

## 20 years later, Vigilius Mountain Resort is still peak perfect

Wallpaper\* returns to the mountains of South Tyrol, where the Vigilius Mountain Resort continues to offer old-fashioned relaxation like no other



Sign up to our newsletter



The larch and glass exterior of Vigilius Mountain Retreat from the Wallpaper\* December 2003 issue  
(Image credit: Sophie Delaporte)

BY NICK VINSON

PUBLISHED 1 HOUR AGO

It's been 20 years since the Vigilius Mountain Resort was completed, 1,500 metres up Monte San Vigilio in the Alto Adige or South Tyrol region of Italy. Here, the silence, views and, most of all, the air, scented by the trees, offers an unforgettable experience. Constructed from local larch, quartz stone, clay and glass, Vigilius was my first encounter with the responsible architecture of Matteo Thun.



## Vigilius Mountain Resort celebrates twenty years of natural harmony



The larch and glass exterior of Vigilius Mountain Retreat  
(Image credit: Courtesy of Matteo Thun and Partners)

Ulrich Ladurner, a local businessman behind the Schär gluten-free food business, hired Thun, Milan-based but born locally, to build him a hotel at the top of the cable car. Thun built a long, two-story structure running north-south following the outline of the mountain, horizontal brise-soleil in larch covering the entire length of the property, providing shade and framing the fantastic panorama from within, and topped it with a green roof to prevent overheating.



The rooftop Paradise Garden from the Wallpaper\* December 2003 issue  
(Image credit: Sophie Delaporte)

The thirty-five rooms and six suites are finished in solid birch and larch wood. A tactile clay wall between the bedroom and bath area contains integrated radiant panels using a heat recovery and geothermal ventilation system. The resort itself is heated with ground waste collected from below the forest, qualities that won it the very first ClimaHotel certification.





Models at full stretch from the Wallpaper\* December 2003 issue  
(Image credit: Sophie Delaporte)

Former Wallpaper\* lifestyle director Emma Moore and I were lucky enough to visit the pre-opening in September 2003. I returned soon after with photographer Sophie Delaporte, models Judith Bedard and Marcelo Bodrin, a suitcase of Tomas Maier & Missoni swimwear, some Malo cashmere, a Fendi blanket and some Prada games. We shot our imaginary guests inside and out of the property, making full use of the spa, pool and rooftop Paradise garden for our December 2003 issue, and we awarded Vigilius and Matteo Thun a design award for 'Best New Eco Retreat' in January 2005.



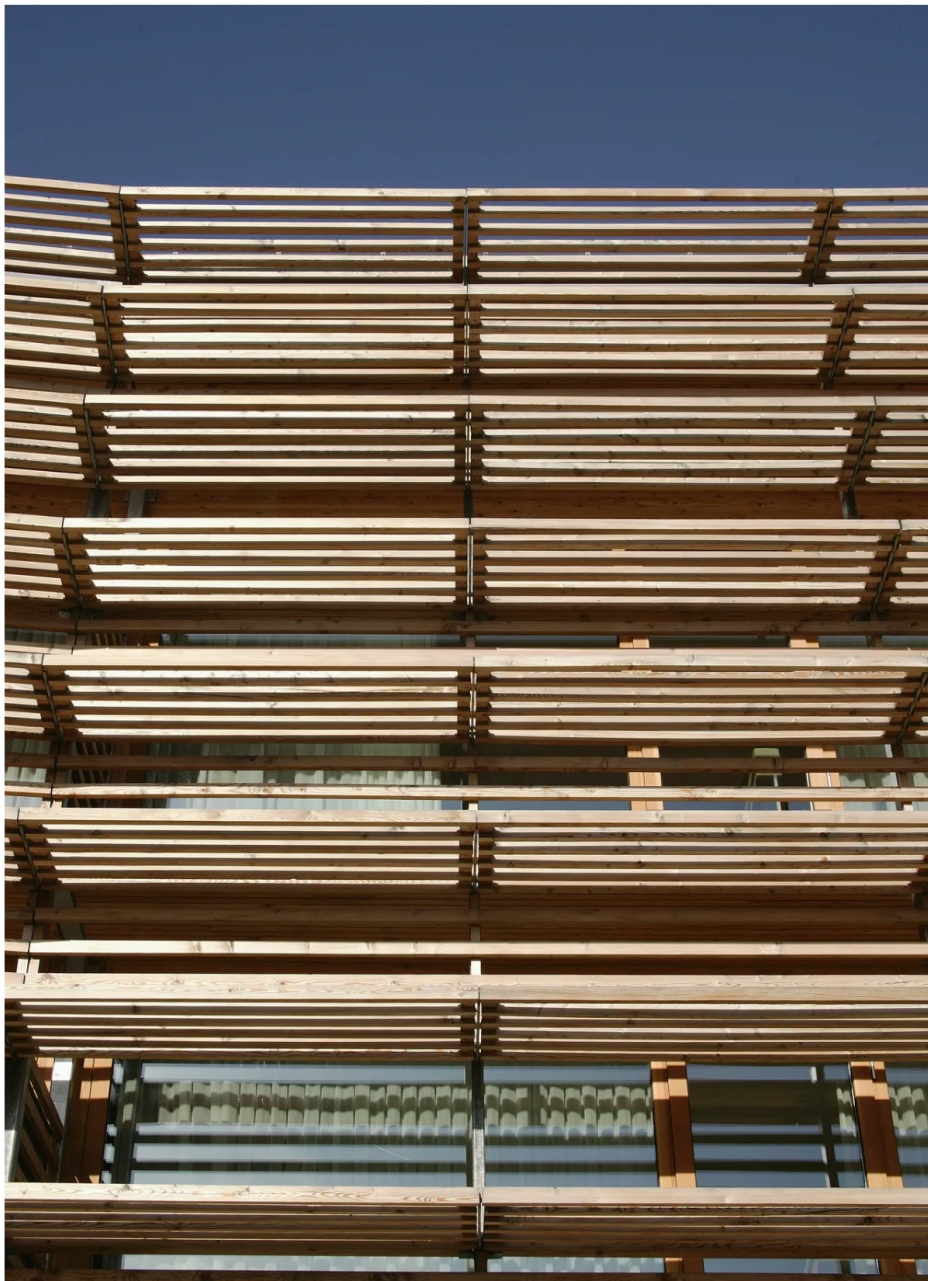
Former Wallpaper\* lifestyle director Emma Moore and I were lucky enough to visit the pre-opening in September 2003. I returned soon after with photographer Sophie Delaporte, models Judith Bedard and Marcelo Bodrin, a suitcase of Tomas Maier & Missoni swimwear, some Malo cashmere, a Fendi blanket and some Prada games. We shot our imaginary guests inside and out of the property, making full use of the spa, pool and rooftop Paradise garden for our December 2003 issue, and we awarded Vigilius and Matteo Thun a design award for 'Best New Eco Retreat' in January 2005.



