WOOD ARCHITECTURE, *light* AESTHETICS

ATMOSFERA

GUIDE — 2025

A guide to ten projects selected by ATMOSFERA Mag exploring the many forms and possibilities of wood in architecture today—proof that it will always find the light way

WOOD ARCHITECTURE, *light* AESTHETICS

What can **wood** do for the cities of tomorrow? For centuries, it has been a material of necessity, local, available, familiar. Today, it is reclaiming its place in contemporary architecture, no longer just a nod to tradition but a response to the future. Architects and engineers are rethinking its potential, using it to address the challenges of urban growth, sustainability, and resource efficiency.

Building with wood today means navigating constraints—bureaucratic hurdles, budget limitations, regulatory challenges. Yet, despite these obstacles, innovation finds its way. Some architects work closely with local sawmills and regional timber, grounding projects in the materials and rhythms of their landscapes. Others embrace engineered and industrialized wood, pushing the boundaries of scalability and structural efficiency. One approach reinforces the **bond with place**, the other explores the **limits of technology**—both shape a new language for architecture.

No longer confined to alpine chalets or rural barns, wood is entering the fabric of cities. It frames **bridges and public spaces**, **high-performance infrastructures**, and **bold urban interventions**. It is flexible yet resilient, expressive yet efficient. As Roland Baldi, architect of Asilo a Chienes, puts it, «wood is gaining increasing popularity thanks to its sustainability, efficiency, and capacity to absorb CO2, making it an ideal solution for contemporary construction». Beyond its environmental benefits, wood's **natural insulating properties** enhance energy efficiency, reducing heating and cooling demands. Its **lightweight yet strong structure** makes it particularly effective in **seismic zones**, where it absorbs stress better than traditional materials. The possibility of **prefabrication** streamlines construction, cutting costs, timelines, and waste, while its **warm, natural aesthetic** creates spaces that feel grounded and inviting. These qualities are making wood not just a material of the past, but a material of the future.

But material alone does not make architecture. The evolution of wood construction depends on a **network of architects, engineers, manufacturers, and institutions**, working together to overcome technical and regulatory challenges.

The projects featured in this guide are an evidence to this collective effort. From high-rises to cycle bridges, from public buildings to intimate spaces, they illustrate how wood is shaping contemporary architecture—bridging **past and future, craft and technology, structure and atmosphere**. Some explore its role in urban infrastructure, others in landscape integration, and in certain cases, in dialogue with **lighting design**, where light and material amplify each other, shaping experience beyond form.

Born in **2020**, ATMOSFERA Mag was founded on the idea that light is not just a technical element, but a **language**—one that deserves to be explored, studied, and told. Created by **A.A.G. STUCCHI**, a historic Italian company **founded in 1944**, today led by **Aristide Stucchi.** Over time, it has evolved from a lighting components manufacturer into a global leader in track lighting systems, with a commercial network spanning five continents through agents and specialized distributors. The magazine narrates the story of light through the voices and experiences of those who shape it, bridging **heritage and technological innovation**—a natural extension of the company's ongoing commitment to light as both a technical field and a cultural narrative to be explored and shared.

A space takes shape—one dedicated to **reflection, exchange, and discovery.** As digitalization and new technologies redefine how we illuminate our surroundings, ATMOSFERA looks beyond function to explore the **cultural and emotional dimensions** of light. It brings visibility to the people and ideas shaping the industry today, offering a place where **knowledge and inspiration meet.**

Keep following us through the magazine, our social media channels, or by staying subscribed to our newsletter. Stay connected, stay inspired—because light, in all its forms, is a story worth telling.






(01) ASILO A CHIENES by Roland Baldi Architects
(02) METROPOL PARASOL by J.Mayer.H Architects
(03) AQUATICS CENTRE by VenhoevenCS + Ateliers 2/3/4
(04) ZALLINGER by NOA—Network of Architecture
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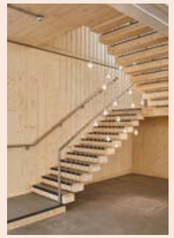


(01)

ASILO A CHIENES
WOOD AND STONE—Revamping vernacular style

Finalist at the **2025 Wood Architecture Prize** by Klimahouse, the new building for **preschool and kindergarten in Chienes**, designed by Roland Baldi Architects, is a **timber construction** with a façade color—a warm reddish brown—inspired by the nearby **church tower**, allowing it to blend harmoniously into the existing town center.

The **partially subterranean ground floor** was constructed in **concrete**, providing a solid base for the **upper level**, which rises in a **wooden construction made of cross-laminated timber (CLT) panels**. The **green roof**, both ecologically and aesthetically considered, contributes to the building's **environmental performance**. On the **ground floor**, the **granite cladding** integrates seamlessly with the surrounding context.

Ph Credits by Oskar Da Riz

by Roland Baldi Architects
Chienes, Bolzano, Italy

«Generous windows on the exterior façades and the internal atrium ensure optimal natural lighting and create a bright, inviting atmosphere inside», underline the architect.

«Particular emphasis was placed on sustainability of the materials and safety of the environment. The entire building was constructed to the Klimahaus/CasaClima A standard. Heating is provided by a free-standing air-water heat pump. In addition, controlled ventilation with heat recovery ensures fresh air and a pleasant indoor climate. Photovoltaic panels generate electricity and are integrated into the green roof», he concludes.

(02)

METROPOL PARASOL
SURPRISING WOOD—A starship landed in the heart of Andalucia

Metropol Parasol is a **unique and unprecedented wooden structure** measuring **150 × 70 metres** with a height of approximately **28.5 metres**, made with **3,500 pieces joined by almost 3,000 knots and 16 million bolts and nuts**.

