



69 THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT DENMARK

No one has branded good taste as effectively as the Danes—the guardians of an empirical beauty that permeates all facets of their culture, from design to the dinner table. They are responsible for streamlined Scandinavian furniture, foraged New Nordic cuisine, and the antiheroes now ubiquitous on American TV. They even proffer a certain kind of coziness indefinable by the English language. And in their pursuit of a masterpiece society, their nation's political arena is enhanced as well. The Danish were the first to grant legal recognition to same-sex unions, and that's just one of the many progressive feathers in their socially liberal cap. Apparently nothing's rotten in the state of Denmark...

“TO TRAVEL IS TO LIVE.”

—Hans Christian Andersen







Photography by Nikolaj Møller.
Styling by Sebastian Machado.
Groomer: Stine Rasmussen.
Jacket and sweater by Margaret Howell.
Photographed at Designmuseum Danmark

1-2.

PILOU ASBÆK & HYGGE

THE *GAME OF THRONES* BREAKOUT ON
PLAYING BAD AND FEELING GOOD.

When the new season of *Game of Thrones* premiered this summer, there was something different about Euron Greyjoy, the morally compromised king of the Iron Islands. The new close-cropped style, the mischievous swagger, the dark eyeliner: Euron Greyjoy got hot.

It was actually Pilou Asbæk's idea to give Greyjoy, the sexiest of *Game of Thrones*'s deranged evildoers, a swashbuckling makeover. The 35-year-old Danish actor had built up enough of a rapport with *Thrones* creators David Benioff and D.B. Weiss to suggest a tweak in his character ahead of season seven. "I wanted to make him a rock star," Asbæk says. Thus began the transformation of your run-of-the-mill dastardly villain into a psychopathic pirate lothario, like Jack Sparrow fresh from the asylum on his way to ask for Cersei's hand in marriage—a play to make the pair Westeros's most diabolical power couple.

Asbæk has plenty of experience when it comes to making depravity engaging, if not charming. After breaking out in an episode of the famously bleak original Danish version of *The Killing*, the actor made a name for himself playing troubled-but-charismatic spin doctor Kasper Juul in the Danish political thriller and international smash *Borgen*, eventually gaining global traction with parts in films like *Lucy* and the 2016 remake of *Ben-Hur*.

The spectrum of dourness, ruthlessness, and occasional crazy-eyed madness that has come to define Asbæk's alter egos is certainly at odds with the jokey, easygoing family man he is in real life. He lives with what he calls his "double A's"—his wife, playwright Anna Bro, and their 4-year-old daughter, Agnes—and, as we speak, he's packing up his apartment to prep his family's move to their "dream home" in the Copenhagen neighborhood of Christianshavn.

"If you met me in a bar, we would be laughing like 85% of the time," he says. "The last 15% of the time you would be at the toilet, but still laughing because my jokes would be so funny." So what is it about him that makes him so suited for iniquity? "I don't know. I'm not very serious. I'm a very chill

guy. Maybe it's the way I look."

That juxtaposition might also just be par for the course for someone from Denmark, a country that has as close an association with doom and gloom as it does with the idea of *hygge* (pronounced HU-guh)—basically, a certain kind of coziness and well-being. You wouldn't know it from watching the moody, rain-soaked psychodramas that have come to define the Nordic noir genre of television—shows like *Borgen*, *The Killing*, and *The Bridge*—but the people who make these series, Asbæk included, are officially the jolliest people on earth.

The United Nations' World Happiness Report, which ranks 156 countries on metrics ranging from GDP and life expectancy to freedom and corruption, consistently places Denmark at or near the top of the list, including on this past year's tally. "I don't know if we're actually the happiest people, or if we're very good at lying when we're doing these polls," Asbæk jokes. "Because why should we be happy? It's raining 40% of the time. It's dark 50% of the year." Researchers posit, and Asbæk agrees, that much of it owes to an insistence on social welfare, whether that comes from the government—Danes pay more taxes than residents of almost any other country, topping off at almost 60%—or from the people's cultural inclination toward *hygge*.

It's a concept so simple that, to foreigners, it just becomes perplexing. "*Hygge's cozy. Hygge's having a good time.*" Asbæk says. "You do something nice. That's *hygge*. The funny thing is, it always comes after you've done it. You say, 'It was *hygge*. It was cozy. It was nice.'"

A fascination with the concept has made its way overseas, with attempts at intellectualizing it making the pages of *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*, and dozens of books translating the premise into a how-to guide for a happy life.

Asbæk cautions not to overthink the concept. (There's a reason no direct English translation exists.) It's a way of living that can't be manufactured. Have a cold? A prescription of tea and *hygge* could do the trick. Did you indulge in a warm croissant on a rainy day, or down a few pints after a chaotic



Coat and sweater by Lanvin. Shirt by Tonsure.
Pants by Brunello Cucinelli. Boots by Swims

**“
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week, and feel better after? That was *hygge*. So was that candlelit dinner by the fire you just had, the perfect confluence of atmosphere, pleasure, and presence in the moment when you, whether you knew it or not, needed it. Some might argue that the concept is a privilege afforded only to a culture with extreme social welfare, unburdened by the anxieties so many cultures face in regard to health care, education, and safety. Others would say *hygge* is simply a human reflex, and one that shouldn't necessarily be reserved for Scandinavians.

"Honestly, I feel I live in the best country in the world," Asbæk says. "I love my country. I love Denmark. That's the reason I haven't moved to America."

The son of gallery owners with two brothers also in the art business—"I'm the black sheep of the family"—Asbæk was born in Copenhagen and has stayed there his entire life, graduating from Denmark's National School of Theatre in 2008. But, especially after seeing his profile explode because of *Game of Thrones*, he's become keenly aware of our preoccupation with his country's dichotomies, particularly when it comes to its pop-culture output. *Borgen*, after all, was one of the most popular shows in all of Europe and a cult favorite in the United States when it aired, and *The Killing* and *The Bridge* scored high-profile American adaptations because of, not despite, their chilling nature.

"Why are we such big fans of *hygge* and the happiest people in the world and yet create things this dark and gritty?" Asbæk ponders. "It's because six months of the year it's a dark country. As in physically dark, because of the sun. That makes you a little more tough, you know?"

He continues, "We're a little bit looser. So what if it's raining? You gotta move on, man. It's the whole vibe of this country that we're a little more... chilled." He starts laughing again and then interrupts himself: "But not California chilled. That's stoner chill. We're just a little bit more relaxed sometimes." — KEVIN FALLON

3-5.

THE NORDIC NOIR TRIFECTA

Forget Stieg Larsson's *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*. Check out these three TV series created by the DR (Denmark's public-access channel). They perfectly encapsulate the pale November gloom cast across the Copenhagen sky.



The Bridge

When a dead body is discovered exactly halfway across a bridge linking Denmark and Sweden, who is responsible

for investigating the crime? Detectives from both countries work together and quickly discover that the severed body is two halves of two different women—a Swedish politician and a Danish prostitute. Currently in its fourth season, the show has spawned several remakes, including in the U.S. and in Russia, and a French-British joint venture.

The Killing

A mouthful—*Forbrydelsen* (“the Crime”)—in Danish, *The Killing*'s forever-frowning protagonist is ready



to pack her bags and move to Sweden but gets caught up in investigating the gruesome rape and murder of a local teenage girl. Aided by stellar acting, the whodunit slowly unravels over the course of the 20-episode season, snaking through jaw-dropping plot twists and turns. The show aired internationally as well, and was such a success that two additional seasons were created around different murder cases. A U.S. remake followed.



