



***In this city special,
Frame heads to Budapest
to check out the swiftly
advancing design scene.***

Photos Tamás Bujnovszky





Best of BUDAPEST

Budapest

133

Budapest by Numbers

A city full of history is
ready for the future.



1873

Budapest's two sides – BUDA and
PEST, separated by the River Danube
– merge to become one city



1845

József Hild designs ST STEPHEN'S
BASILICA; construction begins
six years later



1877

NYUGATI STATION,
an icon of European railway
architecture, is completed



UNESCO WORLD
HERITAGE SITES: Buda Castle
district, banks of the Danube,
and Andrassy Avenue



130

THERMAL SPRINGS feed
the city's spas



1.73

million, POPULATION in 2011
2 million in 1991



525

km², CITY AREA

III O III E
1880

MOHOLY-NAGY UNIVERSITY
OF ART AND DESIGN founded
(as the Hungarian Royal
Institute of Arts and Crafts)


1931

Budapest-born Ernő Goldfinger
designs the ENTAS CHAIR


2004

Hungary joins the
EUROPEAN UNION



1896

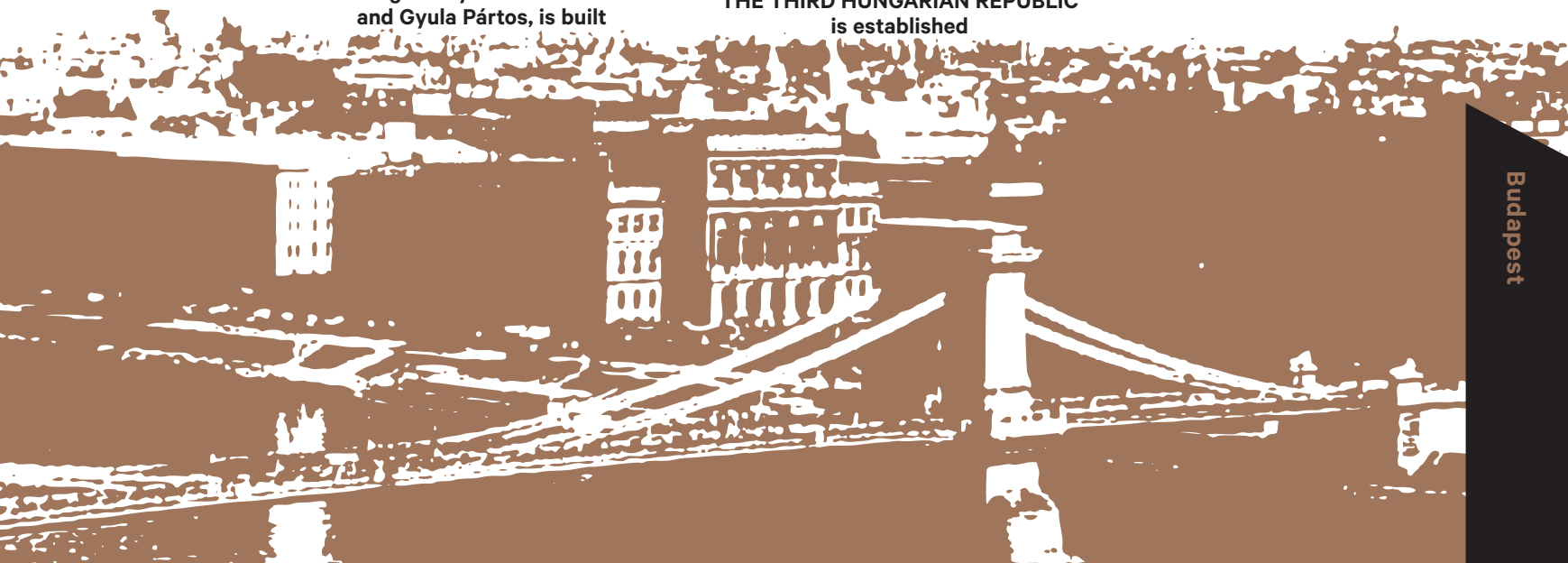
MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS,
designed by Ödön Lechner
and Gyula Pártos, is built



1989

THE THIRD HUNGARIAN REPUBLIC
is established

FACTS AND FIGURES



Budapest is inspiring – just ask Swiss architect Peter Zumthor. Before designing the now revered Therme Vals in his native land, he visited the Turkish baths in Budapest. The lineage of his design is clear; the blue lighting scheme over the main pool – and, in fact, the entire atmosphere of the space – is reminiscent of the Rudas Baths in Budapest. Built in 1566, the Rudas Baths were renovated seven years ago, but the main rooms remain in their original state.