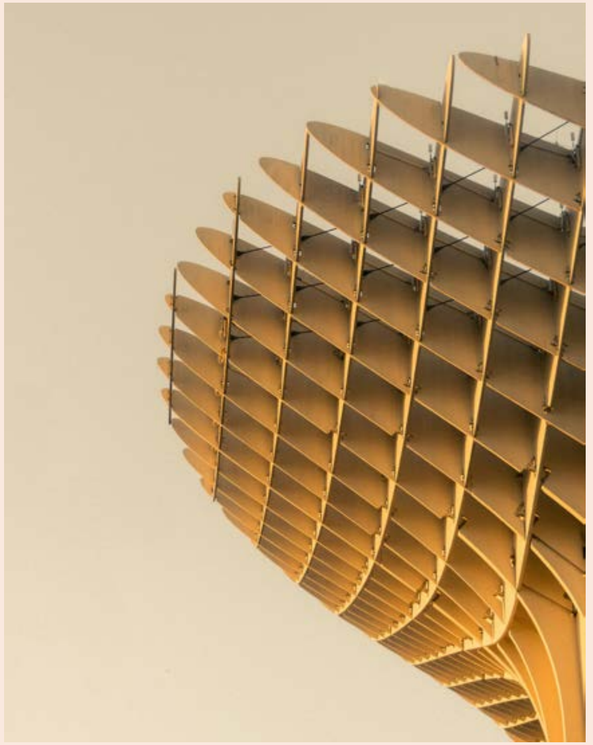
Built with **micro-laminated Finnish pine wood (kerto)** covered with waterproof, breathable, and flexible polyurethane, it was designed by J.Mayer.H Architects in 2004 for a competition to fill the urban void of **Encarnación Square** in **Seville** after the demolition of the historic marketplace. It was very soon renamed **Las Setas** by the citizens, a name that is due to the **mushroom shape** of the structure.

Ph Credits by Antonio Garcia Prats

by J.Mayer.H Architects
Seville, Spain

Ph Credits by Elia

Ph Credits by Henry Acevedo



Ph Credits by Mateusz Walendzik

Las Setas features an **archaeological museum**, a **farmers' market**, an **elevated plaza**, and multiple **bars and restaurants** underneath and inside the parasols, designed to make the area **attractive to tourists and a meeting place for locals**. Its highlight is the **meandering walkway** on the top, offering a **360° view of the city**.

Every night, from **9:30 to 00:00** (00:30 during summer months), the **Parasol comes alive thanks to Aurora**, a **dynamic and colorful light show** that redefines its appearance.

(03)

AQUATICS CENTRE
OLYMPIC WOOD—The green soul of the latest Games

Built in Saint-Denis—opposite the Stade de France for the Olympic Games Paris 2024, the Aquatics Centre **is the major facility built specifically for the event**, since 95% of the dedicated venues already existed or were temporary. Conceived by VenhoevenCS and Ateliers 2/3/4 it hosted the diving, water polo and synchronized swimming competitions; soon it will be open to the community as pool with restaurant, fitness hall, 3 padel courses and 5×5 football field.

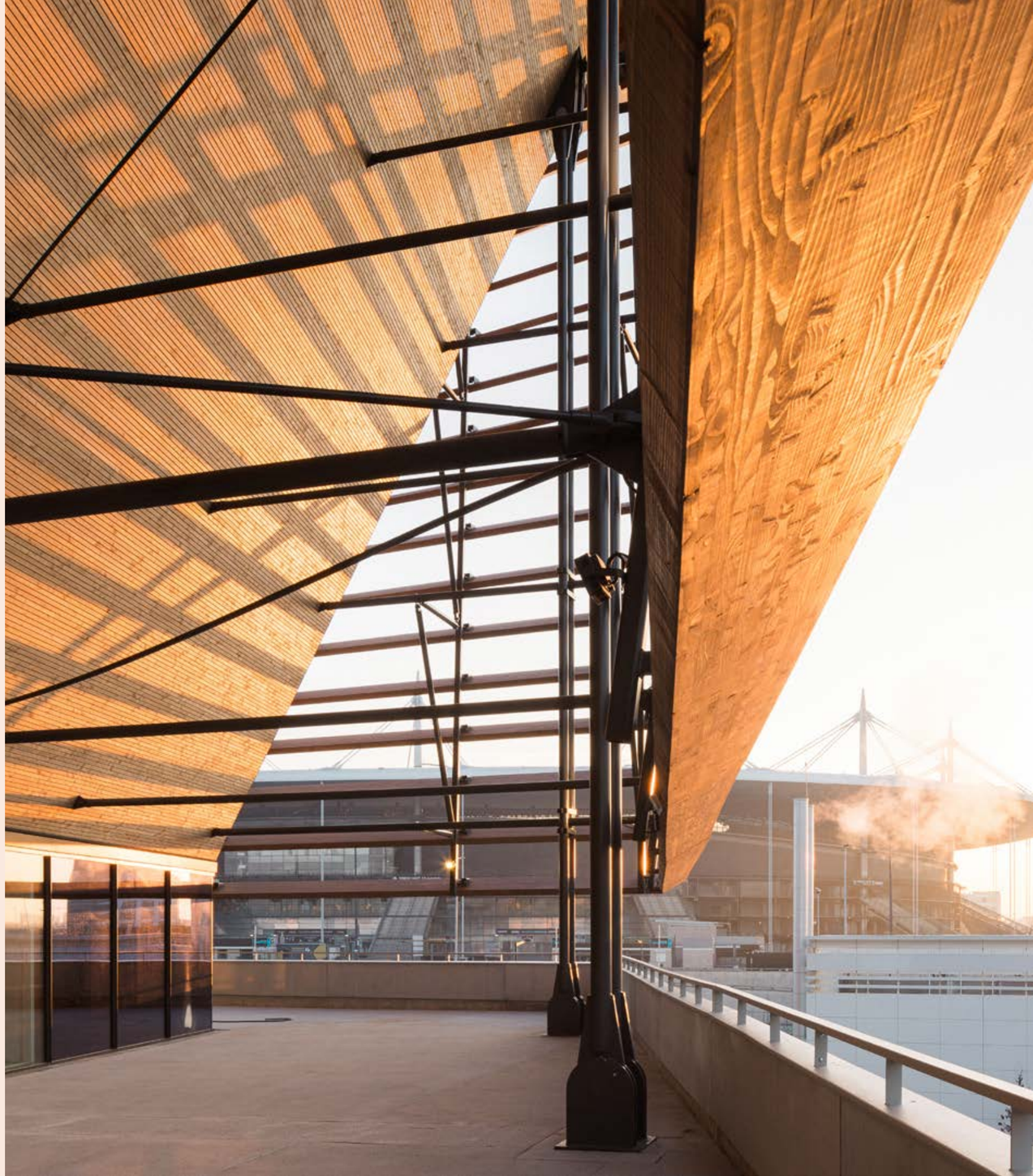
The arena presents a fluid silhouette designed as a strong, compact form that offers a unified image. **A wooden sculpture emerging from a green landscape**, a beacon in the metropolitan sky. **Entirely enveloped by sunbreakers with sinuous, dynamic lines** that create an architectural in-between space, it offers a protected threshold to welcome spectators and extend the uses of the building.