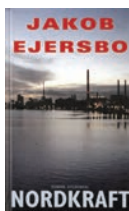
Borgen

Danish for “the Castle”—a nickname for the parliament, as the building was once the royal palace—the show centers on a

female head of state who was a compromise candidate following a difficult election. The inevitable machinations ensue, but the show is a critical fave for unfurling its sudsy plot with striking believability. Hey, anything's possible in politics these days.

6-9.

ESSENTIAL DANISH READING



Nordkraft

In 2003, Jakob Ejersbo novelized Denmark's trademark Nordic noir by showing his audience an un-*hygge* world of spiraling drug addiction. Ejersbo, who was claimed by cancer at the age of 40, also had a deep connection to Africa, and penned a trilogy of novels inspired by his adolescence in Tanzania.



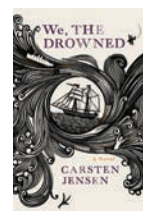
Out of Africa

In 1937, Karen Blixen published a memoir of her 17 years in Kenya after leaving her native Denmark to marry her Swedish second cousin and start a coffee plantation on the outskirts of Nairobi. Sydney Pollack's 1985 film of the same name was inspired by this and Blixen's other Africa-centric works.



Smilla's Sense of Snow

Most would argue that Peter Høeg's 1992 novel is more of an exercise in magical realism—like many of his other works—than it is a murder mystery. The story also tackles the Greenlandic condition, often overlooked by Danes when waxing philosophic about their progressive society.



We, the Drowned

Though the writing is a bit uneven, Carsten Jensen's 2006 tome is an epic tackling more than 100 years of maritime history as several generations of sailors from the Danish islet of Ærø fight naval battles and explore the four corners of the earth.

10.

BLUETOOTH

Like an intrepid character from *Game of Thrones*, King Harald Gormsson vanquished his enemies to rule Denmark for the second half of the 10th century, united all of Scandinavia, and converted his loyal subjects to Christianity. He is known in the annals of history as Bluetooth because, according to legend, he had a prominently positioned dead tooth that may or may not have been a haunting shade of blue.



If you're wondering if he has anything to do with the wireless data exchange technology, he does. The sharing of information over radio waves was being simultaneously trialed by several companies; Ericsson, a Swedish telecom vendor, pushed the idea forward. The name for its technology was pitched as a placeholder by a senior staff member to promote cooperation among other communications corporations, but it stuck. The sideways “M” logo that's synonymous with it is actually a combination of King Gormsson's initials, known as a bind rune, written in the runic alphabet used in the early part of the Viking age.

11-16.

HYGGELIGE HANGOUTS

NABO

Restaurants can wow with premium produce or perfectly executed dishes, but a true standout knows how to expand its diners' vocabulary of deliciousness. Nabo does just that. It's the newest brainchild of the Kadeau clan, who, in 2007, upped the ante on the already upwardly trending New Nordic movement by opening their eponymous establishment on the Danish island of Bornholm. A coveted location in Copenhagen came next, followed by a more decidedly downmarket venture. Nabo punches somewhere in between, bearing all of Kadeau's trademark culinary finesse but with a more accessible price tag. And it's sure as heck *hyggelige* (see page 64), with unvarnished wooden tables, cottage cabinetry, and soft candle glow. Memorable mains, like scallops and kale in savory oyster sauce, can be served à la carte, but we



recommend opting for one of the prix fixe meals, which allow you to, as the menu says, “lean back and let us decide.”

NaboNabo.dk



FORMAT

The newest among this roundup of freshmen, Format (pronounced for-MAYT) swung its doors open in late August inside the glass-topped atrium of the Hotel Skt Annæ. The executive chef came from Geranium (the only Copenhagen restaurant to out-Michelin Noma), and he has a knack for taking food you actually want to eat—like crab, cod, and dry-aged steak—and giving it the royal treatment. The wine pairings are also exceptionally strong, and the matcha ice cream sandwich at the end requires its own Jacobsen-designed fainting chair. *FormatCPH.dk*



COURTESY OF MARIE LOUISE MUNKEGAARD (NABO); COURTESY OF FORMAT

APOLLO BAR

The tenets of restaurant design in Copenhagen are the decorative equivalent of bedhead: putting tons of time and care into an aesthetic that appears as though you're not trying at all. Apollo Bar, however, isn't overthinking things, and for that it earns extra *hygge* points. Set within the Kunsthall Charlottenborg—one of the largest contemporary art spaces in Scandinavia—the eatery slings whatever it desires, with one daily lunchtime special and a smattering of dinner mains from the Med, like roasted octopus and white bean salad. Grab a seat at the bar, and hang with the chef on duty as he whips up your meal. *ApolloBar.dk*

HÖST

A skeptic may assume that the winner of the most prestigious international restaurant design award might skimp on the flavors, but Höst pleases the taste buds just as much as the eye. The ambiance has a certain barnyard quality, with repurposed slatting and wide-bucket chairs set against a backdrop of painted white brick. Snuggly blankets are draped throughout as though they await the embrace of shivering foragers just back from a blustery Danish fjord. And the bounty—witch flounder enhanced with chicken skin, and hand-cut veal tartare flavored with puckery red fruits—comes at a surprisingly reasonable price: Five courses will set you back only 450 kroner (around \$75). *HostVakst.dk*



GEMYSE

We love our meat (duh), but Gemyse (pronounced guh-MU-seh) makes a strong case for eating your greens, especially as you shovel down family-style portions of lentils topped with shishito peppers, and Mexican-style corn on the cob. It's possible to add a protein to your platter, but the veggies are the main event—many are grown just beyond the restaurant's doors in the kitchen garden and greenhouse out back. For something truly *hyggelige*, head to the garden after dinner and sit around the crackling fire to roast your own marshmallows and bread twists.

Nimb.dk/en/Gemyse



VEVE

Chef-owner Henrik Yde Andersen has staked his career on creating vibrant Southeast Asian flavors, but VeVe is a noticeable departure from Siam that's even more daring than doing curries in Copenhagen. The all-veggie meal, served as an ever-evolving set menu, starts on a comfy couch with a round of brightly flavored snacks. Guests then move to a proper table to enjoy a parade of mains, paired with either a carefully chosen roster of international wines or a selection of homemade juices and cold teas. Later, diners retreat back to the cozy lounge area for playful petits fours that remind everyone not to take haute cuisine too seriously. The dessert snacks, like "cinnamon in cinnamon" or "LEGO in LEGO," are like a culinary *Where's Waldo* in which you must find the edible bite mimicking the shape and color of an actual stick of cinnamon or brick of LEGO. *VeVe.dk* —**BRANDON PRESSER**

17.

HENRIK YDE-ANDERSEN

COPENHAGEN'S CULINARY DARK HORSE TALKS "NEXT NORDIC" CUISINE.



When chef Henrik Yde-Andersen welcomes a new employee into the fold, he asks them three questions in front of the rest of the kitchen: Have you ever gone to prison? Have you ever done drugs? And are you gay?

"Oh, the unions would kill me if they knew I was asking those things," Yde-Andersen jokes. He doesn't care about the answers—"I'm just trying to create an atmosphere of openness. We all work better together that way."

"Recently," he adds, "we had a new staff member answer 'yes' to all three—that was pretty unexpected, and really exciting." Yde-Andersen, who

is also gay, has a decidedly unconventional approach to how he runs his kitchens. None of his cooks have an official title or rank, and no one ever yells.

Yde-Andersen's point of view—creating a familial vibe, and always saving face—is largely informed by the years he spent cooking in Thailand, and when he returned to his native Copenhagen, he also brought home a slew of Southeast Asian recipes.

Determined to feature bold flavors on the Danish dinner plate, Yde-Andersen tried to introduce the chili, but was met with a great deal of skepticism. "Everyone was following the New Nordic rules—no one had any respect for Asian cuisine."

