

Top designers Their favourite Helsinki spots



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VISIT SCANDINAVIA



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CHALLENGES

Forget the clichés. Scandinavia is a region which is full of surprises, from design and cooking to nightlife, sightseeing and natural wonders

Time to visit the real Scandinavia

candinavia is so familiar from TV, film, books and magazines that people think they know the region well — even ones who have never been there.

As such, it has to fight a lot of preconceptions.

Everyone recognises Scandinavia's distinguished design history, for example; but, as Professor Ronald Jones from Stockholm's Konstfack design school explains in this supplement, it's not all blond wood and ergonomic surfaces any more. Some designers are making a conscious effort to create the unexpected in their work.

Insight

Then there's the revolution in Scandinavian cuisine. Contrary to popular belief, the best restaurant in the world is not currently in France. It's in Copenhagen, it's



View over Riddarfjärden The Millennnium Tour

called Noma and you'll be lucky to get a table. In January, Copenhagen's Rasmus Kofoed (from a restaurant called Geranium) was named World's Best Chef, and talks in these pages about his city and what makes it so special. Plus, best-selling Danish cookbook author and TV chef Trina Hahnemann, who has catered for Elton John and The Rolling Stones, gives her personal insight into the varied world of Scandinavian cooking.

Stockholm is currently a city break hot-spot, fuelled in no small part by the success of the late Stieg Larsson's Millennium thriller trilogy. Larsson's Stockholm-set stories have been international best-sellers, and the Swedish language movie version of the first book, The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, has been a worldwide hit. There is a Millennium Tour in Stockholm, which takes in many of the locations from the Larsson novels.

Creative

We also look at the outstanding UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Fjords, and highlight Helsinki's position as World Design Capital in 2012. Two leading lights of the Helsinki creative scene reveal what makes their city tick: Minna Parikka, the shoe designer who has created accessories for Lady GaGa; and Pirjo Suhonen who runs international fashion brand IVANAhelsinki with her sister, Paola.

It's time to visit the real Scandinavia.



"When it's summer I go to the beach to relax, have a swim, read a book"



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INSPIRATION

Question: Why is Copenhagen becoming the smart city break of choice? **Answer:** This is a chic location with successful designers, international brands, a laid-back lifestyle and a world-beating restaurant scene

The exclusive side of wonderful Copenhagen

LEADER TO LEADER

Predictably, when most people hear the name 'Copenhagen', they don't think of a chic, modern, consumer-driven city with a roll-call of uber-successful chefs, designers and architects. They think of fairytale teller Hans Christian Andersen (and he wasn't even born here).

Yet this Danish city is synonymous with famous fashion names such as Marlene Birger and Bruuns Bazaar, a mix of classic and modernist architecture, eclectic shops and splashy international events such as Copenhagen Fashion Week.

The bar, café and restaurant culture in Copenhagen is fast winning an international reputation, too. The 2010 Michelin Guide awarded 13 stars to the city's restaurants (that's more than Rome, Milan, Amsterdam and Vienna); while Noma — based in a converted 19th century warehouse beside the harbour in Christianshavn — was voted Best Restaurant

in the World. Reservations, understandably, are like gold dust.

Modern

Diners are also beating a path to the door of Geranium, co-owned by 36-year-old culinary king Rasmus Kofoed. In January, Rasmus was awarded the prestigious Bocuse d'Or 2011 trophy and named World's Best Chef.

"The award was great for me and for the restaurant," says Rasmus, "but also for Denmark and Copenhagen as a food destination. A lot of new restaurants opened in the city last year and we expect more in the next 12 months. Our clientele are young, old, local and international"

Rasmus knows Copenhagen well: he's lived here since he was 18. "It's a very modern city and very relaxing," he says. "The nightlife is good. Like New York, we have a meatpacking district (in Vesterbro) which is home to many restaurants and clubs. Copenhagen has a friendly



"We have a meatpacking district which is home to many restaurants and clubs"

Rasmus Kofoed, award-winning chef

atmosphere. I like that you can cycle everywhere – it's the fastest way to get around. The shops are great and there are many good cafes."

Popular

Nørrebro, for instance, north-west of the city centre, is where Copenhagen's hip young things go to buy clothes, eat exotic food, drink coffee and have a beer or five. Pussy Galore's Flying Circus and Sebastopol are two of the most popular café haunts here, but there are countless more in this vibrant quarter.

And when you're finished with the nightlife and the culture, there is another way to enjoy Copenhagen's exclusive side.

"We're close to the sea," says Rasmus.
"When it's summer I go to the beach to relax, have a swim, read a book. It's perfect."

