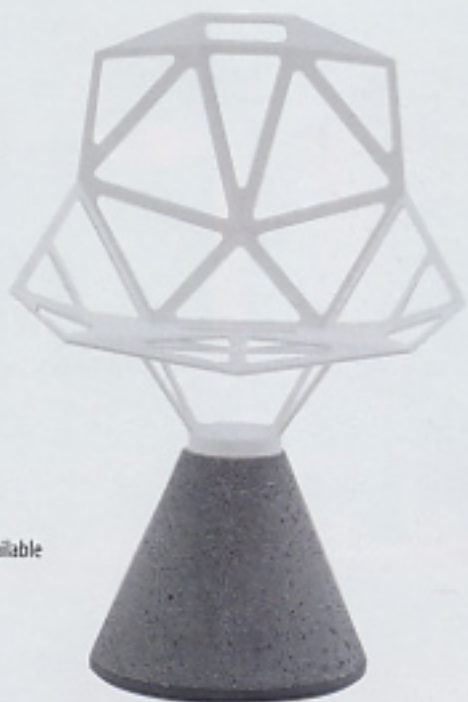




Bottom Heavy—Magis Chairs, available
at DNA Gallery 619-235-6882

living with style



Put a Cork in it—corkscrews by
Alessandro Mendini for Alessi, available at
Disegno Italiano 619-515-0191

SCANDINAVIAN

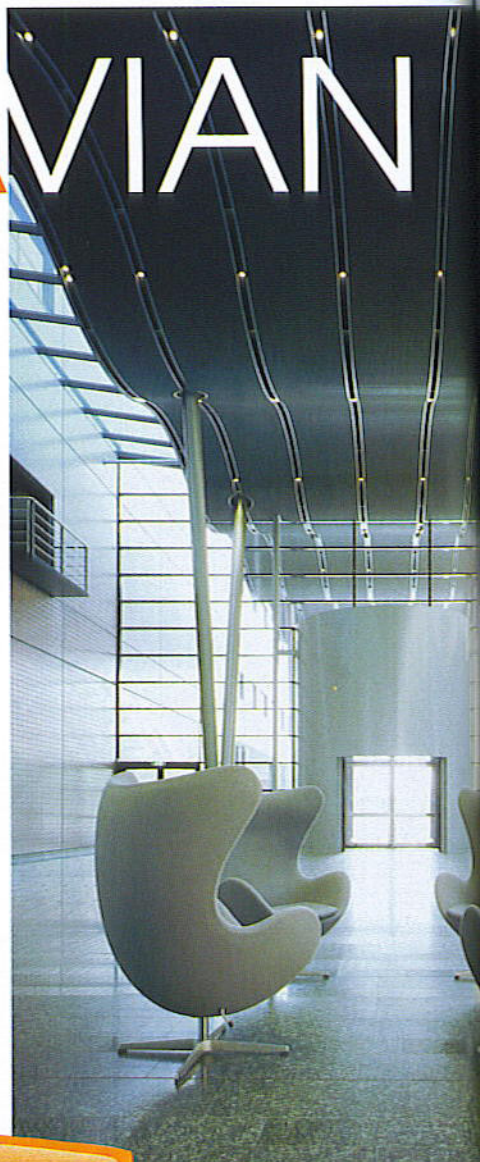
by Miriam Raftery

"Scandinavian design is coming back—and it's coming back strong," says Jesper Kemp de Fonss, a representative of the Royal Danish Consulate General in New York. "Looking at pure exports from Denmark to North America from 2004 to 2005, even though this year is not fiscally over, there has been an increase of 100 percent in the Danish furniture exports to North America. That's an increase of over one billion dollars."

And it's not just homes that are showcasing furnishings and accessories from Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark—the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York recently completed an \$850 million renovation of its public spaces, featuring primarily Danish modern designs. The Danish Consulate facilitated contacts with Danish manufacturers and designers and managed MoMA's Danish Design Project.

"The Museum of Modern Art definitely rates the attention of professionals—architects and people who are interested in contemporary design," notes de Fonss, who credits the MoMA project with sparking renewed interest among Americans in Scandinavian contemporary furnishings. "Where we can see the largest expansion is in high-end Danish modern furniture."

American consumers are acquiring a combination of pieces, from classic to 1950s and '60s vintage (the golden age of Danish modern furnishings) to contemporary pieces by new designers, such as Fleming Busk. "Most Danish/Scandinavian designers are very geometric in their lines," de Fonss says, "but Fleming is one of the new,



Egg Chair by Arne Jacobsen

younger designers who has managed to jump out of that very geometric visual language and make it much more organic."

Charles Taylor, owner of Mixture, a San Diego store that carries Scandinavian-inspired furnishings, sees a "definite" resurgence in interest. Both Taylor and de Fonss credit Ikea, a retailer of inexpensive Scandinavian furnishings and accessories, with piquing Americans' interest in Scandinavian design.

"It is coming back because modern and contemporary styles are coming back," Taylor says. "The Scandinavian/Danish look is contemporary and modern at the same time, but without the coldness of things we saw in the '80s."



