

ARCHITECTURE NOW!

6

*Architektur heute
L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*

Philip Jodidio



TASCHEN



12

12
 Savioz Meyer Fabrizzi Architectes,
 Hôtel de la Poste, Sierre, Switzerland,
 2006–07

actual construction, RCR's proposal will remain a first step along the path to designing a very large building specifically meant for a place like Dubai. Climate, more than local culture, really seems to be the driving force behind the development of such practically self-contained complexes, but The Edge is big enough to be a sort of city unto itself, no longer bound by the more traditional constraints of urban life. In one of his recent pamphlets called "The Gulf," Rem Koolhaas (OMA) writes, "Eventually, the Gulf will reinvent the public and the private: the potential of infrastructure to promote the whole rather than favor fragmentation; the use and abuse of landscape—golf or the environment?; the coexistence of many cultures in a new authenticity rather than a Western Modernist default; experiences instead of Experience—city or resort?"

DESIGNER BED AND BREAKFAST

Just as cultural institutions have provided a good deal of the work for inventive architects over past years, the hotel business, increasingly interested in design, perhaps inspired by the spate of Schrager-Starck projects in the 1990s, has also employed numerous well-known architects in the hope of drawing in a chic, moneyed clientele. This phenomenon has spread beyond world cities such as New York and Berlin and now concerns less well-known destinations like Zuoz in the Engadine region of Switzerland. Though it is a beautiful medieval town, Zuoz is a few kilometers from St. Moritz and its glamorous resort life. The Hotel Castell is situated just above the old town at an altitude of 1900 meters. The Swiss art collector and artist Ruedi Bechtler bought the original building, built as a fashionable "Kurhotel" in 1912–13 by Nicolaus Hartmann, in the mid-1990s. The architect Gabrielle Hächler and the noted Swiss artist Pipilotti Rist designed their first project in the hotel, the Red Bar, inaugurated in 1998. Beginning in 2000, the Amsterdam architects UNStudio came on board and designed a new building with 14 luxury apartments (2003–04, page 502). Within the old building, they added a colorful hamam in the east wing basement, and redesigned about half of the hotel's 60 rooms in a style typical of their work. The local architect Hans-Jörg Ruch redid the other rooms, while the Japanese artist Tadashi Kawamata added a wooden terrace and walkway leading to a sauna on the grounds of the hotel. Completed recently by the construction of a cylindrical *Skyspace* by artist James Turrell, the Castell is in a sense typical of many "designer hotels" across the world, but, in this instance, the high quality of the different architectural and artistic interventions is particularly notable.

Two mountain passes and about 300 kilometers away, though still in Switzerland, the Hôtel de la Poste in Sierre (2006–07, 12) by the young architects Savioz Meyer Fabrizzi does not have the kind of world-class art seen in the Castell, but it shows just how far the idea of the designer, or in this case architect, hotel has come. Working with a rectilinear mid-18th-century building, the architects dared to make the exterior bright orange and to paint the name of the hotel in large letters on its side façade. Situated in front of a small park that runs behind the neighboring city hall toward the railway station, the Hôtel de la Poste now has a sinuous glass dining room to the rear. The architects also redesigned the hotel rooms, using a different type of wood for each of the 15 suites and naming the rooms after the wood used. Photos of the trees concerned figure on the ceiling of each room, giving a "green" tinge to this otherwise traditional old structure.

Legorreta + Legorreta, architects based in Mexico City, completed the renovation of a former water bottling factory in Puebla, Mexico, creating La Purificadora Boutique Hotel in 2007 (page 308). Like their less famous colleagues in Sierre, the Mexicans renovated the existing