

BRAND KITCHEN

THE RITZ-CARLTON OFFER | K2



MOVIE
F
LYNDA
OUR 'NEW' C

LATITUDE
smart move

OPENING FALL 2007
1+2 BEDROOM CONDOS, ABBOTSFORD
FROM THE '160's
LATITUDEONMCKENZIE.COM
1.877.859.8351

MARKETED BY FIFTH AVENUE REAL ESTATE MARKETING LTD.

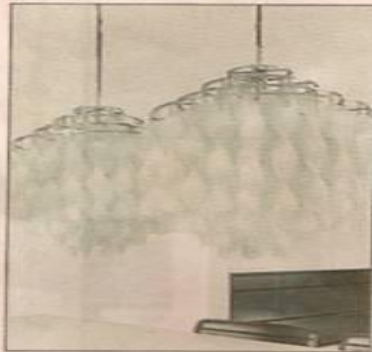
WESTCOAST HOMES

EDITOR MICHAEL SASGES 604-605-2467
E-mail homes@png.canwest.com

THE VANCOUVER SUN

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER

HOME THOUGHTS



Danish show directs a light at us and them

Vancouver's enthusiasm for "Danish Modern" is getting a second-century update in Gastown, at the "Danish Way of Living" exhibit.

As an exposition of national abilities the exhibit is not an inquiry into the sources of Danish design mastery. Those in the know, however, shared some opinions with The Vancouver Sun. **Story, photos, L8 - L11**

Danish exhibit shows mastery of the everyday

Vancouver's enthusiasm for 'Danish modern' gets a second-century chance for expression

BY MICHAEL SASGES
WESTCOAST HOMES EDITOR

"The Danish Way of Living" exhibit in Gastown is both window and mirror: It is an assembly of everyday household objects imagined equally for performance and appearance, and it permits an appreciation of both the Danish "them" and the Canadian "us."

Mounted by the Danish government and Pamela Groberman Media and Public Relations of Vancouver, the exhibit is playing to an appreciative audience in this town. Our attachment to Danish design over the decades is deep.

"Period images of West-Coast-Modern architecture reveal the extent of the dialogue between the Danish and the Vancouver Modern," says Russell Baker of the Bombast furniture design and manufacturing company.

"Almost without exception, the most significant modern interiors in Vancouver in the late '50s and early '60s were equipped with the best of Danish design of the moment."

The photographic record, mostly by Selwyn Pullan of North Vancouver and published originally in the old *Western Homes and Living* magazine, lines the walls of Bombast's store in Chinatown. Here a Barry Downs interior with a chair and ottoman of demonstrable Danish provenance, there an Arthur Erickson with a Hans Wegner dining room suite.

The local retailers of Danish design of those decades were "extremely knowledgeable purveyors of all things modern" in the fine and applied arts, Baker says.

Not imported craftsmanship

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



The Yoga chair (ABOVE) is an example of the 'quality, simple design and craftsmanship' that awaits visitors to the Danish design show in the former Storyeum location, Nancy Bendtsen of Inform Interiors says. Its designer is Erik Magnussen; its manufacturer, Clauser. It 'is uniquely created from a single piece of bended steel,' Clauser says, and was created over 30 years, Magnussen reports.

FACING PAGE: The tables are called the Midform Twins; are made of birch plywood; are manufactured by Midform and GVB; and were designed by Gary VanBroekhoven. The Verpan Spiral light fixture is a 1969 design from Verner Panton manufactured by Verpan Aps. The manufacturer's short description is this: 'Pendant made of white cellulor spirals on four ring metal frame.'

The Swan chair was designed in 1958 by Arne Jacobsen (1902 - 1971) for the public areas of the Royal Hotel in Copenhagen; and is manufactured to this day by Fritz Hansen.

The exemplar of mid-century design in Denmark, the chair may also be 'read' as a page in European history, firstly of trial by genocide and then recovery and rejuvenation.