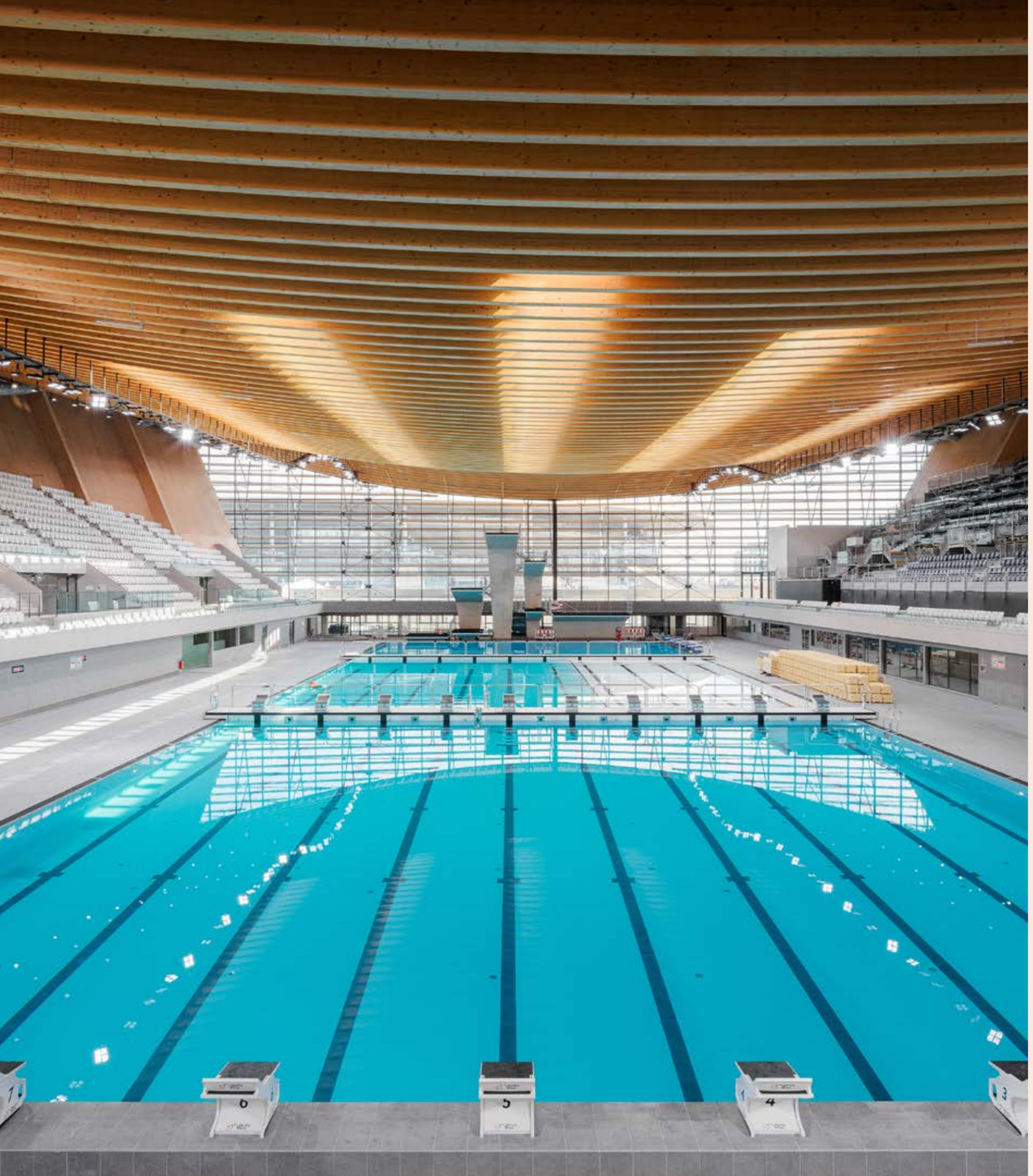
Ph Credits by Salem Mostefaoui

by VenhoevenCS + Ateliers 2/3/4
Paris

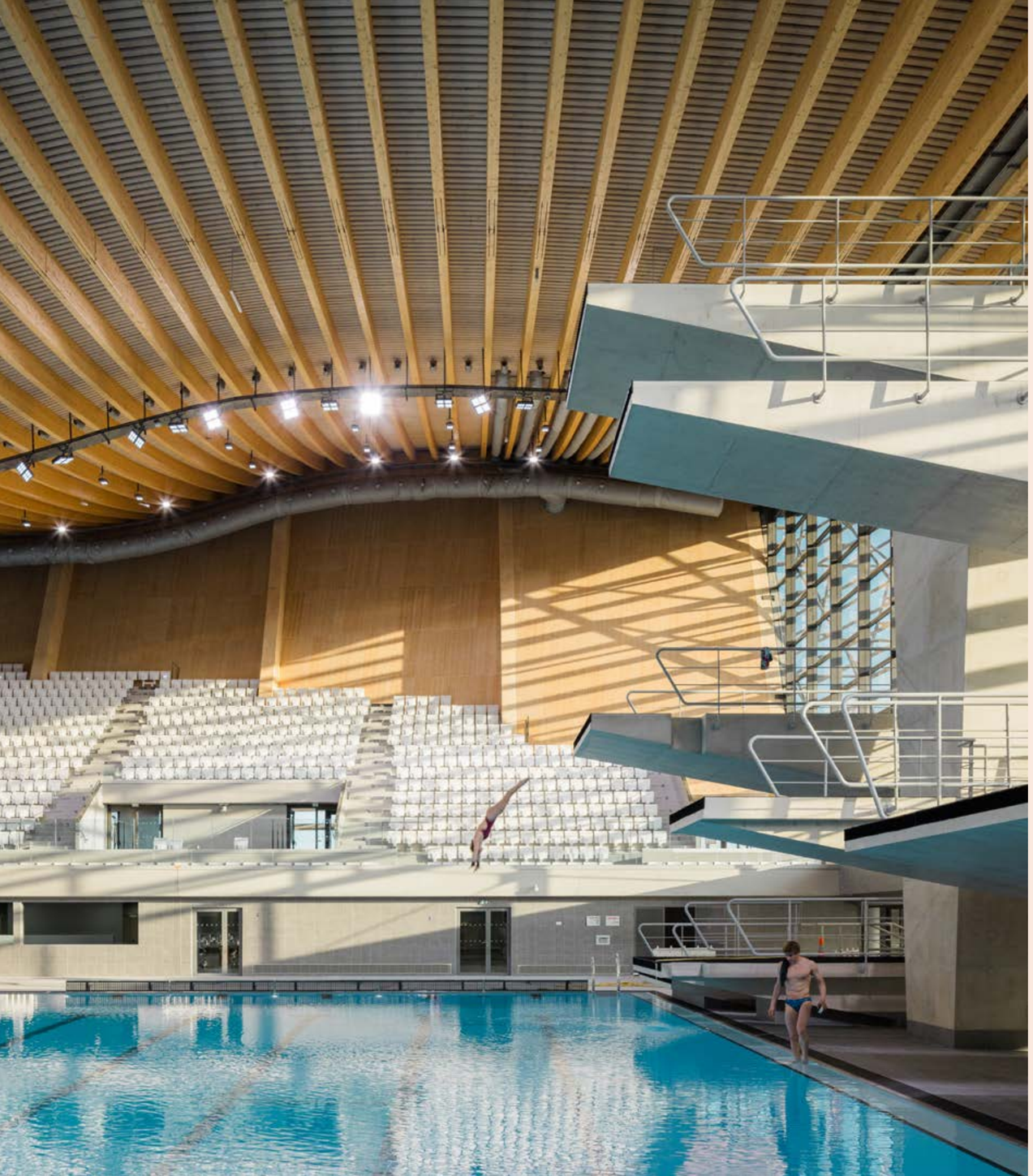
Both on the inside and outside, wood adds coherence to the project, inviting people in, giving rhythm to the routes, filtering light and views, and creating a richness of colour, patterns and softness.
From Atelier 2/3/4 they point out the attention to environmental care:

«Our sustainable design philosophy means that the materials used are carefully selected in terms of quality, quantity and origin, but above all for their ability to optimize their life cycle. Priority is given to bio-sourced materials. The all-timber structure reduces a large proportion of co2 emissions compared to steel and concrete. If the building is eventually demolished, the timber in the structure can be reused in other projects without any loss of quality or value. The co2 stored in the wood will remain out of the atmosphere for hundreds of years».





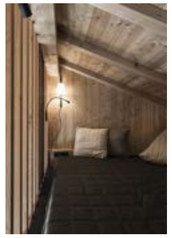
The lighting project for the Aquatics Centre is also relevant. **The exterior lighting oscillates between ordinary and extraordinary situations**. It highlights the time spent in the city, between neighborhood life and festivities, establishing the nocturnal landscape of a new urbanity under construction. A series of tall masts that have heights of up to 12 meters, arranged in clusters along alleyways and parks rather than streets, create a visual link between the Stade de France and the new ZAC Saulnier. **The Olympic cocoon relies on contrast, offering soft, warm, and focused lighting which accentuates the wood on the north and south facades**, complementing the surrounding illumination. **Inside, the space is designed to maximize natural light**, creating a sense of openness and connection to its surroundings. In addition to natural light, effective artificial illumination is essential for both daily training and major competitions. To achieve this, two long light lines run along the curve of the roof on either side of the swimming pool.



VenhoevenCS underlines that

«These lines are equipped with movable light elements, allowing to adjust the lighting as needed. This design ensures uniform and consistent light distribution across the competition area, optimizing visibility. Above the stands, strategically placed light fixtures subtly emerge from the timber roof. These lights contribute to a warm and inviting ambiance and are intended to be perceived as secondary spaces, in contrast to the water surface where the sport and action take place».

(04)



ZALLINGER
STACKING WOOD—In memory of the Genius Loci

At an altitude of **2,200 meters**, NOA network of architecture designed the **expansion and reconstruction** of an **old 19th-century lodge**, its **seven barns**, and a **small church**, transforming them into the **Zallinger diffuse hotel**.

