

Port Side

Zürich-based architect Susanne Fritz of Virtual Design Unit has created a restaurant inspired by all things nautical on Lake Constance in Switzerland's lakeport town of Romanshorn.



Davey Lighting's Aluminium Pendants suspended above tables in main and benched alcove dining area, with each table hosting a Karlskrona Lampfabriken Nattlampa oil lamp. Katerina Handlova's Shibari pendants feature appear next to the benched area, suspended with rope above a bar-stool table.

Swiss lakeport town Romanshorn and SBS, a Swiss corporate shipping line servicing Lake Constance, is home to a new, attractive urban space along its shoreline, featuring the Hafen restaurant erected on a promenade built into the lake. Zürich-based architect Susanne Fritz's firm, Virtual Design Unit, has created an interior characterised by ships and the seafaring world, with a bright and breezy lighting scheme to match. The project was managed by Benno Gmür, a delegate of Virtual Design Unit's administrative board and reorganiser of the company.

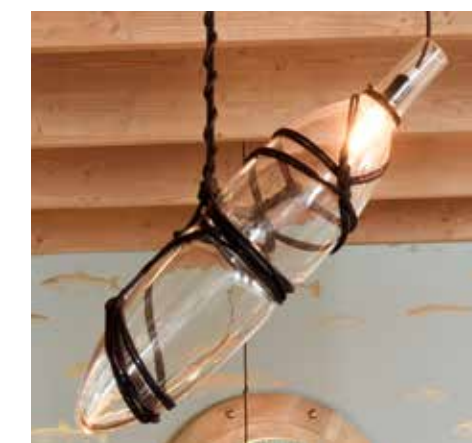
Following renovation of the SBS building at the port and shipyard redevelopment, SBS clientele are being directly affected for the first time by the generation of increased revenues. Given that the SBS building is protected as a historic landmark, Fritz had a challenge in transforming what was a former storeroom into a restaurant, fully symbolic of nautical science.

Five portholes inserted into the side-walls with diameters of up to 1.4m were envisaged to create transparency vis-à-vis the adjacent premises and optically

enlarge the space, which is only around 150sqm large. To link the ship theme with the directly adjoining offices belonging to SBS, both the ticket hall and the access to offices leased to third parties on the upper floors were redesigned as well.

Guests are greeted in the restaurant's entrance under the illumination of Karlskrona Lampfabriken's Heidenstam Bowl Lamps in the immediate entrance that opens up into the central dining area. The entrance openly flows into the central dining and bar area, where Davey Lighting's Aluminium Pendants are suspended above the tables, with Nattlampa oil lamps placed on each table also by Karlskrona Lampfabriken. Guests can also help themselves to a buffet of seafood and other freshly prepared foods in the centre of the dining area, where Original BTC's Ginger Bracket Wall Lights feature on a central fish-printed pillar to provide additional illumination.

Although a large-scale kitchen to provide catering for the shipping trade was already in place in the rear section of the building, a portion of the restaurant area was



sacrificed in favour of a satellite kitchen to keep routes short and workflows efficient. A curved ship's prow adjoins the kitchen and acts as a bar counter and serving area to integrate the galley overlaid with steel bands and white painted metal sheeting. Protruding wooden ribs form an eye-catching design feature, visually obscuring the view of the ribbed ceiling; they merge into the rear wall of the restaurant, where trays and cabinets have been integrated. An alcove with benches akin to those on the passenger boats that tour the lake offers porthole views of the underwater landscape on the opposite wall area. This area features a bar-stool table for more casual dining, where Czech designer Katerina



Top left Waiting on info **Top right** Original BTC's Pillar Light Narrow Polished Brass wall fixtures shimmer on the sea-tiled walls in Hafen restaurant's bathrooms. Above indoor dining area with Original BTC's Ginger Bracket Wall Lights on fish-printed central column featured along with Davey Lighting's Aluminium Pendants above the tables.

Handlova's Shibari pendants are suspended with rope tied around the glass. This lighting is based on the Japanese bondage technique called Shibari, wherein each part has its own binding that creates a kind of ornament.

The bathrooms are also in keeping with the nautical theme, with sparkling tiles ranging through the shades of the sea, enveloping guests in an underwater world. The walls glisten under the illumination of Original BTC's Pillar Light Narrow Polished Brass wall fixtures on either side of the mirrors. All of the restaurant's pendant light fixtures are flexibly and adjustably mounted on track lighting systems because seating arrangements at the restaurant vary in winter and summer. In the summertime

staff routes lead through windows that fold back to access the large outdoor terrace with seating for 100 guests. A year-round roofing membrane provides shade in the summer and keeps it in use when rain spans the terrace. The windows are shut in the wintertime, with more tables placed inside to substitute, creating indoor seating for 80 guests.

The landscaping concept for the outdoor area features elements characteristic of urban gardening. Different-sized boxes made of Corten steel, reminiscent of shipping crates, stand on the platform and harbour jetty, planted with aromatic, scented herbs.

Inspired by its surroundings and history, Fritz created in Hafen a seafaring spacious

and light environment for diners to enjoy each other's company and delicate dishes. With an expansive view of Lake Constance and a nautical interior with details akin to those found on a ship, the restaurant is a truly unique dining experience lathered in the wonder of the underwater world.

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PROJECT DETAILS

Hafen Restaurant

Client: Hafen Restaurant

Interior Design: Susanne Fritz of Virtual Design Unit

Lighting Suppliers: Davey Lighting, Original BTC, Katerina Handlova

Technical Lightplanning: Reflexion