

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 79 (2013)
Heft: [1]

Artikel: Mario Botta - architect of modern castles
Autor: Jung, Alexandra
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943731>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 09.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Mario Botta - architect of modern castles

In keeping with the theme of the three castles of Bellinzona, this article discusses how Mario Botta, Ticinese Architect of renown, is designing castle-like buildings around the world.

Mario Botta was born in Mendrisio in 1943. After serving an apprenticeship as a technical draughtsman in the offices of architects Carloni and Camenisch in Lugano, he attended the Liceo artistico of Milan. He went on to study architecture at the University Institute for Architecture (IUAV) in Venice, with Carlo Scarpa and Giuseppe Mazzariol, obtaining his degree in 1969. It was at this point that he took practical training at Le Corbusier's architectural firm in Paris, where he met Louis I. Kahn. Encountering these two major figures of the "Brutalist" style left a strong impression on him.

In 1970, Mario Botta opened his own architectural firm in Lugano, and began building single-family houses in the Ticino. Soon, he was carrying out commissions the world over. There are some 300 buildings of his design. These include the *Museum of Modern Art* in San Francisco.

They also include the *Watari-um Gallery* in Tokyo, the *Cymbalista Synagogue and Jewish Heritage Centre* in Tel Aviv, the *Centre Dürren-matt* in Neuchâtel and the *Berg Oase Wellness Centre* in Arosa, Switzerland.

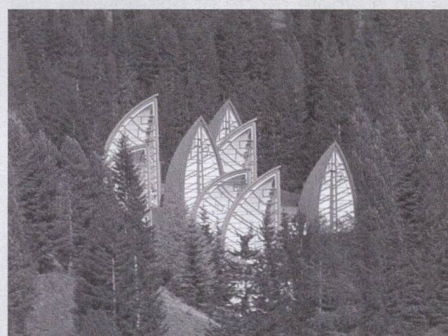
In parallel to his architectural projects, Botta teaches around the globe, including at the *Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale* of Lausanne and, as one of its co-founder, at the *Accademia di Architettura* of Mendrisio. He is the recipient of numerous international prizes. Mario Botta himself generously contributes to the store of literature on his oeuvre by writing numerous articles and monographs on architecture. The first single-family house he designed in Stabio (1965-1967) already illustrates the strict "brutalism" to which he adheres (an architectural style that favours pure geometric forms, steel, glass and, above all, exposed concrete), in line with Le Corbusier's style.

Botta, however, has developed his own, signature idiom of geometric forms: strict cubes, cylindrical forms based on a circular plan, little and big *oculi* in the walls (appropriated from the buildings designed by Kahn in Dacca), wall openings running from top to bottom, and rectangular stairwells. The construction's general shape always determines the shape of any additions to the building. The lighting is precise, arriving mainly from above, and the sides are designed to allow a play between shafts of light from different sources, thus conveying an impression of elegance and lightness. Another major aspect of Botta's approach is that he seeks to interact with regional elements, paying heed to the history and topography of each location and, frequently, availing himself of local materials.

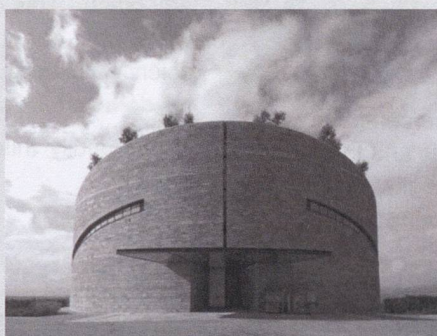
Contributed by Alexandra Jung

Source: www.bundesmuseen.ch

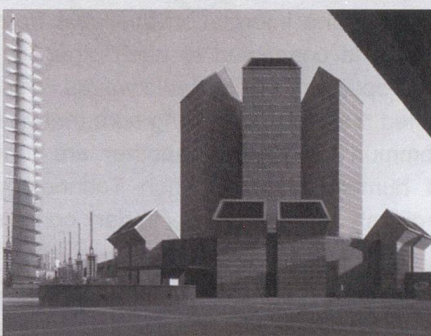
Mario Botta design gallery



Wellness centre – Berg Oase, Arosa, Switzerland



Petra Winery in Suvereto, Italy



Church of Santo Volto, Turin, Italy

Fotos: www.botta.ch



Margaret Mortimer

Residential Sales

mob. 027 280 6772
bus. 09 478 9089
ah. 09 410 4848
email. m.mortimer@barfoot.co.nz

Barfoot & Thompson
SINCE 1823

Licensed under the Real Estate Agents Act 2008



Mairangi Bay Branch
386 Beach Road
P O Box 65075, Mairangi Bay, Auckland
fax. 09 478 9086
www.barfoot.co.nz

FRIBESCO
quality european tools and products

Looking for superb quality european tools and products? We import and sell tools and products for roofers, builders and many more...
check it out on www.fribesco.co.nz