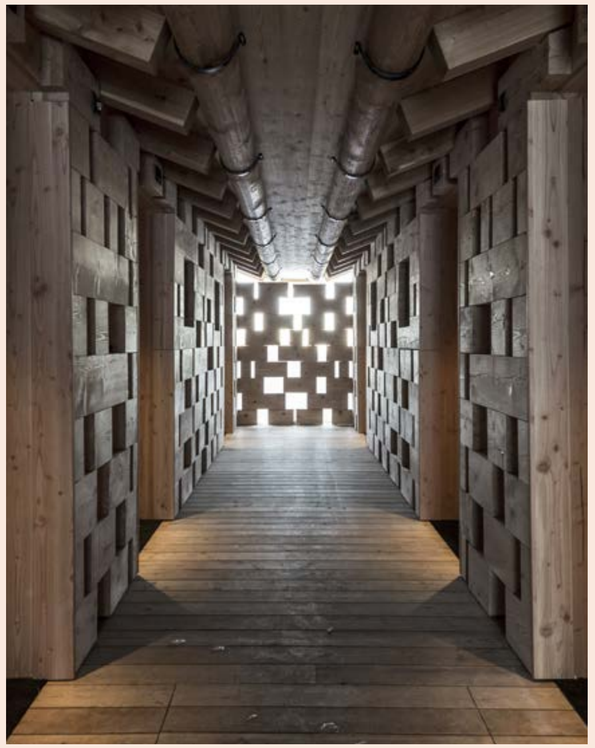
«The aim was to improve the quality and accommodation capacity of an old high mountain hotel structure without altering the delicate landscape and environmental balance, while at the same time creating aesthetic value and sustainability», say the architects at NOA.

Ph Credits by Alex Filz

by NOA—Network of Architecture
Alp of Siusi, Italy

From a **constructive perspective**, each unit rests on a **concrete plateau**, built using **prefabricated wood construction methods**, following a **custom engineering approach** developed by the architects. The **architectural and interior aesthetics** are defined by **structural wooden walls**, giving the space a **modern “log-cabin” character**.

NOA’s objective was to reinterpret the **traditional structures of South Tyrolean mountain pastures** with a contemporary approach. The **external cladding** surrounding the chalets consists of **solid wood blocks**, stacked in an **alternating pattern of full and empty spaces**, becoming a **dominant motif** of the new settlement. Inspired by **the ancient barns of the region**, this solution eliminates **glare from exposed windows**, which would be inappropriate in a **high-altitude environment**.



The **building's structure interacts with natural light,** as **Stefan Rier**, founder of NOA and lead architect for Zallinger, explains:

«Sunlight in the mountains is intense, vibrant, and, when reflected by the snowpack, can become glaring. Our goal was to modulate this intensity to create an environment of calm and an evocative atmosphere within the room. The use of staggered solid wood blocks recalls the traditional ventilated walls of mountain barns, used for drying hay, but at the same time generates a façade harmoniously integrated into the landscape. And, inside, this architectural solution projects fascinating plays of light in constant motion, bringing architecture, interior design, and nature into dialogue».

(05)

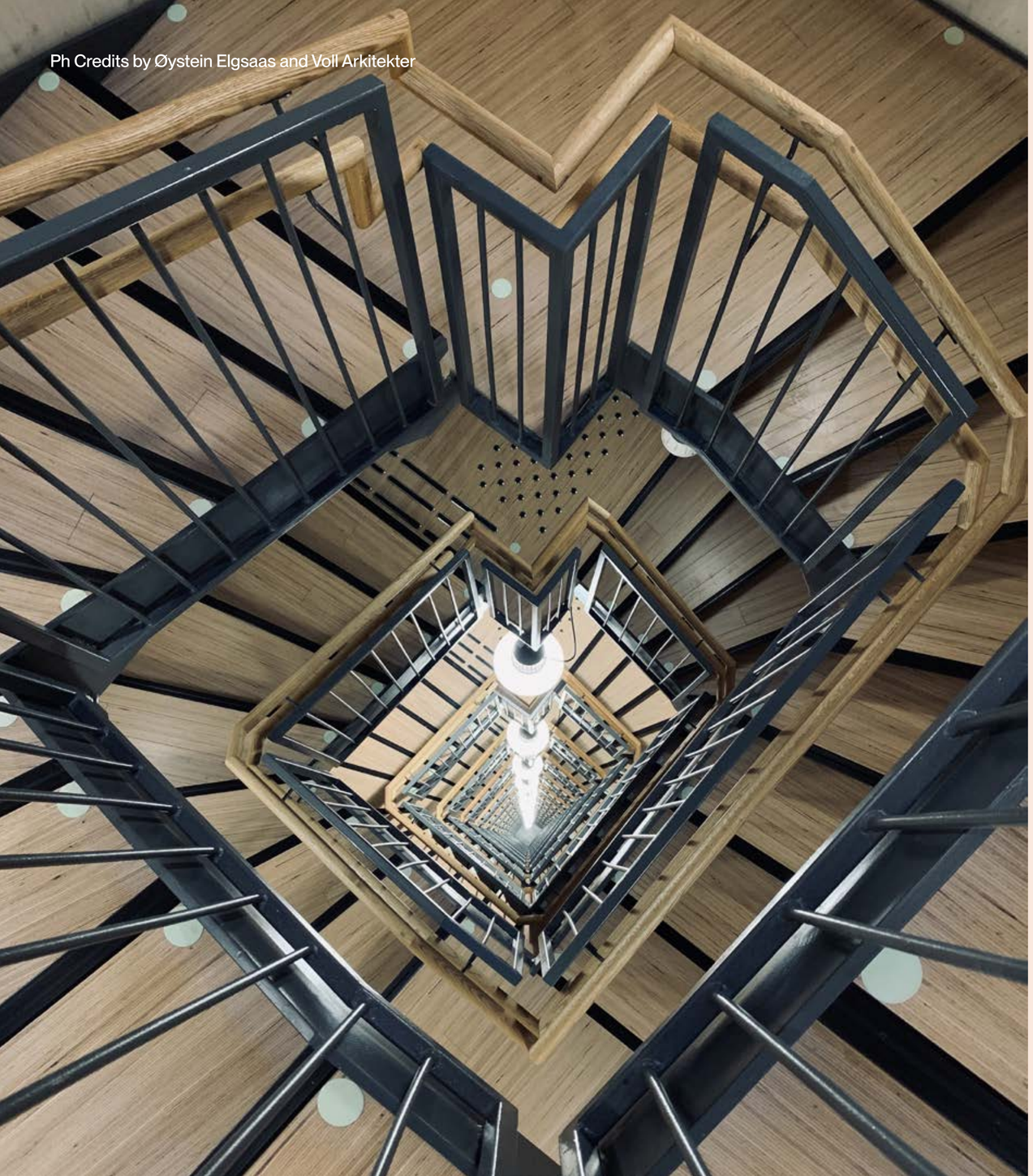
MJØSTÅRNET
WOOD SKYSCRAPER—The world tallest building built in wood