Jacobsen, was a Jew. He, his wife and another couple fled German-occupied Denmark in 1943, by rowboat to Sweden.

The Royal, the hotel for which Jacobsen designed the Swan, was also designed by him. It was Copenhagen's first skyscraper.

Masters were bold and gritty

From L9

"Either way he channels Danish design into this place — and obviously has had an influence."

As a demonstration of one country's abilities, the 12-company exhibit is just right, neither too fulsome nor too spare.

As an accounting of the acquisition or accumulation of those abilities over the decades, it is appropriately spare: An applied-arts exhibit is firstly an exposition of objects of desire and only secondly an institution of



A caption in the Encyclopedia Britannica entry on Georg Jensen permits at least the entertainment of another explanation for Danish design supremacy: The 20th century was a comparatively benign century for the Danes.

In 1916, the caption reports, Jensen either completed or began manufacturing a silverware collection.

In that same year, the battles of Verdun and the Somme inflicted unprecedented slaughter on the young manhood of the Atlantic world.

Was there a German or French or British Jensen buried alive in the mud of the French battlefields in that year? Who knows.

What is known is this:

The Danes sat out the First World War, their neutrality allowing them to victual all the belligerents.

They were occupied by the Germans in the Second World War, but both royal family and government remained in Copenhagen and the country's Jews escaped the Holocaust by fleeing the country.

Georg Jensen's early years permit other inquiries. He was the son of a blacksmith; he was apprenticed to a silversmith; he did graduate, after his apprenticeship, from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts; and he did start his own smithy.

Were the start-up costs of a new business in old Copenhagen gentle enough to facilitate his level of craftsmanship?

Does the admission of a blacksmith's son to an institution of

From the previous page

and lighting while being on the road.

"Panton did this twice, alone the second time . . . He eventually made his home in Switzerland and had his furniture and lighting produced in Germany, but close to the Swiss border. Part of his education, clearly, was just driving around Europe looking for inspiration."

An ability to imagine boldly and then to persevere in the transformation of vision into merchantable product are attributes of at least three designers in the exhibit.

Verner Panton "was considered the bad boy of design in his day and a bit crazy," reports Therkelsen. Between 30 to 40 designs were never brought to market in his lifetime, a "secret basement collection" Verpan and Panton's widow are releasing to the world.

Erik Magnussen worked on the design of the Yoga chair for about 30 years. "I have worked with the idea since the early 1970s, but it is not until now that I am completely satisfied with the chair," a company news release quotes him as saying.

The Danish designer whose name probably enjoys the greatest currency around the world is Georg Jensen (1866 -1935). He endured years of rejection.

"He was recognized as being a skilful artist with no commercial success," says Arne Nordtorp, Denmark's honorary counsel general in Toronto.

"What he designed was so outlandish for . . . those days. Within a year [of opening his silver smithy in Copenhagen in 1904], however, he had a huge following in his jewelry designs . . ."

One challenge of success, of course, is maintaining it. "One of the most challenging aspects of Danish design is that it has to constantly renew itself," Therkelsen of Verpan says.

"We have some new great designers trying to prove themselves, but it's difficult to live up to the older designers like Panton and Jacobsen."

Arne Nordtorp's observation about his natal country's education system, then and now, certainly validates the expectation that Danish design will continue to impress.

"There is a good education for anyone who wants to go into design. Money doesn't have as big a say over what people want to do."

homes@png.canwest.com

"The Danish Way of Living"
exhibit runs until Dec. 15,
in the old Storyeum site,
142 Water in Vancouver. Hours are
noon - 6 p.m., Thursday -
Saturday.

Admission is free.



The Flamingo chair, released for sale in 2003, was designed by Foersom & Hjord-Lorenzen and 'has proven to be a very popular chair in a very short time for business and homes alike,' according to its

manufacturer, Erik Jorgensen. 'We have some new great designers trying to prove themselves, but it's difficult to live up to the older designers . . .,' comments one Danish manufacturer.