The Aquiléia Spa at Vigilius Mountain Resort

(Image credit: Serge Brison. Courtesy of Matteo Thun and Partners)

This past weekend I returned again, to celebrate the official 20th anniversary. When arriving, the first thing that hits you is the smell. All that solid wood is still as pungent as ever and my olfactory memory clicked in. The guest rooms are just as delicious now as they were 20 years back - its absence of clutter (the smell version) gives you the ultimate olfactory experience. And you notice just how quiet it is; a genuine silence as outside it's just the mountain. Vigilius has aged extremely well, a testament to the quality of the architecture and design and the quality of the construction and materials used. Aside from a new and enlarged sauna and steam area, nothing had changed and there were few signs of ageing.



Close-up of Vigilius' larch and glass exterior

(Image credit: Thierry Malty. Courtesy of Matteo Thun and Partners)



Vigilius was Thun's first hotel project, he's gone on to be a leader in hospitality design, delivering sensitive and responsible projects in many beautiful locations. He designed responsibly before sustainability became the overused and often misused noun it is today.



The rooftop Paradise Garden

(Image credit: Courtesy of Matteo Thun and Partners)

On Saturday, during a talk to visitors invited to mark the anniversary, Mr. Ladurner said that when they opened, there were a lot of naysayers from the region. But their voices were silenced when our story came out, and it's fair to say that Vigilius has had a very positive influence in the region since. In 2005, Thun built the Terme Merano (published in Wallpaper\* April 2005 issue), 7,650 square metres of public baths with 25 pools set over five hectares, just 10 kilometres away.



Wood land from the Wallpaper\* December 2003 issue  
(Image credit: Sophie Delaporte)

Nearby, some of my favourite places include The Schgaguler, a 42-room hotel, designed by Peter Pichler Architecture and Martin Schgaguler in Castelrotto, around 1100 metres up. Forestis, which sits 1800 metres up on the southern slope of Plose mountain, built-in 2020 by Asaggio Architects, boasts an astonishing view of the massifs of the Dolomites, and there is AlpINN, the restaurant perched 2,275 metres up Mount Kronplatz with interiors by Martino Gamper, who was born down the road in Merano.





A tactile clay wall divides the bedroom and bath area

(Image credit: Courtesy of Matteo Thun and Partners)

The area is also known for fantastic food and wine, a healthy biodynamic agriculture sector, careful stewardship of local resources and family-run businesses. Ladurner has recently handed over responsibility for running Vigilius to his daughter Ingrid. I look forward to reporting back in 2044.