

DECORATING SERIES: *scandinavian*

NORTHERN LIGHTS

IN THE FIRST OF OUR THREE-PART SERIES ON CLASSIC DECORATING STYLES, WE LOOK AT SCANDI, WHOSE APPEAL LIES IN ITS CALM PALETTE, TEXTURAL QUALITY AND SIMPLE BEAUTY

WORDS VANESSA KEYS

Lighting a candle at the breakfast table. Lounging on floor cushions instead of an armchair. Eschewing roses for bunches of wildflowers. Welcome to *hygge* and *lagom*, the Scandinavian way of living that Danes and Swedes have sworn by for the last century. There's no official translation, but *hygge* pretty much means getting cosy: surrounding yourself with greenery, soft fabrics, handmade objects and being with the people you love. *Lagom* is a Swedish word that means 'just the right amount'. It's all about being sensible without depriving yourself; having items around that you really cherish without over-cluttering your home with 'stuff'. Clean lines, functional furnishings and a neutral palette are the hallmarks of the style. Read on as we dig a little deeper. >



FORM & FUNCTION

Scandinavia has a particular flair for affordable, functional furniture, made using natural materials and traditional craftsmanship, and it is at the heart of Scandi style. "You can learn a lot about a nation from their homes, and in Denmark, most of them have a very similar look: white walls, wooden floors, uncluttered surfaces and smart, designer touches," says Helen Russell, author of *The Year of Living Danishly* (Icon, \$17). "Every home is centred around a dining room table and having family meals together is an important part of life."

◀ **LIGHT:** Long winters kept people indoors a lot, says Elisabeth Carlsson, author of *The Lagom Life*. "Having a home with as much natural light as possible was imperative," she says.

▼ **DESIGN:** Try picking one investment piece and mixing it with items from Ikea, or scour sites like Gumtree and eBay for pre-loved treasures.

▲ **STYLE:** "Scandinavian style is light, clean and not fussy," says Karen Kellock of online store Love That Little Hygge Shop. "Think light timber and cool-coloured furnishings with lamps and candles to set the mood."

"Collect slowly, knowing you'll keep the piece for life. Buy once and buy well"
~ Monica Ramirez, Great Dane Furniture

Functionality and timelessness are key. "Start with simple and sturdy furniture pieces, as these will stand the test of time in terms of wear and tear and style," says Danni Tan, of Scandi store The Design Edit. "Sometimes we are tempted to jump straight to a statement piece because it catches our eye, but my advice is to start off with a few large pieces in simple designs to give your styling more versatility."

▼ **FABRICS:** "Scandi style can be heavy on furs and chunky woven textures," says stylist Sarah Ellison. "In summer, opt for light linens and natural cottons."

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE, FROM TOP) TESSA NEUSTADT/DESIGNER MELANIE BURSTIN, CHRIS WARNES. (OPPOSITE) JOHN DOWNS



'Little Sandy' light, \$430, Lightly.



Frameless hanging mirror, \$220, Heartly Design.



Barnaby Lane 'Smith' full leather armchair in Tan, \$1390, Design Stuff.

GET THE LOOK

Find pieces that ooze simple elegance to place at the heart of your scheme



'Mellow' two-seater sofa in Anthracite, \$1899, Curious Grace.



'Ambit' pendant in Grey, \$535, Lightly.



'Urban Dining Chair Loom', \$510, Curious Grace.

Frameless double-sided standing mirror, \$950, Heartly Design.



'Copenhagen' coffee table, \$279, Nordik Living.



