

Fact Sheet

What is this all about?

- The superior quality of Danish furniture is a better alternative to trendy and disposable furnishings.

Why is Danish Furniture superior?

- It is built to last indefinitely
- It has a clean and classic design which is not overly trendy
- Its design is flexible, ergonomic and multi-functional
- It is made with long lasting and natural materials
- It has high resale value

How is this relevant to consumers?

- Fewer furniture purchases
- Saves money
- Remains fashionable
- Reduces clutter
- Saves space and increases storage
- Increases comfort
- Less chemicals and synthetic materials in the home
- Reduces waste and is better for the environment

Where can you find Danish Furniture?

- At Galerie Danoise in Montreal

Standing the Test of Time

How and Why Danish furniture outlasts all the rest

September 23, 2009

A little thinking before you shop can save you time and money. With so many big-box stores like The Brick and Walmart offering cheaper furniture alternatives, many people are tempted to save money by purchasing lower quality goods for their homes. But experts warn that this may not be the most cost-effective thing to do.

"The well made, well thought-out Danish furniture we offer stands the test of time, both physically and aesthetically" says Fred Matalanis, interior designer and President of Galerie Danoise, a Scandinavian design furniture showroom in Montreal.

Matalanis says "Investing in the best just makes economic sense". Buying a high quality item is often smarter than buying less expensive but cheaply made items. When it comes to cheaper furnishings, people often need to replace them every few years. What's more is that replacing worn out furniture often leads to the purchase of additional and unnecessary furniture as well as accessories.

In the end, the repeated purchase of cheaper furniture is more expensive than quality furniture which lasts and throwing out furnishings is wasteful and detrimental to the environment. Durable furniture also reduces the carbon footprint associated with repeated cutting, drying, shipping and packaging that result from multiple purchases of cheaper furniture.

Galerie Danoise works with quality designers, most of whom are located in Canada and Scandinavia. They work primarily with long-lasting, natural woods such teak, maple and walnut. Making the right choice in furniture will not only save money but also reduce your impact on the environment. Simply put, Galerie Danoise's quality furniture is not only aesthetic and functional; it provides real value for people and the planet.

These days, people expect more value for their dollar, and Danish furniture not only satisfies expectations of durability and style, but the majority of Danish furniture is designed to be multi-functional and space-saving, while reducing the need for more furniture.

Matalanis has listened to his customers and knows what they want, "especially as we emerge from a recession, our customers are investing in quality and classic furniture that is sure to hold its value. I think many people are sick of dealing with so many cheap and trendy knock offs. When they first walk in to our store, I can tell that they are relieved to see such clean and simple style."

In today's economy, Scandinavian, and namely Danish furniture, is uniquely positioned to fill consumer demand for products that will remain in style and in good condition. Matalanis claims that it's because the Danes design every piece of furniture with both nature and the human body in mind. The result is a product that seems so natural and obvious that it transcends time and fashion. "We've had some collections on the showroom floor for over 20 years now and they're still selling well because they never go out of style."

When it comes to functional and ergonomic furniture, Galerie Danoise's quality is incomparable. "I have seen styles come and go, but the classic elegance of Danish and Scandinavian design is an enduring constant."

For additional information about the content of this article or about Galerie Danoise, contact Melissa Matalanis at melissa@galieriedanoise.com or visit www.galieriedanoise.com



contemporary



contemporary



vintage



vintage



contemporary



vintage



contemporary

The History of Danish Furniture Design

While there's been a massive postwar output of modern furniture in Norway and Sweden, the streamlined, uncluttered look of modern Scandinavian design is most associated with Denmark.

With their art rooted in early 19th-century classicism, Danish furniture designers in the 1940s and '50s rallied behind the "form follows function" slogan, making functionalism the cornerstone of Danish design. They even gave the concept of functionalism a whole new meaning by basing their designs on the human body, with its countless forms, needs, and variations.

Home design before World War II embodied clunky bourgeois ideals. Following the devastation of the war and its aftermath, the modern design movement emerged from the peculiar corner of the world that was Denmark, a land that during the 1950s found itself uncomfortably positioned between eastern and western Europe.