Over the years, many thermal baths in the capital have been rebuilt. Hungaria Bad, a bathhouse in the city's Jewish quarter that Emil Ágoston designed in 1907, stood empty for decades until it was revived in 2010 by Continental Hotel Zara. The reconstruction of the listed Art-Nouveau gem received a clutch of architecture prizes, and the majestic

lobby – with its soaring dome of light – is particularly stunning.

Elsewhere in the city, along the Margit körút ring road, Budapest flaunts its classical-modern side. It was here that Lajos Kozma realized the Atrium cinema in 1935, with its red-glazed walls, mirrored pillars and round Art-Deco lamps. Two years later – and a few doors down – architects Hofstätter and Domány built an elegant residence with two curved-glass lifts whose cabins move like pneumatic post tubes. Architectural pearls can be found beyond the city centre, too. Standing on Ildikó Square in Kelenföld – a faceless, socialist-era housing estate – is the high-tech church that István Szabó designed in 1981.

In a city well known for its coffee houses, one of the most architecturally intriguing examples lies within the Pàrisi

Nagy Áruház (Paris Department Store), a 1911 design by Zsigmond Sziklai. This, too, was recently renovated and is now open to the public.

In the last few years, however, contemporary design – rather than renovations of historical buildings – is shifting into focus. Just look at Menza, a restaurant on Liszt Ferenc Square by THEYCOM Art & Architecture, or Göske Project's space-age Capsula store on swank Andrassy Avenue. It seems Budapest is ready to focus on the future, but when you've had enough, do take a tip from Zumthor and slip into the Rudas Baths for a well-deserved break.

Words Peter Sägesser

Fluid lines and volumes throughout the space are set off by striking angular elements.





A wall of teardrop-like display units is based on the store's logo.

Göske Project showcases high-end fashion as *objets d'art* at CAPSULA.



Located in a historical building in Budapest, the recently opened Capsula store offers shoppers a select collection of high-end fashion labels. Two Hungarian architects, Eniko Korompay and Sandor Gocsei of Göske Project, tackled the difficult task of creating an integrated look while individually showcasing Tom Ford, Givenchy, D&G, Armani, YSL, Blumarine and Cesare Paciotti. They opted for a calm yet bright interior with vast flowing forms and lustrous surfaces.

'We aimed for distinct forms and a pure palette that would allow the clothing in these hand-picked collections to stand out,' says Korompay. 'We could have designed a more stunning environment for Dolce & Gabbana, but it wouldn't have been suitable for the more classic pieces in, say, an Armani collection. We had to find a way to present the merchandise in a

subtle but sophisticated way. The solution was to avoid bright colours and go for black and white, always a winning combination.'

Korompay and Gocsei chose to keep not only the original proportions of the space intact but also two eclectic pairs of columns that had been part of the interior as they found it. They enlivened the vast unadorned surfaces of the free-flowing retail environment with several striking details. Walls with sweeping curves inject the space with an interesting dynamic while housing niches of various sizes for displaying clothes and accessories.

The architects were also responsible for the logo, a single letter 'a' in the form of a fat teardrop, which turned out to be such a typographical success that its shape became the basis for a whole wall irregularly patterned with dozens of display niches for bags, shoes and other small items.

All in all, the gallery-like interior of Capsula – with its aesthetically designed display solutions, dramatic lighting and fascinating focal points – can be compared to an exhibition venue for works of art. —

goskeproject.hu

Words Brigitta Bugya

Students built a contemporary interpretation of a wedding tent for pop-up store NANUSHKA.