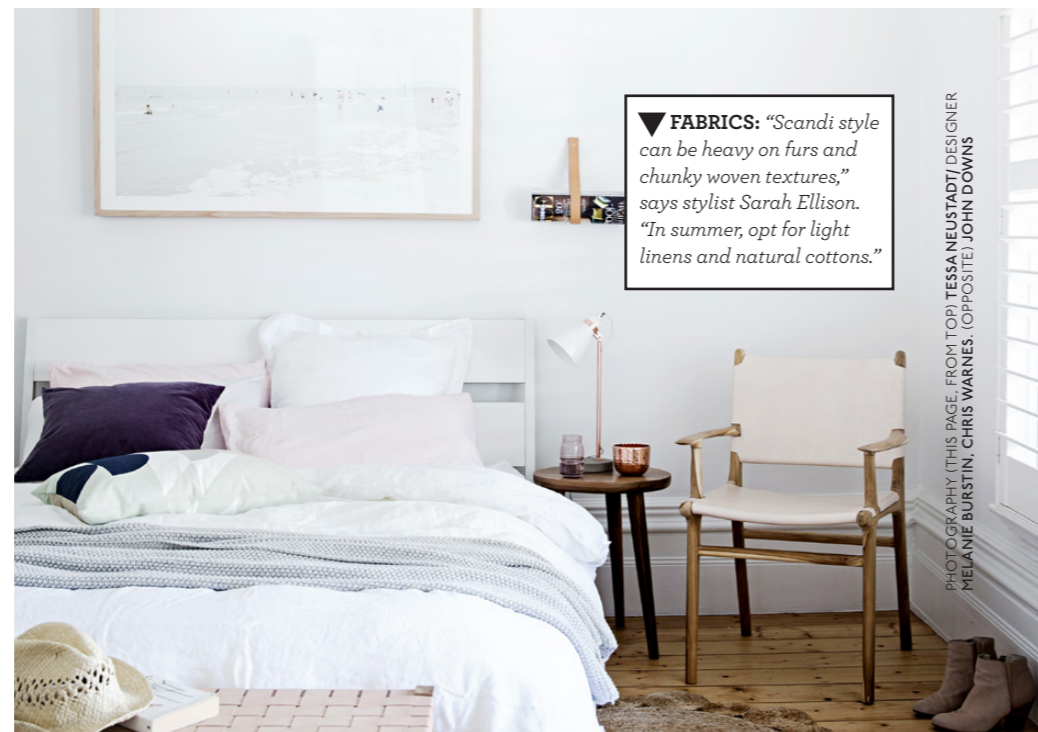
Cushion in Olive, \$80, Lightly.



'Agnes' tea-light holder, \$12.60, Nordik Living.



'Spine' daybed in lacquered oak, \$15,450, Great Dane Furniture. Stockists, page 220 >



TRUE COLOURS

The Nordic colour palette developed to allow as much light into the home as possible, counteracting harsh winter conditions and limited daylight hours. For Dulux colour expert Andrea Lucena-Orr, Scandi is one of the easiest colour schemes to master because it all revolves around calm colours that don't want attention. "Think clean hues: soft whites, neutral pinks, soft amber, darker blue (almost charcoal), soft icy blues, dark greens, pale putty and moss colours," she says.



◀ **PAINT:** To up the cosy factor, go for a blue that has a touch of yellow in it, or a soft green such as moss or putty. "These hues add tonnes of warmth," says Wendy Rennie of Haymes.

Tofu, \$52.24/L, Porter's Paints.

Snow Patrol, \$52.24/L, Porter's Paints.

Dieskau, \$42.90/L, Dulux. *Stockists, page 220*

"A light blue/green or a soft green is particularly good in the bedroom"

~ Wendy Rennie, Haymes

"If you have space that's low on natural light, use a warmish white like Dulux Natural White for the walls and Vivid White for the trim," says Andrea. "If you want more colour, try a gorgeous neutral pink and Vivid White or a soft icy blue for the trims. For a more neutral colour scheme, try Dieskau - it's a natural soft greige and works well with Lexicon Quarter trims."



▼ **PALETTE:** Try two colours that are a couple of shades apart, such as soft grey for the walls and a darker shade for the trim, then repeat these hues in your accessories.

Watermark, \$50.30/2L, Haymes.

Aura, \$50.30/2L, Haymes.

Cavalier, \$50.30/2L, Haymes.

"Right now, I'm loving a palette of oak, white and grey paired with a muted deep forest green. This colour also works beautifully with a bit of warmth from blush pinks" ~ Mikayla Rose, interior designer



▼ **PHILOSOPHY:** "Stick to neutral and calm colours so that the people who live in the house can shine instead," says Elisabeth Carlsson.

