

## Lake House Völs

Project name	Lake House Völs
Typology	Lake hut, recreational facility
Location	Fiè allo Sciliar, South Tyrol (Italy)
Client	Municipality of Fiè
Architecture	noa* network of architecture
Interior Design	noa* network of architecture
Construction start	April 2019
Completion	August 2019
Intervention	Demolition and new construction
Volume	330 m <sup>3</sup>
Surface area	120 m <sup>2</sup>

Text [DE]	Barbara Jahn-Rösel
Translations [EN]	Marianne Lehnis
Photographs	Alex Filz

## Lake House Völs: On to new horizons

*It was the famed jump into the deep end: at the idyllic Völser Weiher lake in South Tyrol, noa\* merged a modern design concept with well-loved tradition to deliver architecture that works in harmony with nature.*

Amid a spectacular mountain backdrop lined with lush green pine forests, the Völser Weiher lake lies over 1,000 meters above sea level. The idyll here is palpable: a scenic nature reserve that offers year-round visitors space for relaxation and leisure. noa\* was commissioned by the municipality of Völs to build a small, attractive swimming hut with attached public changing rooms and sanitary facilities that would complement the scenic setting.

Too small and no longer fit for purpose, the existing old kiosk was getting on in years and was lacking proper accessible facilities for the disabled. The popular destination for outdoor excursions, particularly amongst the locals, whether a refreshing swim in summer or ice skating in winter, was to be given a fresh, contemporary makeover. The old facility was demolished to create space for a new chapter in which architecture could combine with its surroundings in a harmonious whole.

---

## EXTENDING A WARM WELCOME

To keep the facility's scale discreet and small in order to blend in with its special surroundings, noa\* designed two compact structures with a restrained cubature that are connected along a transverse axis.

The main building, a new snack-bar with a classic saddle roof, contains a part closed, part open kitchen and counter where food and drinks are served. It expands into an open loggia and terrace, with sweeping views over the lake and newly designed bathing area.

The transverse axis that connects the two buildings is defined by an open recess with a wooden folding element. The recess functions as second counter where bathers, pedestrians, and cyclists can purchase small refreshments, ice cream, and food. The recess also acts a clever partition, so the loggia and terrace area can be kept comfortably quiet, while simultaneously enabling quick and easy self-service for guests.

## CREATING PLACES

The second building structure is a separate cube connected to the snack-bar, which is dedicated to its public function and together with the main building forms a tight ensemble both architecturally and functionally.

It is here that the sanitary facilities meet accessibility requirements and provide changing rooms for enthusiastic leisure athletes such as swimmers or ice skaters. In the facilities' centre, there is a small open atrium with changing rooms for guests and lockers specially made by local craft businesses. The atrium offers a glimpse of the skyline to signal an inviting welcome for bathers and hikers. In these public accessible premises, a robust resin trowel technology was selected that can both withstand the wear and tear of skates as well as ensure safety on a wet floor. To blend in with the natural environment, the architects' interior design focuses on a strong visual harmonization between the indoors and outdoors. Green was chosen as the base colour for the floor, walls and ceiling, with different shades helping to create an ambience of flowing continuation of nature.

## BECOMING ONE

The floor and vertical surfaces add another unique feature to the lakeside facility: to plant the architecture firmly within its' location, noa\* incorporated a traditional South Tyrolean lace pattern into the resin filler. The motifs were briefly pressed into the damp resin and quickly removed to create an irregular, three-dimensional effect. These 3D patterns, sometimes more, and sometimes less readily apparent, add a special visual flair and a touch of spontaneity. While the main building exudes a characteristic presence and is roughly equal in size to the old structure, noa\* created a concept in which the other volume takes a back seat optically. The wooden frame construction along the transverse axis, which connects the two facility buildings, also acts as a support structure for climbing plants. Within a few months, the planned fast-growing jasmine will envelop the changing rooms in natural, green foliage. When viewed from the lake, the greenery will make the building disappear into its' surroundings.

## PARTICIPATE

The ensemble lies in a unique natural landscape and offers beautifully framed perspectives of views of the lake, forest and mountain. The specially selected, untreated larch wood facade will be left to its natural fate - slowly changing as it's exposed to the elements over time. The newly built bathing jetties, made with wood from the surrounding forests, branch out and dissolve into the lake, guiding visitors from the buildings into the water. Meanwhile, the less-than-conspicuous architecture highlights the flora, giving it space to gently insert itself. Every element of the project demonstrates noa's\* commitment to handling natural environments responsibly and with care while remaining true to their architectural standards. Between the freshly laid rows of reed and the new area for

children, the contemporary design creates space for nature lovers to soak up the serenity in a rendezvous with nature.