Organic materials and natural shapes defined a pop-up store for Hungarian fashion designer Szandra Sándor.

Szandra Sándor, the young Hungarian fashion designer behind the Nanushka collection, jumped at the chance to open a prominently located pop-up store that would welcome shoppers for a period of only four months. She wanted the available space to reflect the brand's style, but the transformation she envisioned had to be realized in a very short time with very little money. And when the pop-up store eventually closed its doors, Sándor had to return the premises to the owner intact. Any installation inserted into the space had to be easy to remove.

Her solution was to enlist the help of architecture students. The search for the ideal team ended with the careful selection

of five undergraduates: Dániel Baló, Zsófi Dobos, Judit Emese Konopás, Dóra Medveczky and Noémi Varga. The team had just five days to come up with a suitable design and an additional two weeks to turn it into reality.

The existing space combined a promise of elegance with a rather cold ambience. Wrapping the interior in inexpensive natural materials struck Sándor as a good idea. 'The original space did not conform to my concept. Covering all visible surfaces seemed to be the only option,' she says. 'Among the inspirational images I'd gathered for the interior design was a wedding tent, which led to the idea of draping fabric on walls and ceiling. The students crafted an irregular grid on which

they hung the fabric. The result was an unconventional interpretation of the tent concept.'

The forest served as the main source of inspiration for the floor, which had to be as inexpensive as the material used for walls and ceiling. The solution was timber in the form of firewood that was cut, planed and arranged 'on end' in a pebble-like pattern. Complementing the flooring were logs in clusters of varying heights, which became display units for folded garments and accessories. —

Words Brigitta Bugya

Csendes combines the ruin-pub concept with that of a stylish bistro. Below: Sufni G'art'n in Budapest's District VII.



It's been a decade since the first RUIN PUB appeared in Budapest. Has the underground phenomenon finally run its course?



Around the turn of the millennium, young creatives discovered Pest's Jewish quarter – between the city's elegant Andrassy and Rákóczi Avenues – and its crumbling, abandoned houses. Clubs and bars began to appear in the buildings and their courtyards: venues for concerts, DJs, art exhibitions and film screenings.

The first *romkocsm* (Hungarian for 'ruin pub', a term denoting Budapest bars that occupy tenements and factories marked for demolition) was Szippla, which opened in 2001 on Kertész Street. Soon similar spots began to pop up in the Jewish quarter and beyond, in old houses, cinemas and warehouses.

All ruin pubs are based on the same concept. The buildings are not renovated but left in the shabby state in which they are found. With only minimal intervention, they're transformed from derelict to inhabitable. The décor – a mix of existing

furniture and objects picked up here and there – has a flea market-meets-cave-meets-carnival aesthetic.

Budapest is now home to around a dozen *romkocsmak*, but the scene is in a state of flux. Some buildings are being renovated, existing clubs are closing, and new bars are emerging. Recent additions, Csendes and Jelen, combine the ruin-pub concept with that of a fashionable bistro.

It seems ruin pubs have had their heyday. Government-enforced regulations – shorter opening hours, lower noise tolerance and nonsmoking laws – and the actual 'design' of new spaces indicate the loss of the genuine *romkocsm*'s informal atmosphere. A new generation is now discovering different types of venues to annex: old-fashioned coffee salons and cellar bars.

romkocsmak.hu

Words Peter Sägesser

Credit for much of Budapest's nightlife scene goes to 81FONT. Lead architect Péter Szendrő talks designing for clubbers.

How did you end up as *the* designer of Budapest's nightlife scene?

Péter Szendrő: I have a wide circle of friends, some of whom opened clubs and hired me to design them. My first commissions were the 4Bro Bistro and Ötkert, which led to a whole series of projects.

How does club design differ from other types of interior design?

If – like me – you're into strong, flashy designs and love creating furniture as much as an overall space, you'll probably like doing club interiors more than, say, living rooms or kitchens. Clubs do have their fair share of difficulties, though – shoestring budgets, a continuous rush to meet deadlines and so forth. They often have to open very quickly to cover expenses, and we usually have to submit demolition plans prior to the completion of the design.

Demolition plans?