But Yde-Andersen was used to being the odd one out. "Being a gay chef has always felt like being the only gay member of a football team," he says. So rather than listening to the chorus of naysayers, he scraped together his pennies and created Kiin Kiin, serving modernized Thai fare with premium ingredients in the Nørrebro neighborhood, which in 2006 was an unlikely area with a bit of an edge.

The risk paid off. An unprecedented seven months after opening, Kiin Kiin received a coveted Michelin star—one of the first Thai restaurants in the world to earn the distinction. (Michelin is gearing up to release its first guide to Bangkok at the end of the year.) And Yde-Andersen hasn't slowed down since, championing a new order in the kitchen—Next Nordic, perhaps?—that uses Danish discipline in refining the spectrum of world flavors.

"What's seasonal New Nordic anyway, when the entire country is buried under three



feet of snow in winter?" Yde-Andersen asks with a wink.

Today, Yde-Andersen's culinary empire has grown to 16 restaurants, including spin-off SEA by Kiin Kiin, along the tourist-laden Nyhavn promenade. While I'm eating at his newest venture, VeVe—a strictly vegetarian concept (see page 67), he grabs a seat at my table between courses, and after asking me his requisite three questions, he poses one more: "How do you tell the difference between a vegetarian and a regular diner?"

"You don't. They tell you," Andersen kids. He doesn't take it all too seriously—a refreshing departure from the New Nordic dogma. —**BRANDON PRESSER**



COURTESY OF SEA BY KIIN KIIN

18. SMØRREBRØD



Leave it to the Danes to take the top slice of bread off a sandwich and pretend it's a whole new creation. The smørrebrød is the staple of the Danish home kitchen—a smorgasbord of ingredients served family-style, where diners can mix and match their favorite tastes and place them atop home-baked slices of dark rye bread. Toppings range from pickled herring to roast beef, and are often enhanced with cucumber, egg, and onion. There's

also an important social element to the smørrebrød tradition as families and friends gather during the protracted midday meal. Some say it's the only truly Danish contribution to the canon of gastronomy.

Two of our favorite establishments in Copenhagen are taking the beloved lunching tradition in two very different directions, and both are creating something rather be'wich-ing.

The Classic ◀ **Kronborg**

What a businessman's lunchtime hangout may have looked like in the 1950s, Kronborg—named for Hamlet's castle—is hidden in a cellar and wallpapered in an eclectic assortment of paintings and portraits. Featuring all the trappings of the traditional smørrebrød meal, the restaurant features an absolutely unfinishable Gentleman's Lunch, which boasts fish prepared four ways (marinated herring, salted herring, fried plaice, and smoked salmon) followed by three home-cured meats, a selection of pungent cheese, and a generous amount of aquavit to wash it all down. We're skeptical of how efficient the workday would be after one finishes this midday meal. *RestaurantKronborg.dk*

The Modern ▼ **Aamanns 1921**

You'd never know it just by walking in, but Adam Aamann's brand-new sandwichery is housed in a former bomb shelter—diners can poke their heads in the basement to see its architectural remnants. With plenty of blonde wood and white cloth napkins, Aamanns 1921 is an elevated smørrebrød experience—almost like having high tea at The Plaza—with canned fish swapped for steak tartare, pork belly, and herring with kohlrabi, served on a thin slice of ground rye bread. *Aamanns.dk*

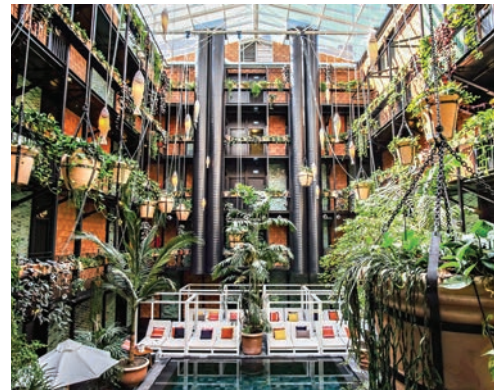


19. MARCHAL

Decidedly not hygge, a visit to the Michelin-starred restaurant inside Copenhagen's "White Lady," the Hôtel d'Angleterre, is theatrical from start to finish, and evokes the grandeur of the city's golden age in the 18th century when the palace-like structure was completed. Carefully following the canon of French cuisine, the menu's mains include chateaubriand, roasted pigeon, and a flambéed dessert. After dinner, retreat to Balthazar, the hotel's bar, for creative champagne cocktails. *DAngleterre.com*

20. SKT PETRI

A city hotel par excellence, the Skt Petri inhabits an old department store—its vintage escalators still swoosh up toward the vaulted lobby. Try for a higher floor, where balconied rooms overlook the city's sea of gabled roofs and hallowed churches. In warmer weather, hang out in the hotel's garden courtyard guarded by a phalanx of brightly colored townhouses erected several centuries ago. *SktPetri.com*



21. MANON LES SUITES

We love when a hotel doubles down on bold design choices rather than trying to be all things to all people. And there's no finer example of that creative confidence than Manon les Suites, the newest member of the Guldsmiden family of international boutique properties. Behind the office tower facade lies an interior courtyard that has gone full-blown Hanging Gardens of Babylon, with added industrial accents throughout. Don't miss the massive gym-club in the basement. *GuldsmidenHotels.com/Manon-Les-Suites*



The entrance to Tivoli

Copenhagen commuters



22-31.

CYCLING CPH

Copenhagen is a city of cycling—in order to see the sights like a true Dane, you'll need to do it on two wheels.

With more bikes than people in Denmark's capital, pedaling is clearly the preferred way to cruise from neighborhood to neighborhood, even when the legendary gloom and rain set in.

Begin your ride at **Frederiksberg Gardens**, the romantic estate of former king Frederik VI. Within its gates are twisting canals and elaborate bridges, expansive lawns, a wild zoo, and the royal palace towering over the menagerie below.

Pause to explore the sprawling gardens on a boat tour, the original way Frederik would entertain his guests.

Pedal over to **Jægersborggade**, a buzzing street located in the satellite neighborhood of Nørrebro that's earned a reputation for being one of the hippest blocks in the entire city. The short road boasts more than 40 shops, including a ceramicist's atelier, a boutique caramel factory, a Michelin-



starred restaurant, and a porridge bar (yes, porridge). With youthful, creative energy, it's a little slice of Brooklyn's Bushwick.

The end of Jægersborggade opens onto **Assistens Kirkegaard**, a large cemetery where dozens of famous Danes are buried, including fairy-tale writer Hans Christian Andersen and philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. If you aren't keen on touring the gravestones, the park offers one of Nørrebro's greenest oases—perfect for a stroll.

Next, zip over the canal toward the city center to find **Torvehallerne**, described as

a "super market," not a "supermarket." This enormous food hall features more than 60 vendors selling everything from fresh fish, meat, and produce to gourmet spices and artisanal chocolates. Or you can peruse the ready-mades if you're hungry for lunch—whether it's Spanish tapas or sushi—and grab an espresso to go at The Coffee Collective to keep your day moving.

Just a block away, **Botanisk Have**, the city's beautiful botanical garden, covers 25 acres of land with more than 13,000 species of flora sheltered in 27 historic greenhouses. Founded in 1600,



Nyhavn



Assistens Kirkegaard



Karamelleriet



Keramiker Inge Vincents



Designmuseum Danmark



Tivoli



Freetown Christiania

and moved twice before settling in its current spot almost 150 years ago, the collection now straddles the old city ramparts.

