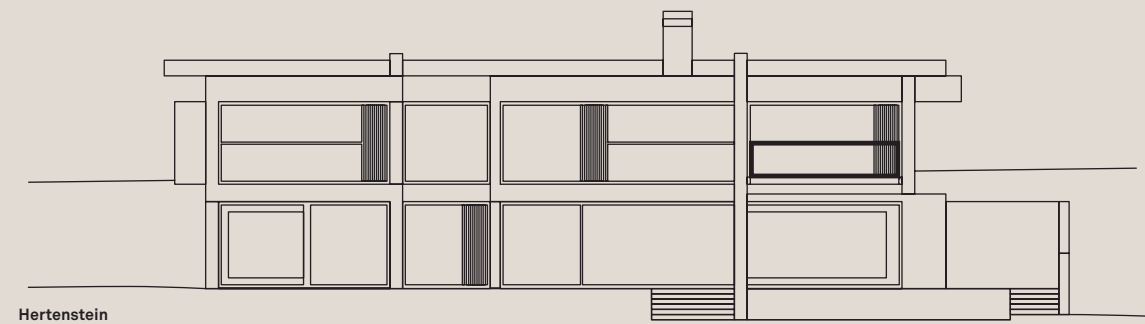


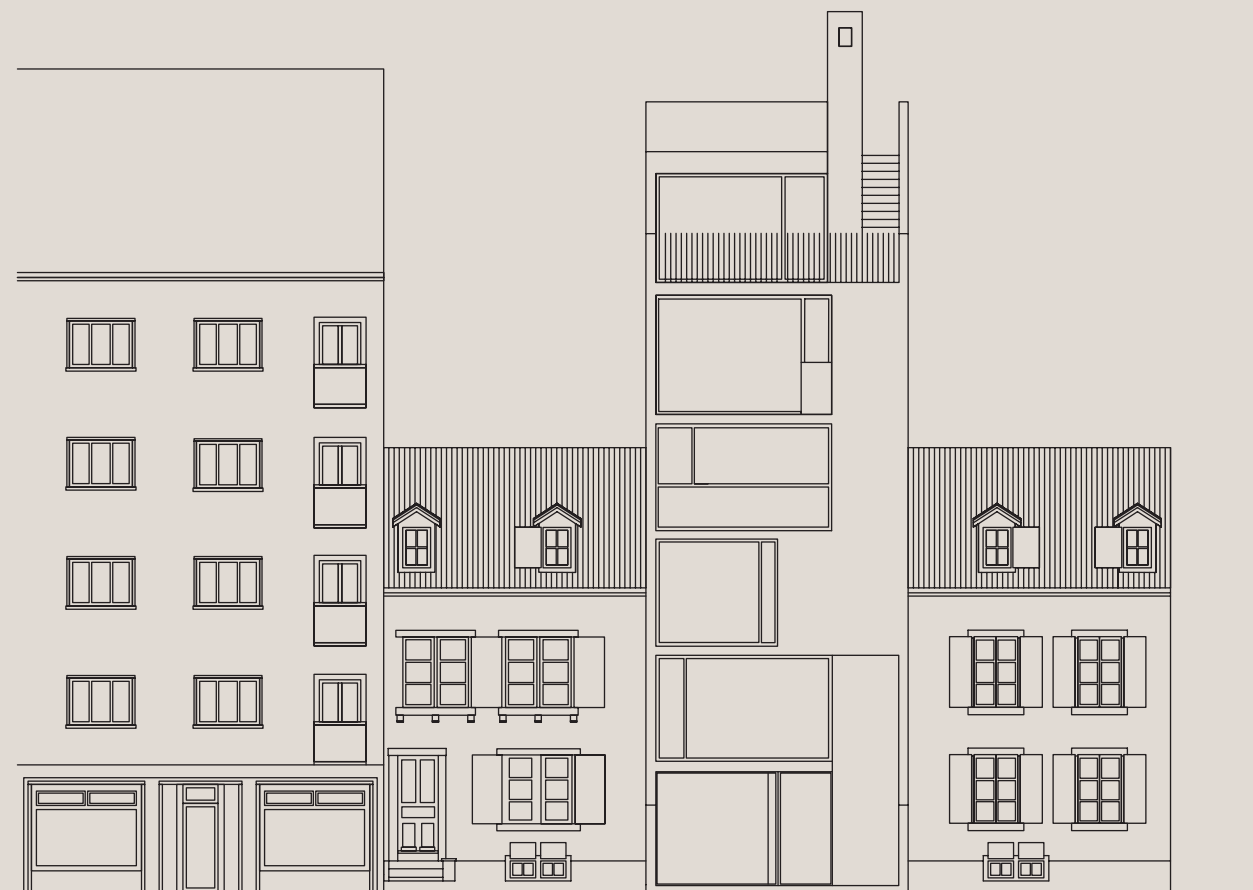
Text  
Katharina Marchal

Photos  
Ruedi Walti

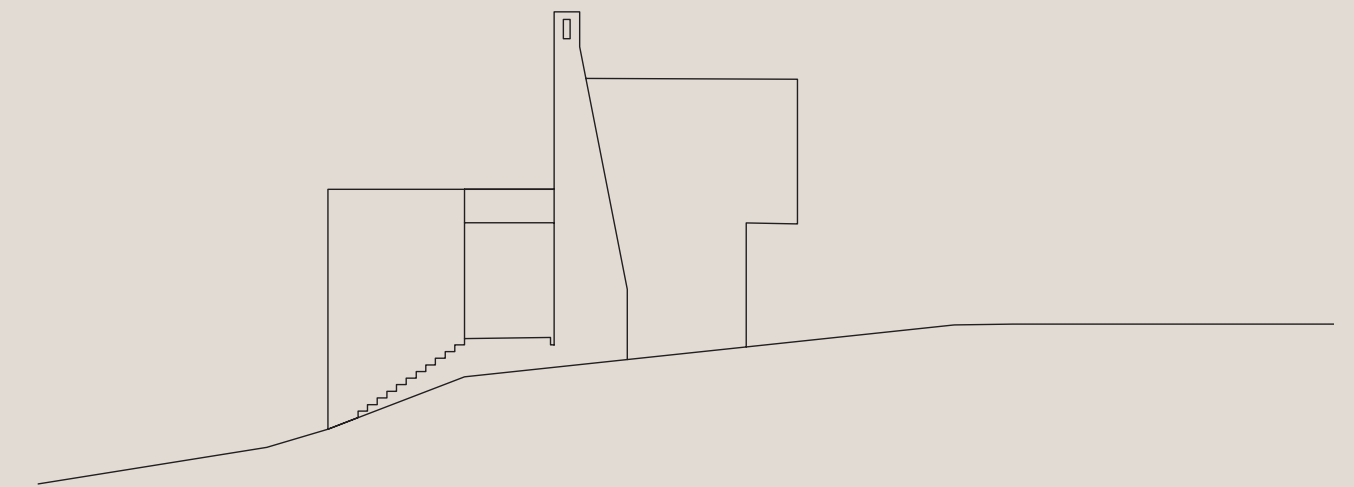


# 3 Houses

Buchner Bründler Architekten recently finished three new houses in Switzerland. We asked the firm's clients to share their thoughts on processes and results.



# 3 Stories



In building a private residence, the architect often develops a close relationship with his clients. Their rapport is not the only thing that affects the outcome, however. If you compare these three houses by Buchner Bründler Architekten (BBarc), it's easy to see the firm's signature, but the evolution that each property experienced is an equally important part of the picture. In the case of Haus Hertenstein in Weggis, the clients gave the architects nearly free rein in the design of their *Heimat* (German for 'home', in both a physical and psychological sense). As modern nomads and artists, they wanted the architects' creative process to be as free of resistance as possible. The owners of Haus Chienbergreben, on the other hand, incorporated images from magazines and other conventional ideas into the development and realization of their home, which continues to fill them

with pride and a holiday feeling. The Bläsiring project in Basel is the most radical manifestation of the team's love of concrete. After seeing and liking another BBarc building in Basel, the clients asked the architects to apply their ideas to an existing house, which was ultimately torn down and replaced by a building that now rises between two smaller houses, serving as a beacon for future development in this part of town.

