

25 Beautiful

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SOLA SWEDISH KITCHENS



(0845 862 0297, solakitchens.com)
Wimbledon showroom open
by appointment only

WHY SHOULD I GO THERE?

ABBA, Ikea, Volvo and, er, Vikings, are just four of many Swedish exports that have made it big in Britain. Destined to add its name to that list is Sola, a kitchen company founded by Sofia Bune and Lara Quie. The former lawyers swapped the legal bar for those of the breakfast variety after sourcing their own kitchens from Sofia's native Sweden, when they spotted a gap in the UK market for high-quality, reasonably priced Scandinavian cabinets. It's a charming tale, and equally delightful is Sola's small-but-perfectly-formed showroom, which is located in a chalet at the bottom of Lara's garden.

MUST-HAVE BUYS

Sofia and Lara sell collections from two prestigious Swedish manufacturers. The first is Lidhults, which offers bespoke

designs in classic and modern styles, from £26,000 for a complete scheme, including cabinetry, worktops, appliances and installation. No two Lidhults kitchens are ever the same because as well as being able to specify the exact width, depth and height of each unit, you can choose from several timbers including oak, ash, cherry and walnut. Then, depending on which wood you select, your furniture can be varnished, oiled, stained, factory-painted or hand-painted in any conceivable colour. The decisions don't end there, either – among the storage options are pegged pan drawers, pull-out chopping boards, under-plinth drawers and 'magic' corner units.

If you're working to a tight budget, Sola also has a great range from Ryssby, starting from £20,000. Although not quite as flexible as Lidhults' designs,

these are kitchens of the highest order, which are again available in a wide choice of solid woods and finishes.

HOW'S THE SERVICE?

All visits are by appointment only, so you are assured of Lara and Sofia's undivided attention as they serve up tea and (if they've had time to bake any) homemade cake, and show you the three roomsets and sample doors housed in their cosy showroom. Busy Londoners should also note that Lara and Sofia are happy to make appointments in the evening or at weekends. The duo offer a complete design and installation service and, because Sola isn't tied to any particular appliance or worktop manufacturer, customers can have whatever gadgets and surfaces they want, from a Miele steam oven to a Corian-topped island.

(Clockwise from top left) Newport cabinetry by Lidhults, from £26,000 for a complete kitchen; Aircraft-style overhead units, part of the Ryssby range, from £20,000; Lidhults butcher's block; shelves with recipe-book stand, both price on application



5 BEST BUYS FOR SHAKER KITCHENS



Shaker-style jugs,
from £11.95, Lily & Line
(0844 810 8867,
lilyandline.co.uk)



Shaker peg rails in
oak and cherry, £38 each,
Heal's (0870 024 0799,
heals.co.uk)



Westport dresser,
£1,200, New England
Lifestyle (0870 872 6292,
newenglandlifestyle.com)



Natural hanging chalkboard,
£5.95, Live Laugh Love
(01342 894626,
liveloughlove.co.uk)



Shaker chair in Ultramarine
Ashes finish, £275,
Fired Earth (0845 346 0400,
firedearth.com)