

"Land Ahoy"

April, 2020

Enjoy | Give Back | Protect

Land Ahoy - a proposal for a lake restaurant/hotel - was selected as a finalist in an international competition. The project is the heart of a local recreation area near to the city of Graz/Austria and encourages activities that everybody is looking forward to while staying at home due to the current crisis.

*"At its best, architecture has the power to transform and enrich places in a positive way. In times of crisis it is even more important that we as architects create places with **remarkable recreational values**, places that people can look forward to."*, says Viola Habicher of smart-voll.

Enjoy

Not far from the city of Graz (Austria) the lake "Thalersee" has served as a recreation area with pleasant amenities for its locals since the 1920s - from swimming, hiking and boating in the summer to ice skating in the winter. A restaurant next to the lake offers visitors a comfortable stay with a cup of coffee or simply just a moment of peace with a romantic view towards the waterfront and the surrounding landscape.

Since Austria has no natural access to the Mediterranean Sea, its lakes mean as much to Austrians as the famous Adria means to Italians. Alongside mountains and forests, **lakes form the backbone** for leisure time- and recreational activities. This is especially true for such areas that are close to cities, where locals benefit from its offerings on weekends. These recreational areas contribute a great deal to the nearby cities' quality of life.

Give Back

The existing building on the northern shore of the lake has come out of date and dilapidated to a degree that it is no longer able to offer meaningful and attractive spaces like a restaurant and a small hotel as well as a bicycle- and boat rental. Instead of re-populating the most prominent part of the shore with a new building and making it exclusively accessible to consuming guests, we **re-naturalize the shoreline** and **return it back to the public in its entirety**. This includes eliminating the unnatural flood control barrier that prohibits the unhindered access to the lake. The unregulated and constant privatization of lakeshores in

Austria has further led to an alarming **decrease** in **public lake access** over the last decades - diminishing the chance for a large part of society to enjoy a primarily public asset. This is one reason why we move the new building away from the shore and place it in the lake - "Land Ahoy". The projects unique placement and architectural staging will turn the building itself into an unforgettable experience - enhancing the attractiveness and the recreational value of the lake.

Protect

Despite its idyllic location amidst wooded slopes, the lake additionally functions as a water reservoir in case of flooding. The landside part of our project replaces the old artificial structural barrier by a natural one - a sensitively embedded hill, merged with the surrounding landscape, will function as a natural dam. A generous cut in this hill forms the entrance of the project, connecting the offshore restaurant and hotel with an underwater tunnel. The hiking trail on top of that dam will complete the formerly disconnected full circle trail around the lake.

*"Entering the rotunda in the lake via this **underwater tunnel** will be an **incomparable experience**. Once you reach the end of the underwater pathway, you will emerge out of the lake - fully surrounded by water, creating an immersive and unforgettable impression. Since recreation is the ying to our working yang, we strongly believe that buildings dealing with recreation should go well beyond providing food and a place to sleep."* says Philipp Buxbaum of smartvoll.

On lake level there is a generous footbridge that merges into a circular ramp, forming an intimate courtyard framed by the elevated building - giving visitors plenty of chances to take a plunge, rent a boat or put on ice skates in the winter. At the end of the ramp one will reach the restaurant - rewarded by a unique panoramic view over the lake and revealing the strength of the new re-naturalized lake shore.

"Land Ahoy" was selected as a finalist in an international competition.

Please include the table of consultants and collaborators in the publication. Thank you!

BY	smartvoll architects
CONSULTANTS	-
PROJECT NAME	"Land Ahoy"
PROJECT TYPE	Restaurant, Hotel, Resilience, Landscape
PROJECT LOCATION	Thal near Graz, Austria
PROJECT TEAM	Viola Habicher, Michael Knoll, Dimitar Gamizov, Philipp Buxbaum, Christian Kircher
PROJECT SIZE	1230m ²
CREDITS	smartvoll architects www.smartvoll.com
SOCIAL MEDIA	instagram: @smartvoll
RENDERINGS	Mathias Bank www.mathiasbank.dk
MODEL	scalamatta www.scalamatta.com