

# TRUE ROMANCE

Lovers of Gustavian style,  
Catharina and Claes Wallander  
built a home with all the grace and  
charm of an 18th-century original

FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN PHOTOGRAPHY SPIKE POWELL



## THE OWNERS

Catharina Wallander  
and her husband  
Claes, who is an  
architect, plus Ellen  
the Jack Russell

■ **THEIR HOME** Gustavian-style new-build

■ **LOCATION** Southern Sweden

■ **ROOMS** Hall, sitting room,  
drawing room, dining room, kitchen,  
conservatory, cloakroom, two offices,  
three bedrooms, three bathrooms

■ **BUILT** 2008

■ **PREVIOUS PROPERTY** 'We used to live  
in a detached, contemporary house  
just outside Stockholm,' says Catharina.

## HOME TRUTHS

25BH  
SWEDISH MANSION

## DINING ROOM

'I wrapped a silk ribbon  
around the chain of the  
chandelier to give  
it an opulent look,'  
explains Catharina.  
'It's an old decorator's  
trick, but it works.'

The Torup chairs by  
KA Roos (karooos.se)  
are available in the UK  
through Allen Avery Interiors  
(01428 643883), £780  
each plus £150 carriage.  
Virginia handpainted  
wallpaper by Paul  
Montgomery Studio  
(paulmontgomery.com);  
contact Henry Bertrand  
(020 7349 1477, henry  
bertrand.co.uk) for details

## HALL

Decorative flourishes,  
such as the painted  
panels, are totally  
in keeping with the  
house's romantic style.

The swags in the inset  
panels were handpainted  
by artist Lilian Peterson  
at Abovo Antik Ateljé  
(abovocatelje.com). Design  
and build, Gripsholmshus  
(gripsholmshus.se)



## 25BH SWEDISH MANSION



**KITCHEN**  
The design of the cabinetry mirrors the period detailing in the house, such as the architraves. Handpainted Kosen kitchen units, Sola Kitchens (0845 862 0297, sola.kitchens.com), price on application



Catharina and Claes Wallander had long planned to build a traditional Swedish mansion, but in 37 years of marriage, they had never found the right plot. However, all that changed in 2006 when Claes, an architect, visited the site of a proposed new development in southern Sweden.

'It was a real stroke of luck because while I was waiting for the client to arrive, I spotted a For Sale sign in the adjacent lot,' Claes recalls. 'It was a large area with stunning views across the surrounding countryside. Over the horizon, I could see a ribbon of deep blue sea, and tasted the salt air on the breeze. I rang Catharina as soon as I could and said, "I've found our perfect site!"'

Trusting her husband's instincts, Catharina gave Claes the green light, even though she didn't know this part of the country. 'When Claes called to say he'd found a "corner of England" in Sweden where we could construct our house, I was thrilled, as I've always loved Cornwall,' she says. 'I also knew the climate was kinder here than in Stockholm, plus one of our sons lives nearby.'

### PERFECT PROPORTIONS

In due course, Claes re-created a stunning example of Gustavian architecture, the 18th-century style that is as popular in Scandinavia as Georgian is in the UK. 'There's nothing to equal the design's character and perfect proportions,' he enthuses. 'I deliberately included the fine details, such as the pillars, tall recessed sash windows and parquet floors with cherrywood borders.'

'In terms of its layout,' Claes continues, 'most of the rooms are separated by double-panelled doors. As a result, each area can be opened up to flow into another. There are no corridors, so the whole place is perfect for entertaining.'

For the interior, Claes relied on his wife to decide on the decor. 'I particularly like the way the walls in the reception rooms are panelled below dado height,' Catharina says. 'It gave me the chance to use some handpainted scenic ►



**DECORATING TIP** 'We left the windows undressed – it seemed such a shame to cover up the lovely views'

**SITTING ROOM**  
The parquet floor and panelled walls give this space a traditional look.

Walking on Wood (020 7352 7311, walkingonwood.co.uk) stocks oak herringbone flooring, from £85 per sq m. Gustavian's (020 7724 6444, gustavian.com) Louis XV Corbeille sofa, £2,900 plus 5.3 metres of fabric, would not look out of place in this scheme



**CONSERVATORY**  
A green check tablecloth adds to the lively feel here.

John Lewis' (08456 049049, johnlewis.com) Gingham tablecloth, from £15 for a 140 x 140cm design, is available in Eau de Nil



**DRAWING ROOM**  
The Mora clock makes a striking impression.

Swedish Interior Design (01273 734371, swedishinteriordesign.co.uk) stocks antique Mora clocks, from £1,400



25BH

## SWEDISH MANSION



### BATHROOM

Strips of reclaimed ship's decking make an attractive flooring solution.

Lassco (020 7394 2100, lassco.co.uk) sells a similar Burmese teak strip floor, £144 per sq m. The Samuel Heath Xenon, £195, Heal's (0870 024 0780, heals.co.uk) is an alternative shaving mirror



### GUEST BEDROOM

The moss-green scheme alludes to the verdant Swedish countryside that surrounds the house.

Garden acrylic eggshell, £34 for 2.5 litres, Little Greene (0845 880 5855, littlegreene.com) is a comparable shade of green paint. The Aubusson Full Cut in Blue, £125 for a 150 x 240cm design, Therugseller.co.uk (0845 634 3477) is another traditional Chinese rug

wallpaper for the dining room, and graceful swags in the hall, painted by my friend Lilian Peterson. I also adore country house English chintz – and it looks fabulous with this style of property.'

### PRESIDENTIAL STYLE

White and pale grey are Catharina's favourite colours, and are seen to great effect in the kitchen and bathrooms. 'The kitchen is special,' she says. 'It has extra-high top cupboards and a curved breakfast bar made of solid walnut. Claes and I spend the mornings here watching the news on a small TV concealed in a cupboard above the hob. When the family pays us a visit, we move to the conservatory breakfast room, while for formal entertaining, the dining room is superb.'

Claes jokes that Catharina is known as the 'First Lady' by friends because the house's façade is reminiscent of the White House. 'Classical architecture is wonderful,' she says, 'and I think Claes has captured its most romantic, graceful elements. A sense of symmetry is also prevalent, and that creates a feeling of harmony, which is matched by our beautiful surroundings. The people here are so friendly and in summer we feel as though we're on permanent holiday.'

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### MASTER BEDROOM

The painting over the couple's bed reflects the house's beautiful coastal location.

Painter and interior designer Carl Larsson produced similar portraits; Allposters.co.uk (020 7183 1770) sells framed prints of Larsson's work, from £90