Commonalities among the three houses begin with the use of materials: exposed concrete paired with timber. The second similarity is the sculptural character of these residences, which is visible inside and out. A third is the influence exerted by location and the immediate surroundings: Bläsiring adapts to the city, Chienbergreben to the countryside, and Hertenstein to the scenic beauty of Lake Lucerne and the Swiss Alps.



↑ The living room on the fourth floor features a mix of concrete and oak.

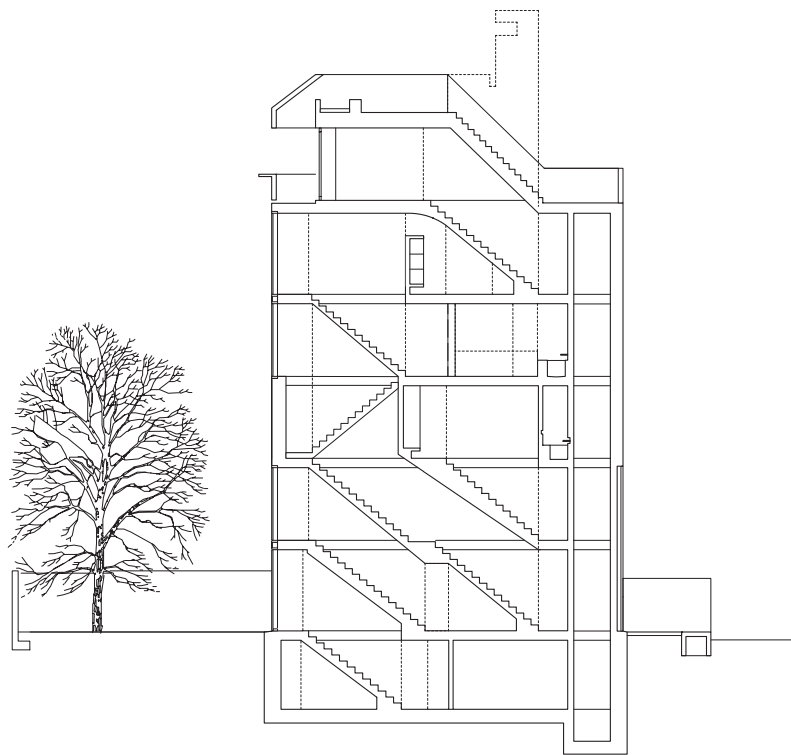
← A house from 1870 was torn down and replaced by a six-storey building that contains two triplex apartments.

1

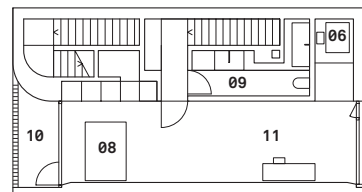
**Bläsiring**  
 (two triplex apartments)  
 Basel | Switzerland | 2012

→ A studio with a robust brick floor occupies the top level of the building.

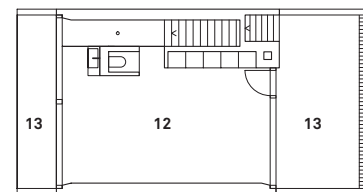
## Long Section



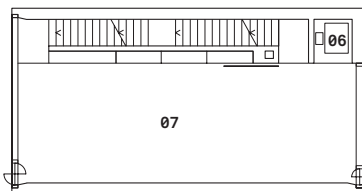
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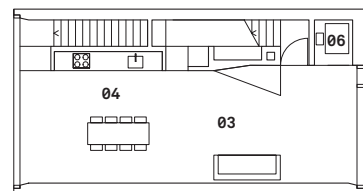
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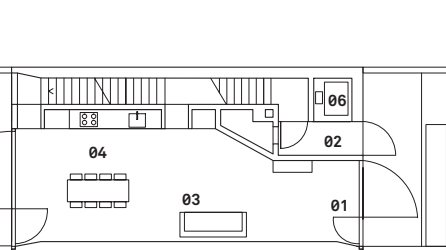
+1



