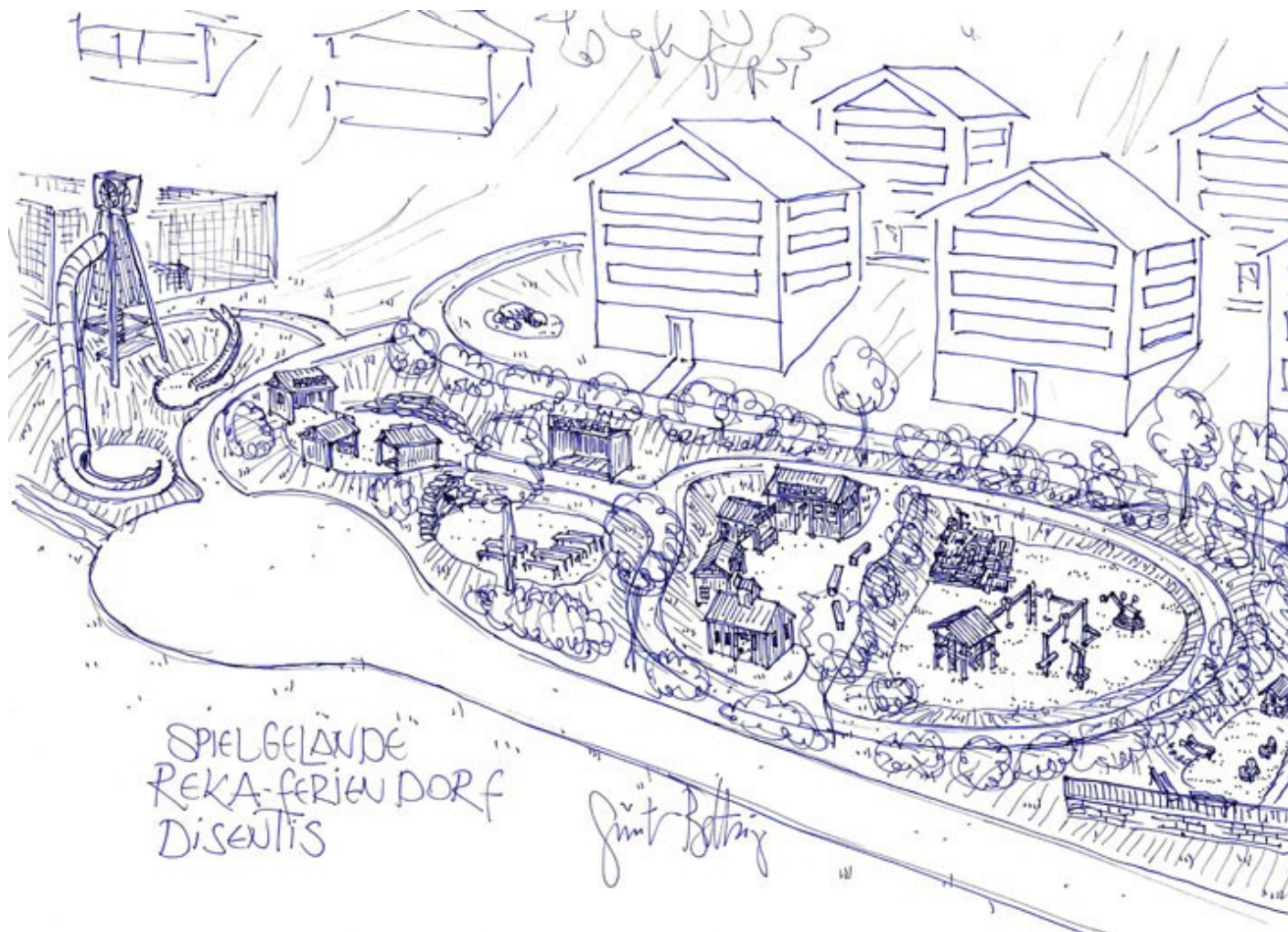


Disentis Reka Holiday Village: a goldmine-inspired playground amidst the Alpine pasture landscape

The clear positioning in terms of content was intended to make the new Reka Holiday Village in Disentis (Switzerland) more attractive for its guests. To this end, it was necessary to first of all ascertain which themes could be associated with the region. A workshop involving discussions with locals was held for this purpose. Historians, experts on the Surselva region, creative artists and tourism professionals were all asked for their opinions – in short: all kinds of knowledgeable individuals and specialists. For the “customers”, it quickly became clear that the theme for the Disentis Reka Holiday Village was “gold”, because gold used to be mined in this region.



