

**VELUX®**

# SLEEPING UNDER THE STARRY SKY

Holiday Huts at Milstättersee, Austria



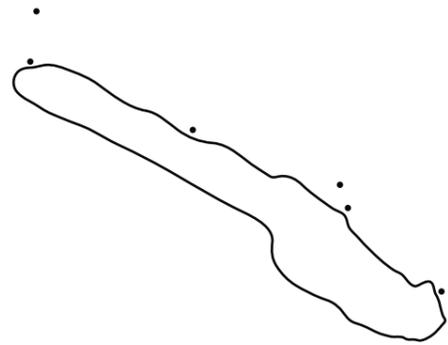
## A DAY WITH A VIEW

The concept of spending a day immersed in the landscape - yet in a comfortable bivouac - was invented by Maria Wilhelm, general manager of Millstätter See Tourismus GmbH together with the designer Roger Aeschbach from element design gmbh from Basel and their teams for an annual tourism innovation contest organized by the Austrian government. The project, together with five others among over eighty submissions, was awarded and generously funded.

The Millstätter See region is, along other holiday destinations in Austrian region of Kärnten, known for its picturesque views: deep blue waters surrounded by forests and mountains.

Seven tiny two-person cabins are located in prime locations around the lake: some right at the shore, some at the mountain top, all with splendid views. The competition among the regions is big, so is the need of clear, progressive tourism concepts. Focus on conscious experiencing of nature with beloved people is the trademark of the Millstätter See region, put in scene in various projects developed by Millstätter See Tourismus together with element design. The bivouac project is part of a larger concept, tying together various players in the tourism sector.

The huts are operated by various hotels, promoting both the hosts and the region. Only two of the current locations are fix, as the cabins are on wheels, and can be moved to new places. A large opening only on one side guides the tourists to the most spectacular view and allows maximum of privacy and "wilderness feeling" even when very close to a hotel with all amenities. The guests usually rent the bivouac for one day. Thanks to provided picnic basket they don't have to get in touch with civilisation until the next day.



"One thing we knew from the very beginning - we want our guests to be fully immersed in nature, yet comfortable: they should look up to the stars directly from their bed, wake up with the rays of sun or the music of the raindrops. Due to this connection to the sky roof windows are a key element of our concept."





# SIMPLICITY UNDER THE SUN

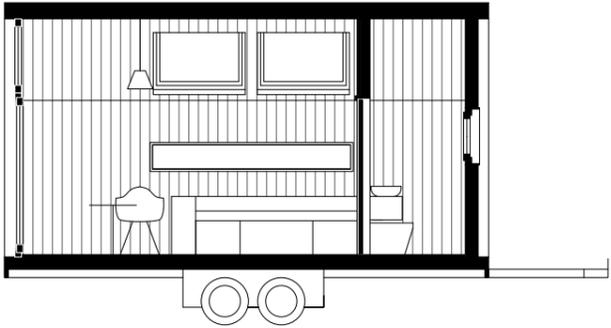
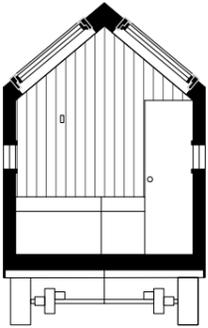
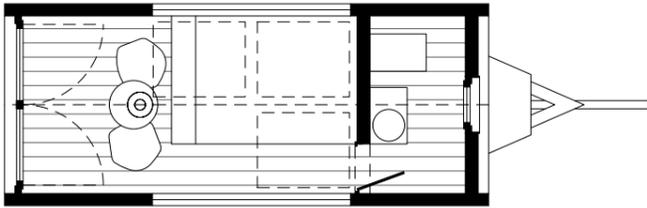
A modest design with sloped roof, one fully glazed facade and roof windows opening to the sky was done by Elementdesign, an office from Basel, dealing with special concepts for tourism and museums. The form derives from the "primitive hut", an imaginary, romantic concept of a first dwelling - minimal shelter for humans in nature.

Although the roof shape is traditional, the aesthetics could not be farther from kitschy mountain hut romanticism, so widespread in Kärnten.

"The most valuable thing you can give someone is time and attention, and the most romantic thing to do is to look together at the stars, spend time outside, and return for the night to minimalistic, well designed space without decorations other than views of the nature and the sky, and absolutely no technology,"

explained Ms. Wilhelm, adding: "We introduced a special drawer, where the guests can stow away their mobile phones during the stay. Most of them do it."

The cabins feature only basic furniture. Actually one piece takes over most of the functions: bed, drawers, place to stow away suitcases and a shelf for glasses, lamp or books. Interior is clad with wonderfully smelling larch planks.



Floorplan and sections of the cabin. The construction consists of 8cm pine-clad cross laminated timber, 5cm insulation between batting, foil, from the inside 2cm larch planks.

"When the cabins arrived at their sites, we checked each roof window location ourselves, lying down and gazing to the stars, and adjusted the position of the cabin, if necessary," Ms. Wilhelm recalls. Some windows are meanwhile under the trees, foliage grazing the glass gives the feeling of sleeping in a forest.



## CONSTRUCTING A DREAM

Responsible for turning concepts into constructed reality was Mr. Marco Moser from Ralf Moser Holzbau GmbH. His company, specializing in wood constructions, is located just at the Millstättersee, with all the bivouacs less than 20 kilometers from his office.

According to the competition design the cabins could not exceed the width of 2.5 and a total height, including wheels, of 4 meters to meet the traffic regulations, as they were to be transported as trailers.

After being constructed in company's headquarters they were wheeled, attached to a farm-tractor to their destinations. Some were put on foundations and provided with running water, while the others still can be freely moved.

The mobility proved to be a constructive challenge, as the weight distribution on the axes as well as leveling in uneven terrain are not everyday tasks to solve.

Mr. Moser was lucky to have the right partners during the preparations of tender documents. He got inputs on the mobility issues, as well as on roof openings. A big fix glazing drawn in the concept design had to be replaced by windows to provide necessary natural ventilation.

"As my company collaborated successfully with Velux on several occasions, I reached out to our area sales manager asking for advice while preparing the offer, to check the feasibility of proposed solutions" - said Mr. Moser - "this time there was no need for light evaluation, as it was the case on other projects, but we were thankful for inputs on untypical construction details."

The walls and roof have a simple wooden structure and pine cladding. They are well insulated and rear-ventilated, which allows a good climate in the summer and, with electrical heater, winter use.

But as the pine cladding wrapped the entire building, and the whole structure, despite insulation, thinner than in standard housing, typical solutions could not be used.

Velux staff provided help on solving of the insulation issues, suggesting the use of foil normally applied in flat roof constructions, glued to the windows from all sides. This proved to be the most successful solution, although it caused a slow and precise workflow, as the windows are located very close to one another.

Thanks to use of prefabricated wooden elements the construction of one hut, including the built-in furniture, took only two weeks. First cabin was opened to the public in May 2017, the rest followed during the course of summer.





## PROJECT DATA

Project:	7 mobile holiday cabins
Location:	Millstätter See region, Kärnten, Austria
Client:	Millstätter See Tourismus GmbH, Millstatt, Austria
Concept:	Maria Wilhelm & Element Design gmbh, Basel, Switzerland
Design and planning:	Element Design gmbh, Basel, Switzerland
Realisation:	Ralf Moser Holzbau GmbH, Spittal an der Drau, Austria
Cost:	571.450 EUR, with 317.200 EUR government funding
Time:	Concept summer 2016, realisation May - October 2017

























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