

WHERE NEXT: SWITZERLAND

NO REALLY, IT'S A "HUT"

A space-age, low-impact lodge lands in the Alps BY CAROLYN WHELAN

Set at 9,169 feet in the Swiss Alps, the Monte Rosa Hut is a three-hour, cross-glacier hike from a train station outside Zermatt (Rottenboden). So when it came time for a \$6 million renovation, Swiss engineers faced a Matterhorn-size challenge. "Picture an island," says Marcel Baumgartner, the project's lead architect. "The hut had to make its own energy and water, use mostly natural light and biodegradable materials, and it had to blend with the landscape." Um, done. Once a leaky, drafty, 114-year-old trekkers' lodge, the reimagined hut opens again this March as a model of green design (\$31; section-monte-rosa.ch). Here, some thin-air highlights.



DESIGN

Monte Rosa's spherical shape cuts the wind and maximizes space. The octagonal first floor narrows to a hexagon on the fifth. No two rooms are alike, but all are connected to a wide, windowed staircase that runs along the periphery, providing even ventilation to all 50 rooms and 120 bunks.



MATERIALS

Lightweight local spruce replaced the original hut's stone; an aluminum shell protects the exterior from the harsh alpine elements. Water collects year-round in an underground cistern, and waste water is treated in the hut's own plant and reused. Triple-pane glass windows retain heat while showing off those iconic Matterhorn views.

POWER

Solar panels produce 90 percent of the hut's power; an internally stored rapeseed bio diesel generator kicks in only when necessary. Computers track weather conditions to optimize energy use.



PHOTOGRAPHS, FROM TOP: STUDIO MONTE ROSA/PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE LOWE; FROM BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY OF HOLCOM FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION (2); ALTENDO/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF ELLINGTON

GEAR CRUSH

If a bag doubles as a statement of character, well, you could do a lot worse than the **Ellington Wanderlust**. Constructed of oiled nubuck leather, the weekend-size duffel is a classic travel piece, improving with every bump, scuff, and overhead bin it endures. Features are clever but subtle, like protective metal feet on the outside and well-placed pockets and sleeves on the inside. And now for the real kicker: It only costs \$200 (ellingtonleather.com). —CATHARINE LIVINGSTON

