

Press release from 24th October 2013 - Europa Nostra Award 2013 –
National ceremony at Schloss/Gutshof Britz, Berlin-Neukölln on 8th December 4 pm

Berlin holiday residence "Taut's Home" wins European award for monument preservation

The "European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award" is the single most important prize for the preservation of Europe's cultural and historical monuments. As a rule, castles, cathedrals or historic old towns are honored at a glamorous European ceremony that is comparable to the film industry's Oscars.

One of this year's awards goes to a relatively small but dedicated project from Berlin: "Taut's Home," located in the suburb of Neukölln-Britz. This colorful holiday residence has been given a new lease of life by its private owners, landscape architect Katrin Lesser and graphic designer Ben Buschfeld. People can experience the spirit and cultural awakening of the 1920s not only by visiting the premises, but by spending the night. The site gives one the feel of having hidden in a museum until it's been locked up for the night, then emerging to wander freely through the rooms, not restricted by ropes and security glass. The restored home is part of the Hufeisensiedlung, a housing estate laid out in 1925-1930 by architect Bruno Taut. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008, this monument ensemble is regarded throughout the world as an outstanding example of modern urban housing. By winning the award in the conservation category, this modestly sized (65m²) terraced unit, furnished in 1930s style with great attention to detail, is filling some very big shoes. The last award-winner in Berlin was the Neues Museum, remodelled by British star architect David Chipperfield on the city's Museum Island (2010).

When the house with garden went up for sale, the couple – both long-standing residents of the estate and strongly committed to heritage preservation – were absolutely thrilled how much original material had been preserved inside. Over a two-year period, they invested to restore Taut's typically lush wall and floor colors, and meticulously renovated the historic tiled stoves, cupboards, flooring and windows. They stripped away newer layers of construction, researched in libraries, gathered original furnishings and even designed numerous pieces themselves, based on historical patterns and photographs. Modern comforts were discreetly integrated. All this was achieved without public funding. The owners aim to recoup their long-term investment by renting out. This is a property by enthusiasts, for enthusiasts: so far, guests have been impressed by the flair of the house, and in the guestbook virtually everyone announces they want to return.

Such passions for a project completed only in May 2012 helped win over the jury. The report from the judging panel says: "The Jury was charmed and fascinated by the careful restoration of this small but important house on the 1925 UNESCO world heritage site (...) The restoration was based on intensive research, material evidence, surviving elements, photographs and knowledge of the design principles of its period. A rewarding work of restoration and renewal, it commemorates a highly significant phase in the history of civil architecture. The outcome is a lively and powerful combination of bold colours, reason and form brought together by design. The Jury strongly approved of the project's power of example to comparable urban settings."

Due to the limited space inside the awarded site the local ceremony will take part on 8th of December in „Britz manor house“, a handsome classicist ensemble only a few hundred meters away from Taut's Home. Before the heavy award medal will be handed over by Europa Nostra's Executive President Denis de Kergorlay, the two owners will show a series of images taken during the restoration process.

More details at www.tautshome.com.

Complimentary pictures, press material and further info:

www.europanostra.org/heritage-awards

<http://www.tautshome.com/> + <http://www.tautshome.com/pressematerial>

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