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The decision was made in favour of a large themed playground: a veritable “village within the village”, going by its dimensions – planned and designed systematically and precisely. This themed playground was to become a crucial part of the tourism and marketing concept. Günter Beltzig, the designer, and Peter Heuken from the Frasdorf-based company Richter Spielgeräte supported the on-site planning team. Custom-made designs combined with elements from the wide equipment range ensured a uniform style and a clear design, which also appeals to the adult guests.

It was for this very reason that the positioning attributes were based on a foundation of authenticity, lending credence to them and eliciting the whole family's anticipation for their holidays. Environmental compatibility, durability and sustainability were obvious planning guidelines for the new themed playground. To integrate this mock gold mine into the open mountain scenery and to convey the impression of an authentic “gold mining village”, the material of choice for the playground equipment, huts and other items was wood. Visible parts are made of untreated mountain larch, and ground fixtures of steel. The water play elements at the gold panning site are made of stainless steel, and the new paths and squares of water-bound marl.

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Structuring the space with greenery

The village and playground are incorporated into an Alpine pasture landscape, which is why the greenery is unobtrusive and consists of individual robust shrubs and groups of shrubs. On many playgrounds, plants and shrubs often provide the children with their much-needed hiding places, a function in this case fulfilled by the playhouses.

The entire area is divided into six large sections:

- > Play area for the very young with a shaded sandpit, playhouse and tippers on springs
- > Gold panning area (sand and water feature)
- > Gold mining village with town hall, bank, police station, theatre and saloon
- > Working area with a workshop, garage and petrol station
- > Large headframe with a tunnel slide and a barrier-free hillside slide
- > The existing barbecue area in the centre, overlooking the theatre, was left unchanged.

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The individual spaces are located at different altitudes and are divided by "driveways" for tricycles and pedal cars. The "driveway" winds through the area in the shape of an 8 and can be accessed by wheelchairs.

Play area and surroundings

The playground can be seen from most flats. Its area for the very young adjoins the bistro lounge. The area is lined on two sides by the "internal" network of footpaths, which is connected to the public agricultural driveway. A partially planted embankment separates the playground from the driveway along the side. The path connection from the slide's run-out to the barrier-free hillside slide entrance is the only section of the "internal" path that does not adhere to the maximum incline of six percent determined for "barrier-free". If necessary, however, wheelchair users can reach the entrance by using the lift in Building 1.



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Planning process and costs

The playground sponsor commissioned the conceptual design agency Steiner Sarnen Schweiz AG with the task of repositioning the holiday village. The "gold" theme was implemented in the form of a gold mining playground and a mechanical gold mining donkey at the front of the community building. The total costs amounted to approximately 550,000.00 Swiss francs (500,000.00 euros). Two-thirds were incurred for the production and assembly of playground equipment, while one-third was attributable to modelling and landscaping. The "Denk an mich" foundation (dedicated to improving the accessibility of leisure experiences) made a generous contribution in light of the barrier-free accessibility of both the playground and the rest of the holiday village. Due to the new positioning of the Disentis Reka Holiday Village, the occupancy rate during the summer season has been improved significantly. The investment costs will therefore be recouped relatively quickly.



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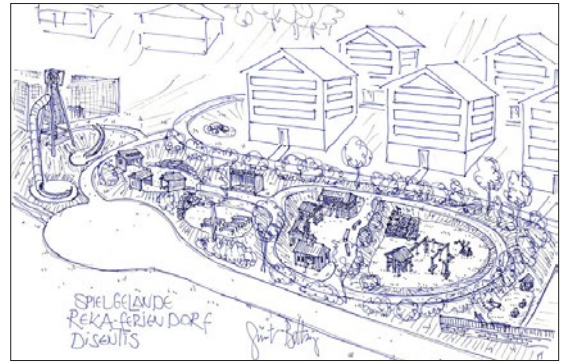
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Photos on p. 5: Richter Spielgeräte GmbH



Drawing on p. 5: Günter Beltzig



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Photos and graphic on p. 6: REKA

