

KITCHEN

Plenty of beautiful ceramics are on show. 'It's a shame to have them hidden away,' says owner Milan. 'And you use things more when they are in the fore.'

Ceiling and units, Kalø Køkkenet

houses



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alerlandsbyen, the artists' colony outside the Danish village of Veksø, was founded in the 1950s. The houses here each share the same DNA – huge panoramic windows that make the fecundity of nature part of each building's identity – and the architecture itself seems to blend with the landscape. For the artists who have lived here over the last seven decades, light has been their most precious, lasting resource.

Imbibing in this artistic haven, associate professor at the University of Oslo, Milan Obaidi, and chief physician and psychiatrist, Clas Winding, found the house they envisaged their long-term future in, but it bore little resemblance to the original architect Ib Kofod-Larsen's vision. 'It was a dated house when we bought it, but with a lot of potential,' says Milan. 'Extensions had been made in the 1970s and 1980s with materials from the different time periods, so it did not connect in style at all. We knew we were going to rebuild, but wanted to stay here a bit before we got started, to get to know the house. It felt like a shame to just tear it down and build a new one because it

has so much history. We chose instead to collaborate with Kim Pretzmann Olesen from Nordpil Arkitekter.'

Kim, an architect who is determined to avoid any of the highbrow connotations of his profession, runs a practice with an egalitarian and sustainable focus. 'When I met Milan and Clas, I'd just started out and didn't have a portfolio to speak of but there was a shared creative chemistry between us and they trusted me. The later additions to the house had been done badly but we were all eager to preserve the original soul of the building,' Kim explains.

'Converting summer houses into year-round residences can be challenging but we added huge amounts of insulation in the ceiling and walls. The façade now has a new breathable plaster surface. Where previously the old house had been a puzzle of small rooms we opened them up to get as much light and volume in the main living space as we could,' he adds.

Built into the side of a slope that rises about six metres from the edge of a lake, the lower floor of the summer house is absorbed into the flank of the hill, a huge double-height window providing a stunning backdrop of foliage. Glass being the house's defining feature, Kim designed an orangery that is entirely reserved for plants and was a lifelong dream of the couple. 'We are partly self-sufficient and enjoy growing flowers and vegetables,' says Milan. 'We have artichokes, figs, pomegranates, a lot of fruit trees like apricot and peach and seven truffle trees in the backyard. In addition, we also have a number of exotic and unique flowers such as real Hawaiian flowers and desert roses.'

The kitchen was specially made by Kalø Køkkenet and makes a feature of the couple's ceramic collection, which they wanted to display. A large sculptural fireplace extends between the kitchen and dining area to provide both a heat source and a functional seat so guests can chat to the cook. The mellow oak of the acoustic ceiling blends nicely with the baked clay tiles, which provide a gentle tonal variation amid an earthy palette. Light circulates around the house and provides enjoyment each hour. 'The morning sun enters the orangery and the evening sun sets behind the lake, which can be seen from the panoramic windows at the dining table,' Milan says. A life force that both homeowners and their huge collection of plants thrive on, naturally.

nordpil-arkitekter.dk

home profile

THE DESIGNER

Kim Pretzmann Olesen, who founded Nordpil Arkitekter in 2020 alongside construction architect Bashar Nasouri. Kim also teaches at the Aarhus School of Architecture.

THE PROPERTY

A 1950s summer house in Denmark. It is entered through an 'orangery' glasshouse into the kitchen and mezzanine dining room. Off the kitchen is a bathroom, office and shed. A hall connects the guest bedroom and main bedroom. Below the mezzanine is a living room.

DINING AREA

As the dining space is on a mezzanine, the windows are double-height and start in the living room (shown far right) below the eating space.

Antique Danish table and West German pottery vase, source similar at 1stDibs. Pendant, Uno Kristiansson



“We call renovations ‘architectural surgery’ – so retaining what’s valuable and adding only meaningful extensions”

**TERRACE**

One of the first things to be built in the renovation, the 120-square metre terrace has views over the small lake, Løje Sø.

FDB garden furniture by Danish architect Børge Mogensen

**LIVING ROOM**

The house is filled with mid-century modern classics like this lounge chair and stool by Danish designer Bent Møller Jepsen



houses

home truths

WHAT IS NO DANISH HOME WITHOUT?

Kim: A utility room, or bryggers – most larger family homes will have one.

GO-TO COLOURS?

Anything earthy and natural.

DESIGN HERO?

I have several but if I were to name one it would be the Danish architect Jørn Utzon. He designed Sydney Opera House – I have a man crush on him!

FAVOURITE FURNITURE DESIGNER?

Hans J. Wegner for his egalitarian approach.

DESIGN OBJECT YOU WOULD LOVE TO OWN?

Fallingwater house by Frank Lloyd Wright.

THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE YOUR ARCHITECTURAL STYLE?

Egalitarian, meaningful, sustainable.

**BATHROOM**

The floating vanity hides plenty of storage while providing a sense of continuity with the cabinetry in the kitchen.

Cabinetry, Kalø Køkkenet

**BEDROOM**

Vintage and modern furnishings combine for a relaxed feel.

Flowerpot lamp, & Tradition. Atkin and Thyme's Greenwich chest is similar. Try Etsy for a Guatemalan blanket

KITCHEN

The stand-alone fireplace divides the cook space from the house's dining area. It also acts as bench seating for guests. The cook space's brick-style flooring has