Jehs + Laub by ROFH
Concept Furniture from
Fritz Hansen

STYLE

Scandinavian design made its debut at the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition. The 1939 World's Fair in New York first exposed Americans to the simple, clean and lightweight forms of Scandinavian furniture, which combines quality craftsmanship with mass production. Scandinavian design also epitomizes the "form follows function" principle.

Architect Kaare Klint provided early inspiration for Danish designers who pioneered the Danish modern design concept. Arne Jacobsen, Poul Kjaerholm and Hans Wegner were among the most prominent names in Danish modern design during the style's heyday in the 1950s and '60s.

"Jacobsen is whimsical," says Lisa Lesney at DNA European Design Studio in San Diego's Little Italy district. Owned by Danish architect Jesper Pedersen, the shop carries works by Jacobsen and other designers under the Fritz Hansen line. Two of Jacobsen's signature pieces are still available at the shop. "The Egg and the Swan are famous icons of Danish design," Lesney adds, gesturing toward a brightly hued molded Swan chair priced at \$4,995.



Ball Chair by Eero Aarnio (Finland), at My Own Space



Noah by e15 (Germany), at Mixture

Jacobsen designed all furnishings as well as details such as door handles for the SAS Royal Copenhagen Hotel, since renamed the Hilton Copenhagen Airport. Recently, Hansen produced a special version of the Egg chair covered with a painter's canvas on which Danish artists Peter Bonde and Erik A. Frandsen applied artwork. The hotel plans to ask famous guests to autograph the one-of-a-kind Egg, which will be auctioned to benefit the Red Cross.

Poul Kjaerholm, another architect in the Fritz Hansen line, contributed to the collection with minimalist furnishings utilizing largely chrome and glass. "This is a very clean line. Architects love it," Lesney says.

Most Scandinavian furnishings utilize light-toned woods or plies of wood. Some utilize particle board or MDF



Rosendahl knife stand, at DNA Gallery

(medium-density fiber board), with particles compressed to a higher resin standard than in American-made products. Early pieces were often made of teak, a wood used to separate barrels of spices and cheeses during the colonial trading era. Modern Scandinavian designers utilize birch, alder, cherry and other woods.

According to the Royal Danish Consulate, "Beginning in the mid-1990s, Danish furniture entered a new golden age. In the 21st century, Danish contemporary designers face

new demands spurred by concerns about the consumption of natural resources and environmental sustainability, as well as new technology." Examples of new contemporary designs can be seen at MoMA.

"My favorite part is the Café 2," de Fonss says. "They have some new chairs, stools and designs from Komplot Design." Those include Gubi chairs and stools by designers Boris Berlin and Paul Christensen. "This is quite significant in design and technique because it's the world's first 3-D wood-molded chair," de Fonss adds. "That's a completely new technique."

Finnish designer Harri Koskinen won the coveted Compasso d'Oro award (the equivalent of an Oscar in the design world) for his artfully molded oak plywood Muu chair created for Montina, an Italian manufacturer. More recently, Koskinen has begun designing for Litala, a Finnish glassworks company. According to Lesney, however, "the next classics" will come from the moderately priced, "accessible modern" line by Bo Concept.



Rosendahl newspaper rack, at DNA Gallery

Scandinavian furnishings are also known for making visual statements while remaining comfortable. "Much of our furniture is also art," states the Web site for Scan Furniture House on Morena Boulevard. Ekorner makes a variety of recliner shells and ottomans with leather designed to conform to the body. Each recliner features adjustment mechanisms to accommodate different heights and sizes. Locally, Ekorner products are available at Scan Furniture as well as Copenhagen Interiors.

Mixture offers two lines of products inspired by Danish modern design. "These pieces are practical for downtown San Diego because they have clean lines, and are small, and unobtrusive—so proportionally, they work well for small urban spaces," Taylor says.

Nest of Tables by Poul Kjaerholm for Fritz Hansen, at MOMA



The E-15 line, made in Germany, features solid woods with a warm ambience. "It's uncluttered, so you get a soft, contemporary look that you can match and mix with other styles fairly easily," Taylor says. "You can have a Craftsman or Spanish house and still have your Old World pieces, but have a Danish modern or Scandinavian-style table and chair that will still look nice." Mixture also offers 3square, a line inspired by Scandinavian designs of the 1950s. Clean lines, delicate edges and thinner woods characterize the collection, which is made in New York.

A wide range of artistic Scandinavian accessories are also available. Vetro, for instance, is a glass gallery in Little Italy that offers mid-century Scandinavian glass works, which are noted for their clean, contemporary lines and beautiful workmanship.

"Our pieces are in excellent condition—and some are one of a kind," says owner Merrilee Ekstrom. "Holmegaard is a famous glass house that is still



Hexa by Palluccobellato (Italy), at Mixture



Circa 1970s glassware designed by Tamara Aladin for Riihimaen Lasi, at Vetro

Decision by Piotr + Co. from Fritz Hansen

around today. We also have glass from a Scandinavian company called Riihimaen Lasi."

Stelton housewares, such as stainless-steel vacuum jugs and dishware in vivid hues, are offered at DNA European Design Studio. The store also offers Evasolo countertop appliances and accessories to complement Scandinavian furnishings.

"The Danish aesthetic is functional, yet beautiful," says Lesney, who is half Danish. "The Danes are really into classic design—quality that's meant to last for a long time." □

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