

ADHotels



Austria's Schloss Velden

THE VENERABLE CASTLE ON LAKE WÖRTH
UPENDS TRADITION WITH A MODERN ADDITION

Architecture by Jabornegg & Pálffy/Interior Design by Peter Silling of Hotel Interior Design
Text by Jeffrey Simpson/Photography by Robert Reck

For Horst Schulze, founder of Capella Hotels & Resorts and former president and COO of Ritz-Carlton, the perfect hotel is "a continuation of the customers' lives." Capella, the collection of hotels Schulze is developing in Austria, Mexico, Germany,

Ireland, Singapore and Telluride, Colorado, is named after the alpha star in the constellation Auriga—the Charioteer. Capella is a binary star, hence the company's double-star logo, which "reflects our focus on the intimate relationship between the hotel and the guest," says Schulze.

"Happiness lies in creating excellence," he says, and with the first Capella hotel, Schloss Velden on Lake Wörth, in what is dubbed the Austrian Riviera, Schulze has achieved his goal.

Schloss Velden is composed of an old castle, originally completed in 1603 and



"It's a juxtaposition of old and new," Peter Silling says of Schloss Velden, the historic castle on Lake Wörth in Velden, Austria, and its new addition, whose interiors he designed. The modern, U-shaped wing, by the Viennese architectural firm Jabornegg & Pálffy, wraps around the rear of the castle, which was originally built by Bartholomäus Khevenhüller. **RIGHT:** The 1603 entrance. **BELOW RIGHT:** The lobby lounge.



rebuilt several times over the centuries, and a contemporary U-shaped structure designed by the Vienna-based architectural firm Jabornegg & Pálffy. There are 39 guest rooms in the castle and 66 rooms in the contemporary addition, which also houses 45 condominiums.

The hotel has two main dining areas—a large, more formal one in the castle and a smaller, relaxed terrace restaurant on the lakefront.

"The area is known for its diet-oriented resorts," says Peter Silling, whose firm, Hotel Interior Design, based in Cologne,

Germany, was responsible for Schloss Velden's interior décor. "The hotel has a young, acclaimed chef, Silvio Nickol, who serves healthy versions of the local cuisine in the main dining room." Adds Schulze, "Only five months after it opened, *Guide Michelin* awarded Nickol and his



“There are incredible layers of tradition to draw on, but the way to make it appeal to people is to make it up-to-the-minute.”



ABOVE: Handwoven Italian fabrics cover the sofas and chairs in the living room of the Kaiser Suite—the largest of the 105 guest rooms. **LG television.** **OPPOSITE ABOVE:** Black marble, custom-ordered for the suite, adds a mirrorlike reflection to the bath.

OPPOSITE: A king-size bed dominates the master bedroom. Nobilis pillow fabric. **LG television.** **LEFT:** At 3,200 square feet, the suite takes up the entire front portion of the new wing's top floor and has views of both the lake and the courtyard. Auriga Spa is located on the first floor.



team one star, which is very unusual.”

The hotel has a beach club and a private marina and a 38,000-square-foot spa. The beach club is connected to the hotel through an underground corridor that runs beneath the street along the lakefront. In addition to a pool, the beach club has a terrace with lounge chairs and cabanas, where guests can get massages and body treatments. The spa has 14 private treatment rooms, a fitness center, an indoor pool, a simulated golf course and a café.

With such amenities, it is not surprising that the hotel is a destination year-round. “In the summer there is the lake and hiking,” says Silling. “And in the winter there is skiing nearby and the spa, which is very relaxing. Schloss Velden is a complete resort.”

Lake Wörth is the largest and warmest of the Alpine lakes, and the area has a long history as a spa, in the old-fashioned European sense of the word—a leisurely resort where people went to promenade, observe other guests and relax. The castle, partly burned in the 18th century, was rebuilt to some extent in the mid-19th century, after



which it operated as a hotel, with clients arriving and departing on steamboats that puffed up and down the lake from 1853 on.

In 1891 Ernst Wahlliss, an industrialist from Vienna, bought the property and had the castle restored. Gardens and parks were planted to facilitate afternoon strolls. Starting in 1894, concerts and dances took place, and artists from the Vienna Hoftheater performed at the hotel.

Following World War I, when the hotel served as a headquarters for the Austrian army, two daughters of a prominent hotel-keeper bought Schloss Velden and developed it further. Guests in the pre-World War II period included Lillian Gish, King Alfonso XIII of Spain and Prajadhipok, the former King of Siam.

After World War II the hotel continued to be a venerable monument of hospitality

“We shopped around the world.” The materials are luxurious. In the castle, the floors are oak parquetry.



ABOVE: A Royal Suite in the historic building “follows the Marco Polo principle,” remarks Silling. “The rooms resemble those of a returned globe-trotter who has brought back precious memorabilia. They have a timeless elegance.” Nobilis bed skirt, bedcovering and pillow fabrics.

RIGHT AND OPPOSITE BELOW: Seespitz, the hotel’s casual lakefront restaurant, “is connected to the hotel by a discreet underground corridor,” notes the designer. “Boat owners can dock at the marina and come up to dine on the terrace.”

and the set for several movies and television shows, including the very popular Austrian series *Ein Schloss am Wörthersee*. The German billionaire Gunter Sachs bought Schloss Velden in 1990 and used it as a private residence. “We wanted guests to feel like Gunter Sachs or the King of Spain when they came here, yet at the same time feel free to do things as simply as they wish,” says Schulze.

