

INTERIOR DESIGN

# The Raw Elegance and 'Alpine Brutalism' of L'Apogée Courchevel

03.03.26 | By Joseph Sgambati III

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High in the French Alps, where snow blurs the boundary between architecture and atmosphere, **Kelly Wearstler** has reimaged the dining spaces at **L'Apogée Courchevel** with a language that feels at once Californian and Alpine, monumental yet intimate. Introduced in December 2025 under the **Beefbar** collection, the redesign unfolds across five distinct zones—each calibrated for mood, materiality, and mountain light—marking her first European hospitality project set within the storied environment.

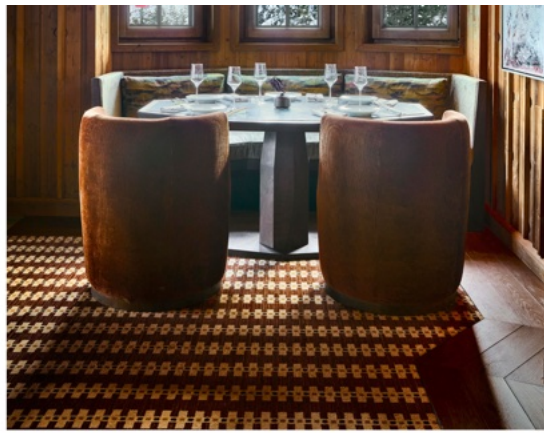


Wearstler describes the result as a kind of "Alpine Brutalism," a phrase that captures the project's central tension: the muscular geometry of **New Brutalism** softened by texture, craft, and a distinctly California ease. As critical architectural history argues, Brutalism was never merely a style but a "contrarian, direct, and anti-dogmatic modernist sensibility." Here, that sensibility manifests not in cold austerity but in raw elegance—monumental forms grounded by tactile woods, near-black stone, and richly woven natural fabrics.

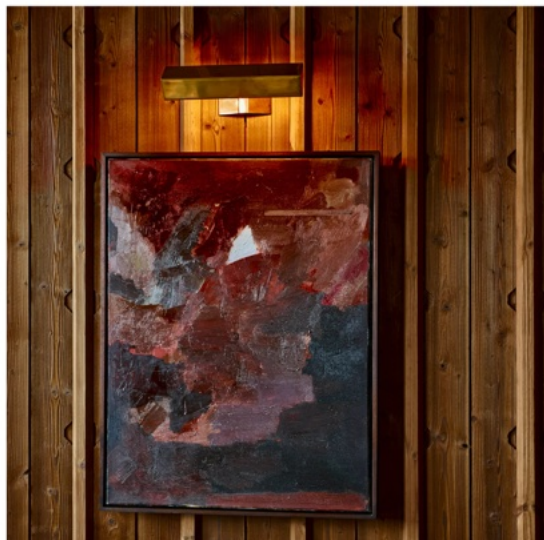


If California Cool conjures neutral palettes, layered natural materials, and an effortless relationship to landscape, Wearstler translates that ethos into a high-altitude key. Earthy greens, charcoal tones, warm ochres, and garnet reds anchor the interiors, while brushed alpine woods and locally quarried stone pull the drama of the surrounding peaks inside. The result like geological extension—an interior carved from the same rugged topography beyond the windows and walls.



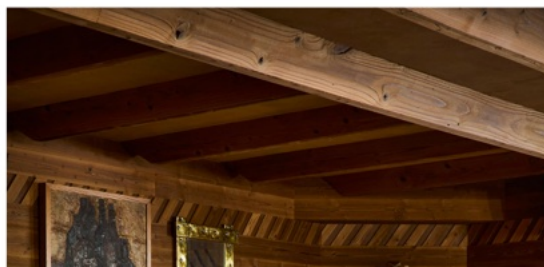


The Piano Lounge announces a dialogue between strength and soul. Guests descend past a custom sculptural staircase with brutalist-inspired balustrades into a double-height volume clad in textured pine, its surface treated to enhance tactility and acoustics. At its center sits a bespoke Edelweiss piano, subtly customized in collaboration with the UK-based maker, grounding the space in both performance and provenance. It's monumental, yes—but also deeply atmospheric.





From there, the Central Bar shifts into laid-back luxury, where vintage pine chairs meet a custom chandelier by Paris-born designer Nathalie Ziegler—blown glass elements suspended in a silhouette that nods to organic forms. In the Salon, mirrored ceilings and low banquettes conjure late-night glamour, ambient lighting reflecting against snow-dusted panoramas beyond floor-to-ceiling glazing. East and West Dining Rooms debut the Beefbar concept in complementary palettes, each wrapped in warm wood cladding and window banquettes that frame the mountainscape like living canvases.





Crucially, the project's warmth is not accidental. Brutalism's reputation for severity often obscures its capacity for lightness and ease. Wearstler leans into that overlooked softness, pairing bold architectural gestures with soulful curation including vintage European furnishings and commissioned artworks sourced through international dealers. The spaces feel collected more than composed, experiential rather than imposed.





Delivered within the tight seasonal window of Courchevel's ski calendar, the project demanded swift coordination and deep collaboration with craftspeople—refining timber treatments, perfecting sandblasted finishes, and prototyping sculptural elements to achieve the precise tonal nuance Wearstler envisioned. The collective craftsmanship reinforces her belief that every project is an exchange between disciplines, geographies, and hands.

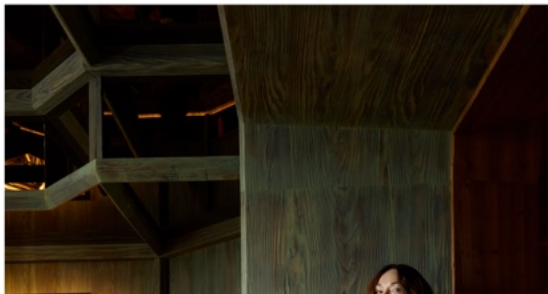


"We're continuing to partner with the best in class—companies and partnerships, collaborations—for any projects that we're taking on, and I love it" Wearstler shares. "I love expanding and continuing to create beautiful spaces while collaborating with interesting people to tell interesting stories."





California Cool may have been born along the Pacific, and New Brutalism forged in postwar Britain, but at L'Apogée, the two converge to create a new language of 'Alpine Brutalism'—raw elegance at altitude.





See this and other works by the designer, visit [kellywearstler.com](http://kellywearstler.com).

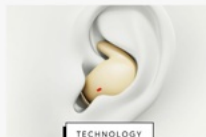
Photography courtesy of [Matthieu Salvaing](#)



With professional degrees in architecture and journalism, New York-based writer Joseph has a desire to make living beautifully accessible. His work seeks to enrich the lives of others with visual communication and storytelling through design. When not writing, he teaches visual communication, theory, and design.

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