Most of our projects are in buildings scheduled to be torn down; our demolition plans are used to strip the space to its bare bones before the transformation. We visit the site with our sketchbooks. As we visualize the result, we sketch the outlines of a concept, which we have to finalize fast. While we're developing the actual design, the demolition squad moves in and does its work. The process demands a great deal of improvisation, not to mention expert project management. Building a club interior is like raising a child; it takes continuous care until it's ready to face the world.



Ötkert was your breakthrough project. Can you explain its success?

It was a first in Budapest – in more than one way. It combines the atmosphere of a *romkocsmá* ['ruin pub'] with that of a bar and a tea garden. It's in the 5th district, the heart of the city, unlike most of the other ruin pubs, which are in the 7th district. A genuine *romkocsmá* is the product of Budapest's relentless evolution, whereas we planned Ötkert very deliberately, with a specific target group in mind.

Sometimes you name the clubs you design and create an identity for them. What does this say about your talent as a communicator?

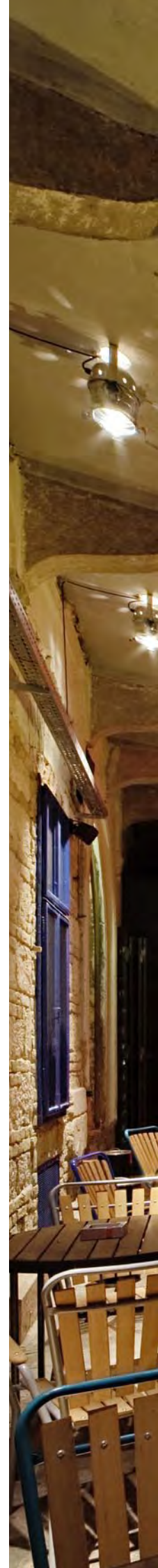
Together with Dávid Loszmann and Kristóf Patáricza, I basically run 81Font as an A-to-Z consulting service. We design a space in its entirety, including the desired image, not just an interior. Nowadays I sometimes feel that I know more about running a club than the new owners do. I understand exactly where a guest wants to sit and where everything – bar, beer taps, dining area, wine bar – should be.

Producing a space that promotes high turnover is also part of the job. That's why the functional aspects are just as crucial as the atmosphere and the aesthetic details. If all of this isn't taken into consideration, any club could fail. —

Words Brigitta Bugya



One of 81Font's first commissions was 4Bro – a bright, bold bistro.



A range of amenities, each with a particular mood and function, make up DoboZ (also pictured opposite page, centre).

NIGHTLIFE

Budapest

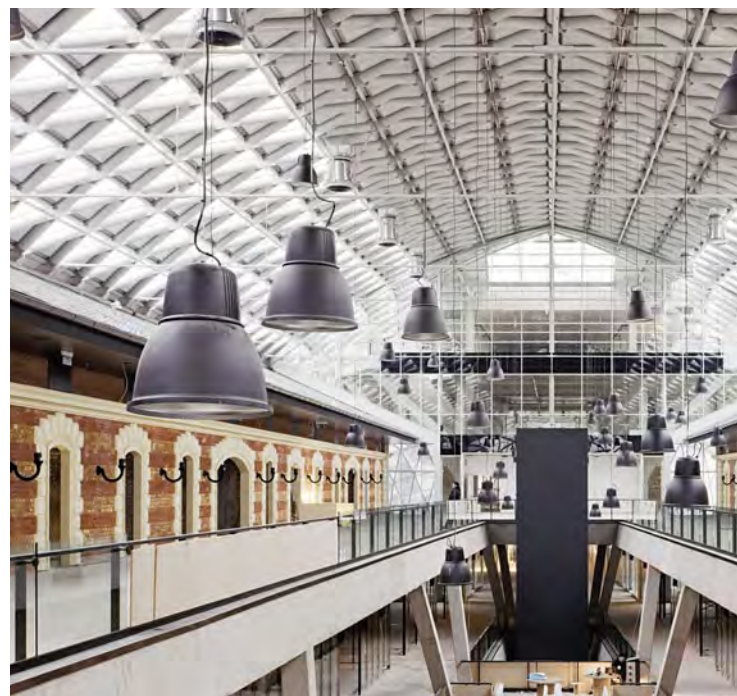
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Kas Oosterhuis's sweeping CET complex remains closed for now. The Dutch architect explains why.



