

# Great Danes

Think Scandi interiors are all sleek edges and white walls? Think again, says *Jessica Salter*. As the new Soho House Copenhagen opens its doors, Danish design leads the way with colour and a sense of fun

Copenhagen has long been a byword for understated cool: it's a city that boasts cult fashion and interiors brands such as Stine Goya, Ganni and Hay. But the buzz along the waterfront this summer? The opening of Soho House's first Scandinavian outpost in the pastel-painted neighbourhood of Nyhavn.

The latest house, which opened last week to coincide with Copenhagen fashion week, has taken over the former customs house and been given a burst of Copenhagen style by the design team, with popping aquamarine ceilings, yellow-panelled walls and colourful vintage pieces.

We might think we know Scandi style (there are more than five million Instagram posts tagged #scandinaviandesign) but Copenhagen has its own — whisper it, more fun — aesthetic. It's a city that loves sleek design, but with gorgeous curves and explosions of bright pastel colours.

Severine Lammoglia, the Soho House lead designer, says the influences for the Copenhagen house came from the building itself — such as the verdigris-tinged green, which also echoes a tone used



The lounge area in the members' club



The waterside frontage of Soho House Copenhagen, a former customs house

by the Danish designer and architect Arne Jacobsen inside the Rodovre Library in the west of the city. “We loved the colour of the façade of the building,” she says. “It was such an iconic colour that we decided to bring it inside and paint the ceiling of the club in it too.” To complement the green she paired it with

orange and yellow tones: “That links back to some of the other façade colours in Nyhavn around the corner.”

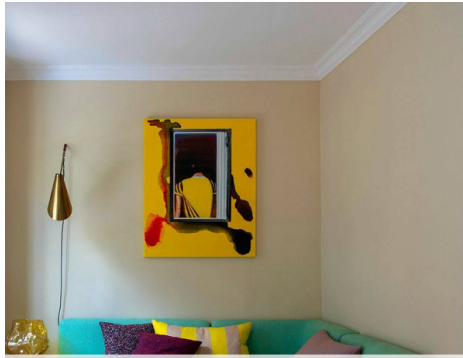
Another key influence for the colour palette was the 20th-century artist Lili Elbe, who was depicted in the film *The Danish Girl*. As a well-known painter (and transgender pioneer) who studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, she produced works that were “colourful yet muted, and we used that as inspiration for our library scheme”, Lammoglia says.

It's a sentiment that chimes well with the city's creatives. The Danish designer Stine Goya says Copenhagen's fashion and interiors scene

has evolved “from being synonymous with minimalism in earthy tones and sleek silhouettes to a more diverse scene with bright colours and playful prints. Since I founded Stine Goya in 2006, we’ve used colours to dress playfully, boldly, individually and beautifully.” Likewise her home is a riot of colour, with lavender-painted walls in the hallway set off by a sky blue ceiling, which leads through to a yellow kitchen, along to mint green sofas in the snug and up to a pink bedroom. “I love living in colour,” she says.

She’s not the only one: the glass artist Helle Mardahl says she grew up in a “white house with white walls and white furniture” — but now in her work and own home celebrates the colourful side of life. “I think it was time for a revolution and what’s beautiful about it is how playful we want things to be, with more humour and colour.”

It’s an approach to decorating that feels very fresh and modern, and one that we could all adopt right now. In the Apartment, a popular gallery styled like a chic home, apple green walls are teamed with red candy-stripe curtains and a red and blue stripy sofa. “Slowly people are being more and more experimental with colours, which is so necessary right now, because it is a gentle form of therapy that stimulates our nervous system in a good way,” says Thilde Maria Haukohl Kristensen, a



The custom-made sofa in Goya’s downstairs snug is covered in mint green Pierre Frey fabric  
IRINA BOERSMA. SET STYLING:  
NATHALIE SCHWER

floral designer and visual artist living in Copenhagen who has created works for everyone from Louis Vuitton and Gucci to Net-a-porter.

It’s not just colours — like Goya and Ganni’s clothes, the Copenhagen design aesthetic is marked by playful silhouettes. And precision. As Mardahl says: “We still need perfection [in our work], just as Denmark has celebrated for generations. We’re proud of that.” Her glassware (which Goya has at home) features beautifully precise tactile shapes that add humour to a traditional piece of dinner setting; while Hay’s latest range of garden furniture marries utilitarian function with curvaceous forms. Even a lavatory roll holder by Ferm Living features wiggles — making a deeply practical item several thousand degrees more attractive than the bog (sorry) standard.

Back at Soho House Copenhagen, traditional Danish design is celebrated in the carefully selected vintage

pieces deployed to add texture: a rug on the club floor that picks up the colours of the room and banana-style Danish sofas. But Lammoglia and her team were keen to layer the house with contemporary references: works by 38 artists, all with connections to the city, hang around the building, while pieces by craftspeople such as the Danish textile designer Helene Blanche, who handmade the lampshades in the main bar using her own fabrics in a Scandinavian pleated design, were used to add another contemporary edge.

Lammoglia says there is a knack to getting the Copenhagen sense of style, which starts with a considered colour palette that can be drawn from anything from favourite designers to furnishings (such as a vintage rug) “that can inspire key colours in a room”. From there she advises choosing “lush fabrics like mohairs and chenille to provide a cosy atmosphere”, carefully picking hero pieces of furniture with “elegant, simple silhouettes” and finishing a room off with “low-level lighting and candlelight to create a restful environment”. Above all, though, to be a true Copenhagener you need a sense of fun, a desire to play — and the ability to make it all look so very effortless.

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