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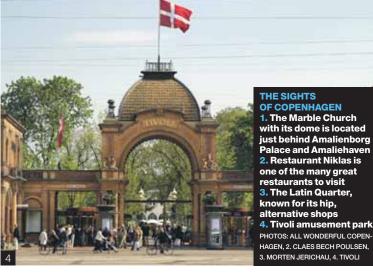


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OF COPENHAGEN

1. The Marble Church
with its dome is located
just behind Amalienborg Palace and Amaliehave
2. Restaurant Niklas is
one of the many great restaurants to visit

3. The Latin Quarter, known for its hip,

PHOTOS: ALL WONDERFUL COPEN HAGEN, 2. CLAES BECH POULSEN, 3. MORTEN JERICHAU, 4. TIVOLI

COPENHAGEN MUST SEES

Karriere

Situated in the meatpacking district in a former slaughterhouse, this experimental art café/restaurant/bar features a bar counter which slowly moves from side to side (by Jeppe Hein).

Pakhus 48

 $A new \, design \, zone \, which \, has$ been created at the harbour area of Frihavn in Østerbro, where various names have their showrooms: Montana, Erik Jørgennsen and VOLA, among others.

Christiana

A collectively run 'hippy' village within the city (it dates back to the 1970s). The place to go for organic food, workshops, galleries and music venues.

The Plaza Library Bar

A stately, wood-panelled library bar and was voted one of the 10 best of its kind in the world by Forbes Magazine.

Jægersborggade

Eclectic names jostle in this small street in Nørrebro, including The Coffee Collective, a specialty micro roastery; caramelmakers Karamelleriet, and organic bread bakers Meyers Bakery.







All eyes on the Finnish line

- **Question:** What makes Helsinki such a popular tourist destination?
- **Answer:** A fascinating east-meets-west culture, an easy-going atmosphere, a family-friendly attitude and its position as World Design Capital 2012

HOW WE MADE IT

Helsinki — home of the great architect and designer Alvar Aalto and iconic textile company Marimekko — has long been a haven for art-lovers and followers of fashion. This is a city which sits on the cultural crossroads between east and west.

Next year, however, when Helsinki officially becomes 2012 World Design Capital, it won't just be the design community who'll come calling. Its raised profile will spark interest in anyone who is after some Finnish-style Northern exposure.

Mellow

Helsinki-based Minna Parikka is Finland's top shoe and accessories designer, whose work has been worn by celebrity fans including Paloma Faith, Beth Ditto, Dita Von



Pirjo Suhonen IVANAHelsinki

Teese and Lady GaGa. "The spotlight will be on Helsinki in 2012," she says. "When people visit, they'll find that the vibe of the place changes with the seasons. In winter there are lots of snowsports, of course, and the nightlife is always good; but the residents are more mellow. Come the summer, the parks are full of people and everyone is in party mode."

Minna leads an international life, but Helsinki relaxes her and fuels her creative fires. "That's why I live here," she says. "It's a great place to return to, get some calm and concentrate on my work."

And while it's the most populated place in Finland, it's not particularly busy. In the Greater Metropolitan area of Helsinki, there are more than a million inhabitants — while Helsinki itself has just over half a million.

Popular

Families are well-catered for. Some of the most popular attractions in-

clude the Atenum Art Museum, Esplanade Park and the Cathedral. And because it's located on the Baltic Sea, Helsinki is surrounded by a vast archipelago: a cluster of some 300 islands including the maritime fortress of Suomenlinna, which has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1991; Seurasaari, the only open-air museum in Helsinki; and Korkeasaari, home of Helsinki Zoo.

Pirjo Suhonen co-runs (with her designer sister Paola) famous fashion company IVANAHelsinki. "My favourite part is Eastern Helsinki," she says. "That's where I'm from. It has beautiful seaside hideaways and small islands to spend perfect summer days." The city, says Pirjo, is "friendly, with a 'slow life' feeling... it's cosy and small" but has much to offer.

"Bigger cities are hectic," agrees Minna. "But in Helsinki, you can cycle or walk everywhere and have time for the most important things in life. It's great to live in your own bubble and you can easily do that here. The best things here are authentic, real and have history."

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MINNA PARIKKA'S TOP FIVE HELSINKI LOCATIONS



Soppakeittiö

A small lunch stall that sells soup in the atmospheric Hakaniemi indoors food hall. It gets really busy, so you'll need to share the table with strangers (which is very non-Finnish), overlooking meat and fish counters.

Savoy

A restaurant on a rooftop with a terrace where they grow herbs and have a little bee farm in the summer. The interior was designed by Alvar and Aino Aalto in the 1930s. It's part of modern design history.