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) JODY D'ARCY, CATH MUSCAT X2 (OPPOSITE PAGE) MATTHEW WILLIAMS



CEILING Try Wood Wash in Plain White, \$29.95/500ml, Porter's Paints.

TOP TIP: Small touches can make a big impact. "The essence of Scandi is about minimalism, so if you're on a budget, take as much stuff away as you can and then add in some pot plants and soft cushions in blues and greens," says Wendy Rennie, colour and concept manager for Haymes. The feature wall in this space by Jessica Helgerson Interior Design has quiet impact.

WALL FEATURE Try Mornington Half, \$42.90/L, Dulux. >

MATERIAL MATTERS

Scandinavian design owes its origins to the modernist movement that followed World War I. Seeking to make the most out of limited resources and traditional craftsmanship, designers like Hans Wegner, Erik Møller and Arne Jacobsen used teak, rosewood, birch and ash to create simple pieces that favoured function over form. Natural-stained wood such as birch, maple and pine and fabrics such as cotton and linen are still very much the mainstay of Scandi design today.

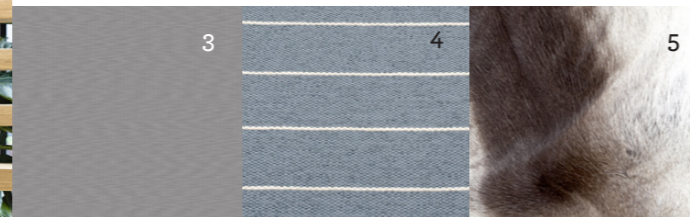


▼ **TIMBER:** Woods from the paler end of the spectrum are the go-to, used in simple forms to highlight the beauty of the material.

◀ **FINISHES:** The rawness of concrete complements the natural look of timber for an industrial take on the aesthetic.



▼ **SOURCE:** "Choose natural materials like wool, stone, leather and buy objects made with integrity, and to last," says Elisabeth Carlsson.



▶ **FABRIC:** Light, loose-weave materials such as linen and cotton have a relaxed look that perfectly suits the Scandi vibe.



"Scandi is a timeless look that can complement minimalist, rustic, feminine, industrial, coastal and Zen styles"
~ Danni Tan, Design Edit

For furnishings, think tactile materials you can layer as the temperature fluctuates. For flooring, stick to pale hues, such as light oaks or a whitewash, and create warmth with rugs in different sizes, shapes and colours (it's not unusual to see rugs in Scandinavian bathrooms). If hardwood flooring isn't an option, consider a timber-look laminate or vinyl.

1. French Oak Finished floor in Mont Blanc, from \$121/sqm, Porter's Paints.
2. Impressive saw-cut Oak Beige laminate flooring, from \$54.90/sqm, Carpet Court.
3. Artisan flooring in Concrete, \$100/sqm, Bolon.
4. Linn plastic rug in Vanilla-Blue, from \$225, Nordic Fusion.
5. Reindeer hide, \$595, Great Dane Furniture. [Stockists, page 220](#)

PHOTOGRAPHY (THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) DEREK SWALLOW, CATH MUSCAT, TESSA NEUSTADT. (OPPOSITE) MATTHEW WILLIAMS/JESSICA HELGEMSON INTERIOR DESIGN



WALLS Try Easycraft 'Easyline' cladding, from \$101/2400 x 1200 x 9mm panel, Bunnings.

LET THERE BE LIGHT
According to the European Candle Association, Danes burn more candles per head than anywhere else in Europe. Endlessly flattering, soft light is the epitome of hygge. The key is to avoid bright overhead lights completely and to use different light sources to bring focus to points around the room. Try lamps with soft shades on side tables, hang a pendant over your table or place a reading light by a chair to create a cosy corner. And lots of candles, of course. [HB](#)

SOFA Try 'Carmo' corner sofa in Light Grey Lux Felt fabric, \$8949, Bo Concept.

RUG Try 'Carlos' felted wool rug, from \$599/255 x 155cm, My Scandinavian Home.

LOOK OUT FOR PART 2, COMING SOON: french provincial