

## coffee table read

**FamilyLifeStyle Home, Anita Kaushal's project for Thames & Hudson, is a glossy take on family-friendly ways to create a home that's both beautiful and smoothly functioning. See it at www.amazon.com**



## inside



## Part of a whole

Style guru Ben de Lisi, who speaks at Interiors UAE, mixes high fashion with high design **hh4-5**



## Justine Fox

Colour comes first in this creative director's guiding philosophy **hh8**

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## insider yvonne courtney

## Creating a handsome home



VitraHaus is an interactive furniture shop showcasing the Vitra Home Collection, with re-editions of design classics.

## Sitting pretty

The international design fraternity recently descended on Weil am Rhein, near Basel, to witness the opening of furniture manufacturer Vitra's latest architectural gem on its sprawling campus – aka VitraHaus. Herzog & de Meuron's fabulously intriguing structure is a playful stack of charcoal Monopoly-style houses on top of

each other, fully glazed at either end. VitraHaus is, in essence, a great big furniture shop – albeit a rather gorgeous one. It showcases the Vitra Home Collection, which comprises re-editions of design classics by the likes of George Nelson, Charles and Ray Eames and Isamu Noguchi, alongside products developed

with contemporary designers such as the Bouroullec brothers, Jasper Morrison and Hella Jongerius. The exhibits have been choreographed in a series of desirable living sets – a sort of seductive soft-sell – think *Wallpaper\** magazine in 3D. What's particularly great is that visitors can test and try everything out.

But perhaps the building's best trick is at dusk, when its dark shell disappears from view and the domestic scenes visible behind each window resemble illuminated pictures floating in the sky.

*Yvonne Courtney is the co-founder of design/publishing consultancy and ezine designtastic.net*

## Beauty is best

The UK's cultural commentator and design guru, Stephen Bayley, with whom I had the pleasure of working alongside to help launch London's Design Museum, has strong feelings about the notion of beauty (and ugliness, for that matter) and the necessity of providing beauty in today's cities. "What alarms me is that beauty has become a taboo subject, people in authority never use the word beauty ..." he told the regional news organisation, *Liverpool Confidential*. "It would be good to change that ... somehow discussions of aesthetics have been swamped by the need to be cost-efficient. That is important but we mustn't forget beauty. Maybe every council should have an officer dedicated to beauty, saying things such as, 'you can't build that school, it isn't beautiful'. Good design shouldn't have to cost more than bad design. Let's think like the best of the early Modernist's did, beauty should no longer be the preserve of the privileged, or maybe live to the quote of the old Italian Communist Party, 'the best salami for everyone'." As for creating beauty in our homes – Bayley's philosophy is simple, as recounted in *The Independent*: "Doing up a home is like food and sex: it should never be rushed. Furnishing our house has been a careful process of acquisition, and patience is immensely important... I do care about detail and would rather do without than put up with something that doesn't satisfy. It is also best not to try to achieve an effect; a home is not a set, it needs to genuinely reflect the characters living within it." Quite.

## cult shop malmstenbutiken, stockholm

## Timeless classics with youthful energy

Malmsten uses his grandfather's guiding philosophy, making it modern and fresh

The pleasing scent of wood and fresh polish hits you as you enter the brightly lit white-walled Malmstenbutiken in Stockholm's finest street, Strandvägen.

The wood used for the handcrafted cherry, pine and birch furniture comes from the thick forests of Scandinavia and each piece, which takes hundreds of hours to make, has been handcrafted by Swedish carpenters. If you're looking for inexpensive, mass-produced items, this is not the place. Everything sold here, from the furniture to the carpets, lighting and porcelain, is designed and made in Sweden and can't be found on the shelves of shops around the globe.

Most items in this spacious two-level store were designed by the late Carl Malmsten, often referred to as the father of Swedish furniture design. His breakthrough came in 1916, with the commissioning of chairs for Stockholm City Hall, followed by orders to furnish Stockholm's Concert Hall (where the Nobel Prizes are awarded) and the city's Grand Hotel. After he won the Grand Prix for furniture design at the Paris Exposition of 1925, the world began to take notice and, a few years later, he was commissioned to furnish a suite at the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York.

Although Malmsten died in 1972, his designs are making a comeback. When Bukowski, the Stockholm-based auction house, sold the goods from Ingmar Bergman's estate last year, the director's large collection of Malmsten furniture was revealed – and it fetched record amounts.

