

Celebrating Northern Homes

A Sustainable Culture by Nina Bruun

Italian-Norwegian interior designer duo ALESSANDRO D'ORAZIO and JANNICKE KRÅKVIK (see pp. 116–119) love using colors and forms. “We’re fond of graphical scenes with architectural details. At the same time, we like it moody and texturized, calm and simple,” says the couple of their work.



In the North, we grow up surrounded by beautiful bentwood furniture and long-lasting designs. Classic twentieth-century designs by great minds such as Arne Jacobsen, Hans J. Wegner, Verner Panton, and Børge Mogensen, as well as newer designers and brands like Cecilie Manz, Dinesen (see pp. 154–155), and Nikari have all contributed—or continue to contribute—to our common design heritage. With their takes on shape, expression, and simplicity, Nordic design has continued as a cultural hallmark.

Some look at design as something confined to furniture shops, while others see and understand how everything from food packaging, the font on a metro map, the food at a nice restaurant, or even a park bench can be understood through the lens of design; that as long as you keep a curious and open mind when observing the world, you’ll never get tired of understanding and learning about design and its applications. Learning about design and working creatively opened up an amazing new world for me. Studying design also taught me that great design can also come from breaking the rules once in a while. When we had to create furniture using new upholstery techniques, I did a lot of research and came up with the idea to create a “human nest.” In the end, however, I decided to present only the skeleton, which consisted of bent wood



A home that epitomizes the Swedish concept of *lagom* (see pp. 50–51) “is not too minimalist or too cluttered, but will be an uncomplicated mix of interesting forms and practical function—objects both old and new—and will include seasonal elements brought in from the outdoors,” says author NIKI BRANTMARK.

and almost no upholstering, as I felt it made more sense in terms of the shape and expression that the chair embodied. My Nest Chair later won a Swedish competition and, some time later, I was contacted by the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, who wanted to request the chair for both their permanent collection and a rotating exhibition. That kick-started things for me as a designer, and is also when I learned that good design really can come from bending the rules a bit.

When creating homes or home-like settings, I’ve noticed that the definition of a home varies greatly depending on where you are. Some cultures have certain “showrooms” in the house, designed to entertain guests, while in other places people spend the majority of their time out of the house. Nordic living, is primarily characterized by sustainability, durability, and practicality, and we don’t perceive our home as merely a physical shell but as a place where we exist within the company of family and friends. Our choice of wood, colors, and our love for natural light, are often a result of our really long winters, where it becomes important to let in as much natural light as possible and make the most of it through the use of reflective surfaces. As the long winters essentially force us to spend most of our time indoors, we want our homes to be representative and reflective of who we are. It’s the one place where we can relax completely, build up relationships, and really express our identity. Because of this, many beautiful homes are made and filled →