When you cycle east toward the water, you'll find the exquisite **Designmuseum Danmark**, showcasing the talents of Danish artists and industrial designers, and narrating the advent of the Scandi-sleek style loved worldwide. The permanent collection even includes an annotated history of the chair, set inside an exhibition space resembling 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Travel a few blocks south to find the Copenhagen seen on

postcards: **Nyhavn** is a dockside lineup of posh, pastel buildings fronted by passing sailboats. Once a busy commercial port, the pedestrian street is now packed with restaurants, live music, and Instagramming tourists.

Across the river is Copenhagen's bohemian 'hood, **Freetown Christiania**. Founded in 1971 by a group of hippies squatting in abandoned military barracks, the 84-acre area exists independent of the Danish government, and offers a haven for artists with workshops, organic eateries, and marijuana dealing. The society within a society is also

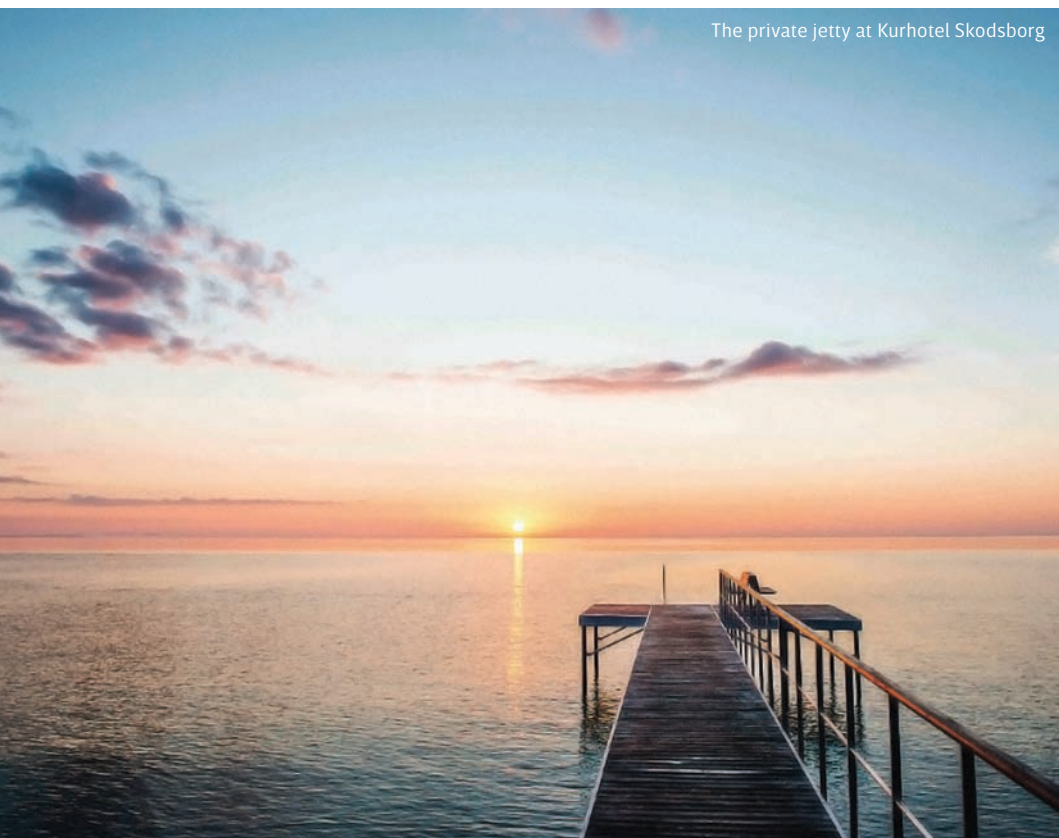
rich in real estate, with a stunning lake surrounded by woodland.

As evening approaches, head back across the water. You'll want to set aside several hours for the fantastical world of **Tivoli**. The second-oldest amusement park in the world (after Bakken, also located in Denmark), Tivoli is less like a contemporary Six Flags than a dreamy combination of Disney World, Lewis Carroll's Wonderland, and a quirky resort. Within its storybook walls are adrenaline-crushing roller coasters, a world-class restaurant, an oddly oriental concert venue, and Nimble, a stunning, *Aladdin*-esque hotel.

When you've had your fill of thrills, close out the day a few blocks beyond in Vesterbro's buzzing **Meatpacking District**—an area teeming with trendy bars and restaurants frequented by Copenhagen's young creative crowd.

Park your bike and refuel at WarPigs, a pub with its own on-site brewery that pumps out 22 different beers on tap.

And if you're missing home, try its authentic Texas barbecue—served in the open-faced *smørrebrød* style, of course.



32-33.

A DAY TRIP FROM COPENHAGEN

LOUISIANA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Forty-five minutes from Copenhagen, this curatorial feat and site-specific architectural wonder showcases the best of contemporary art along the quiet cliff-ridden coast of eastern Denmark. Founded in 1958, it's the brainchild of Knud W. Jensen, who enhanced an intimate villa with a multi-wing structure and called it "Louisiana" after the original owner's three wives—all named Louise.

Louisiana's private collection leans heavily toward sculpture, and regularly rotates its exhibits, highlighting pioneers like Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Cindy Sherman. Before leaving, pause for lunch at the on-site café. It was Jensen's intent, when he opened the Louisiana, to offer an eatery where guests could relax. And even today, after hours of winding through the property, it's still the perfect finale, complete with seasonal Danish cuisine and a panoramic view of the Swedish coast. *Louisiana.dk*

KURHOTEL SKODSBORG

This elegant turn-of-the-century relic is the grande dame of Copenhagen's posh northerly suburbs, set between Nordic pines and the quiet shoreline. From 1852 to 1863, King Fredrik VII spent the year's warmer months there with his wife, Countess Danner, then in 1898, Dr. Carl Ottosen created a sanitarium dedicated to advancing treatments in physiotherapy.

Now a full-fledged wellness hotel (*kur* means "spa" in Danish) and a choice destination for weekend Danes, the property still blends many of Ottosen's medical practices into its health-focused program.

The heart of the estate—the spa—was redesigned by famed Danish architect Henning Larsen's firm, and features dedicated sauna suites where practitioners school newcomers on the basics of Danish sit-and-sweat sessions. *Skodsborg.dk*

34-35.

SAUNAGUS AND WINTER BATHING

Saunagus (derived from the German word meaning "pouring on the oven") is Denmark's own brand of steamy wellness. Tina Andersen, the "gus master" at the Kurhotel Skodsborg, explains that participants start by sitting perfectly still as oil-infused steam is swirled throughout the chamber by a swinging towel. Three short sessions of increasing heat are interspersed with brief breaks outside, culminating in a tingling dip in the sea. If that sounds too hot, try winter bathing. Sea swimming in winter has become a growing trend all over Denmark. According to the country's Council for Greater Water Safety, more than 25,000 Danes regularly crack holes in the subarctic ice for a chilly but refreshing dip. The shocking temperatures are known to have plenty of health benefits, stimulating the secretion of endorphins and quickening the pulse. Regular soaks are thought to reduce stress levels and fatigue, and decrease symptoms of asthma and rheumatism.

COURTESY OF KURHOTEL SKODSBORG



36.

UFFE ELBÆK

AN AUDIENCE WITH DENMARK'S GAY BERNIE SANDERS

A strong political voice in government, 63-year-old Uffe Elbæk has worn many hats, including minister of culture and CEO of 2009's World Outgames. In 2013, he founded Denmark's Alternativet Party, which now has 10 members in parliament. —BRANDON PRESSER

Why does Denmark seem so far ahead of the curve when it comes to human rights?

We're a small country, and very well educated. We laid the groundwork for equality in the 1850s, and since then we've had plenty of practice placing value on the role of the civil society. We're progressive in our art, design, and culture—it's all part of the same story. Our history is not without its fights, of course, but to understand Denmark one must understand consensus. A desire for the common good is in our cultural DNA.

