



WARM HEART

With a low-lit, sensual take on its interiors, there may be no more agreeable place to get snowed in than Zhero, the Austrian Tyrol's newest luxury hotel

Many architects like to look to the past for inspiration in their work, but Manfred Jäger, architect on Austria's new 78-room Zhero hotel, has taken historical reference to the max with this latest project, likening its appeal to our caveman instincts. "We are modern people, but after being outside in the big, bright world we like to go back to our cave to be cosy," he says.

The hotel's dark interior – wood ceilings and floors, exposed brick walls and soft fabrics in dark grey, black and brown – stands in stark contrast to its snowy surrounding landscape. Soft, warm lighting is used throughout and glows from the predominantly glass facade, filtered by rows of vertical wooden planks that wrap around the building. These are reclaimed from local

barns, which Jäger explains is a link to the community's agricultural history, and used inside as well to make the building cohesive.

Inside, high ceilings, large floor-to-ceiling windows and a completely open-plan layout on the ground floor save the dark interior from becoming too enclosed. There are open fires – almost obligatory in ski hotels – and a restaurant with a huge open grill. The rooms are equally warm in their design, with leather, fur and wood used in a palette of browns, with glamour added by furniture from Minotti. Jäger's client specified that, like its sister hotel in Mallorca, the interior be high-end, luxurious and feature a fashion theme.

Situated in between the popular Ischgl ski resort and the lesser-known village

Below Dark and moody interiors contrast with the snowbound setting



Above A render of Austria's Zhero hotel, built on a greenfield site in the heart of skiing territory

of Kappl, also great for skiing, the hotel offers guests easy access to both locations, but sits on a site that had never previously been developed. This led to a slow start on the build due to complicated planning issues, but, luckily for Jäger and his client, the attraction of having one of the most high-end hotels in the valley helped push it through: "The local authority was very proud to have this hotel here. It's very good for the community." Two particular local residents who are sure to have given Jäger honest feedback are his parents, who live just 300m from the site.

Building started in June 2012 – having meant to start in January – and finished in mid-December, with plans to build a further annex for conferences this year.