



Welcome to the Inflight Magazine of Brussels Airlines



Spirit of the moment

Scandinavian fashion design takes centre stage. By Keri Bridgwater.

Famous the world over for their simple and functional design ethics, the creative strength and esteem in which both Danish and Swedish designers are held is legendary. The words 'Scandinavia' and 'design' have long been synonymous with quality, but with both nations' penchant for elegant minimalism it can at times be hard to distinguish between the two. Turn your attention to their fashion industries, and a totally different picture starts to emerge. Hot on the lips of London's fashionistas right now is Denmark's Ann Wiberg, co-founder of Paris-based label Trash Couture (already a hit with the red carpet regulars). Fellow Danes are designing for Galliano and Kenzo, while in New York Bill Blass handed over the reins of his fashion house to Swede Lars Nilsson three seasons ago. More prominent than ever before, Scandinavian designers are making a big impact on the international fashion scene.

A contrast of styles and influences

Certainly both countries share similar traits and cultural characteristics, and often people tend to confuse the two. But leave any preconceived notions

Bjørn Bruun

you may have at the door, as when it comes down to it, the contrast of creative styles and influences between the two nations couldn't be more diverse. If Swedish fashion is the elder sibling in the trendy SOHO loft space, then Danish fashion is the wilder, younger sister in her bohemian Village brownstone. The industrialist Swedes, with their background in steel and engineering, create graphic, almost masculine, linear designs in their clothing, often using pure cottons, linens and wools.

In contrast the Danes' creative signature style is feminine, fluid and organic. Looking to far-flung, exotic locations like India and the Far East, fabrics are, if not always completely practical, both sensual and luxurious. Silks, crepe, lace and suedes embellished and adorned with tiny details and embroidered designs are trademark Danish fashion features.

COPENHAGEN : Danish capital, shopping Mecca and hotbed of designer talent

DAY Birger et Mikkelsen

One of the first labels to make a name for Danish fashion outside of Scandinavia was Bruuns Bazaar (Kronprinsensgade 8-9W, Copenhagen). Set up by

brothers

Teis & Bjørn Bruun in the mid 90's, Bruuns Bazaar quickly established itself as a firm favourite at the Paris shows. Attractive colours and prints are the basis of each collection, which has a slightly more urban feel to it than some of their counterparts. Using pure materials to create close-fitting, wearable designs, their signature style is both contemporary and creative. But if it's modern classic bohemian you're after then look no further than **DAY Birger et Mikkelsen** (Illum, Østergade 52, Copenhagen) who, in their own words, offer clothes with "design and personality". With an emphasis on creativity - mixing furs and satins with tweeds and lace - the look is modern yet has an overriding elaborate elegance in its everyday wear. India plays a pivotal role in the inspiration and concept behind all DAY collections, and classic garments such as tunics and shirts are key products. There's a definite feel of 1920s starlet glamour in the lingerie line, while sharp tailored suits, combined with relaxed shirts, epitomise the look for the DAY man.

For some real star appeal Naja Munthe and Karen Simonsen's label **munthe plus simonsen** (Kronprinsensgade 11, Copenhagen www.muntheplussimonsen.com) boasts an impressive celebrity clientele – Kylie Minogue, Helena Christensen and Nina Persson to name but a few. Drawing inspiration from all corners of the world, with an approach both mystical and alluring, their to die for designs are split between Eastern and more traditional Nordic origins – think Arabian princesses and Russian empresses. Feminine and sensual, the clothes encompass a wide range of opulent fabrics and materials – ribbons set with tiny metal beads, and delicate lace embroideries alongside silks, velour and satin. February 2004 sees the exciting launch of their new line, PLUS, which, while still maintaining the unique style and quality synonymous with the original label, will be sold in a more moderate price range.

Modern classic bohemian clothing with an emphasis on creativity – mixing furs and satins with tweeds and lace

Malene Birger's impressive resumé includes designs for Jackpot, Marc O'Polo and co-founding DAY Birger et Mikkelsen, but deciding to go for it alone in 1998 she set up her own label By Malene Birger (Kongens Bryghus, Copenhagen V, www.bymalenebirger.com). Gracefully blending a classical signature style with today's modern looks, By Malene Birger's clothes express an edgy, sophisticated look. August saw the launch of her first collection across Scandinavia, but if you want something unique then try The Salon. Here you can experience the exclusive attention of Malene herself when you meet to discuss, and create, a gown for that ultra- special occasion; it could just be the wedding dress you've always dreamed of!

