

Press information

Zumtobel light showcases “Bürchen Mystic”

A lighting solution from Zumtobel has been used to add a mystical air to the new central square in the Swiss village of Bürchen. A concept of radial illumination, which shapes the unique atmosphere in Bürchen when darkness falls, was forged at the Biennale Architettura 2014 following discussions with architect Fernando Menis, who based his approach on the distinctive way rays of light fall through the trees. SUPERSYSTEM outdoor was the ideal light tool to sprinkle the pretty alpine mountain village with soft circles of light.

Dornbirn, 14th February 2017 – The inspiration for the lighting solution came to architect [Fernando Menis](#) during an exchange of ideas with [Zumtobel](#) at the Biennale Architettura 2014 in Venice. As the sunbeams forced their way through the dense foliage and illuminated the Giardini with soft radial light circles, the vision of the lighting concept for “[Bürchen Mystic](#)” was born. The idea was to light the village square of the 700-inhabitant community of Bürchen in the Swiss canton of Valais with similar spiralling circles. It was therefore necessary to use artificial light to imitate the mystical light moods created by the interplay between the sun's rays and their surroundings, while also being careful to take into account the changes in daylight during the different seasons. In addition, the light concept needed to interact with pedestrians by creating subtle pools of light to guide them across the square.

Like many other resorts in the Alps, Bürchen struggles with a weak economy and the steady stream of young people leaving for other places. The village therefore organised an architecture competition in 2013 to try and reverse this damaging demographic trend, while also complementing winter tourism with an appealing summer offer and creating attractive long-term jobs. Fernando Menis was able to beat off strong competition from a host of renowned international entrants with a concept that brought together the redesigning of the village square with the construction of a new hotel and other facilities that would boost the local tourism and economy. He impressed the jury with a design approach that was both aligned with nature and deeply rooted in the imposing landscape, history and alpine traditions of Bürchen. At the same time, the plan from Menis fulfilled the core requirements of economic, social and ecological sustainability.

The realisation of the design was made possible by a customised lighting solution from Zumtobel, which is now available as a further-developed version of a standard product: [SUPERSYSTEM outdoor](#). The LED exterior luminaire has been optimised for the multi-zonal showcasing of streets and open spaces. Each luminaire encompasses a number of LED light tubes, which can be individually and precisely equipped with appropriate optics that, despite the uniform appearance, blend specific accents with enhanced visual comfort and wellbeing. The natural charm and mystical effect of Bürchen's central square are highlighted with the Zumtobel lighting solution in the evening,

creating the right light and an emotional, comfortable atmosphere that harmonises perfectly with nature.

Visual artist [Andreas Waldschütz](#) has now provided a genuine visual insight into this special atmosphere. Through a series of dramatic pictures he has managed to capture the unique mystical mood. The interplay of light, the architecture of the Valais mountain village and the alpine landscape on a plateau high above the Rhône Valley are authentically and intriguingly presented with his unmistakable style. As a result of the cooperation between Zumtobel and Fernando Menis, “Bürchen Mystic” now constitutes an additional tourist attraction, creating new jobs and helping to weaken the economic dependency on second homes. However, it is also a place that makes the living space of the local population more attractive. Once largely devoid of people, the new village square is now a welcoming location for visitors and villagers alike.

The “Bürchen Mystic” initiative has been named among the best 20 projects from hundreds of submissions for the European Prize for Urban Public Space, an award organised to recognise special achievements in the fields of architecture and urban planning. Bürchen Plaza is also one of ten ventures vying to be named “best landscape project” at the renowned [World Architectural Festival](#) (WAF) in Berlin, the largest international architectural festival. A second major phase of Fernando Menis' concept is also in planning: the construction of a hotel he calls the “inhabited forest”, a wood-like creation that will be fully integrated into the surrounding landscape.

Photo captions:

(Photo credits: Zumtobel)



Fig. 1: A lighting solution from Zumtobel has added a mystical air to the central square in Bürchen, a village with 700 inhabitants in the Swiss canton of Valais.



Fig. 2: The SUPERSYSTEM outdoor LED exterior luminaire, optimised for the multi-zonal showcasing of streets and open spaces, utilises a series of LED light tubes to create specific accents.



Fig. 3: Visual artist Andreas Waldschütz has captured the special atmosphere of Bürchen with an authentic and intriguing style.



Fig. 4: The natural charm and mystical effect of Bürchen's central square are highlighted by the SUPERSYSTEM outdoor lighting solution from Zumtobel.

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About Zumtobel

As a leader in innovation, Zumtobel develops sustainable lighting solutions tailored to the needs of people in their respective applications. With a comprehensive portfolio of high-quality luminaires and intelligent lighting management systems, the Austrian company provides optimum indoor and exterior products for working and living spaces – the right light for every activity at any time of day. The applications office, education, presentation and retail, hotel and wellness, health, art and culture and industry are now perfectly complemented with portfolios for living and outdoor areas. Zumtobel is a brand of Zumtobel Group AG with its head office in Dornbirn, Vorarlberg (Austria).

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