

Scandinavian style design & colour



Scandinavian architecture

Scandinavian design is best described as well-ordered simplicity. Rectangular shaped buildings with open-plan interiors, natural timber floors and ceilings, large smart-glass windows, ergonomic and ecological.

Inspiration may have originally come from the Finnish Tupa and Swedish Stuga (open plan farmhouses and little red barns) but the modernist movement at the end of the 1930s was probably the biggest influence on this design in order to achieve a balance between form, function, durability and cost.

Wood has always played an important part in construction because of it being an abundant raw material with insulation attributes during the long, hard winters. While common characteristics of Scandinavian design include an affinity for nature and functionality, each of the countries are also influenced by their individual differences in nationality - Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland.





architectural Influences

Danish design has always understood how to combine new ideas and maritime influences with its own culture to create something fresh and new. The Swedish government concentrated on improving the living standards of its citizens, which led to new buildings after the 1960s. In the 1990s Norsk Form, the centre for Norwegian design and architecture, was founded to advance awareness of their design. Finnish architecture is adapted to the climate and difficult environmental conditions in Finland. Iceland is volcanic and sparsely populated so design is influenced by the stark contrasts of its natural surroundings.

The house to the left is constructed of steel, while the apartments on the right looks like stacked 'boxes' with cantilevered terraces.



colour Inspiration

The colours from nature often have an impact on the colours people like in their homes and furnishings. Shades from plants and produce, soil and sea are transferred into paint colours, tiles, fabrics etc.

- Silver herrings and sardines -stainless steel homewares.
- Snow and ice - whitewashed timber, translucent glass, white buildings.
- Creamy cheese - pale yellow-ochre paint, tiles, linen fabrics, bleached timber.
- Blue sea and skies - blue and white tiles, fabrics and furnishings.



design in wood

Well known designers originated in Scandinavia - Alvar Aalto and Eero Arnio in Finland, Arne Jacobsen and Verner Panton in Denmark, Stig Ancker in Sweden.

With a plentiful supply of timber and modern manufacturing techniques, furniture making has been revolutionised using plywood to make curved and moulded ergonomic furniture and attractive homewares.



furniture

More examples of timber and moulded furniture are seen here. Scandinavian styled furniture is available locally from stores like Danske Mobler, Design Denmark, Thonet, Bromhead and Katalog to name a few.



homewares

Scandinavian homewares are uncomplicated, functional and streamlined in appearance. Materials include stainless steel, translucent glass, matt chrome, timber and plastic. Colours black, white, blue and green and all the colours in between.



product design

Saab and Volvo, Bang & Olufsen, Nokia, Ikea and Electrolux are well known designs/brands from this part of the world. Again the lines are simple, materials satin silver teamed with black, and a little metallic green or frosted blue and turquoise.

These accent colours relate back to the colour of the forests and snowy rivers. They also work well with natural timber finishes and are used as accent colours in interior design.



It is accessories that 'tell the story' in a room and help to create a design theme. Below are some more examples of stainless steel cutlery, tapware and utensils designed in Scandinavia. The lights are made of timber and the open weave allows a play of light and shadow on adjoining surfaces.



Red is another accent colour used to enliven a neutral colour scheme. The furniture stands alone in the commercial project below, while the red house to the right contrasts with the snow and vegetation. Marimekko is a fabric designed in the 50s that is 'happy' and colourful, and still produced today.



Another example of Marimekko fabric in orange, and an interesting translucent light fitting. The bed is a good example of low, linear lines which are contrasted with the vertical lines of the screen to the right of the picture. Note the bed is on castors so it can be easily moved to the view/sun or out of the way so the space can be used for other purposes during the day.



living rooms

The room to the left has soft blue-green walls and floor rug, with honey-coloured furnishings to make it inviting and cosy. The example to the right shows sliding wall panels in ply wood, and a great chair designed by Alvar Aalto constructed of curved timber and upholstered in black and white textile.



This living room is light and airy and again neutral apart from the orange accents in the way of cushions and chair. The furniture is low and linear, and the lighting is soft and diffused. The floor rug anchors the central seating area in the room. The fixed floors are light colour timber, and walls, ceiling and joinery are all painted white.

This children's room shows continued use of neutral timber finishes and restraint of colour. The cot to the right of the picture is designed to 'grow' as the child grows and converts into a bed



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the paint the professionals use



These two kitchens are constructed in solid timber. The one to the left is gallery style, and open to the dining and living areas. The kitchen to the right is more of a farmhouse style with green and white gingham curtains looking crisp against the blonded timber.



These white kitchens are again quite simple in design, with bleached wood floors and light and airy with reflective surfaces. The tiles in the one to the right are in that frosted turquoise colour while the kitchen to the left is pretty much all white and silver.



Both of these dining rooms demonstrate the use of timber for ceilings, walls and furniture.

Note all the wooden objects on display on the chunky shelves in the picture to the right.

Soft light is filtered through the high-level windows in the room to the left.

Popular Scandinavian colours include black and white, soft grey and shimmering silver. Accent colours comprise of watery blues, frosted turquoise and produce greens, with stronger accents of red, burnt orange or olive green contrasting alongside natural timber surfaces.

Wooden furniture, floors or wall panels can be treated with Resene Waterborne Colorwood Stain - try Resene Pea Soup, Resene Rock Salt or Resene Egg White for a light neutral colour, or Resene Deep Cove, Resene Pigeon Post or Resene Pistachio for a blue or green finish.



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