Mjøstårnet—The tower of Lake Mjøsa is a symbol of the green shift in architecture, demonstrating that **tall buildings can be constructed using local resources, local suppliers, and sustainable wooden materials**. Located in **Brumunddal**, a small city with 10,000 residents, about one and a half hours north of Oslo, the structure **stands out in the landscape by the water.**

Voll Arkitekter has been responsible for the site regulation, the tower's design, and the public bath connected to the building.

Ph Credits by Ricardo Foto

by Voll Arkitekter
Brumunddal, Norway



Ph Credits by Øystein Elgsaas and Voll Arkitekter

«The tower consists of 18 stories with different programs. The official height is 85.4 meters and is recognized by the CTBU as the world's tallest timber building. With a footprint of only 17 meters in width and 37.5 meters in length, each floor is about 640 m^2. The total program for the tower is about 10,500 m^2 with an additional 4,900 m^2 public bath».

Ph Credits by Øystein Elgsaas and Voll Arkitekter

The **main load-bearing structure** consists of **large-scale glulam trusses** positioned along the **façades**, combined with **internal columns and beams**. These trusses manage global forces in both horizontal and vertical directions, ensuring the necessary stiffness of the building. CLT walls provide secondary load-bearing support for three elevators and two staircases. The building envelope is formed by **large prefabricated façade elements**, which are **attached to the outside of the timber structure**. These sandwich-type elements include incombustible insulation and pre-installed external panels.
Voll Arkitekter highlights:

«The most important aspect of Mjøstårnet is to show that it is possible to build large, complex timber buildings, and in that fashion, inspire others to do the same».

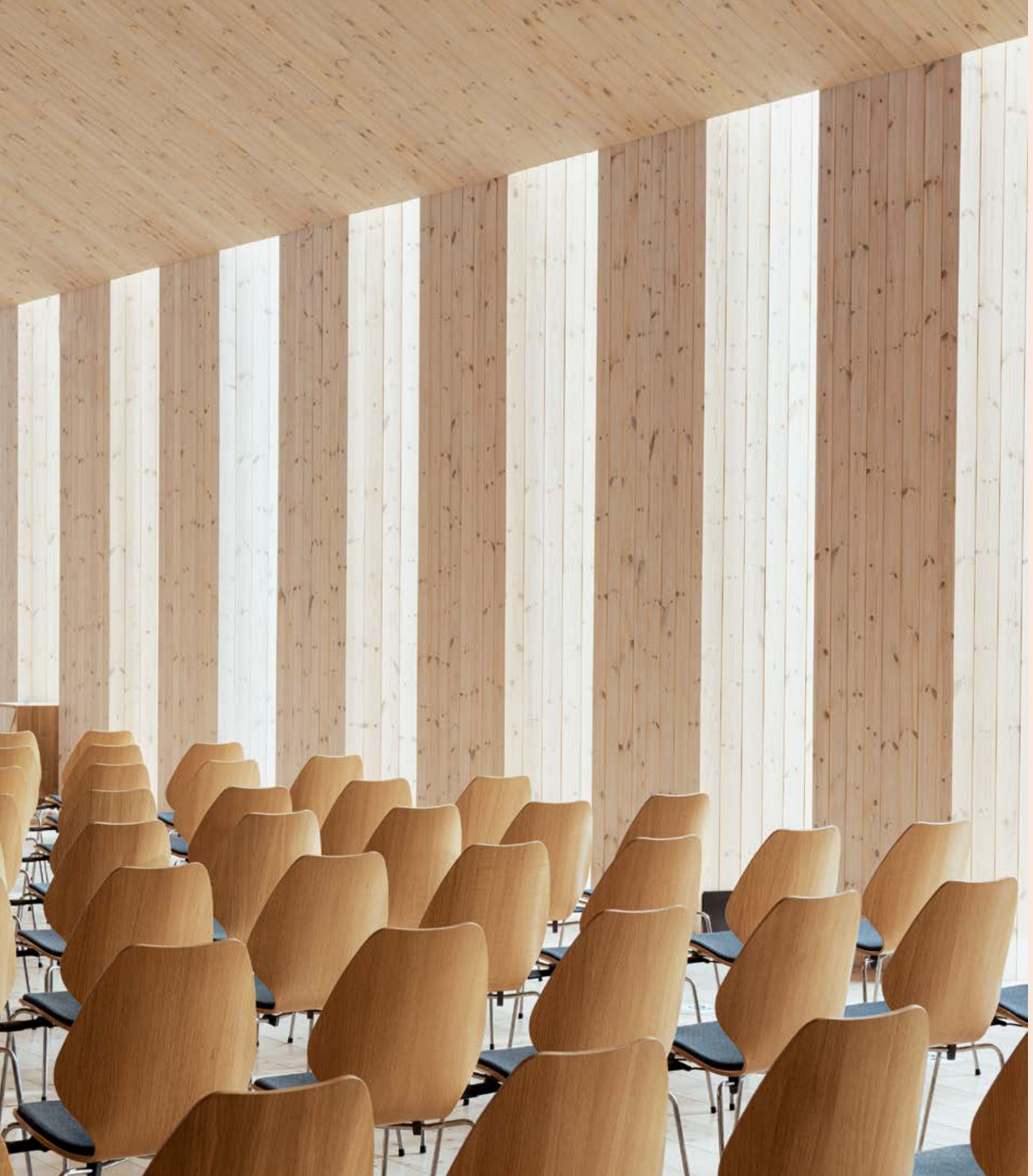
Ph Credits by Melissa Hegge

(06)