+4



0



+3



- 01 Entrance lower apartment
- 02 Entrance upper apartment
- 03 Living room
- 04 Kitchen
- 05 Garden
- 06 Lift
- 07 Children's room
- 08 Master bedroom
- 09 Bathroom
- 10 Loggia
- 11 Study
- 12 Studio
- 13 Roof terrace

**Clients:** Because the project drew heavy protest from people living in the neighbourhood and was realized only after the necessary legal proceedings, the clients prefer to remain anonymous. (Architect Daniel Buchner of BBarc lives in the apartment upstairs.)

### What made you choose Buchner Bründler Architekten?

We learned about the firm after seeing the residential building on Colmarerstrasse in Basel. We liked the building very much, because it's so reduced and modern. It's also got a rather radical appearance. After buying a house, we hired the two architects to make a study of how it could be renovated and revamped. In the end, though, we decided to have the house torn down. It seemed like the best option for us.

### What do you like about your house?

The open-plan programme, the huge windows and the continuously poured concrete floor. Rooms don't dictate our way of life as they would in an older house. The interior design is what gives the space life. I especially like the niches and curves, as well as the floor-to-ceiling windows, which open to the garden and create a sense of interior blending with exterior. Even in the children's room on the first floor, the window frames a beautiful view of the tree outside, giving an impression of standing in a garden. We really like the combination of raw concrete and built-in elements made of oak.

### Would you do anything differently?

Certain concrete elements are hardly protected and already under heavy stress. Surfaces are more beautiful when they're untreated and matte, but a little more paint would have made them less sensitive to wear.

### What did your former home look like?

We lived in an old three-room apartment with a parquet floor, at the edge of the city, with a view of the Rhine.

### How was your cooperation with BBarc during the various phases of the project?

There was a lot of convincing necessary. But the architects did a good job. We worked hard together – work that included looking at some of their buildings and getting a better understanding of the radicality that goes into their projects.





← A façade with blind walls in three directions gives the house its sculptural character.

→ The occupants anticipate the pleasure that their shallow-stepped stairway will provide as they grow older.

↘ A gigantic glass wall on the upper floor opens the house to the landscape.



## Clients: Rahel and Marcel Reist

### How did you find out about Buchner Bründler Architekten?

MARCEL REIST: We bought a plot at the edge of a village from a family that had to move to another city for professional reasons. They had started a project with BBarc, so we continued working with the architects, but the project got a new concept.

### How do you like the house?

We're proud of our house. It's big but clearly organized and, at the same time, completely unusual. It corresponds to our desires. We like the ramp-like staircase, which we call our 'retirement precaution'. Huge windows on the ground and first floors frame an amazing view of the valley. Upstairs we have a kind of wellness area next to the generous bath and built-in sauna. It's a glassed-in space where we can cool off after leaving the sauna. In the winter, the space is closed and becomes a part of the interior. From here, we ascend the floating steel staircase to the roof, where we have a whirlpool and a fantastic panoramic view. Next to the living room is a protected outdoor seating area where you can take in the surrounding landscape. My wife loves the chrome-steel kitchen. And I definitely wanted cladding in brushed and tinted brass for the garage door and entrance area. The house has no windows to the street. Between outside and inside is an entrance courtyard with a ceiling light. We loved the idea. We also wanted a fireplace. This one has no threshold and extends over the entire length of the living room, creating an amazing atmosphere.

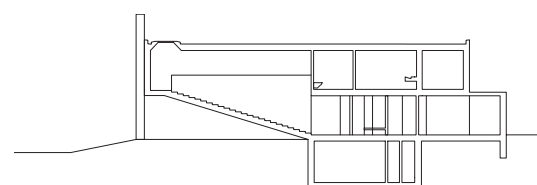
### Would you do anything differently next time?