Café Engel

This is under renovation until May. I love the courtyard here in summer. Between June-August, they use it as an outdoors cinema, which is the most romantic place in Helsinki. You can sip wine, wrap yourself in blankets and watch a film under the night sky.

Kiasma and Ateneum

Kiasma is the modern art museum — a fascinating place to explore the Finnish modern art scene. At eneum is interesting for traditional art lovers.

Saunasaari

I love taking a sauna. If you can get a bigger group together (10-30 people), the place to rent out is Saunasaari, a small island just 10 minutes boat taxi ride away from the market square. They have four different saunas, one with a view of the sea and the city centre of Helsinki. You can have a swim in the sea afterwards, sit outside and enjoy a traditional salmon meal.

NEWS

In the footsteps of Stieg Larsson

■ Question: Has Stieg
Larsson's Stockholm-set
Millennium series increased
international interest in the city?
■ Answer: Yes. And with the
Hollywood film version of The
Girl with the Dragon Tattoo
expected at the end of this year,
tourism numbers are expected
to rise further

If the Swedes thought that Stieg Larsson's Millennium trilogy couldn't get any more popular, they're about to get a shock. Already, the late author's thrillers have sold in huge numbers around the world (47million and counting); and the Swedish language film versions of his Millennium stories — The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo, The Girl Who Played with Fire and The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets Nest — have been box-office hits in Scandinavia and abroad.

At the end of this year, however, a Hollywood version of The Girl

with the Dragon Tattoo will be released, starring Daniel Craig and Rooney Mara; and when that happens, it's expected that Sweden in general, Stockholm in particular and all things Stieg Larsson will be in huge international demand all over again.

Pilgrimage

The Millennium novels are set in Stockholm, and the locations mentioned in the books (and seen in the Swedish language films) have become places of pilgrimage for Larsson fans. In 2008, Stockholm's City Museum decided to create a tour around the series, taking in locations such as the Mellqvist coffee bar, the haunt of Larsson's hero, Mikael Blomkvist; and Fiskargatan 9 where heroine Lisbeth Salander buys an apartment.

"When the tour launched, the books weren't that popular worldwide," says the City Museum's Sara



The house at Fiskargarten 9 where Lisabeth Salander buys her flat PHOTO: THOMAS KARLSSON

Claesson. "They certainly weren't the phenomena they are today. Our events producer was looking to make tours appeal to a younger audience, so used popular literature as a basis. Now the tourist industry is telling us that the Millennium series is a real reason to travel to Stockholm."

Exciting

The Hollywood filmmakers are shooting at locations on the tour,

although, says Sara, they are playing things close to their chest. "I know for a fact that they have filmed at St Paulsgatan," she says. "They want to make it right. They want to use the buildings described in the book." Sara's own favourite part of the tour is the view of the city from Monteliusvägen.

Visitors to Stockholm can join a guided tour (in English), or buy a map and take the tour on their own. It's a good way for people who are new to the city to get a handle on the place. "This part of Stockholm is not the most well-known area of the city," says Sara. "So it's a good way to learn about the capital in the footsteps of Mikael Blomkvist and Lisbeth Salander. It's exciting to see these places for real and feel you are part of the story."

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Nothing beats London. Just ask your mummy.



Question: What makes the Norwegian fjords unique?

Answer: The area's three UNESCO World Heritage Sites, two of which are famous for their outstanding natural beauty

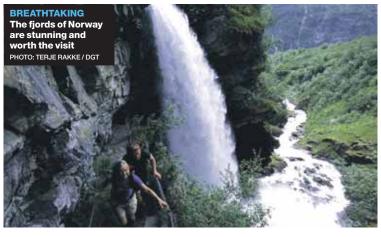
Geir Gjørva lays down a challenge: visit the Norwegian fjords and, while you're there, try to take a bad picture of that awe-inducing, madly picturesque scenery.

It can't be done, he says.

"The photos of the fjords in magazines and brochures don't lie," he insists. "There are fjords in Alaska and New Zealand, of course; but in this country we have so many of them in a small area. And UNESCO has listed two of them (Geirangerfjord and Nærøyfjord — a sidearm of Norway's longest and deepest fjord, Sognefjord) as World Heritage Sites because of their incredible natural beauty." And uniquely, he says, people still live and work on the Norwegian fjordsides.

Spectacular

Gjørva runs an activities company based in Geiranger, a village at the head of the dramatic Geirangerfjord. The air is clean, the scenery



unspoilt and the vantage point at Flydalsjuvet (on the way from Dalsnibba to Geiranger) one of the best in the area. "When you're travelling in this part of Norway," says Gjørva, "there is another highlight around

every corner." Autumn in the fjords is beautiful, but spring, he says, is "marvellous".