When complete, the CET will house an entertainment and cultural centre, as well as offices and a parking garage.





Rising along the Danube River, which separates Buda and Pest, is CET, a one-stop destination for culture and shopping. The three letters stand for Central European Time, a reference to Budapest's central position within continental Europe, but they are also the Hungarian word for 'whale'. The streamlined structure designed by Dutch architect Kas Oosterhuis of ONL (Oosterhuis_ Lénárd) covers both fronts: Large enough to be a major landmark for Budapest, it also evokes the form of a cetacean.


ONL received the BIM Experience Award for its CET design. Cited in the jury report were the 'use of [the] BIM [building information modelling] process for innovative mass-customization and file-to-factory fabrication strategies'. Although each steel and glass component used to build the CET is unique in size and shape, the architects came up with an advanced, computer-driven, file-to-factory production process that made this type of construction economically viable.

What was it like for a Dutch architect to work in Hungary? 'I've become familiar with Budapest over a period of more than 30 years; my partner, Ilona Lénárd, is Hungarian,' says Oosterhuis. 'The biggest difference between the CET project and the work we do at home has to do with building permits. Hungarian authorities ask for ten times more drawings and paperwork – and they want 40 copies of each document. The difference is due to Hungary's highly fragmented building process, which encompasses countless departments and subdivisions.'

The project was scheduled to open in the summer of 2010, but the wait goes on. 'Although the building is, in fact, ready for use,' he says, 'the city of Budapest and the property developer are embroiled in a conflict concerning the level of workmanship. If all goes well, part of the CET complex will welcome visitors this coming summer.'

oosterhuis.nl

Words Merel Kokhuis



A network of crisscrossing concrete beams produces a dramatic play of light and shadow in the Fővám tér metro station.

Budapest will soon welcome a very important piece of public-transport infrastructure. Currently under construction, Line 4 of the metro, which will connect South-Buda with the city centre, is one of Hungary's more ambitious projects of late – both technically and architecturally speaking. Among others responsible for tackling this huge project is local firm Sporaarchitects, which was tasked with the design of two metro stops: Fővám tér and Szent Gellért tér. Sporaarchitects was founded in 2002, and Line 4 is its largest project to date. The architects have been working on the project since 2005, but the end is in sight; the project is scheduled for completion later this year.

Buried 36 m below street level, Szent Gellért tér is an exceptionally deep metro stop. Its proximity to the Danube and the density of surrounding buildings made construction quite difficult. Because parts of the station lie under existing buildings, the architects inserted a web of reinforced-concrete beams to stabilize the side walls of the shaft. The resulting network of crisscrossing structural members produces a dramatic play of light and shadow. Walls clad in printed ceramics – reminiscent of the Zsolnay porcelain in nearby Hotel Gellért – will be visible from the platforms.

Sporaarchitects' second stop, Fővám tér, lies directly opposite the first on the other side of the Danube. Although the two stations look almost identical, the inclusion of a tramline and a new pedestrian underpass made the construction of Fővám tér far more complex.

While both underground stations are generous in size – their dimensions correspond to those of street-level metro stops – their outward appearance is relatively reserved. They are located, after all, at the heart of a Unesco World Heritage Site. You won't find standard entrances, either; a spacious plaza at ground level will have large openings indicating the public facilities underground.

Sporaarchitects relishes the idea of working on a subterranean space. 'The fact that most of our work would be hidden away, as it were,' says Ádám Hatvani, 'was liberating.' Without having to focus on a landmark visible to passers-by, the architects were able to work unfettered by debate on their deep-seated activities. _

sporaarchitects.hu

Words Peter Sägesser

Some of the most ambitious infrastructure design in Budapest is happening below street level, thanks to **SPORAARCHITECTS.**

Tamás Dévényi's renovation of the RÁCZ BATH brings a Budapest institution up to date.



Thin concrete shells covering restored vaults create an intriguing cluster of amorphous white forms.