How did Denmark become the first nation to legally acknowledge same-sex unions?

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love—that era really resonated with Denmark's youth. And if I remember correctly, we were the first country to legalize porn that same year. It was a really big step when we got recognized same-sex partnership back in 1989, but, in my opinion, it wasn't until 20 years later, when Denmark hosted the World Outgames, that acceptance of the LGBT community went mainstream. That's when people really understood that "gay" wasn't just men, but women, transgender people, and many other people as well. Then diversity strategies started to take place in the private sector, too.

What's today's political landscape like?

I'm really happy with attitudes towards the LGBT community. There's even a double standard for the conservatives right now, because they use their support for our community to hit the Muslim population on the head. But more generally, there's



a certain neoliberal philosophy and economic model—introduced by Thatcher and Reagan—that has infected everyone, including Denmark. Even me. A lot of things in Denmark are fucked up at the moment.

How did the Alternativet Party begin?

Well, it really started with two young activists approaching me on a Copenhagen street corner. I had just stepped down as the minister of culture, and I was really fed up. There's a saying in Danish: "40, fat, and finished"—I was 60, fat, and finished, and there was no fucking way I was going to begin a new political party. But then I did some research and eventually decided to start my own track—kind of like Bernie Sanders. The party's focus is threefold: to attack the climate crisis, to resurrect empathy—we aren't able to understand one another and see the world through other perspectives—and to tackle the systems crisis. The public sector, private sector, and NGOs can't solve the world's problems on their own. We need hybrid solutions, and to develop totally new business models. We're seeking to create a political platform where anything can happen: a party, or even a dance party!

Any thoughts on American politics?

I really think Bernie Sanders could have beaten Trump. I was on the floor—one of a hundred international politicians invited by the Democratic Party—during the primaries when Bernie, Hillary, and Obama were onstage, and it was just so clear that Hillary never had the love of the people. She didn't even have the love of her own party. These days I'm damn scared about what your president will do. It can't be real.

37–40.

GREAT DANES

FOUR FINE GENTS WHO LEFT THEIR (DEN)MARK ON CIVILIZATION

Niels Bohr (1885–1962)

In 1922, Bohr snatched the Nobel Prize in Physics for something about atoms and how they emanate radiation, blah, blah, etc. But more than being a real smarty, Bohr was a total mensch. During the Nazi occupation, he helped Jewish physicists escape to his institute in Copenhagen and eventually to the U.S.



Tycho Brahe (1546–1601)

Possessor of one of the greatest mustaches in history, Brahe (in a twist worthy of H.C. Andersen) was abducted by his wealthy, childless uncle.

After being *Gone Girl*-ed, young Tycho was raised in the lap of luxury and given a first-class education. He would go on to make the most accurate measurements of the solar system before the advent of the telescope.

Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855)

A philosopher, theologian, and cultural critic, Kierkegaard is known as the Father of Existentialism—the art of "Why are we here?" Teenagers everywhere can listlessly thank him for originating the concept of angst, a Danish word meaning "anxiety" or "dread," which influenced later philosophers from Nietzsche to pre-*Make Believe* Weezer.



Jacob Riis (1849–1914)

New York kweens may be familiar with Riis thanks to the queer beach bearing his name. He documented the city's slumlike conditions in his book

How the Other Half Lives, leading to nationwide improvements to the lives of the working poor.

41.

THE REAL DANISH GIRL



In 2015, Eddie Redmayne starred in the film version of David Ebershoff's novel *The Danish Girl*, about Lili Elbe, an ex-painter and one of the first

recipients of a gender-confirmation surgery. But the book and film took several liberties with Elbe's life and her marriage to fellow artist Gerda Gottlieb—including Gottlieb's lesbian erotica paintings, the dissolution of their marriage, and the details surrounding Elbe's death. Between 1930 and 1931, Elbe underwent a series of experimental surgeries, dying after the last at the age of 48. However, by this time she'd successfully transitioned and legally changed her name.

42.

ASTRID ANDERSEN

GETTING TO KNOW THE LUXE STREETWEAR SAVANT

Danish-born and London-based, Astrid Andersen's eponymous luxury brand has given classic sportswear a subversive, street-ready edge—the perfect intersection of both of her worlds. This elevated and accessible mix has made her the go-to designer for the likes of Drake and A\$AP Rocky, and she most recently collaborated with M.I.A. on an exclusive line of merch. Here, Andersen reflects on her background and its lasting impact on her label.

—JUSTIN MORAN



How has Danish design inspired your brand?

My heritage comes through in my dedication to detail and quality. It's in our blood to be obsessed over perfection, and it provided me with a very humble nature. But I

have always struggled with the Scandinavian obsession over good taste, which makes us less able to challenge conventions. London opened my eyes to having an individual style without worrying about everyone else.



A kimono by Astrid Andersen

43–48.

SHOPPING FOR DANISH DESIGN

WHERE TO GO TO STREAMLINE YOUR HOME AND WARDROBE



SINNERUP

This home-goods heavyweight has one-upped IKEA for nearly 50 years with stylish curl-up-and-watch-Netflix chairs. Sinerrup.dk

DANSK
A shrine to the Copenhagen lifestyle, Dansk's pared-back interior is like a museum of good taste. Everything's up for grabs, even the hangers. DanskShop.com



SOULLAND
With a forward-thinking approach to menswear, Soulland fills its flagship store with covetable cold-weather attire. We love its cuddly sweaters. Soulland.com

STORM
A combustion of design, art, and fashion, Storm sells everything from beauty products to books, and will dress you up Scandi-style from head to espadrille'd toe. StormFashion.dk



COURTESY OF ASTRID ANDERSEN (PORTRAIT AND KIMONO); COURTESY OF BRANDS

You move between Copenhagen and London for work. What keeps you tied to Denmark?

I love the lifestyle here. I love riding my bike to work, eating healthy food, and breathing clean air. I like to distance myself from the fashion scene a bit, and here I have all my old true friends and family close by.

How has your upbringing affected your point of view?

I often think about the relationship with American culture that's so deeply rooted in my generation, because everything we saw on TV or listened to on the radio was from America. Even though I grew up in a small town in Denmark, I knew all the TLC and Dr. Dre lyrics when I was 14 years old.

How would you define the Danish aesthetic?

Danish fashion is polite. We are very good at commercializing good taste, but that never really caught my interest. As a designer, I identify more with

my generation globally than with the land beneath my feet, because everyone is connected today through the internet.

You approach designing menswear and womenswear in the same manner. Why is genderless style so important to you?

I was always drawn to menswear because I could identify with the style codes. To me, it's really about regarding everyone as equals. I want men to feel and look powerful, but I want exactly the same for women.

What is your idea of "luxury"?

Luxury is being reinterpreted these days, which is amazing because it's demanded by a new generation that doesn't identify with the luxury their parents went by. A man in a suit is classic, but not necessarily a sign of success. A guy in the correct tracksuit can look more powerful because he shows confidence and individuality. This is luxury to me.



ARKET

The new concept store from the same folks who brought us H&M wants to overhaul your life, starting with your morning routine—enter the Hario coffee kettle.

Arket.com

WOOD WOOD

The subculture brand is at its best when it rolls streetwear, sportswear, and high fashion into one—like its shell jacket collab with Barbour.

WoodWood.com



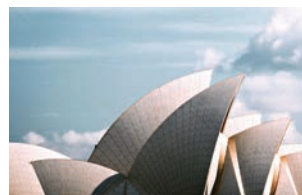
49–52.

