township of St Moritz and the Engadin St Moritz Tourism organisation

operations,' say the architects. 'The need for energy- and cost-efficiency was also emphasised.' White artificial stone was used outside, while the interior features acres of varnished silver fir; silver quartzite on the floors of the bathing areas; ceramic and glass mosaic tiles on the walls; acoustic plaster on the ceiling; bronze for the handrail details; and furnishings by Spanish manufacturer Kettal.

The five-star materials and design credentials don't mean the building's primary role of serving the local population, from school children to pensioners, is forgotten. At the café, you can opt for a 'wellness salad' with toppings of choice, but equally you can guzzle Rainbow Toast – white sliced topped with peanut butter and mini Smarties. And not far from the aerobics pool is the discreet entrance to the cleverly concealed 'fun tower', a mesh of spiralling slides and tubes. For a municipally managed please-all project, Ovaverva works astonishingly well. ★

www.ovaverva.ch

