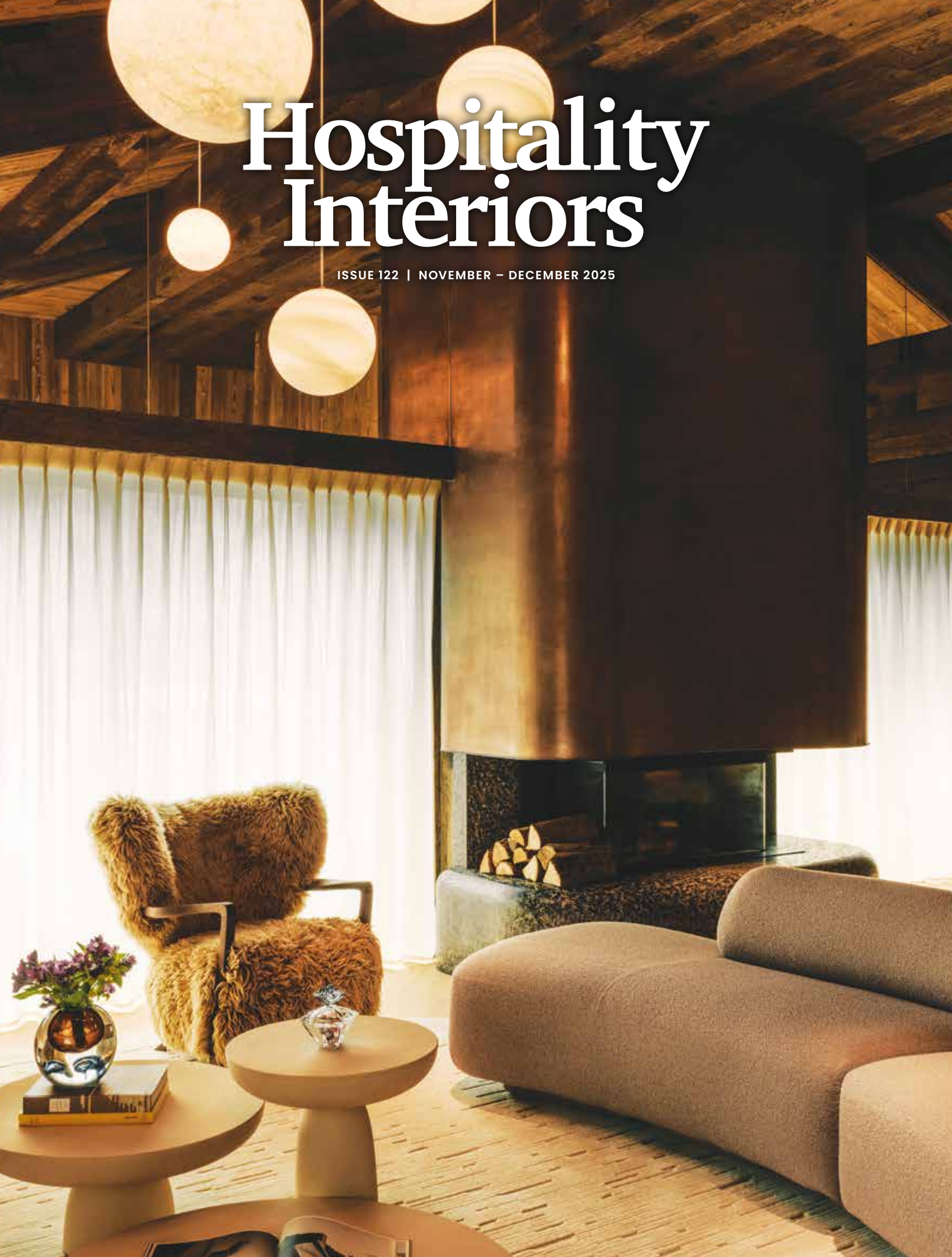


Hospitality Interiors

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Comment



We celebrate the contrasting charms of Europe's snow-dusted landscapes and the golden warmth of the Middle East

As the year draws to a close, our Winter Sun & Ski issue celebrates the contrasting charms of Europe's snow-dusted landscapes and the golden warmth of the Middle East.