The style was unusual for what it was, and perhaps even more unusual for what it was not. There isn't a trace of kitsch about it; the very fact that the best examples of the style have endured for almost half a century (with a few alterations or adaptations) attests to its timelessness¹.

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|  | Hans Wegner 1950 |
|  | Hans Wegner 1949 |
|  | Arne Jacobsen 1955 |
|  | Arne Jacobsen 1958 |

¹ Porter, Darwin. Danforth, Prince. (2007). *Frommer's Denmark* (5th ed.). Frommers

The Revival of Danish Furniture Design

While Scandinavian Design enjoyed a brief rise in popularity during the 50s, it has recently received a great deal of attention from designers around the world. In fact, Scandinavian Design is finding its way into major trend setting cities all over the world.

- *Danish Way of Living*, a 6 week exhibition showcasing some of Denmark's best furniture designers, took place in Vancouver's Gastown hip district in 2007².
- The *Made in Denmark* stand won 2007 award for Best Contribution to the 100% Design show in London, England³.
- The "*SuperDanish*" project: The Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in Toronto, renovated and reopened in November 2008, furnished by 15 old and new Danish furniture designers.
- *Danish Design Week* held in Toronto in late 2008, media coverage and events to promote Danish Design in Canada⁴.

So, what is it and why are so many people finding this style to be appealing? Nowadays, people are trading excess for excellence, superficiality for substance. In the home-furnishings market, while cheap chains like Linens 'n Things and Bombay Company have gone bust, high-end and custom manufacturers are still enjoying robust sales. The reason is simple: quality pays. Well-made but expensive items in classic styles offer a few big advantages over trendier, more disposable things⁵.

Despite its name, Danish Modern in many ways transcends the word "modern"—it is a style that can be incorporated successfully into contemporary and traditional interiors, urban and country alike, lending itself to a timeless and universal appeal⁶.

Danish designed furniture uses simple and straightforward materials, including wood (usually walnut, teak oak, and maple) steel, aluminum, silver, and copper. "The best pieces of Danish modern stress flawless craftsmanship, a design that suits the ergonomics of the object's intended use, and subservience of form to function"⁷.

Scandinavian Design has a very unique and easily recognizable look. One of the key components of this aesthetic is the fact that it is inspired by nature. Scandinavian Design also utilizes lines that are very clean and simple. As a result, this style is often looked upon as being a "modern classic" since it utilizes classic design elements with a modern flare.

The growing popularity of green living is one reason for the appeal of the natural look. With green design, home décor decisions are based according to the impact they have on the earth. Those materials that can be easily replaced and that won't have a negative

² Danish Way of Living. (2007). *Cutting-edge modern meets classic iconic as Danish design takes centre stage in Vancouver's stylish Gastown*. Retrieved August 30th 2009. Website : <http://www.danishwayofliving.com>

³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. (2007). *Made in Denmark: Wins Award at 100% Design*. Retrieved August 30th 2009. Website : <http://www.designtaxi.com>

⁴ Association of Danish Furniture. (2008). *Superdanish: Unique showcase for Danish design in Canada*. Retrieved August 30th 2009. Website : <http://www.danishfurniture.dk>

⁵ Tepperman, J. (28 Mars, 2009). A Few Good Shirts: Luxury lies not in how much stuff we have but in how well it's made—and how highly we value it. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved August 30th 2009. Website : <http://www.newsweek.com>

⁶ Hollingsworth, Andrew. (2008). *Danish Modern*. Jones & Bartlett Publishers.

⁷ Porter, Darwin. Danforth, Prince. (2007). *Frommer's Denmark* (5th ed.). Frommers

impact on future generations are used with green design. Scandinavian design fits nicely with the growing awareness of nature and the environment. Scandinavian Design has been around since the 1950s. Although it has enjoyed some popularity in the past, it has really become quite popular in the 21st century. Its simplicity and modern look are both perfect complements to today's eco-conscious society⁸.

What makes Danish design unique is the fact that it never really goes out of style. Danish furniture - from Jacobsen's stylishly simple chairs to Wegner's rounded, organic ones - is still displayed in design showrooms across the globe as the ultimate image of modernity. The timeless allure of Danish design is due mostly to its simple lines, a deliberate lack of decoration, and a consistent pursuit of functionalism.