“To have this Old World building with a new addition,” says Silling, “makes it like working on a project in Shanghai. There are incredible layers of tradition to draw on, but the only way you will make it appeal to people is to make it as up-to-the-minute as possible.”

Saying that the hotel has to be both “homey and young,” Silling points out such details as furniture in the contemporary section that is upholstered “in the old sophisticated way, with the springs tied and feather stuffing, not just some foam on a board,” and hand-painted furniture in the old castle with traditional faux graining.

The Capella Rooms, located in the new wing, “are very contemporary,” he says. “Yet the divider between the living area and the bedroom has a fireplace that is open to both areas, so the coziness of an open fire is felt throughout the suite.

“We shopped around the world,” he notes. The materials are luxurious. The Kaiser Suite’s bath in the modern addition is lined with Noir Saint Laurent marble. In the castle, the floors are oak parquetry,



and the furniture, designed by Silling, was custom-made in Hong Kong.

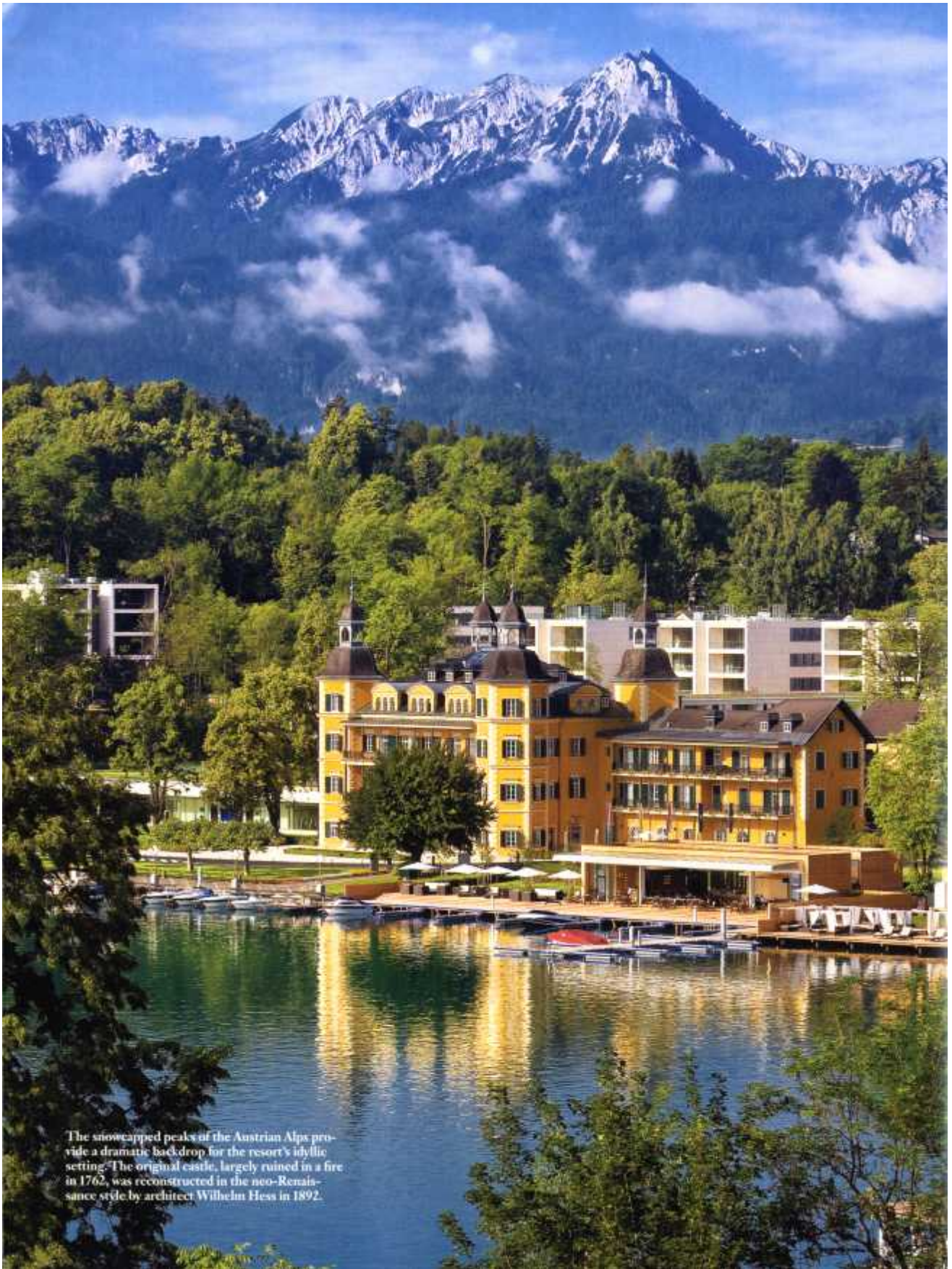
Already the length of time guests stay at Schloss Velden has been surprisingly long. “We expected it to be about three days,” says Schulze. “But one German family took 18 rooms for three weeks, and a Saudi family stayed for four weeks.”

“This is not like a business hotel in a city,” says Silling. “People want independence, they want comfort, and they want to relax. Luxury is harmony, and Horst Schulze delivers that.” □

Schloss Velden

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The snowcapped peaks of the Austrian Alps provide a dramatic backdrop for the resort's idyllic setting. The original castle, largely ruined in a fire in 1762, was reconstructed in the neo-Renaissance style by architect Wilhelm Hess in 1892.