Nothing. We're happy about the daring decision to use exposed concrete on walls and ceilings. It's not something we would have done in the past. The concrete lives, because traces of the formwork are visible. And in the bathroom, concrete is a lot easier to take care of than caulked tiles, which are much harder to clean. Another good decision was oak flooring, which suits the big casement windows and built-in elements.

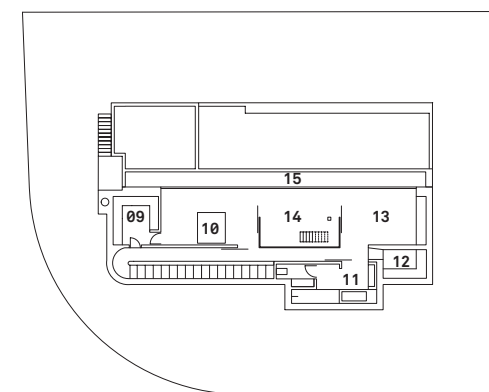
### What did your old house look like?

We lived in a village, in a house built in the post-war period. It was dark and narrow and, compared with this one, not at all exciting.

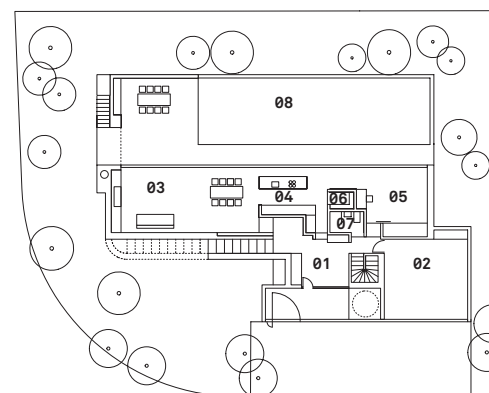
## Long Section



+1



0



- 01 Entrance
- 02 Garage
- 03 Living room
- 04 Kitchen
- 05 Guest room
- 06 Storage
- 07 Toilet
- 08 Terrace
- 09 Walk-in closet
- 10 Bedroom
- 11 Bathroom
- 12 Sauna
- 13 Space for relaxation
- 14 Loggia
- 15 Extra-long flower box



# 2

**Haus Chienbergreben**  
Gelterkinden | Switzerland | 2012



**Clients: The clients, a photographer and a concert pianist, prefer to remain anonymous. Our questions were answered by the photographer.**

**How did you find Buchner Bründler Architekten?**

We could call ourselves 'modern nomads'. For years we've been on tour – all over the world, over long periods of time – living for months in the most varied places. With this house, we wanted to fulfil the dream of a 'home'. A friend gave us a tip about a unique plot of land above Lake Lucerne, with a view to the Alps. While we were researching suitable architects, we came across BBarc.

**Why did you choose the plot in Hertenstein?**

A lot of people here were doing exceptionally creative work, independent of one another: Rachmaninov, for example, to whom my partner [the concert pianist] dedicated her first album, spent several summers here. Already on the first visit to Lake Lucerne, we developed a special, almost esoteric feeling for the surroundings.

**What factors helped you formulate your desires as building supervisors here?**

We definitely wanted to have a contemporary house that can absorb nature through incisions, cutouts, windows and openings. Right from the start, we said that you have to be able to experience this panorama, the lake, and the mountain face that rises behind it. At the same time, however, we wanted to have an area in the back that blocks out all of that: this atrium, which is Zen, calm, entirely isolated, and is only drizzled with light from above.

The house must reflect inside what can be felt outside. In the domestic security, you have to feel the energy of the surroundings. It radiates from the outside to the inside and goes from me, the inhabitant, through the house, back outside again.

**What do you like about the house?**

The most beautiful room for me is the hallway on the upper floor. It has only a top light, and the view is starkly framed through the deep cut in the building. But when I walk along it, it's no longer a space for me; I'm carried away. Just like the yard. Because it is bordered off, it opens up extremely wide.