This season, we journey from the frosted peaks of the Alps and Scandinavia to the sunlit shores of Dubai, exploring how design continues to shape experiences that comfort, inspire and captivate, whatever the climate.

We open with an insightful conversation on page 18 with Erik Nissen Johansen, founder of Stylt, whose philosophy of storytelling in design has transformed hospitality projects across the globe. His reflections set the tone for an issue that celebrates imagination, authenticity, and place.

Our project portfolio takes us from the elegance of the Rosewood Courchevel Le Jardin Alpin (p.26), a refined retreat nestled in the French Alps, to the bohemian beauty of Casa Cook Madonna di Campiglio (p.36), where alpine design meets soulful relaxation.

In Sweden, the Hernö Gin Hotel (p.42) and The Original Sokos Hotel Royal (p.50) showcase Nordic restraint paired with playful, contemporary touches.

For those seeking winter sun, we travel to Dubai to discover the breathtaking Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab (p.74), where maritime inspiration meets sculptural modernity.

Our F&B Design Special (p.57) dives into the evolution of dining design, celebrating the creativity shaping how we gather and share experiences around food. Meanwhile, we speak with Irene Kronenberg (p.68) about her collaborative design ethos and her studio's distinctive approach to storytelling through interiors.

Finally, don't miss our HIX Event Preview (p.84) – your essential preview of one of the industry's most exciting events.

Wherever this season takes you – into snow or sun – may it be filled with design that warms, inspires, and delights.



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A full-page photograph of Erik Nissen Johansen, founder of Stylt, sitting in a modern, orange-colored chair. He is a man with long, wavy blonde hair, a beard, and round glasses. He is wearing a green corduroy jacket over a patterned scarf and blue jeans. He is holding a pen in his right hand, resting his chin on it. The background shows a bright, open-plan office or studio with large windows and other people working in the distance.

Interview

Erik Nissen
Johansen,
Founder of Stylt



As the boundaries between hospitality, culture, and conscious living continue to blur, Scandinavian designers are finding new ways to infuse hotels with purpose and personality. **Erik Nissen Johansen**, founder and creative director of renowned concept design studio Stylt, has spent decades at the forefront of this movement and he believes the best is yet to come.

For Erik Nissen Johansen hospitality design isn't about simply making things look good, it's about creating places with meaning. In a world where travellers increasingly seek purpose, personality, and connection, Erik believes design must go far deeper than surface-level beauty. It should educate, engage, and above all, tell a story.

"We always try to build concepts that are authentic," he says. "When a hotel taps into something real, something cultural, something passionate, that's when it becomes more than just a place to sleep."

And in Erik's case, the story almost always begins with his Scandinavian roots. For him, design is a reflection of his regional values: sustainability, simplicity, quality, community, and a good



dose of humour. Many of Stylt's most acclaimed projects share a distinctly Nordic sensibility. They're playful yet considered, modern yet rooted in heritage. They avoid flash for flash's sake, but never take themselves too seriously.

That combination of purpose, wit and warmth is what defines Scandinavian design for Erik. "Luxury for us Scandinavians isn't gold or marble," he explains. "Luxury is putting on your old paint-stained shorts and sitting in a summer house by the sea. That's our gold."

It's this ethos that informed 25hours Hotel Paper Island in

Above and top:
Huus Hotel,
Switzerland
Images: Mark
Nolan



“ We wanted the hotel to feel like a personal retreat — like you’re stepping into someone’s quirky cottage. Design has to have some friction. Something odd. Something you can’t plan. That’s what makes it human ”

”

Copenhagen — a vibrant, irreverent hotel inspired by Danish summer homes, flea markets, and the pleasure of imperfection. “We wanted the hotel to feel like a personal retreat — like you’re stepping into someone’s quirky cottage.”

This kind of freedom, Erik believes, is essential to creating places

people remember. “Design has to have some friction. Something odd. Something you can’t plan. That’s what makes it human.”

At Pater Noster, a lighthouse hotel in Sweden that Erik co-operates, Scandinavian values around nature and environmental stewardship are embedded into every detail.

