

Peak practice

Their designs are strikingly new, yet these three Swiss houses echo their architectural landscapes

House Vignogn
by Hurst Song Architekten

Rocks and boulders were the cues for this weekend retreat, set on a steep, grassy slope in an Alpine village in Graubünden. Approach it from the road below and its form may represent the archetypal, pitch-roofed houses of the region, but follow the road round and the crisp geometry becomes more abstract. 'We were inspired by the rocks deposited by glaciers,' says Alex Hurst, co-founder of Hurst Song Architekten, featured in our 2011 Architects Directory. 'They're part of the scenery and yet are somehow different.'

The practice, set up by Hurst and Suzanne Song in 2008, distils building typologies into simple forms with subtle twists. It is known for its love of materials – in this case, concrete, which absorbs and emits solar radiation, keeping a stable indoor climate. 'We create hi-tech effects with low-tech materials,' says Hurst. hurstsong.ch

