



The view of Copenhagen
from inside the
Royal Danish Library

THOSE CLEVER DANES

Copenhagen draws travelers in search of design inspiration, innovative architecture and Hygge (the Danish ritual of enjoying life's simple pleasures).

BY SUZETTE LIPSCOMB

Design and creativity must be prevalent in the Danish DNA. It can be seen in Danish Modern, a minimalist movement of streamlined, yet also functional furniture. It appears in the sleek, modern architecture of The Royal Library, The Royal Danish Playhouse and the acoustically astounding Copenhagen Opera House. And while the Danish Museum of Art and Design (Design Museum Denmark) showcases the elegant, functional simplicity that launched a movement, modern day cooperatives such as CPHMade (where only "made in Copenhagen" goods are sold) highlight the works of a collective group of over 100 entrepreneurs who love what they do



Nykredit headquarters is a glass
cube designed by Schmidt
Hammer Lassen architects.

FROM LEFT: OLESA KUZNETSOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM; LAURA ZAMBONI/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



BETWEEN THE TYPICAL TOURIST DESTINATIONS OF TIVOLI GARDENS, THE FORMER RESIDENCE OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AND THE BUILDINGS THAT LINE NYHAVN . . . THERE IS A BURGEONING BUZZ OF CREATIVITY BEING PLAYED OUT ACROSS EVERY INDUSTRY IN COPENHAGEN.



so much, they would actually do it for free—a prerequisite for joining the group.

All around the city, you see evidence of unbridled creativity. The Copenhagen Opera House might be the most expensive ever built—a modern mecca of maple wood and glass reflecting off the water and designed by Danish architect Henning Larsen. Seated opposite the Royal Castle of Amalienborg and the Royal Library (and its extension, The Black Diamond), the main auditorium seats 1,400 and is adorned with Sicilian marble, kilos of gold leaf, and a simple but dramatic foyer that lures guests to their seats.

Schmidt, Hammer, Lassen (SHL) Architects' work and influence can be found in many of

Copenhagen's modern iconic buildings. The award-winning firm has two locations in Denmark, as well as one in Shanghai, and also maintains small, local onsite offices during construction to coordinate their vision with contractors, the city and collaborators. The firm is particularly well known for building the world's largest public libraries, and designed both Copenhagen's Royal Library and its Black Diamond extension as well as the Nykredit Headquarters, a 10-story glass structure conceived as a transparent cube. SHL is deeply committed, according to their mission statement, "to the Nordic architectural principles of democracy, welfare, aesthetics, light, sustainability and social responsibility," which is evident in their work.



Clockwise from top left: Modern chairs inside Design Museum Denmark; Copenhagen Opera House is the largest in the world; a dish from Michelin-starred Restaurant Marchal, located in Hotel d'Angleterre; modern cube buildings in Copenhagen's Ørestad district designed by JJW Arkitekter

TOP LEFT: KIM WYON; BOTTOM LEFT: VOLHA STASIVICH; SHUTTERSTOCK.COM; CENTER SPREAD IMAGE: ALLARD ONE; SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

MADE IN COPENHAGEN

Head to Jaegersborggade Street for a tour or just meander amongst the cognoscenti on a bicycle—the most popular mode of transportation in this environmentally friendly city—and visit some of these collectives.

Asger Daugbjerg, one of the founders of CPHMade, and Brian Engblad co-founder and current owner, explain that they were inspired by a March 2011 *New York Times* article entitled, “The Future of Manufacturing is Local.” That article introduced them to SFMade, which in turn inspired them to visit

San Francisco, and they brought the bones of the program home to their beloved Copenhagen. They realized that often, the passionate makers of goods don’t have the background in business needed to thrive. The collective is ripe with success stories highlighting owners like the pipe maker who has been

in business for 47 years—25 of which he never made one Krone (Danish dollar)—until CPHMade came along and helped organize marketing, guided tours, business plans and attorneys. Now the makers of a variety of goods such as coffee, chocolates, and ceramics can focus on the making of things.



▶ The owners of the Coffee Collective had worked in a big coffee chain and wanted something different for their dream—contact with the farmers, the dairy, and to buy beans directly from the growers. So they formed a business that has a consciousness about where the suppliers come from and made commitments to themselves and their customers to visit each grower every year, pay a 25 percent premium above the required wages, and did things like commit to purchase at least 1/3 of a crop in, say, Brazil or Kenya. They also had a vision of their beans being sold to local restaurants and coffee houses and for each of their locations to offer a different aesthetic to customers. It must have worked, as they celebrated their 10-year anniversary in February.

▶ Keramiker Inge Vincents says she loves to work “in a high quality, creamy white, translucent porcelain,” and all of her pieces are one of a kind. Vincents began her business by just making ceramic tea lights, using her unique technique where some pieces are made on the wheel and some in slab. She stuck them together and voila—thinware was born. She explains that 95 percent of her sales are purchased as gifts (a fact that makes her happy) and she ships all over the world, usually within a week. She makes functional pieces—think baggy vases, small espresso cups and of course, tea lights, all in white.



▶ Everyone loves chocolate, although Rasmus Olsen, who owns and manages Ro Chokolade, seems to love it more than most. And he must be good at what he does, because he sells approximately 6,000-8,000 salted caramels a day during the holidays. He says he wanted to be a pastry chef, but “found it too mundane,” so he launched into Ro Chokolade full force after an apprenticeship in an old chocolate shop. He curates his ingredients, uses up to 24 types of chocolate and mixes it up to keep it fresh.



In between the typical tourist destinations of Tivoli Gardens, the former residence of Hans Christian Andersen and the buildings that line Nyhavn—the city’s picturesque 17th-century waterfront, canal and entertainment district—there is a burgeoning buzz of creativity being played out across every industry in Copenhagen. The city is considered a world-leader in creative cuisine, where you can come for a piece of hygge pie, or hygge comfort foods like a “hot, hot dog and a cold chocolate milk” (hygge is a defining piece of Danish cultural identity—a national obsession with all things cozy, like sitting by the fire, mulled wine, throw blankets and homemade goodies). Dine across the river from the Opera House at No. 2, where you’ll find innovative cuisine and impressive chefs crafting meals that are beautiful, simple and yet, a complex marriage of flavors. Or, for a modern urban dining experience, make a reservation at

the Michelin-awarded restaurant Marchal in the Hotel d’Angleterre, which brings a classic French twist to Nordic cuisine.

You don’t have to be a designer or an architect to appreciate the Design Museum Denmark, where pieces of furniture that co-exist as art are on display. A permanent exhibition called “The Danish Chair, an International Affair,” illustrates the minimalist adventure of Danish Modern and “Danish Design Now” offers visitors a selection of 21st century design created by talented and influential modern Danish designers. Located walking distance from many popular tourist destinations in the center of Copenhagen, the Design Museum’s permanent exhibitions offer a glimpse into the creativity and functionality that shaped much of 20th-Century design. Much like all of Copenhagen, there is beauty and art celebrated in everyday life.

(visitcopenhagen.com) (CPHmade.org)

Clockwise: The Black Diamond, a modern waterfront extension to the Royal Library in Copenhagen, designed by Danish architects Schmidt Hammer Lassen; sitting outside Restaurant Grod in Jaegersborggade; The modern cyclist bridge on the Islands Brygge leads to the Gemini Residence, a modern apartment complex made from old silos.

