

Old Scandinavian Charm and Decor for our Cabin



Last September, my husband attended a board meeting in Vail, Colorado. Naturally I tagged along! If you haven't been to Vail Village, you are transported to a quaint, charming European hamlet. Loaded with Scandinavian decor everywhere you go, the experience is a magical one right here in the United States.



We stayed at the **Sonnenalp Resort**, a boutique lodge and our room made me feel like yodeling. A cozy fireplace, cuckoo clocks, window boxes spilling with colorful flowers were some of the treats we enjoyed during our stay.



Stock photo of Sonnenalp Resort

One of the highlights of the trip, for me, was exploring

[Axel's of Vail](#), a European clothing store in Vail Village. Decorated in old Scandinavian decor, the architecture of the store, as well as its contents far exceeded my expectations.



Most retail stores do not go to the expense to make their exteriors so exquisite. The wood carvings, the iron hardware and the abundant flowers transport you from Vail to Norway in seconds.



At one of the board meeting dinners, I had the pleasure of sitting next to the owners of Axel's, Axel and Janie Wilhelmsen. What a warm and engaging couple! The conversation was lively and as a result, a visit to their spectacular home was arranged.

Some people are enamored with Hollywood celebrities. I am not. But I do get very excited when I am invited to see someone's unique and spectacular home. I don't know about you, but I am tired of seeing the same design styles over and over again.



As featured in Vail Luxury Magazine~a view of the kitchen
The next day, my friend, Missy and I traveled to this treasure
of a home. Yes, they have a [living roof](#) (also called a green
or garden roof). The plants grow each year on top of a

waterproof membrane. Living roofs provide good insulation, are long lasting and often seen in Norwegian homes.



The Wilhelmsens, being such gracious hosts, provided a full tour of the guest house and main home, which they built and designed themselves.

Below is their guest cottage. What a delight for their friends and family to stay here!



Each room is more breathtaking than the next. The kitchen in the main house, which is part of an open plan with the living room, did not feel like a kitchen at all. The cabinets are beautifully hand painted and even the refrigerator was covered with a decorative panel, making the kitchen feel as furnished as the dining and living room.



And look at this stove/oven! Even the pedestal on which it sits, is beautifully painted!



I did not take many pictures, because after all, this is their home and I wanted to respect their privacy. But it was hard not to capture every single luscious detail! The wood carvings alone were spectacular. Touches such as matching handmade chandeliers made this a one-of-a-kind home.



Even the television is hidden behind a gorgeous hand painted cabinet. This Scandinavian type of folk art painting is called **rosemaling**. What is the difference between rosemaling and tole? Rosemaling is painting on wood, whereas tole is painting on tin. I now have a desire to learn how to do this!



Clearly, having logs and chinking walls add enough Scandinavian character, but look at that carved headboard and those comfortable linens.



So you are probably asking, what is Mary sharing this with us today? Well, quite honestly I have not stopped thinking about this house since I saw it last September. The Wilhelmsens' home is so warm, welcoming and appropriate in the mountains of Colorado.

I would love for our cabin to have this European/Scandinavian charm and decor. However, I would imagine all that wood carving would be a bit cost prohibitive, though Janie was kind enough to share her resource.



While at our cabin, I started to notice that I already have a few Scandinavian pieces that I have acquired over time. I never really thought of a strategy to decorate the cabin this way, but I would love to try.

In a future blog post, I will share some thoughts and hopefully you can help me along the way to add enough, affordable touches to make our cabin unique and charming. It's a stretch, but I am hopeful!

Mary

As a side note, I want to thank my friend, Missy who acquired the invitation to Axel and Janie's home. Also, if you are ever in Vail Village, you must visit their store (and you can order online). Their philosophy is: *Romance is the very thread that weaves our collections together, from Italian handmade sartorial clothing to the rugged leathers that imbue the*

spirit of the west." Their "modest" objective is to be the best store in the world. This is a family run business. Their lovely children, Candice and Axel, Jr. model all their clothing. I can honestly say I am very impressed with their collection of goods, but more importantly, their sincerity, passion, elegance and commitment to family is genuine.