



# Christiania Residence

Old Zermatt revisited

*Text: Claude Hervé-Bazin / Photos: Yves Garneau*



Outside stands the timeless mountain. Inside the present is reworked. While its understated wooden shell suggests it has been part of the Alpine scenery for many a year, the Christiania Residence is resolutely contemporary in spirit.

Situated in the heart of old Zermatt, this four-floor chalet stands in the shadow of the slender spire of St Mauritius Parish Church, or as near to it as possible. The church's bells discreetly mark out the time, rising on Sundays to a crescendo in praise of the Eternal, their mere repetition celebrating the timelessness of this corner of the world. The Christiania's location makes its transformation seem all the greater. All that remains of the building erected in the middle of the 19th century - a time when the first British visitors swooned at the sight of the Matterhorn - is the wooden framework, made lustrous by many winters. The windows have disappeared, to be replaced by bay windows offering views of the iconic mountain and the surrounding landscape. Balconies now run all the way along the southern façade and also face westwards, looking out to the cluster of old wooden houses that are the pride of the resort. These days the Christiania is home to eight apartments that offer, as you might imagine, luxurious comfort. It is the

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*On the upper floor of the Christiania Residence, the cavernous lounge and the dining area merge as one beneath the penthouse's huge beams.*

**1.** *The wine cellar stands at the end of the lounge/dining area. Beyond lies the kitchen, overlooking the town, with its steel grey breakfast bar, bold lines and light wood.*

**2.** *Stretching comfortably beneath the suspended light fittings, the long wooden table can seat up to 24 diners.*



1. While a massive headboard is no guarantee of a good night's sleep, the soft lighting, mattress and comfy pillows all help.

2. With its lounge area and contemporary fireplace, this suite lacks nothing in style or high ceilings.

3. A dark grey colour scheme, wall-hung double-basin vanity unit, large LED mirror, bathtub and even a sauna: this bathroom ticks all the boxes when it comes to modern interior design.

top floor that attracts our interest in particular, however, comprising as it does a vast apartment with seven huge bedrooms, each containing beds as big as oceans. The colours, materials and proportions of the interiors are unmistakably modern, right down to the bathrooms with their black earthenware tiling.

Frequently rented to both private and corporate groups, the penthouse boasts an extensive open-plan living area with room enough for 24 guests beneath a pine ceiling supported on massive beams. There is a refrigerated wine cellar built into the wall, a long dining table just waiting for guests to arrive, and a lounge area which features extensive grey settees that form a snug square looking on to a contemporary fireplace.

As you might have guessed, the Christiania fulfils all your leisure needs. Aside from a cinema room, there is a sauna on the third floor, a large gym room and a massage room on the ground floor and two outdoor hot tubs, the perfect spots from which to marvel at Le Valais' starry skies by night.

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