DANISH STARCHITECTS



ARNE JACOBSEN

The now dour SAS Royal Hotel was an ambitious hotel concept when it was built in the late '50s. Jacobsen was tasked with creating the very first "design hotel," for which he developed every detail from the facade all the way down to the ashtrays. Famous for his chair designs, Jacobsen fancied himself an architect first and foremost, and was a Brutalist in his interpretation of Danish Functionalism—that a building's design should be based on its usage at the expense of its aesthetic.



JØRN UTZON

Although perhaps not as prolific as the other members of our short list, Utzon is the genius behind the most inspired—and famous—structure of the 20th century: the Sydney Opera

House. The landmark sparked the international trend of statement-architecture pieces for civic structures, and arguably changed the gravity of tourism in the Southern Hemisphere, inspiring millions to visit the city Down Undah. Utzon won the coveted Pritzker Prize (the Academy Awards of architecture) in 2003.

HENNING LARSEN

Like with all art, sometimes an object or oeuvre simply evokes a feeling—maybe wonder or joy. Such is the case with Larsen's work. He included Utzon and Jacobsen on his short list of mentors, and later taught at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. His version of a harborside opera house dominates Copenhagen's waterfront, though our favorite work by Larsen is The Wave, an apartment complex that swooshes across the Danish town of Vejle.



BJARKE INGELS

The wunderkind of Danish architecture is the principal of the Bjarke Ingels Group. Notorious BIG is scooping up design commissions around the world. His creations share a bombastic quality—many

of his sweeping residential projects look like ziggurat-spaceships that manifest a physical shape out of the more immaterial social, cultural, and political touchstones of modern civilization.

53-57.

FYN ROAD TRIP

A LOOP AROUND DENMARK'S
FAIRY-TALE ISLAND

At the crossroads of Copenhagen and continental Europe, Fyn (pronounced FOON) is often referred to as the fairy-tale island, largely because it's the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen.

A trip around Fyn will, however, quickly reveal that it's not just Andersen's reputation that has earned the landmass its moniker. Furling into almost every bay and fjordlet is a charming harbor sprouting centuries-old manses that have been lovingly restored into quiet inns, cafés, and museums.

And the swaths of wooded land in between are the realms of moated castles—some crumbling, others still occupied by royals. Often overlooked for wilder pastures, Fyn is the perfect escape from the capital or—dare we say—a worthy alternative to Copenhagen should your Denmark foray be short.

DAY 1: SVENDBORG

A big modern bridge shoots like a waterspout into the air as it connects the highway to the island of Fyn—an auspicious welcome as you trundle toward the quaint seaside town of Svendborg. But before exploring

the idyllic seaside villages that have earned Fyn its adoration among Danes, it's well worth stopping at **Egeskov** (*Egeskov.dk*)—an actual fairy-tale castle.

Owned by Count Michael Ahlefeldt-Laurvig-Bille, who



Egeskov Castle



still lives within the turrets with two of his four children, the castle has been passed down through the generations since its construction in the 1550s. Ahlefeldt's grandfather opened the grounds to the public as a means of offsetting the incredible costs of their upkeep, charging visitors to see his collection of cars and perfectly manicured lawns.

Today, 30 full-time gardeners (and a coterie of wild peacocks) saunter around the property endlessly trimming hedges and pruning roses.

Egeskov, which means "oak woods" in Danish, stands atop a series of oak poles in the middle of a small lake. Around a third of the castle is open to the public, including the Hunting Room, filled with game

trophies, and several smaller suites including one that features Titania's Palace—the ultimate doll house, which took more than 15 years to build, and contains over 3,000 unique objects from all over the world.

Further on, outside the town center of Svendborg, **Stella Maris Hotel de Luxe** (*StellaMaris.dk*) eschews clean Danish lines for a mishmash of Provençal and Cape Cod design, kinda like visiting granny's country house. Take in the setting sun out back along the private wooden dock with views of the town to the left and a quiet archipelago of offshore islets to the right.

DAY 2: ÆRØ

After breakfast, enjoy the hour-long ferry ride to the island of Ærø (pronounced AY-ruh.) If

COURTESY OF ROBERT LACY (EGESKOV CASTLE)



Svendborg

the sun's out, sit on the deck and spy on the seaside summer mansions as they gradually fade into pockets of deep green pine.

There's a palpable sense that you're in a different world when you get off the boat—bicycles clatter over ruthlessly cobbled lanes, and the brightly colored harbor homes of Ærøskøbing cheer the tiny port no matter the time or weather. A holidaying favorite for many Danes in the know, the island is refreshingly devoid of souvenir stalls, preferring storefronts geared toward the island's 6,000-plus residents.

Wander out to the western shores of town to find a strand of tiny beach cabanas, each slathered in a different color of bright paint, from lime green to millennial pink.

Dating back more than a hundred years, the huts are privately owned via lifelong leases and are a true real estate anomaly: They are never for sale, as no Dane in their right mind would ever give up such a precious commodity. However, the sand surrounding the cabanas are public property—the perfect place for a relaxing afternoon picnic.

In the evening, retreat to the converted granary at **Andelen Guesthouse** (AndelenGuesthouse.com); Adam, the British owner, spent years traveling to the far corners of the earth before settling in the village of Ærøskøbing and refurbishing the dilapidated structure into the handful of pristine rooms available to tourists today. ►

58.

THE SECRET LIFE OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN



The world's greatest fairy tale writer was also a cultivator of enumerable eccentricities. Here, four things you probably didn't know about this dandy:

- **The Ugly Ducking was autobiographical.** Before becoming a writer, Andersen tried his hand—or foot—at ballet but was rejected because of his lanky stature; acting and singing didn't pan out either, due to his awkward appearance (think: Danish Abraham Lincoln).

- **He was desperately afraid of fires.** During his travels, Andersen always carried a thick rope in his trunks—long enough to throw out of a second-story window should his lodging be engulfed in flames. He was also a hypochondriac and a notoriously demanding

houseguest who quite famously overstayed his welcome (by a month) when visiting Charles Dickens.

- **He was an avid diarist—and champion masturbator.** Andersen vigorously documented even the most banal details of his life. Scholars believe that he even noted his masturbatory habits by marking small crosses in the corners of his diaries' pages—there are a lot of crosses.

- **He probably died a virgin.** Some historians believe that Andersen was the perpetual victim of unrequited love, choosing women who were either already married or far beyond his station. Others cite a very romantic love letter penned to a dear male friend. Whether he was a deeply closeted homosexual, bisexual, or even perhaps asexual, many scholars agree that he never got laid.

59.

THE REAL LITTLE MERMAID

Hans Christian Andersen's original version has very little in common with Disney's underwater princess. Let's set the record straight: After saving her Prince Charming from drowning in a storm, the mermaid trades her beautiful voice for a Sea Witch's potion to grow legs. Each step on land feels like walking on glass, but she persists and mesmerizes the prince with her dancing. However, he marries another woman, believing her to be the girl who saved him from the swells. The mute mermaid is offered the opportunity to murder the prince to regain her fish tail, but she reneges, dies, and turns into sea foam. So much for "happily ever after."





Ærøskøbing, Æro



Falsled Kro



Breakfast on Æro

► DAY 3: ÆRØ

Saying “I do” in Denmark is considerably easier for those entangled in their respective countries’ bureaucratic red tape (especially LGBT couples), and Ærø has become the choice destination for many. On any given day you’ll see brides and grooms in their matrimonial best roaming around town posing for photos—locals even volunteer to be witnesses, signing five or six certificates a day. Snag a bicycle after the wedding bells toll and follow the ocean path to **Marstal**, the island’s largest settlement, for a heaping portion of dockside fish and chips served on giant cod-shaped plates at **Fru Berg** (bergsrestaurant.dk/Frisk-Fisk-hver-dag.html).