Two relative newcomers to the Danish fashion scene, and definitely ones to watch out for, are **Dalhov Copenhagen** (Valkendorfs-gade 13, 3 sal, Copenhagen) and **Bottoms** (Rosenvængets Allé 5, Copenhagen). Both established in 2000, they already enjoy sales across Scandinavia, Ireland and the UK. Swede Sarah Dalhov moved to Denmark to study fashion design three years ago and liked it so much she decided to stay. Inspiration drawn from both sides of The Sound has helped create the Dalhov Copenhagen collection, which has a classical, light, spring- in-the air feel to it. Contemporary embroidery and silks epitomise an elegant, feminine style while the vivid colours and use of flowers throughout invite you into a romantic fantasy world where aesthetics and quality are key aspects. Lea Dam Jensen created the Bottoms label three years ago for women with a strong awareness of quality and style in mind. With a philosophy based on storytelling, every collection has its own world of fantasy elements mixed with inspiration from the real world. Previous collections are based on themes such as 'Pandora's box' or 'Alice in Wonderland/Alice in Miami', each with a multitude of twists, decorations and details, all together creating the feminine expression that is Bottoms.

The Bottoms label is for women with a strong awareness of quality and style

SWEDEN : land of the contemporary

Having long been recognised as a source for contemporary creative design Stockholm is now coming to the forefront of avant garde European fashion. Probably one of the most well known Swedish names abroad is that of Stockholm based designer **Filippa K** (Södra Grevturegatan 18, Stockholm www.filippak.com). Back in 1993 Filippa Kilhborg saw a gap in the market for well-made, reasonably priced fashion basics and started her label with a brand concept based on simplicity and purity. A distinct Scandinavian style and a knack for creating cool, understated clothes, the label is now a firm favourite of Stockholm's style conscious twenty-somethings. Filippa K oozes low-key, understated elegance and is the place for those items that will remain an essential part of your wardrobe season after season. Another classic label has to be **Tiger of Sweden** (Nordiska Kompaniet, Hamngatan 10-14, Stockholm). With a century of tailoring experience (this year celebrating its 100th birthday), the signature Tiger style offers a trendy, suit-heavy, European look for the choosy modern man (or woman). Since 1997 the label has diversified into successful womenswear and jeans lines, presenting innovative garments that are satisfying both visually and intellectually. Combining style and flair, the latest collection offers funky designs with everything from cool leisure and officewear to a new range of sterling silver jewellery and accessories which perfectly complement the clothing range.

Gothenburg, Sweden's second largest city, has also contributed its fair share to the ever growing number of Swedish fashion labels, the most notable being **Twist & Tango** (Haga Nygatan 31, Gothenburg), whose ranges of austere and functional clothing have been selling like hotcakes since the mid 90s. Run by designer Birgitta Lundgren, and still based in Gothenburg, the label's philosophy is to place the individual and their personality at the centre of attention. The collections appeal to the modern woman and, with a fundamental concept that "less is more, more or less", garments such as linen jackets and fitted shirts in the softest of cottons are among their top sellers.

Haute versus throwaway couture

These days just about any high street chain worth their salt has grasped the fact that, while some of us are happy to splash out in the upmarket boutiques, sometimes we need a place for those high fashion pieces we don't plan on wearing forever. Most of the top high-street labels have made a fine art of recreating designer influenced pieces at a fraction of the price, so no mention of Swedish fashion is complete without a nod to global highstreet giant **H&M** (Hamngatan 14, Stockholm) the place for throwaway couture. However, if you feel like taking home something a little more original, then stop off at hip Danish high-street chain **VERO MODA** (Østergade 7-9, Strøget, Copenhagen), which offers a great selection of up-to-the-minute designs, perfect for utility trousers and trendy tops. Another great high street label whose contemporary collections comprise a mix of almost everything for all occasions is **VILA** (Amagerbrogade 57, Copenhagen) - discreet, luxurious bohemian with a slightly tougher edge. RH

[click here for archived features from redhot inflight magazine](#)