

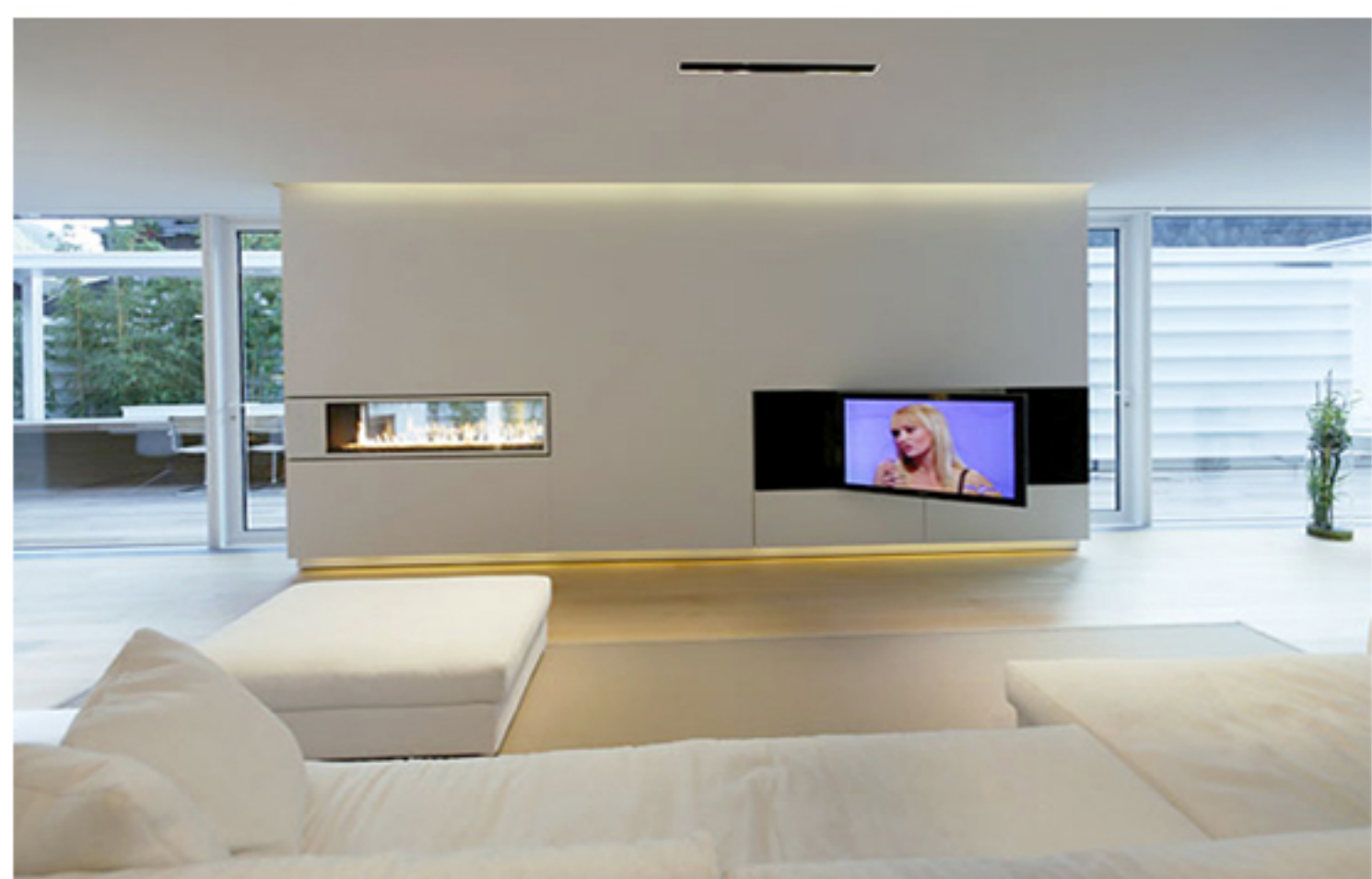
HOUSE PROUD

# A Chalet So Pale, Snow Would Blanch

By VIRGINIA GARDINER

Campo Tures, Italy

PETER REICHEGGER recently discovered that his two greatest passions have something in common he said: I'm obsessed, he said, "with white light" — whether it flashes incandescently in the engine exhaust of a race car speeding around a track, or bounces off the colorlessly clean surfaces of a modern interior. A developer in Europe who spends his free time racing cars, Mr. Reichegger, 42, Cup Italia at the 2005 Ferrari Challenge, a series of amateur races. He took second having missed a key race to attend his son's first communion. In professional life Mr. Reichegger is the chief executive of Hobag, a thriving family business that is finishing the first apartment complex in Italy designed by the American architect Richard Meier: an 83-unit cluster in Jesolo Lido, a beach resort near Venice. He lives between mountain peaks in an oversize chalet in the town of Campo Tures in South Tyrol, a region of northern Italy where people speak a German dialect. Though only seven years old, the house has just been renovated at a cost of \$2 million by an architect and former Meier employee, Jacopo Mascheroni. "This used to be many rooms painted in different colors — peach, blue, ocher," said Mr. Reichegger, seated on a blocky ottoman. (His wife, Isabella, was with the maid in the kitchen, too absorbed in preparing the evening meal to talk about the house.) He was sipping a 2003