The Danish Mindset

Denmark is renowned for its furniture industry and when it comes to design, form, functionality and aesthetics the Danes are global giants. This helps explain why massive global furniture makers use many Danish designs, including their Swedish neighbours IKEA.

What sets Denmark's \$3.2 billion annual furniture industry apart from its competitors is its ability to incorporate its own style and traditions into its designs, including the Danish way of life. Throughout the 20th century it has become a fundamental principle for Danish designers to emphasize user need and functionality and as a result, the use of design-driven "green" products, wherever possible, has become part of the industry's very fabric.

In short, design is an inseparable part of daily life in Denmark. "Danes are born with designer genes it seems," says Poul E D Kristensen, Denmark Ambassador to Canada. "We are a design nation. Everything that is produced in Denmark has a high level of design and good quality. It is why we are a world leader in design".

"The global industry is very competitive and the Danish philosophy is about creativity and simplicity of function. We have to create something that will endure," he says. To remain successful global players, many Danish companies elevate design to an art.

A few Numbers

The Danish furniture industry is impressive for a tiny country and draws its strength largely from boutique producers. It is the Danish genius for design that is closely watched by its competitors. Furniture production and exports are significant on the global market, says the Association of Danish Furniture Industries (ADFI). It points out that more than four fifths of the production is exported, making it the country's sixth-largest export industry. According to Eurostat data, the Danish furniture industry comprises

⁸ Campbell, C. *Incorporating Scandinavian Design In Your Home*. Retrieved August 30th 2009. Website : <http://www.ezinearticles.com>

around 1,300 companies with over 90 per cent of them employing less than 50 employees. Totally, it employs around 26,000 workers⁹.

There are 450 manufacturers of Danish furniture employing around 20,000 people. The industry generated a revenue of \$3 Billion in 2002, of which nearly \$2.5 Billion in exports. The share of the US was \$170 Million, while the UK's share was \$400 Million. Germany is the largest importer of Danish furniture with \$700 Million in 2002¹⁰.

Just like Canadian and U.S. companies, Danish furniture manufacturers face low-cost competition, not only from Asia but from the emerging market economies in Eastern Europe. And like the best U.S. companies, the most successful Danish companies are staying in business by focusing on what they do best. In their case, it's design.

Even small producers are part of a big global economy. Denmark imports two-thirds of the furniture it consumes, but exports 85% of the furniture it produces. Total Danish production is about twice the size of the domestic wholesale market. Compare that to the United States for example, where their production is roughly two-thirds the size of their domestic wholesale market, because they import a lot and export little¹¹.

About Galerie Danoise

Galerie Danoise Inc is a Scandinavian-style home furnishings dealer located in Ville St-Laurent, Quebec. It first opened its doors in Montreal in 1968 and quickly found success amidst the surging popularity of Danish modern furniture in Canada. It has since expanded its collection to include a wide array of Scandinavian-inspired designs, all of which maintain the store's high standards of quality and workmanship.

Galerie Danoise carries many exclusive collections from designers working with over 30 reputable Scandinavian, Canadian and American suppliers, including several respected brands such as Ekornes, Skovby, Palliser, and Tvilum-Scanbirk. A selective collection of home furnishings for the bedroom, dining room, living room, and home office are available in a variety of durable wood finishes, accompanied by unique household accessories, specialty decorations and wall art, from area rugs, to lamps, to glassware.

Fred Matalanis represents the second generation to preside over Galerie Danoise. Before taking over in 1985, he held a long-standing position as an interior designer for high end hotels and office buildings. Combined with an eye for interior design, his business skills have made him a successful entrepreneur in a competitive industry.

⁹ Danish Way of Living. (2007). *Cutting-edge modern meets classic iconic as Danish design takes centre stage in Vancouver's stylish Gastown*. Retrieved August 30th 2009. Website : <http://www.danishwayofliving.com>

¹⁰ *Danish Furniture Guide*. Accéder le 30 Août 2009. Site web : <http://www.danish.com>

¹¹ McIntosh, J. (31 Mai, 2004). Danish manufacturers elevate design to an art. *Furniture Today*. Retrieved August 30th 2009. Website : <http://www.allbusiness.com>