Bård Huseby moved here to run the Torvis hotel in the village of Marifjøra on the Sognefjord, and be-

FACTS

- The Fjords region features no less than three UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Bryggen, Nærøyfjord and Geirangerfjord.
- Nærøyfjord is part of the Sognefjord and the narrowest fjord in the world. At one point it is only 250 metres wide.
- Geirangerfjord is 15km long and visited by more than 700,000 tourists each year.
- Alesund has 43,000 inhabitants with its own museum, The Art Nouveau Centre, celebrating the town's architectural style.

lieves he's found paradise on earth. "People come here to see the fjords, of course," he says, "but also the Hoperstad Stave Church. Then there is the Nigardsbreen glacier, which is just half an hour away by car."

The area is good for children, too, he says. Visitors to Geirangerfjord and Sognefiord can opt to stay in hotels or on camping sites, and activities include kayaking, biking and hiking.

Natural

The fjords' natural beauty can't be beaten; but, in this part of the world, even the urban areas are good-looking. Ålesund — named Norway's most beautiful city — lies at the entrance to Geirangerfjord and features fairytale Art Nouveau architecture. Bergen, the birthplace of composer Edvard Grieg, is situated between Sognefjord and Hardangerfjord, and its wharf (at Bryggen) is another UNESCO World Heritage Site.

"If you like the outdoors life, moutains, water, nature and fresh air," says Bård Huseby, "there's no better place on earth."

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Shaking the design tree

Question: Does

Scandinavian design always follow minimalist, functional principles?

Answer: No, says Professor Ronald Jones from renowned Konstfack design school in Stockholm. Things have changed in the last decade

Thanks to legendary names such as Arne Jacobsen and Alvar Aalto, the Scandinavian design aesthetic is justly famous around the world. When you think of it, you picture bleached wood, clean lines and form following function.

Ronald Jones is a Professor at the renowned Konstfack University College of Art, Craft and Design in Stockholm, whose alumni include international glass artist Erika Lagerbielke. Jones says things have changed — and that some designers from the region have made a conscientious effort to become more international and avoid the Scandinavian cliché.

Design tradition

"About 10 or 12 years ago, there was a shift," says Jones, an American who moved to Sweden seven years ago. "Designers here have



Ronland Jones
Konstfack design
school, Stockholm

great respect for that very strong and important Scandinavian design tradition; but some stepped away from it so that they didn't get tagged as, for example, 'traditional Swedish designers'. They didn't want people to think: 'You're a Scandinavian. So we already know what your work is about."

Swedish names such as Sony Ericsson, IKEA and H&M are leading players in international markets. "But there is a middle group,"

FACTS

- Finnish designer Tiia Vanhatapio has been dubbed the Queen of Cocktail Dress by the press.
- Madonna and Jimmy Choo have designed collections for Swedish fashion brand H&M.
- International fashion designer Margit Brandt was knighted by the Queen of Denmark in 2007 for her commitment to Danish fashion.

says Jones. "I'm thinking in particular of the likes of FilippaK, the fashion brand. Their fashion is extraordinarily well-designed, they have 20 stores worldwide and they are extremely popular. When I first came to Sweden, local brands had a few international followers. That's certainly changed for FilippaK — and it's changing for others."

Hybrid effect

For example, Jones points to fashion houses Front (an all-female collective of Konstfack graduates) and Whyred. He also flags up Stockholm-based No Picnic, formed in 1993, who produce everything from packaging and furniture to the built environment.

Konstfack has always been a hugely influential force in the Scandinavian design arena — and more than 50 per cent of its students are international. "That's going to have a hybrid effect," says Jones. "Which isn't to say that Scandinavian design is going to be left behind. On the contrary. I think it's going to be really interesting."

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HEXAGON design plant pot by Signe Persson-Melin

It's cast in recycled aluminum, has a wonderful texture and functions really well with big plants or even small trees. Eighty-five-year-old designer Signe Persson-Melin is a Swedish icon, famous ceramicist and equally famous designer of glass and china. She is still very much active and going strong.

Wooden coat hanger LOOP by Nina Jobs, for Gärsnäs

It's poetry! It hangs your coat and it adorns your hallway. I never knew wood could be bent like this. I love the way it is fully three-dimensional.

Chair/easy chair COMET by Gunilla Allard, for Lammhults

Elegant and very slim with a nicely rounded back which makes it just as beautiful from all angles. I like the one on four wheels best.

May Bente Aronsen

The work of Norwegian textile artist/sculptor May Bente Aronsen.

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Work by goldsmith Helena Edman

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