WELLNESS

Budapest

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Budapest is rich in natural springs. Tamás Dévényi's recent renovation of the Rác Bath – a mix of architectural styles – exemplifies a harmonious union of different layers of time. It is also a project that ushers a historical space into the present. Built in 1572, the Rác Bath's oldest space – the Turkish cupola – remains void of modern conveniences such as heating and electricity. Many ancient features, including the dominant cupola and the bath's first pool, indicate that this space has been barely altered.

Reconstruction of the building's 18th-century sections, including the shower hall and the imperial cupola, is based on the original technical and stylistic plans of Miklós Ybl, a renowned architect of his era.

To avoid what Dévényi calls a 'fake history', however, he reduced Ybl's 1-m-thick walls to 15-cm-thick reinforced-concrete walls that follow the interior contours of this part of the complex.

Because the new load-bearing walls are so much thinner than those specified in Ybl's plans, the reconstructed interior, with its majestic vaults, is visible from the outside of the building. The intriguing white-painted volumes appear as amorphous forms behind the new glass façade, expressing the architect's theme of transparency. —

budapestimuhely.hu

Words Brigitta Bugya

Tamás Nagy, head of architecture, and Dániel Barcza, head of design at Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest (MOME) on the changing face of Budapest.



Gyöngyvér Szabó explores colour-mixing in glass with the Sweet Cubes series.

How has the design and cultural scene of Budapest changed in the last decade?

Dániel Barcza: Design is now driving the vibrant culture of Budapest. People are becoming more open to and conscious of design. Several events are organized each year to introduce and promote Hungarian design. The most significant is the city's design week – Design Hét – which has grown into an international festival over the last few years.

How did your students react to these developments?

Barcza: Students at MOME act as catalysts for such developments. They're young, open-minded people who follow international trends but are capable of creating original, sensitive and often witty work that will also succeed abroad.

Sustainability, social value and sensibility are so important. We try to give students the kind of intellectual antennae that will facilitate their entry into the social and cultural discourse of Budapest's design subculture.

Do the city and its history add anything to their education?

Barcza: Budapest has the potential to become one of Europe's design capitals. Combine the picturesque Danube and the forests of Buda with a superb cultural-historical heritage, and you've got the perfect environment for fostering creatively strong yet sensitive minds. Budapest is a bridge between Western and Eastern Europe. You can sense a great deal of cultural diversity here.



For the opening of the Mercedes-Benz factory in Hungary, Daniel Ruppert proposed a car sculpture featuring what he calls 'the graphics of insect wings'.



Metal designer Janka Juhos recently collaborated with fashion designer Dóri Tomcsányi for the Jujj jewellery collection.

What can your students learn from Budapest and its architectural heritage?

Tamás Nagy: We believe that Budapest is one of the most important cities in East-Central Europe and that its cultural heritage – particularly of the last few centuries – is a treasure worth protecting. The curriculum emphasizes this tradition, but innovation is equally important.

We treat the three main disciplines of this course of study – architecture, interior architecture and furniture design – as an entity. It was introduced at the university in the 1970s, and it's what guarantees quality architectural training at MOME. Budapest shouldn't be the only source of inspiration, though. A vast number of students study abroad via the Erasmus programme organized by Hungarian universities. The resultant cultural exchange is very important, as these students bring foreign knowledge back to Hungary.

How do you promote innovation?

Nagy: By innovation, we basically mean open-mindedness. Teachers, regardless of their oeuvre, are here to cultivate individuality. The institute tries to keep abreast of international trends and to pass this knowledge on, and our university has Budapest's best-stocked library for the arts and architecture. We also seek an active relationship with today's most significant architects. The likes of Steven Holl, Kengo Kuma and Peter Zumthor recently accepted MOME's invitations. These initiatives are all attempts to put Budapest on the international architecture and interior-design map. —

w2.mome.hu

Words **Dávid Smiló**
Images courtesy of **MOME**



A hillside winery
by Ágnes Törös.



Lookout tower in Őrség
by Erzsébet Hosszú.



King Radnóczy's design for a school
yard in Budapest's eighth district.