

THE SHIPPING NEWS

Shipping containers have been given a new lease of life as the building blocks for rented offices and housing with Urban Space Management's Container City system. Projects include **Container City II** (left), an airy office in south London; and **Cove Park** (below), live-work studios in Scotland. Conceived as part of a regeneration scheme, the system is cost-effective, easy to construct (the units are stacked and welded) and eco-sussed, too – especially when roofed with grass! For details, visit www.containercity.com or call Urban Space Management (020 7515 7153).



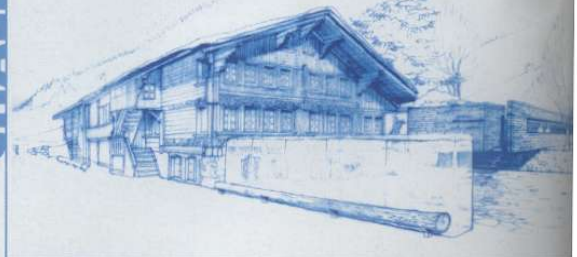
FRENCH FANCIES

Lille's year as Cultural Capital of Europe continues with 'Maisons Folie', 12 cutting-edge new arts venues created from former industrial or heritage buildings. One of these, **La Maison Folie de Wazemmes** by NOX/Lars Spuybroek (above), uses wire mesh to morph a factory into a theatre. Dinkier attractions include 'Microfolies', such as François Azambourg's **L'Estaminet-Dinette**, a see-through mobile restaurant (below), and there are curious lighting displays, such as François Morellet's blue neon 'À La Place Des Bleuets'. Visit www.lille2004.com for details and launch dates.

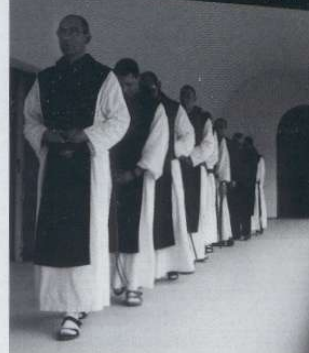


CHALET CHIC

Calling all ski bunnies and gourmets. French designer Patrick Jouin has just revamped **Le Chlösterli**, the oldest mountain chalet in Gstaad, Switzerland (below). It now houses a nightclub, bar, tea lounge, outdoor terrace, classic restaurant and the latest eatery from Alain Ducasse, Spoon des Neiges. Inside, cosy Alpine-style chairs nest alongside modern design, including a vertiginous glass wall holding the wine collector which splices the former farm in two. 'I wanted to play with traditional ideas of Swiss style – the chalet, cuckoo clocks and snow – but also be radical,' explains Patrick Le Chlösterli, 3783 Grund Bei, Gstaad (00 41 33 748 7979).



MINIMAL MONASTERY



Architect John Pawson's latest work is the design of **Novy Dvur**, a new monastery for Cistercian monks in the Czech Republic, the first to be built there since the fall of Communism. Ironically, after visiting John's minimalist London home, the monks were worried that his work would be too austere. However, his clever use of space and pared-down detailing has given the place a sense of modern simplicity, with highlights including a cantilevered cloister (left). Due to be completed this year, the monastery will also include a hostel for guests. For more details, visit www.johnpawson.com or www.novydvur.cz.