

very vivid

the graphic spirit of scandinavian design

The recent rediscovery of Scandinavian design has come right on time. Just as we've grown weary of self-conscious rooms, showroom-slick styling and finishes so shiny the materials can't breathe, along comes a fresh breeze from the north. This revival not only offers a way to pull off some visual housecleaning, it also shows a renewed appreciation for the roots of modernism. "The style is classic," says George Tanier, president of Design Selections International, who's been importing Hans Wegner's handsome blond furniture from Denmark for 50 years. "These pieces hold up because of their simplicity and craftsmanship."

Centuries ago, Nordics made nature their partner, using the natural resources at hand (notably wood, linen and wool) to shape simple and useful fittings for their homes. In the '50s, modernists in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden applied the same principles to new technologies, translating a rural, fingertip feeling for wood to furniture made by machines. Designers instinctively lifted motifs and colors from their unspoiled

Scandinavian evergreens: Here, Hans Wegner's Peacock chair, Alvar Aalto's free-form vase and a Marimekko print table skirt commingle naturally. *Opposite:* Part of Marimekko's repertoire—Ujoruutu (Shy Square) in shades of orange (top) complements Lepo (At Ease), a blue-green grasslike design.

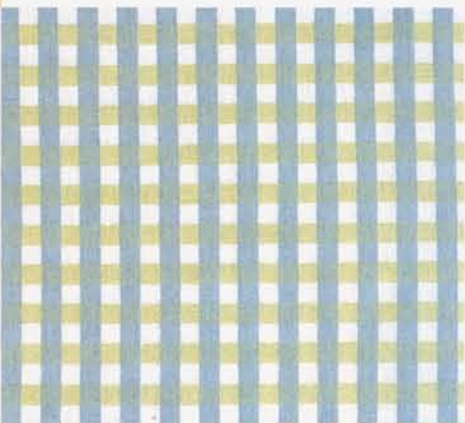
What you put in a room is as important as what you leave out: the impact of color and line is heightened



Above: A curtained sleeping alcove is a new take on the old Scandinavian cupboard bed. Wegner's Wishbone chair and Marimekko's Woodlands sheets are naturals against the bleached pine. Below: Marimekko's Onnea (Happiness) is stretched on a frame and reinforced by real bouquets in similar shades. Right: Ujoruutu here is in cool blue-greens.

environment to create fresh interiors. Undiluted sun yellows, clear grassy greens and the blues and reds of berries from the forest were brought indoors and applied to graphic hand-screened yard goods like those by Marimekko.

The rest of the world took notice of the pure forms and honest use of materials that came to be associated with furnishings from this part of the world. Scandinavian design filled everyday needs but allowed for the dynamics of empty space; it created articles propor-



tioned for the human body without neglecting the spirit. It was at once a cerebral approach and a colorful solution suited to everyone.

Appreciating these principles, New York City designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz (whose home is featured here), marries a contemporary American interior with the spirit of the Scandinavian look. The result is an amalgam of minimal furnishings interpreted in clear colors and bold graphics.

Scandinavian design is as accessible today as it was in its heyday in the '60s—thanks to the comeback of modernism. Then as now, the goal has always been the democracy of good design.



In the dining area, Noriega-Ortiz slipcovered ladder-back chairs to make them volumetric. The white forms—chairs, table, window shade, walls and woodwork—are a foil for the bold prints of a sofa cushion (foreground) and striped table runner. Wrapped, dried bamboo branches are in keeping with the bring-nature-inside Nordic attitude.