

New version of Null Stern

The Null Stern inventors launch an anti-idyllic version of their hotel concept

Saillon, Valais, Switzerland – **It is difficult to ignore the current global situation when we feel society may be drifting. The same sentiment is shared by conceptual artists Frank and Patrik Riklin and hotelier Daniel Charbonnier, who have been making international headlines since 2008 with their “Null Stern Hotel” ([video](#)). Today, they radicalize their concept once again with an anti-idyllic version of their “zero real estate” suites. This anti-idyllic suite feels as if it fell from the sky, like a disturbing anomaly which is hard to look away from. It is not sleep that is at the center of this suite, but self-reflection on the current world situation – it becomes a statement on the urgency and necessity of a radical change in society.**

This new version without walls or roof was realized in partnership with the Commune of Saillon (VS). The suite is located between a gas station and a thoroughfare; the sign of the constantly increasing gas price, the gas pumps, the cars and the passers-by become the set of this living picture. This anti-idyllic suite, including the service of a Modern Butler can be booked now. For those who wish to become part of this living picture, a public photo-shooting will take place on Tuesday, June 28 at 6 pm.

“In view of the current world situation, this is no time to sleep”, say Frank and Patrik Riklin. This year, the inventors of the Null Stern concept have created an anti-idyllic suite where one can enjoy a “half-sleep” to reflect and question yourself. This new “zero real estate” version, which can both fascinate and disturb keeps us all awake with burning questions: what is security? what is luxury? how can we conserve resources and reduce our energy consumption? In contrast with this new anti-idyllic suite without walls or roof, three idyllic “zero real estate” suites are installed in the Saillon landscape. The four suites are open from July 1 to September 18. An overnight stay including butler service, costs CHF 325.



As if it fell from the sky: Swiss conceptual artists Frank and Patrik Riklin and hotelier Daniel Charbonnier, launched an “anti-idyllic” version of their hotel concept. The current world situation inspired them to create this suite that becomes a statement on the urgency and necessity of a radical change in society. (Photo: Gianluca Colla)

Null Stern – an endless creative process

Since “Null Stern – the only star is you” was born in 2008, art has been a driving force in the creative process and in the evolution of the concept. This summer, art has struck again and brought to life the anti-idyllic version of the “zero real estate” suite. *“The new version of the zero real estate suite questions the accepted norms of the hotel industry while providing a space to reflect on current social, economic or environmental situation and uncertainties”,* says Daniel Charbonnier.

Null Stern - a mirror of society

The three founders, conceptual artists Frank and Patrik Riklin and hotelier Daniel Charbonnier, have continuously found inspiration in the major socio-economic changes so that the concept functions as a mirror of society. Whether the financial crisis, climate change or the war on European soil, the Null Stern concept brings us back to our deepest fear and dreams (see history in the box). *“Art gives the freedom to transgress norms and the status quo. It has allowed me to push the boundaries of the hospitality world and its established standards”,* say hotelier Daniel Charbonnier

Antithesis of the race to the ideal

By merging art and hospitality, the three founders are committed to developing the Null Stern concept so that it continues to become the mirror of the society. The new anti-idyllic suite is the antithesis of the race to the ideal. *“With this new suite, we try to address the contradiction of the human relationship between ideal and reality. Humans are part of nature but at the same time they are strangers to her and put their needs above hers”*, explain brothers Frank and Patrik Riklin. *“If we continue in the same direction as we are today, there might be more anti-idyllic places than idyllic”*, add the Riklin brothers.



Vertical sleep: Swiss conceptual artists Frank and Patrik Riklin, pose in the anti-idyllic suite situated between a thoroughfare and a gas station in Saillon (Valais, Switzerland). The Riklin brothers explain: *“In view of the current world situation, this is no time to sleep”*. (Photo: Gianluca Colla)

“Half-sleep” as an incubator for thoughts and reflections

This new version of the “Null Stern Hotel” offers a space for reflection – like a living picture where we are invited to ask questions and share ideas: what is beauty? what is comfort? what is safety? how can tourism be sustainable? *“It was important for us to show both, the idyllic aspects of our world with its stunning landscapes but also the realities we all face today. If you manage to look beyond and see the backdrop, you will find beauty and serenity”*, explains Daniel Charbonnier. The Riklin brothers add: *“A stay at the anti-idyllic suite invites you to think in an unconventional way, it is an investment in yourself and in your own reflections. Big changes can start with a small thought”*.

Guest will be able to share their insights by dropping them under the mattress. *"This anti-idyllic suite brings us back to our doubts and uncertainties and I hope it will inspire guests to reflect and share their thoughts so we can gather them to implement future actions locally"*, explains Charles-Henri Thurre, President of the Commune of Saillon. Thus, your visit become a statement and contributes to shaping change in society.