The town also has brightly colored beach cabanas, including a red cabin with a

thatched helmet that’s become the poster-boy proxy for the entire island.

DAY 4: FALSLED

The smaller ferry from Søby will shuttle you back to Faaborg, further west on Fyn—only a 15-minute drive from **Falsled Kro** (FalsledKro.dk).

Mentioned among Danes in hushed tones, the Relais & Chateaux property is considered one of the country’s finest stays and a favorite for local mini-mooners. The decor is Viking chic: prim Tudor walls, heavy rooftop thatching, and rooms replete with porcelain tiles and thick wooden beams.

The suites are charming, but the main event is dinner: multi-course delicacies delivered by a dutiful legion of servers, and a mammoth cheese cart worthy of Michelin consideration.

DAY 5: ODENSE

Change is afoot in little Odense—Denmark’s third-largest city after Copenhagen and Aarhus—smack in the center of the island, around 45 minutes from Falsled. The sprawling highway, built in the ’60s and bisecting the downtown core, is now being rerouted around the metropolitan center as its medieval roots are carefully stitched back together.

Towering cranes contrast the huddle of old wooden homes, one of which—painted in yellow and black stripes—belonged to Hans Christian Andersen and his pauper parents.

Andersen is the city’s main attraction, luring thousands of daytrippers from the capital to check out his namesake museum stuffed with his personal effects, from his cane

and top hat to the rope he carried around should he need saving from a fire.

Letters and paper cutouts help tell the story of his life and his oeuvre—the sanitized account of his biography appeals to every stripe of traveler, but subtle clues to his queerness are sprinkled throughout.

Plans are currently underway to transform the museum into a state-of-the-art facility designed by Japanese architect Kengo Kuma.

Although the exhibits will be dispersed throughout town during construction (set to be complete in 2020), it’s well worth spending the afternoon in Odense to appreciate his work. After a journey through fairy-tale Fyn, it’s easy to see where the author got his inspiration.

—BRANDON PRESSER

60.

FANO

If Denmark looks like Germany's cartographic crown, then Fanø (pronounced FAY-nuh) is its encrusted jewel. Linked to the mainland by a blustery 10-minute ferry ride, this green isle is largely protected under a national preserve mandate, save its two small towns: Nordby in the north and Sønderho in the south. Despite their proximity and shared isolation, the townships are bitter rivals, engaged in a centuries-long feud sparked by specific events that no one seems to remember anymore.

Besides sounding like a piece of IKEA furniture, Nordby is a workaday port and the terminus of the ferry. It's also home to **Fano Bryghus** (*FanoBryghus.dk*), which was recently voted one of the top 50 breweries in the world by RateBeer.com. A coterie of resident American brewmasters regularly rotate the selection of draughts and bottles, but things never get too serious on their quest for the perfect ale—when we stopped by, they were taste-

testing their Mango Mussolini with a constipated Trump cartoon adorning the label.

While the west side of the island is lonely and sand-swept, the vast expanse of mudflats in the east are the leeward domain of Jesper Danneberg Voss, the self-proclaimed **Oyster King** (*Oyster-King.dk*). During the months that end with "r," Voss takes travelers out where only rubber boots can go to pluck some of the best bivalves on the far side of the Atlantic.

Unlike the rest of us, the Danes prefer their oysters cooked, and Voss draws on his encyclopedic knowledge of ingredients to deliver tasty seafood snacks prepared over the barbecue—he's even published perhaps the only recipe book solely dedicated to the oyster.

A 15-minute ride links Nordby to southern Sønderho—you can even drive down along the packed sands of the island's western

shores. Sønderho is the throwback counterpart to more modern Nordby, and it's here that you'll find the quaint Danish hamlet of your imagination: turf-roofed Viking-style chalets candlelit in twilight's gloom. Hang your umbrella at **Sønderho Kro** (*SonderhoKro.dk*), one of the oldest inns in Denmark, founded in 1722. Classically decorated rooms are tucked away in a second thatched cottage where the township meets the bluffs and heather—each suite is named for a handsome ship that sailed from Sønderho's harbor.

Guests in the snugly dining room are served meals of the same caliber as in any prix-fixe-slinging establishment in Copenhagen, but with

country-side charm instead of cosmopolitan pretense. It'll be hard to tear yourself away from the inn's relaxed hospitality when it's time to get back on the road. —**BRANDON PRESSER**



61.

HERREGÅRDSKÆLDEREN



Siri gets really chatty when you search this restaurant in your phone—she guides you along a series of dusty backroads (mostly in mispronounced Danish) until you reach the doorstep of an old white manor house now preserved as a museum. While the grounds are of moderate interest to travelers, the basement features one of the best dining establishments in Denmark. Break up your backcountry drive with an exquisite multi-course meal served by chef Preben Madsen, who has a knack for allowing his fresh ingredients to sing rather than muddling them in too many sauces. Greens and herbs come from the castle garden, shrimp are plucked from the nearby shores, and Madsen even offers braised goat—a rarity in Denmark—all served on crisp white linen under hygge-fied wooden beams. *Sonderskov.dk/Restaurant*

62.

THIS CERAMIC COCK

Dorit Knudsen, the wife of Preben Madsen—chef-owner of Herregårdskælderen—is a skilled artist who has mastered the Japanese *raku* method of burning ceramics. Her work adorns the tables of her husband's restaurant, and is also found throughout the rest of Denmark. *DK-RakuKeramik.dk*





Photography by Jermaine Francis.
Styling by Marie Louise Von Haselberg.
Suit by **Emporio Armani**.
Bra by **Baserange**

63.

MØ

THREE YEARS AFTER HER GLOBAL SMASH
“LEAN ON,” DENMARK’S MOST FAMOUS POP
EXPORT IS READY TO DITCH THE LABELS.

In English, the Danish word *mø* translates to “maiden,” and is laced with cultural connotations of virginity, innocence, and purity. Karen Marie Ørsted, who’s adopted the term as her pop moniker, has found personal power in its meaning. For her, it’s a declaration of youthful independence, and a statement of purpose that has come to define her career as she’s ascended from the underground fringe to international stardom. “I’m still a childish person,” she says. “But that’s what making music is all about—creativity doesn’t have an age.”

MØ is known globally for her breakout single, “Lean On,” produced by DJ Snake and Diplo’s electronic trio, Major Lazer. It became 2015’s summer anthem and remains one of the most streamed tracks on Spotify, with more than 1 billion total plays. The song, which she describes as her “little weird baby,” not only carved out a space in the mainstream for the former outsider but also marked a shift in her approach to songwriting. With “Lean On,” she hit a sweet spot, buffering her jagged edges to achieve a more Top 40-friendly sound.

A self-declared punk, MØ grew up in Ubberud, a village on Fyn, but quickly tired of her mundane middle-class existence. Danish subculture felt more like home, so she became a teenage activist, engaging in politics through feminist and socialist groups. For three years, she squatted with friends in old buildings as an act of reckless rebellion. “I’m from a small city, so we’d get kicked out after a week,” she admits, laughing. “It wasn’t very radical, but we tried.”

She spent much of her childhood and adolescence writing songs on her great-grandmother’s piano, and by the age of 18 had combined her two major interests—music and protest—to form Mor, her aggressive, trashy punk act with pal Josefine Struckmann Pedersen. “Of course we were singing about feminism, but even more so about how we fucking hate racists,” MØ says of the duo, who released two EPs, one of which was titled *Fisse I Dit Fjæs* (“Pussy in Your Face”).