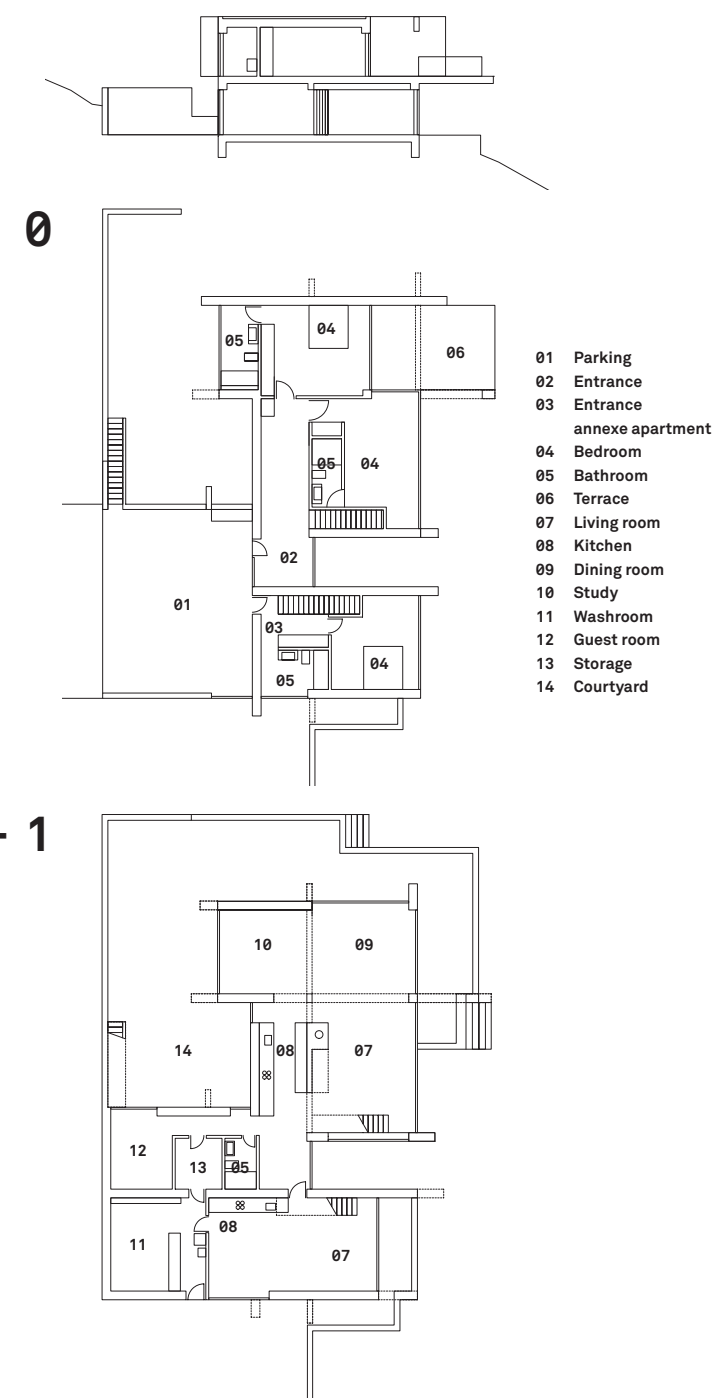
**How was the cooperation during project development and building?**

I don't believe in architects and owners sitting together for hours, discussing countless designs until something is created. After we discovered the architects and studied their work, we decided that the two needed carte blanche... and as little information as possible from us, simply the key elements.

bbarc.ch



**Cross Section**



**3**

**Haus Hertenstein**

(single-family home with annexe apartment)  
Weggis | Switzerland | 2012

↖ Thanks to Haus Hertenstein's sloping site, the floor accommodating the living room is below street level.

↗ Living areas face Lake Lucerne in the distance.

→ The design of this house moves to the rhythm and harmony of classical music.

