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## TOWERING AMBITIONS

*Will the plans to make  
America's landmarks clean  
and green fall woefully short?*



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# OBSERVED

*"In Vienna, it's common to buy a tomato that was grown in southern Italy."*

WRITTEN BY  
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ARCHITECTS  
Architects Collective  
www.architectscollective.net

PROJECT  
Allesapfel Orchard  
Wiener Strasse 40  
www.allesapfel.at

St. Andrä am Zicksee,  
Austria



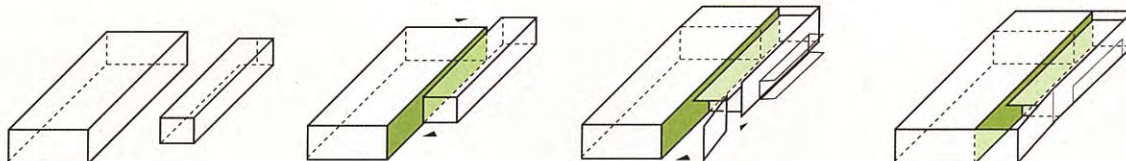
## Shining the Apple Orchard

A new building symbolizes an Austrian couple's sustainable practices.

Organic produce is big business in Austria, where 16 percent of farmland is devoted to chemical-free crops. Shoppers clearly care about safe fruits and vegetables, but even so, they don't always know where they come from. "In Vienna, it's common to buy a tomato that was grown in southern Italy," says Kurt Sattler, a partner in the Vienna-based firm Architects Collective. The studio's recently completed apple shop and cold-storage facility for Albert and Vera Leeb, in St. Andrä am Zicksee, aims to address that gap with a design that subtly relates that the fruit for sale was plucked from nearby trees.

In 2007, Architects Collective proposed a design for a cultural center in Vera's hometown, Tadtten, with undulations that referenced a popular lake in the well-known wine region. The firm, then a year old, didn't win the competition, but its idea did earn Vera Leeb's admiration. She was in attendance and decided to share with the architects her concept for a building on her family's farm in the adjacent town. "She imagined a large version of the wooden boxes that apple pickers carry, to create a more direct **continued on page 58**

The new building for Albert and Vera Leeb's apple orchard is designed to resemble the wood crates that the fruit is hauled in. The prefab project was built in two parts over four months. First came the main shed (left volume in diagram), followed by the shop.



# OBSERVED

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*"She imagined a large version of the wooden boxes that apple pickers carry."*



connection between the farm and the people who buy produce," Sattler says.

The Leebs are in the process of reducing pesticide use through "controlled and integrated farming," which Vera says is a step toward certifying their inherited orchards as organic or biodynamic. Agricultural sustainability may be a work in progress, but the Leebs knew they could achieve the architectural version quicker, by adopting extremely efficient Passivhaus building standards, which deploy passive solar design rather than active (and often energy-intensive) green technology to eliminate energy used for heating or cooling spaces. Architects Collective constructed the 4,800-square-foot shop out of oriented-strand-board modules (which evoke that apple picker's crate) and filled them with as much as 17 inches of blown-in fiberglass insulation. By exploiting the concrete base for thermal mass and further sealing in heat with triple-glazed windows, the architects produced a \$600,000 facility that requires only a minuscule electric heater to handle domestic water.

True to the project's locavore spirit, Architects Collective sourced recycled materials from the vicinity, working with Gabarage Upcycling Design, a Vienna-based furniture company, to mount a sunscreen (made of old Wien Museum signage) above the retail entrance, fashion bicycle-tube light fixtures, and clad the counter in old printing plates. They also gathered unused vineyard posts to pave the parking lot and walkway. "We need to keep nature intact to continue producing apples," Vera says. "We live directly off the land, and we can't just upgrade it as we want." ■

Sliding walls allow the structure to open and close, much like a green-market stall. A canopy of used advertising banners (above left) keeps the shop from overheating. Old bike inner tubes were used to make the hanging light fixtures.