The pair got “pretty famous,” at least in certain circles, but MØ eventually needed an outlet for relating her own experiences. Mor disbanded in 2012, and soon after, under her

current stage name, she began creating weird bedroom electro inspired by her provocateur idols like Peaches, including the song “When I Saw His Cock.” Her 2014 debut solo album, *No Mythologies to Follow*, was more of a critical darling than a commercial win—nowhere near as successful as “Lean On” or “Cold Water,” her recent collaboration with Justin Bieber. “It has been a long journey for me to figure out how to marry the pop world with my instinctively

“**It has been a long journey for me to figure out how to marry the pop world with my instinctively alternative backbone, but I soon realized you don’t have to be either/or.**”

alternative backbone,” MØ says, “but I soon realized you don’t have to be either/or.” Rather than rush to release a follow-up, she’s spent the past two years dropping select singles. The soaring “Final Song” and “Drum” are deceptively upbeat songs about breaking up, while on “Nights With You,” she craves an evening out with a special girl, uttering one of her best lines: “Don’t care about your boyfriend waking up alone.”

MØ prefers to keep the details of her forthcoming sophomore album under wraps, but she promises that it will reflect her current mission to live in the moment. The record knows no gender or sexuality, she explains—an expression of the childlike naïveté she tries to sustain in her music. “A love song is a love song, regardless of how you identify,” says the singer, who’s uninterested in labeling herself or those around her. “I’m always striving to be free through my music—to be without worries—and to become more connected with myself.”

—JUSTIN MORAN

64–68.

FIVE OTHER
DANISH ACTS
WE DIG**Robin Hannibal**

One of Denmark’s busiest and most adventurous sound-smiths, Hannibal has written and produced

for indie-pop darlings Chairlift and Little Dragon and been sampled by Kendrick Lamar. He’s also one half of the R&B duos Rhye and Quadron.

Key Tracks: Rhye’s “The Fall,” Quadron’s “Hey Love”

**Iceage**

This sneering, snarling punk quartet formed in Copenhagen in 2008, when they were in their teens. Three

explosive albums later, they’ve become the bratty, brooding embodiment of millennial angst.

Key Tracks: “The Lord’s Favorite,” “Forever”

**First Hate**

On their 2017 debut album, *A Prayer for the Unemployed*, Anton Falck Gansted and Joakim Nørgaard

wrap their feel-good lyrics in chilly synthesizers, rousing four-to-the-floor beats, and pitch-slapped vocal samples. The perfect soundtrack for winter bathing.

Key Tracks: “The One,” “Copenhagen”

**Lowly**

With their first full-length, this year’s *Heba*, the Copenhagen five-piece has put a new

spin on ’80s sophisti-pop, weaving in modern electronic flourishes to craft sexy, sumptuous lounge music for the Tinder age.

Key Tracks: “Deer Eyes,” “Mornings”

**The Raveonettes**

Sune Rose Wagner and Sharin Foo have been penning peppy songs about drugs, murder, and suicide

for nearly two decades. The key to their longevity? They’ve dabbled in just about every genre, from surf rock and doo-wop to new wave and noise pop.

Key Tracks: “That Great Love Sound,” “Last Dance”

69. 48 HOURS IN AARHUS

NAVIGATING DENMARK'S VIBRANT SECOND CITY



FRIDAY EVENING

Over the past decade, as Copenhagen's reputation rose to international levels of cool, Aarhus (pronounced OR-hooss) fell behind to a distant second. Change is afoot, however: The 330,000-person city was declared a European Capital of Culture for 2017, and has positioned itself as the go-to destination for the real Danish experience now that the nation's biggest burg is officially overrun with visitors.

Happy-hour cocktails at the rooftop bar of **Salling** (*Salling.dk*), a Danish department store, are the perfect way to get a feel for the metropolis down below while DJ beats waft through the wood-and-windowed space. Test your vertigo on the glass-floored Skywalk, which juts out over Strøget, Aarhus's high street.

In addition to playing its culture-capital card, Aarhus has drawn itself a constellation of Michelin stars. One such culinary ray of light is **Domestic**

(*RestaurantDomestic.dk*), which carries the New Nordic banner far beyond Copenhagen's gravity. True to its name, almost every item on the menu—including the wine pairings—comes from within the country's borders.

SATURDAY MORNING

Hundreds of bicyclists hit the road each morning (this is Denmark, after all), but Aarhus is easily explored on foot. Head down to the water and walk along the harborfront to witness one of the most ambitious feats of urban planning: a gritty industrial seascape transformed into not only a livable environment but a scenic spot where locals love to spend their time.

The newly developed neighborhood of Aarhus Ø, crowned by the **Iceberg** (*Isbjerget.com*), a spiky residential complex, is the perfect place to release your inner Viking. A dedicated swimming lane at the **Aarhus Havbane**



(*AarhusHavbane.dk*) attracts tons of denizens who enjoy a refreshing dunk below the Nordic waves—they'll even crack open a hole in the ice in the colder months for organized polar dips called winter bathing.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Museum cafeterias usually cater to their captive audiences with mediocre fare, but the **ARoS Art Museum** (*En.Aros.dk*) is worth visiting for its on-site Art Café, perched high on the fifth floor with views overlooking the city. We won't scold you if you fill up on the freshly baked bread—the waiters dispense some of the finest specimens of gluten in the entire city. Take in the collection of contemporary art (including Ron Mueck's *Boy*—you'll know



it when you see it) and don't miss Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson's *Your Rainbow Panorama* on the roof, providing infinite Instagram filter fodder.

SATURDAY EVENING

Cutlery is served in a leather tool belt at **Hærværk** (Restaurant-Haervaerk.dk/), our favorite restaurant in Aarhus and a winner of a Bib Gourmand, Michelin's nod to more affordable fare executed with great finesse. Pronounced almost like "havoc," the name seems apt even in English, as the owners—a small group of chef friends—cook up whatever's available that day. With an eye for only the finest produce, the eatery never has a set menu, and courses have been known to change throughout the evening as it switches to different

veggies or prime cuts of meat.

Should you crave a late-night snack—though we highly doubt you will—it's well worth hitting up **Aarhus Street Food** (AarhusStreetFood.com), housed in an old garage at the central bus station. More than 30 micro-kitchens dish out street fare there, from Vietnamese to Mexican.

SUNDAY MORNING

If yesterday's splashing around in glacial temperatures wasn't enough to get your blood flowing, send a jolt through your veins with a shot of espresso at **La Cabra** (LaCabra.dk). Located among the boutique-lined cobble lanes of **Latinerkvarteret**, the city's Latin Quarter, everyone's favorite student hangout feels more like a real-life catalog of moving

menswear worn by attractive Danes in architectural glasses.

Catch Bus 18 out of the city center to the **Moesgaard Museum** (MoesgaardMuseum.dk), an architectural marvel by Danish mastermind Henning Larsen. Cut into the side of a grassy hill, its diagonal concrete bands feel playful in their stoicism; guests climb atop the structure for views of the surrounding forest and sea. Inside the so-called MOMU, you'll find an annotated timeline of the region, from the prehistoric human remains uncovered in a mossy bog to the vivid retelling of Viking lore.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Before leaving Aarhus, there's one more stop you have to make: **Den Gamle By** (DenGamleBy.dk), or "The Old Town," dedicated to the urban history of the city and, by proxy, the entirety of Denmark. We know, it's a lot of museums for one weekend, but there's a treasure buried deep within here.

Skim the sections dedicated to the days of yore where costumed staff are churning butter and writing letters with quills, and head to 1970s Aarhus, where you'll find a throwback pastry shop serving Danish treats as they were made 40-plus years ago. Scarf down some marzipan-coated cakes with a swig of Peter Larsen coffee, then head to the replica of a college commune and an abortion clinic wallpapered in safe-sex brochures, both set inside a mid-'70s multi-family residence. It's all proof that Aarhus is a very, very, very fine house, indeed.

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