



ALTES MILCHHAUS

Location	Kapellenstraße 20, 2126 Ladendorf, AT
Building Type	Former milk collection point & community deep-freeze facility (<i>until 1989</i>)
Reuse	Restaurant, café & local tavern
Usable Area	~ 120 m ² indoor + 68 m ² outdoor area
Investment Costs	~ 300,000€
Ownership Model	Private ownership (<i>family business</i>)
Duration until Opening	~ 22 years - purchased 1993/1994, opening in April 2016



Initial Situation

- The Weinwurm family aimed to **open their own restaurant** in the village
- Initial plan: Purchase the former village cinema - financially not feasible
- Search for alternative buildings in the village centre
- Discovery of the **former milk house** (*milk sales facility & community freezer plant*)
- Building **remained vacant** for a long period after closure
- Despite **structural deficiencies**, the central location, historical significance & development potential were convincing

Reuse Strategy

Strategy: Careful, step-by-step renovation with strong focus on self-construction, functionality & preservation of the building's character

Spatial Programme:

- Restaurant with café & local tavern operation
- Outdoor guest garden & terrace
- Small-scale event & celebration facilities

Key Decisions:

- Implementation in several construction phases
- Deliberately small business scale to ensure economic stability
- Preservation of historical elements & atmosphere

Objectives

- Revitalisation** of a social **meeting point** within the village
- Complementing existing gastronomic offers** without creating competition
- Strengthening** local **quality of life & attractiveness** of the village centre

Financing & Costs

- Total renovation** ~ 300,000 € (*in 2 phases*)
- The project was carried out through **multiple construction stages** (*with preparatory work over several years, followed by the commercial expansion phase*)
- A high share of self-construction** significantly reduces building costs.
- Running costs mainly result from **staffing**
- Public funding** played only a minor role - limited to ecological business consulting (*funding programmes require very detailed pre-planning*)
- Income Sources:** Revenue from **restaurant operation & additional income from selling** homemade local products

Operating Concept

- **Business:** Family-run restaurant business
- **Use Concept:** Gastronomy concept (*with a small menu & international influences*) complemented by seasonal outdoor operations
- Functions as a **social meeting place** for local residents & visitors (e.g. cyclists)
- **Goal:** Economically stable small business with manageable financial risk
- **Marketing:** Mainly through personal recommendations & conservations, supported by website, Facebook & local press coverage

Challenges & Solutions

- **Challenge: Very long project duration** (22 years)
 - Solution: Step-by-step implementation, strong self-financing, perseverance, gradual transition into commercial operation
- **Challenge: Planning uncertainty**
 - Solution: Multiple planning revisions with different planners until a functional solution was achieved
- **Challenge: Moisture problems & old building structure**
 - Solution: Structural drying measures, roof renovation & comprehensive refurbishment
- **Challenge: Economically challenging start of business**
 - Solution: Reduced staffing costs & low loan pressure

Tips

- ✓ Ensure **a strong level of self-financing**
- ✓ **Plan staffing needs realistically**
- ✓ Maintain **perseverance & long-term motivation**
- ✓ Implement projects with **personal commitment & passion**
- ✓ Assess **workload & physical demands realistically**
- ✓ Actively use **personal recommendations & local networks**

Key Actors

- **Main Operator:** Private owner family
- **Operational Partner:** Tenant restaurant operator
- **Planning Partners:** Several architectural & planning offices
- **Supporting Actors:** Cooperative municipality & business authorities (*operational licensing process was particularly demanding*)

Transferability

What makes this example particularly instructive?

- Demonstrates a **low-risk, long-term reuse model** (*based on self-construction, own capital & reduced opening hours*)
- Shows the value of **self-construction & phased implementation**
- Highlights the **importance of local identity & storytelling** in developing new uses

For whom is this model suitable?

- For small municipalities with **historic infrastructure** seeking to expand local attractions
- For projects with **strong craft or technical competence** within the project team or network
- For initiatives that can operate within a **long development timeframe**

- ✗ Start projects with **high debt financing**
- ✗ **Oversize staffing structure & business scale**
- ✗ **Underestimate time commitment & workload**
- ✗ Treat the project as an **economic venture** without social & emotional connection
- ✗ **Underestimate funding applications** & their planning requirements



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