It has been a long, hard journey to reawaken interest in the design legend, says Malmsten's grandson,



Jerk Malmsten has restored his grandfather's shop by using his designs in a more contemporary form, injecting colour and using new textiles.

Jerk Malmsten. When he took over in 1999, it was slipping into oblivion. "I was working here part-time and had begun to get a feel for it. I felt it would be a tragedy to just let the shop disappear."

But convincing others that his grandfather's furniture had a place not only in the homes of Swedish grandparents, but also in the homes of today's generation, proved difficult. Malmsten says that while most people in Sweden are familiar with the furniture, many had an image of it as being "a bit too grand, perhaps a little boring, and expensive".

The younger Malmsten has injected some youthful energy into the store, inviting young designers to have fun with grandpa's furniture. Although the classic Malmsten lines remain, new fabrics and colours have been introduced, adding playfulness to the strict functionality of the furniture.

"We are using the same designs that my grandfather used, but are starting to use new textiles and colours," he says. For example, you can choose brightly coloured, candy-like buttons to grace the back of

a sober Hemmakväll sofa, or the bold, hand-printed fabric by the fashion designer Martin Bergström, for the 75-year old Jättepaddan (Giant Toad) armchair.

Among Jerk Malmsten's personal favourites in the store is the stick-back Lilla Åland chair, which he grew up with: "We had the chairs in our kitchen and used them every day, so I know how well they work." Carl Malmsten found inspiration for these chairs in a church on the island of Åland and created his own timeless version.

"Today, there are more people who can identify with Carl Malmsten's philosophy of creating beautiful everyday items that are comfortable, functional, use natural materials, and are long-lasting. These are people who select handcrafted, high quality items over throwaway consumer goods," says Malmsten. "With the generation shift it feels like our timing is right again."

★ Cari Simmons  
● Malmstenbutiken, Strandvägen 5b, 114 51, Stockholm, +4688233380

## ??? ask the expert

## Getting the most out of the show

**Q** I plan to attend several interiors shows this year, including Interiors UAE later this week. How can I make the most of my time there and see everything I want to?

**A** I go to a great number of shows in a year and definitely try to include the ICFF in New York, Maison & Objet in Paris and Salone, the Milan furniture show. My most successful and memorable show would have to be Maison & Objet last year in Paris, where I adopted a strategy that allowed me to cover 99 per cent of the exhibition halls, from opening to closing, in 24 hours. The strategy is simple, based on practicality, good sense and successfully prioritising what needs to get done. These tips will help anyone keen to maximise their time at interior shows.

**Research is critical.** Prior to the shows, go on the website (www.

interiorsuae.com) and look at the list of exhibitors. I also print the map and make a note of the location of my preferred exhibitors so that I don't waste time trying to find them.

**Introduce yourself.** At every stand try to meet the owner, president of the company or manager; they attend most of the big shows and this will help you in the future for special orders and requests, particularly if you're in the trade.

**Take your cards.** You'll find that you have access to a lot more information if you hand out a business card. Even if you're there for your own enjoyment and your home rather than for work take them with you and give them out. Staple other people's business cards to their catalogues as soon as you can and even consider taking a small stapler – it keeps things organised

and prevents sifting through a pile of cards that seem meaningless once you get home.

**Be prepared.** I cannot emphasise this enough: wear comfortable shoes, bring cash in case you find an amazing bargain, carry a bottle of water and bring a snack – you will burn lots of calories.

**Do a zigzag.** Divide the space by adopting a zigzag approach for maximum coverage – this is really effective. I start from lane 1, and walk up and down until I reach the aisle of the section I'm interested in. That way you've covered more ground en route to the exhibitors of your interest.

**Keep focused.** Don't lose focus and spend time on products and offerings that don't interest you, otherwise your mind space will be crowded with excessive information, and you'll find that at the end of the day you're exhausted yet have barely covered any ground.

**Snap away.** Remember to bring a camera since most vendors have very expensive and creative exhibits, and you never know where you will find inspiration.

**Go big.** There's so much to see at shows that it can be hard to know what's worthy of attention and what isn't. There is usually a spot where the well-known brands showcase their products – visit that particular hall. Their proximity to each other will save you time.

**Get there first.** Start your day early – as soon as the show opens. You can always go home if you're not interested but it's more likely that you'll run short on time.

★ Emily Davies was talking to Liza de Luna, an interior designer based in Dubai. www.lizadeluna.com



Plan ahead and know which exhibitors you want to visit. And take pictures of displays to inspire your own designs. Giuseppe Aresu for The National