COMMUNITY CHURCH KNARVIK
HOLY WOOD—A cathedral made of slabs

by Reiulf Ramstad Architects
Knarvik, Norway

Located on the **scenic west coast of Norway**, north of Bergen, **Knarvik Church** is inspired by the **local tradition of stave building**, with a shape defined by clear and elemental geometries, materials, and construction techniques. Designed by Reiulf Ramstad Architects, it stands as a **landmark within the landscape**, distinguished by its ability to **merge religion, culture, and the site-specific context** into a unified architectural expression.



Regarding the **construction technique and light**, the architects stated:

«Wood is the key material of the project, expressed in the homogeneous cladding of pre-weathered pine heartwood and mirrored by the light-coloured pine finish on all interior surfaces. The building permits daylight into its volume through lancet-reminiscent tall and narrow windows, splayed in plan to maximise admittance and reduce glare. At night, the warm glow of the interior reveals the activities of its religious and cultural events»

(07)

CYCLING THROUGH THE HEATHLAND
WOODEN PATHWAYS—A cycling route integrated into the landscape

Within **Hoge Kempen National Park**, Cycling through the Heathland extends for **4 kilometers**, providing a route that improves access to Limburg's **natural and cultural landscape** while ensuring minimal environmental impact. Designed by Maat-Ontwerpers **in collaboration with Bart Lens**, the project is integrated into **Visit Limburg's Cycling Synergy Strategy**, a program aimed at expanding and diversifying the region's **2,000 km cycling network** through the creation of **experience-based pathways**.

The key element of the project is a **300-meter-long wooden cycle bridge**, conceived as both a **safe crossing over the national road** and an **elevated vantage point** over the **Mechelse Heide**, one of Flanders' largest heathland areas, spanning **700 hectares**.

Ph Credits by Kurt Vandeweerdt and Frank Resseler

by Maat-Ontwerpers in collaboration with Bart Lens
Maasmechelen, Belgium

The bridge is positioned at the transition between **dense pine forests and open heath**, aligning with the **existing topography** while ensuring minimal disruption to the site. The **high wooden walls** along the bridge create a **progressive visual sequence**, guiding cyclists through a **spatial transition** that emphasizes the contrast between enclosed and open landscapes.

The bridge structure is built using **local coniferous wood**, a material historically linked to Limburg's **mining industry**, where it was extensively planted to supply timber for underground construction. The **modular construction system**, based on **small spans and prefabricated elements**, ensures **efficient assembly and durability** while reducing on-site environmental impact. The design takes reference from **traditional infrastructure typologies**, including **piers and trestle bridges**, reinforcing a connection to both **historical tourism structures and industrial engineering methods**.

Environmental considerations were integrated into both the **design and construction process.** To protect local **fauna and flora**, including the **smooth snake**, the bridge foundations were built using **individual footings rather than a continuous foundation beam**, reducing soil disturbance. Additionally, the original black asphalt on the cycle path was replaced with **grey concrete**, which heats up less rapidly, preventing the surface from becoming an artificial heat source that could attract reptiles. Beneath the bridge, **3,700 m² of former road surface was removed**, restoring the area to its **ecological state** and promoting biodiversity.

(08)

UCHI WEST HOLLYWOOD
WOOD IN LIGHT—A multi-sensory dining experience

Located in West Hollywood, one of Los Angeles' most vibrant and walkable neighborhoods, **Uchi West Hollywood** is a 160-seat restaurant designed by **ORA**. The project, winner of the **2024** LA Business Council Restaurant/Retail Award, explores the relationship between **Southern California and Japanese design sensibilities**, shaping an environment where **architecture and light interact to define space and atmosphere**.

The **spatial composition** is structured around a **continuous wood spine**, made of **live-edge slabs milled from reclaimed Los Angeles street trees**. These elements frame distinct dining zones while maintaining openness and fluidity. Suspended from the ceiling and extending onto the patio, the slabs vary in **width, spacing, and height**, introducing a dynamic rhythm that enhances both **spatial organization and material presence**.

Ph Credits by Eric Staudenmaier

Architecture Project by ORA / Lighting Design by DOT DASH
West Hollywood, California

The natural irregularities of the wood align with the **wabi-sabi** philosophy, emphasizing its authenticity. Large **sliding glass doors** connect the dining area to the exterior, integrating **natural light and greenery** into the space. A **zen garden-inspired ceiling**, composed of **curved vertical wood planes**, reinforces the spatial hierarchy while contributing to the **restaurant's acoustic performance**.

Material selection plays a central role in the project's cohesion. **Custom concrete planters**, integrated along the spine, feature a **planting palette inspired by mid-century modern California gardens**. The interior is framed by **stone walls, textured plaster, and fine metal details**, defining key areas such as the **cocktail bar, sushi counter, and private dining room**. Custom **walnut banquettes**, designed with **Japanese joinery techniques**, invite diners to engage with the material craftsmanship of the space.

