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SKI SCHOOL

This pretty chalet in Gstaad has developed since its time as a boys' boarding school – as is borne out by these photographs of the former headmaster's flat, now a comfortable guest suite

TEXT JUNE DUCAS PHOTOGRAPHS FRITZ VON DER SCHULENBURG
LOCATIONS EDITOR LAVINIA BOLTON



MAIN PICTURE At the far end of the sitting room, stairs with Swedish-style banisters, designed by Lars Bolander, rise to a gallery 'library'. The painted bookcase is by Graham Carr. French eighteenth-century engravings of trees and woodland are hung formally throughout – including above the sofa, which is covered in a Kravet fabric designed by Mark Hampton.

BELOW A vaulted corridor adjoins the sitting room. Behind the trompe-l'oeil-painted wall is a small kitchen which serves this guest wing

bears and cuckoo clocks. Swiss chalets are often dark and gloomy,' she says. 'I wanted it to have a Nordic feel – to be airy and bright.' Considering Lars's nationality, she couldn't have opted for a more appropriate brief.

When the owners bought the chalet, every room was lined in cheap pine panelling stained a nasty reddish tone. All over the walls and even on windowpanes, the pupils had etched their names – no doubt with that very handy tool, a Swiss Army knife. Local workmen wanted to gut the place. But along with Lars and a clever young architect, Gabriel Muriset, the owner decided that this was a pointless expense.

Instead, the knotty pine walls and beams were scrubbed, sanded and painted shades of ecru and Gustavian grey or plastered unpretentiously with white gesso. Simple devices, such as adding dados, cornices and coving, gave the rooms elegant articulation.

In the double-height sitting room, Lars created a flight of stairs with those flat, vase-shaped balusters like wooden templates that you see all over Sweden. They lead to a minstrel's gallery, lined with bookshelves that add colour and warmth to the scene. At the same time, the gallery acts as a link from the headmaster's old rooms to the chalet's other side, leading into a cosy drawing room on an upper floor.

The downstairs sitting room was planned for summer use because of its sunny ambience. Overlooking a terrace, with a sweeping vista, it has become a year-round nesting ground. Arched french windows are hung with linen curtains embroidered with floral sprigs, made specially by Chelsea Textiles. So, too, is the quilted cream and green checked cotton that upholsters a pair of bird's-eye-maple Scandinavian sofas.

Perhaps the sitting room owes its popularity to the adjoining vaulted cellar, once a bathroom. This is a good spot to gather for

