

Home Cover

Britain's love affair with all things Scandi has been a cultural phenomenon, from crime-thriller box sets to midcentury furniture, Ikea and the cosy cult of hygge. Step into many a middle-class London home and you'd be forgiven for thinking you were in Stockholm. But what does the British home of a Scandi designer look like?

Staffan Tollgard, a Swede who has lived in Britain since 1996 and runs an interior design firm in Belgravia, has brought a bit of Scandi style to his family home in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, but he's avoided the clichés. "The stereotypical Scandi look is blond wood floors, white walls, contemporary art and a few design classics, such as Hansen's Wishbone chair or Arne Jacobsen's Series 7 chair," says Tollgard, 46. "And you'd have a white kitchen with simple tiles. Scandi is a good aesthetic – everything looks right – but it doesn't celebrate individuality. I love that, in London, you can see a man walking down the street in a yellow suit. That would never happen in Stockholm."

Tollgard's home is certainly a true original. Designed with his wife and business partner, Monique, 42, it's a six-bedroom, three-storey house that was built in 2014, which makes the couple part of a rare breed: designers or architects who don't live in a period house. They bought it in 2015, when they were living in Bayswater, west London; they wanted their two boys, Leo, 11, and Elliot, 8, to grow up outside the big smoke and close to their maternal grandparents, who live nearby.

The interiors also set them apart from the crowd: they've done the impossible and made a grey colour scheme look fresh. There's no Elephant's Breath on the walls – it's a Dulux custom blend. And the grey is a canvas for dazzling jolts of colour: acid yellows, cherry reds, royal blues.

The sofa is an enormous grey L-shaped number by Living Divani, an Italian manufacturer, but it's dotted with cheery cushions in midcentury-style graphics by an English designer, Eleanor Pritchard. Behind it is an Anglo-Scandi burst of colour: four abstract lithographs, all dots and stripes and primary colours, by the young British artist Mark Francis, which was created at Edition Copenhagen studio. "We're bold, but not brash," Tollgard says. "Brash is shiny and bling. We're humble. We don't like interiors that try too hard."

Another design achievement: they have made the grey interiors feel warm and cosy. There's a woodburner and the floors are dark wood, rather than Scandi blond. But don't call it hygge, the hard-to-pronounce Danish aesthetic. "Hygge is candles, blankets and cable-knit, and an open fire," Tollgard says. "We do have the fire, but we've thrown in colour and our art frames are in Perspex boxes."

Monique, who is South African but knows her Scandi design, chimes in: "Hygge is a sameness, lots of layers, but without anything popping or being too different." Nor is their style *lagom*, billed as the Swedish successor to hygge. "*Lagom* is not a design term, it's more a cultural sensibility," Tollgard says. "It means not too much, not too little, don't show off."

If the Tollgards have an aesthetic, then it's industrial craft. There's lots of steel. The kitchen cupboards are finished in a cloudy bronzed steel by the Italian firm De Castelli. A Modò ball chandelier, all black ironmongery and filament bulbs, feels vintage industrial, yet is new. "We love American lighting," Tollgard says. "Companies in New York and Philadelphia are producing fantastic new designs in old industrial styles. This is raw steel done in a bold and beautiful way."

ONE MAN, ONE CHAIR...
11 ways to sit in it — Staffan Tollgard shows how a little imagination (and some key design pieces) can make for a stylish and fun family home on Twitter @TheSTHome and Instagram @sundaytimeshome



Staffan and Monique Tollgard with their sons, Leo and Elliot, at their home in Beaconsfield. Warm grey walls provide the backdrop for bright flashes of colour throughout the contemporary house



GET THE LOOK

● The headboard fabric in the bedroom is Logan FD743.A101, in Woodsmoke (£110 a metre; gpjbaker.com). The pendants by the bed are BAI DI lights, by Neri & Hu (£860 each; tollgard.com)

● In the dining room, the Modò Chandelier Diamond 13 Globes is by Jason Miller (£6,816; scp.co.uk). The Kekke dining chairs are by Piet Boon (from £1,200 each) and the Fly table in Carrara marble is by Antonio Citterio for Flexform (£8,275; both tollgard.com)



● NLXL Scrapwood wallpaper PHE-15 is by Piet Hein Eek (£175 a roll; beut.co.uk)

● Yellow Belgrade Chair II, an artwork by Stacie McCormick (£6,500), is shown with a Stockholm sideboard by Mario Ruiz (£3,975; both tollgard.com). The lithographs in the living room are Untitled, by Mark Francis (£5,125 for a set of four; editioncopenhagen.com)

● The outdoor furniture is by Piet Boon: Niek seating (from £1,800) and Anne table (from £2,300; tollgard.com)

MAKEOVER MASTERCLASS

NOTES ON A SCANDI

Bold colour, no blond wood and an industrial edge: a Swedish/South African design duo show *Hugh Graham* their take on Nordic living in Buckinghamshire

Industrial craft is also a family-friendly aesthetic, Monique says. "All the materials are solid and elemental – they had to take scrapes and scratches, and to be robust." Hence the sturdy leather and steel Kekke dining chairs by Piet Boon, and the leather rug. "There's a worn quality to the leather," Monique says. "If the children spill anything on it, it's wipeable."

Surely a marble dining table is not suited to family mess? "It has marks and scratches, but it's part of the age and life of the table," Tollgard says. "Marble feels durable." They don't want "perfect", Monique explains. "A lot of clients ask for things to be frozen in time, but that's a bit sad, like your grandmother putting plastic on the furniture. There's a freedom in saying, 'This is a family house, we don't put coasters everywhere.'"

There is, however, a gallery-like feel. "We have a saying: around the corner, you should find at least one thing that grabs your attention," Tollgard says. "A bold piece of art, furniture or sculpture." The couple have a background in film – and it shows. "We try to give the eye a bit of delight," Monique says. "Staffan creates still lifes – plants in corners, plinths and sculptures beside a painting."



Despite all the splashes of colour, one room does feel hygge: the master bedroom is unashamedly greige, but not in a glossy London luxe way. There's a rustic headboard from a reclaimed Austrian barn. It's framed by a silvery grey Navajo-style woven fabric, and the bed is layered and textured: rabbit fur and throws in wool, linen and cotton. The avant-garde bedside tables, by the Swedish design studio Front for Porro, are among the few Scandi pieces.

"My style isn't particularly Swedish," says Tollgard, who was nonetheless pleased when the craze for all things Scandinavian hit Britain. "Monique and I watched Wallander, The Bridge and The Killing, and I thought they were brilliant. And it doesn't hurt me professionally that there is a notion that Swedes are more style-conscious."

There is only one thing that is hardcore Scandi about this family's home. "This is a shoes-off house," Tollgard insists. "In Sweden, you wouldn't even contemplate not taking them off. Even if my clients tell me to leave my shoes on in their home, I say, 'I'm very sorry, it makes me uncomfortable.' It's a Scandi thing."

tollgard.co.uk