The **lighting design by** Dot Dash, awarded the **LIT Lighting Design Award 2024 in the Bar and Restaurant Lighting Design / Hospitality Lighting Design category**, plays a key role in defining the relationship between **light, structure, and atmosphere**. Inspired by **Japanese dry gardens**, the lighting strategy highlights the **texture and depth of the materials** while creating a controlled interplay of **light and shadow**.

A system of **concealed point-source fixtures**, placed between the suspended **wood slabs**, provides **grazing illumination**, emphasizing the **grain and natural imperfections** of the timber. Along the **zen garden-inspired ceiling**, **continuous cove lighting** illuminates only the **inner faces of the vertical planes**, establishing a **subtle contrast** that reinforces the depth and layering of the space. Other lighting elements complement this approach. **Alabaster lanterns**, discreetly placed within the planters, create a soft, indirect glow that accentuates the greenery and wood screens. Near the entrance, an **illuminated glass chandelier**, conceived as an **abstract ikebana composition**, references **cherry blossoms on a branch**, with **handblown glass petals** introducing a tactile variation.

Designed for **adaptability and energy efficiency**, the system integrates **daylight sensors** that automatically adjust fixture intensity. As evening falls, the lighting dims to a **low ambient glow**, balancing **energy conservation and spatial ambiance**.

(09)

LARUN HOUSE
WOODEN-CONTINUUM—A dialogue between heritage, wood and stone

In the historic center of **Tregnago**, near the Lessini Mountains, **Larun House** is a renovation project that explores the balance between heritage and modernity. Designed by Zarcola Architetti, the intervention strengthens the existing stone structure with an **ultra-light wooden framework**, creating a **seismic-resistant system** that merges contemporary engineering with vernacular construction methods. The project was recognized as a **finalist for the 2025 Wood Architecture Prize**.

The **trapezoidal layout** of this warm and functional rural home responds to its surroundings: a **north-facing façade** opens onto a shared courtyard, ensuring **insulation and privacy**, while the **south-facing façade** is fully glazed, maximizing **natural light and thermal gain**. The **main façade**, clad in **dry-laid Prun stone**, takes inspiration from the **architectural heritage of Lessinia**, maintaining continuity with the region's traditional building techniques.

Ph Credits by Alessandro Saletta

by Zarcola Architetti
Tregnago, Verona, Italy

At the core of the project is a **structural approach that pushes wood to its limits**, both technically and aesthetically. The framework is composed of **exceptionally thin 3×3 cm wooden pillars**, reinforced through **interlocking horizontal elements** that contribute to the building's overall stability and define its internal rhythm. The **staircase**, positioned externally in a strategic location, plays a crucial role in bracing the structure, acting as an integral component rather than a separate architectural element.

Rather than following a conventional construction sequence, Larun House was assembled from north to south, allowing for a progressive integration of materials and reinforcing the dialogue between wood and stone. The two elements are designed to work together: **the stone walls provide bracing, stabilizing the delicate timber framework**, while **the wooden components add structural flexibility and lightness** to the system. The interiors reflect the same logic of **efficiency and precision**. Fixed furniture is crafted from **three-layer wood panels**, the only glued elements in the project. The use of a **block-out technique** differentiates **structural components** from **non-structural elements**, reinforcing the clarity of the architectural system and ensuring a seamless relationship between form and function.

(10)

6 ORSMAN ROAD
URBAN WOOD—A workspace designed for adaptability and sustainability

Overlooking the **Regent's Canal in London**, **6 Orsman Road** is a six-story workspace designed by Waugh Thistleton Architects to explore how **engineered timber** can redefine contemporary office environments, balancing **structural efficiency and environmental responsibility**. The **5,000 sqm building** is conceived for **adaptability**, allowing businesses to modify their layouts with ease.

At the core of the project is a **hybrid structure combining cross-laminated timber (CLT) and steel**, creating **wide, open spans** with only **two columns per floor and no internal support walls**. This design maximizes flexibility while reducing the material footprint.

Ph Credits by Ed Reeve

by Waugh Thistleton Architects Ltd.
London, UK

«With only two columns per space and no internal support walls, businesses can easily reconfigure their environment as they grow», explains Andrew Waugh, founding director of Waugh Thistleton Architects.

The entire structure is **bolted together**, allowing it to be **dismantled rather than demolished**, significantly reducing waste and enabling **materials to be repurposed**. Prefabricated **SIP panels, timber decking, and steel balustrades** can be detached and reassembled, aligning with the principles of **low-impact construction**. Inside, **CLT remains exposed**, enhancing **material warmth and reducing the need for additional finishes**. Where necessary, **clay plaster and linoleum tiles**, chosen for their **durability and sustainability**, complement the space. Even **offcuts from the CLT panels** have been repurposed into **furniture**, reinforcing a **resource-conscious approach**.

Lighting plays a crucial role in shaping the interior experience, particularly in the **exposed timber stairwell** that spans the full height of the building.

«WTA approached us to find a lighting solution that would effectively illuminate and highlight the exposed timber stairwell spanning the height of the building. We chose the cast glass 14 series, which glows almost like candlelight and beautifully complements the warm tones of the timber», says Erin Challoner, VP at Bocci.

The building embraces **biophilic design principles**, integrating **natural materials, abundant daylight, and ventilation** to create a **workspace that prioritizes well-being**. Research shows that **incorporating nature into the built environment** can **boost productivity by 8% and improve employee well-being by 13%**. Offices with **timber interiors** have also been found to **enhance staff retention and reduce sick days**, reinforcing the impact of a thoughtfully designed, nature-connected workspace.

Extending this connection with nature, **rooftop and communal terraces** feature **biodiverse landscaping**, including **brown roofs, insect boxes, edible plants, and fruit trees**, enhancing both **local ecosystems and user experience**. As part of Storey's environmental commitment, 6 Orsman Road operates with a **zero-waste-to-landfill policy**, ensuring all operational waste is effectively managed and diverted from landfill.