“When we started the project, we said: let’s not just make a hotel. Let’s create something with a higher purpose,” he says. “We brought in a chef who’s also a marine biologist. He dives into the sea every day in his wetsuit, collects seaweed, and teaches guests about future foods. People leave more educated and more curious.”

This deep integration of education, sustainability, and experience reflects a broader Scandinavian design principle: that design should be functional, responsible, and improve life.

It also mirrors Erik’s belief that purpose isn’t just a bonus, it’s good business. “When you do something with meaning, people are willing to pay more. Not because it’s fancy, but because it matters.”

While hotels around the world often chase trends or over-designed spectacle, Erik sees value in restraint — a core



Scandinavian trait. "I think there's beauty in simplicity - in doing less, but doing it well," he says. "We've had projects where we deliberately scaled back the rooms. We saved the budget for public areas, art, culture. The rooms don't need to impress. They need to work."

At his upcoming project in Aarhus, Denmark - Bassin Seven - this philosophy is on full display. Set in a former container harbour, the hotel's pyramid-shaped structure designed by Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) is bold, but inside, everything is built around comfort, nature, and calm.

"The rooms are quiet, spa-like, with a special wood in the headboards that helps people sleep," Erik explains. "Downstairs, it's vibrant with restaurants, bikes, paddleboards - but upstairs, you relax. That contrast is important."

And outside, the harbourfront location offers direct access to swimming, surfing, and saunas and is very Scandinavian in its embrace of outdoor living, all year round.

"Aarhus is a cultural city, and this hotel will be its urban resort,"

he says. "You'll be able to walk to the theatre, take a dip in the sea, grab a drink on the roof. It's about creating a whole-life experience - the kind of hotel that takes care of you 24 hours a day."

Erik is also thoughtful about the brands and vendors he partners with. His list of favourites reads like a who's who of new Scandinavian design.

"There's a Norwegian company we love - they've resurrected forgotten 1950s furniture designs by working with the original designers' families. It's classic Scandinavian style, but fresh to the eye."

He also highlights Dusti Decor, a Swedish company blending minimalism with fun and flair, and HAY and &Tradition, both Danish design leaders. "HAY is great because they do everything from small accessories to large furniture, and &Tradition makes beautiful, high-quality lighting and furniture."

Some of the most meaningful partnerships, however, are with Swedish company, SKRYTA, which turns fashion industry waste into amazing woven lamps, and Atelje Spalje. "They work with former

LEFT AND ABOVE:
25Hours Paper
Island hotel in
Copenhagen
is a vibrant,
irreverent design
inspired by
Danish summer
homes, flea
markets, and
the pleasure of
imperfection
Image: Stephan
Lemke

LAUFEN

SHOWER TOILET CLEANET AURIA DESIGN BY PETER WIRZ
LAUFEN 1892 | SWITZERLAND



“The days of trying to please everyone are over. Hotels should have a clear identity and not be afraid to stand for something”

”

convicts and people trying to re-enter society. It's a feel-good company. You get beautiful design and real impact.”

“We're heading towards the 'travel agency of one,’” he says. “Everyone can tailor their trip exactly how they want, instantly. If you're a dog person, you'll find all the dog-friendly hotels in seconds. If you love art, you'll be able to search for that too.”

The key, he believes, is specificity. “The days of trying to please everyone are over. Hotels should have a clear identity and not be afraid to stand for something.”

That could mean leaning into local culture, regional craft, or even political values. “In Denmark and Sweden, people are proud of doing things right. If your hotel stands for that, say it. Your guests will respect you for it.”

One of the most important qualities Erik sees in successful

Above: Pater Noster, Sweden



Hotel Draken,
Gothenburg,
Sweden



design, especially Scandinavian design, is a sense of humour. "We don't take ourselves too seriously. We like to surprise people, to make them smile."

Whether it's a knitted room sign, a bed made from recycled barn doors, or a bar hidden in a sauna, Erik's work always includes a little twist. Something human. Something weird. Something real.

Because for him, design is not about being perfect, it's about being personal. "We never want our hotels to feel like someone else's. They should feel like yours."

And while the world may be changing fast, he believes the core values of Scandinavian design – simplicity, sustainability, storytelling, and soul – are more relevant than ever.

"People want to feel something. They want to go home with a story. That's what we try to give them."