Modern Butler: a key role and rigorous training

"In the context of the anti-idyllic suite, the butler has an even more central role, as he or she provides a sense of security and care in an environment of insecurity", explains Daniel Charbonnier. The modern butler embodies the essence of "Null Stern – the only star is you" philosophy which consists of placing people at the center of the experience. This iconic role is open to all members of the community who wish to be part of these living pictures while ensuring guests are experiencing memorable moments. All modern butlers undergo rigorous theoretical and practical on-the-job training. They acquire not only technical skills, such as carrying a tray up a steep hill or making a bed in windy conditions, but also soft skills, such as personalizing service, anticipating guest needs or empathy.



Modern butlers in the midst of a training session: it is a key and demanding role in the Null Stern philosophy, requiring both technical and people skills to constantly adapt to guests expectations and needs.

Photo: Archives Null Stern, 2017)



In 2016, rooms without walls or roof also known as “Zero Real Estate suites” emerged in Safiental (GR). Artists Frank and Patrik Riklin with hotelier Daniel Charbonnier, founders of “Null Stern – the only star is you” created rooms without wall or roof at an early stage of the back to nature trend. Currently, there are more than 6’000 guests on the reservation request list.

(Photo: Null Stern Archive, 2016)



Un trio for unusual missions: since 2008, the three founders, concept artists Frank and Patrik Riklin and hotelier Daniel Charbonnier have been merging art and hospitality focusing on re-thinking the value proposition in the hotel industry.

(Photo: Gianluca Colla)



Null Stern suite Bayart (at. 535 m): found on the hills where the famous Bayart Tower was erected in 13th century. It offers a stunning view over the Rhône Valley with vineyards and the mountain Ardévaz as a backdrop.

(Photo: Gianluca Colla, 2022)



Null Stern suite Farinet (alt. 570 m): located on the mystical hill called « Colline Ardente », also home to the smallest registered vineyard in the world. The current owner of these three vines is the Dalai Lama. Pilgrims from all horizons have visited this place of introspection and contributed to a stone collection from all around the world including the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids and the Berlin Wall.

(Photo: Gianluca Colla, 2022)



Null Stern suite Vineyard (alt. 470 m): located in the valley on a small road in-between two vineyards, as if it was deliberately dropped from the sky. This suite provides a magical view of the historic medieval village of Saillon and her tower. Forming the backdrop, is the 3'934 Bietschorn mountain also known as the « King of Valais ».

(Photo: Gianluca Colla, 2022)



Null Stern suite Anti-Idyllic (alt. 475 m): this suite is situated between a gas station and a thoroughfare. Rather than a place of rest, this new version aims to keep you awake and offers a place of reflection on current affairs such as climate, economy, security or equality. We offer the opportunity to invest time in yourself and for yourself. You can share your thoughts, your fears or your convictions in an « idea chest » and they will contribute to shape future concrete actions on a local level.

(Photo: Gianluca Colla, 2022)

“Null Stern“ and her story

Null Stern Hotel was created in 2008 in Sevelen, St Gallen (SG) in a nuclear bunker by Swiss conceptual artists Frank and Patrik Riklin, Atelier für Sonderaufgaben. They partnered with Swiss hospitality professional, Daniel Charbonnier, Managing Director of Minds in Motion SA and together transformed the artistic installation into the brand “Null Stern – the only star is you”. In 2009, the first “Null Stern – the only star is you” hotel opened in a nuclear bunker in Teufen, Appenzell AR. Socio-economic context: **financial crisis, first 7-star hotel, peak of consumerism and globalization**

In 2016, rooms without walls or roof also known as “Zero Real Estate suites” emerged from the famous concept “Null Stern – the only star is you” ([video](#)). Between 2017 and 2020, Zero Real Estate suites were featured in different regions of Eastern Switzerland including Safiental, Appenzellerland, Toggenburg, St. Gallen-Lake Constance, Heidiland, Thurgau, Schaffhauserland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. Socio-economic context: **sustainability, back to nature and deglobalization**

In 2022 and for the first time, “Null Stern – the only star is you” will feature four Zero Real Estate suites in French-speaking Switzerland, more specifically, in the picturesque commune of Saillon in Valais. Additionally, one of the three suites will be a new and radically different version born from the current state of the world’s situation. Socio-economic context: **climate change, war on European soil, exploding cost of living**

“Null Stern – the only star is you” has been nominated at the Worldwide Hospitality Awards for Best Innovation of the Year, 2009. In 2010, GEO magazine included “Null Stern – the only star is you” in the 100 best hotels in Europe. In 2016, the brand “Null Stern – the only star is you” with their Zero Real Estate suites was declared an official **“Trend 2017”** in New York and Hamburg. In 2020, Travel + Leisure states *“You’ve never slept under the stars like this”*.

Press photos

The attached press photos are at your disposal. Other free images (high resolution) can also be downloaded free of charge by clicking on the following [swisstransfer link](#). **Keystone** and **Reuters** also provide images and videos.

For further information, please contact

Charles-Henri Thurre, President of Saillon, 079 430 92 05, president@saillon.ch

Frank and Patrik Riklin, conceptual artists, 076 457 12 41, info@sonderaufgaben.ch

Daniel Charbonnier, hotelier, 078 736 26 53, contact@mindsinmotion.ch