Photographs by Dave Yoder for the New York Times



**BUILT FOR SPEED** Peter Reichegger, a developer and amateur auto racer (above left with his son, Maximilian), asked Jacopo Mascheroni, an architect who trained with Richard Meier, to make over his traditional chalet. Now a single streamlined white space holds a dining area, top, and sitting area, above, with a fireplace and, far left, a built-in plasma TV. Below left, a Corian sink Mr. Mascheroni designed

Alto Adige, between a day at the office and a 9 p.m. lecture he had to attend to clear a speeding ticket off his record. The house is now a palace of fine finishes in white. The kitchen, living room and entry hall are connected in an open plan. Cupboards with a slim horizontal groove along the top and bottom blend into picture windows and Corian counters; tables cantilever off single legs bolted to the floor; lighting is recessed, dispersed and computer-controlled. Generous sectional sofas define two sitting areas, each with a fireplace. A stack of firewood stands at the ready, the logs as uniform as pretzel sticks. Using a remote control with at least 50 buttons, Mr. Reichegger turned on surround-sound lounge music and the plasma television, which showed photos of the house before the renovation. At 7,000 square feet, he said, it used to be "a compartmentalized mix of traditional Alpine, French brasserie and farmhouse," featuring marble floors, crystal chandeliers and a stube — a cozy wood-paneled dining room typical of the Alps. The Reicheggers built the chalet-meets-mansion from the ground up in 1999. Unin-

terested at the time in modern architecture, they had hired Heinz Flattinger, a Munich architect, to create a luxury home in a blend of traditional styles. What started in 2004 as a small-scale idea to take out walls between rooms on the main floor snowballed into renovations of a 3,000-square-foot area and a huge deck. Mr. Mascheroni's slick monochromatic style did not blend smoothly with the earlier look. "The problem became where to stop," he said, smiling, in a recent interview. In the end the renovations stopped on the second floor, where walking from the master bedroom to the children's rooms is like passing through a time warp. Mr. Reichegger had met Mr. Mascheroni through his work. The developer wanted to bring some architectural glitter to Jesolo Lido, an average Italian beachfront with undistinguished buildings. He said that after being turned down for the apartment complex by Jean Nouvel and Renzo Piano, he got lucky with Mr. Meier. But he didn't expect the project to change his personal style. "Looking at these white models became an obsession for me," he said. "I'm young, modern and high tech: I

wanted those things visible in my surroundings." Mr. Mascheroni was the project architect for the Jesolo Lido apartments, designed in Mr. Meier's grandly geometric style. As Mr. Mascheroni and Mr. Reichegger worked together they became friends. "Once he took me on a snowmobile ride to a restaurant in the mountains," the architect said. "The way he drove! I was terrified." In 2004 Mr. Mascheroni, his 30th birthday approaching, left Mr.

up his own practice in Milan. The Reicheggers hired him soon after. A technology-obsessed channel surfer with plenty of money and no fear of eclecticism, Mr. Reichegger is a weird amalgam of futurist and postmodernist — an ideal client for an architect going solo post-Meier. And his construction company, which built the house, lived up to the South Tyrolean stereotype, melding Italian nuance with Germanic efficiency. "They kept everyone on schedule," Mr. Mascheroni said. With his client's own company as general contractor, the architect was freed from negotiating typical builder-client conflicts. Mr. Reichegger even recommended a local subcontractor, Metris, for the interiors. Not that the renovation was without challenges. "If I could," Mr. Mascheroni said of the pitched chalet-type roof, "I'd have torn it off." Now painted a stark white, it is nonetheless awkwardly traditional-looking in the context of the renovation's cool colors and clean lines. But on the wide-open 6,000-square-foot deck, a spatial extension of the living area seen through floor-to-ceiling windows, the architect had room to stretch out.

deck's solid white fence has evenly spaced horizontal beams that elongate the perspective, giving the space a decisive grandeur. Three carefully sculptured trees add a touch of nature, albeit controlled. As the evening brought a deeper blue to the sky, a timer switched on outdoor lighting, angled to throw striking shadows out from the horizontal beams. The white walls faded to a silver-gray that blended with the ipè-wood decking. This is the hour, Mr. Mascheroni said, when he is happiest with his work. Maximilian, the Reicheggers' 10-year-old son, was playing with a new Sony Ericsson cellphone, while their daughter, Helena, 4, dragged her rocking horse across the maple floorboards with a rope. Mr. Reichegger finished his wine and rinsed it off his breath in the dressing room by the front door, ready for the driving lecture but in a minor huff. "It's ridiculous," he said. "They don't care whether I'm paying attention, sleeping or whatever, as long as I'm there." He climbed into the metallic-white Lamborghini he had recently acquired to match the house. The engine roared, and he was off.



**WHITE LIGHT** The architect made an immense deck feel longer with horizontal beams in the fence that cast striking shadows. He had the roof painted white to match. "If I could" he said, "I'd have torn it off."