

SCANDINAVIA : SAVORING THE SEASON OF LIGHT



Photos

AS RISING SUMMER TEMPERATURES RESHAPE TRAVEL PREFERENCES, NORTHERN EUROPE IS EMERGING AS ONE OF THE SEASON'S MOST COMPELLING DESTINATIONS. Travelers come in search of cooler climates, of course, but also for the lingering light, the dramatic landscapes framed by fjords, and the cities where culture spills effortlessly into the open air. From Denmark to Norway to Sweden, nine Relais & Châteaux properties invite guests to experience the season of light: that cherished period that stretches from the first bright days of spring through the golden hues of early autumn. It is a time to slow down, reconnect with nature, and discover a distinctive expression of the Nordic art of living.

STOCKHOLM'S SUMMER SITTING ROOM

Stockholm Stadshotell, Stockholm, Sweden

At the heart of Södermalm Island, Stockholm Stadshotell reinvents the *stadshotell*: a kind of central hotel where residents and travelers alike have gathered socially since the 19th century. Housed in a landmark building constructed between 1873 and 1875 in honor of King Oscar I, the intimate retreat of 32 rooms and suites has been meticulously restored with the ambition of carrying forward this distinctly Swedish tradition. Restaurants, a bar, elegant lounges, a sauna, a cold plunge, and a secluded courtyard create a warm, welcoming atmosphere that feels worlds away from the conventions of ostentatious luxury. Just steps away, a beautifully restored former chapel is home to Matsalen, the hotel's fine-dining restaurant. Beneath its soaring historic vaults, Chef Olle Cellton showcases the region's finest ingredients through a single seasonal tasting menu inspired by the passing seasons and herbs grown in the kitchen garden. As daylight lingers well into the evening, the courtyard becomes a lively gathering place where locals and visitors come together to savor the gentle pleasures of Scandinavia's long summer nights.



THE SPIRIT OF *BADEHOTELS*

Dyvig Badehotel, Nordborg, Denmark

In the Dyvig Bay on the Danish island of Als, the sun seems reluctant to turn in. Set right on the water's edge, Dyvig Badehotel carries forward the tradition of *badehotels*: coastal hotels that have been an integral part of Denmark's summer way of life for more than a century. Guests come here to breathe in the sea air, watch sailboats drift through the channel, linger through long, luminous evenings, and settle into a gentler rhythm of life. Its seventeen rooms and four suites embody a warm, understated elegance, where antiques and contemporary design coexist in effortless harmony. At the table, Chefs John Bech Amstrup and Christian Lebech celebrate the bounty of the Baltic, while the brasserie offers a refined interpretation of *stjernesked*, one of Denmark's most iconic dishes. This special spot quietly reminds us that summer freshness is not just a climate. It is a culture, a landscape, and a way of being.



THE SOUL OF AN INN

Falsled Kro, Millinge, Denmark

Since 1744, Falsled Kro has been carried forward the living story of the Danish inn. Set on the island of Funen, just steps from the sea, this iconic destination invites guests to slow down and fully embrace the Nordic summer. In the 1970s, Lene and Sven Grønlykke redefined its culinary ambition, introducing the influence of classical French cuisine. This was a turning point that would leave a lasting mark on Danish gastronomy. Today, the garden, meadows, coastline, and changing seasons continue to shape its cookery. Throughout its 26 rooms and suites, as at the table, Falsled Kro cultivates a way of life rooted in unhurried time, local produce, and a deep connection to nature. At this retreat, guests discover the softness of summer in the landscapes of Funen and in their plates.



FIFTY YEARS OF AVANT-GARDE

Restaurant Kong Hans Kælder, Copenhagen, Denmark

In Copenhagen, Kong Hans Kælder marks fifty years of gastronomic history. Open since 1976, the restaurant became the first establishment in Denmark to be awarded a Michelin star in 1983, marking an important milestone in the international recognition of Danish cuisine. Only four chefs have led its kitchens over the past half-century, each upholding an exceptionally high standard of excellence. Since 2014, Chef Mark Lundgaard has continued this legacy, balancing a deep respect for the French culinary classics with precise techniques and a devotion to the finest seasonal ingredients. The second Michelin star, awarded in 2021, confirmed this ongoing ambition. Beneath the historic vaulted ceilings of Vingårdstræde – recently and respectfully refreshed – Kong Hans Kælder embodies another facet of the Scandinavian summer: an urban dining experience that is both rich in heritage and vibrantly alive.



FUNEN, WITH A FRENCH ACCENT

Restaurant Liefroy, Nyborg, Denmark

In Nyborg, on the Danish island of Funen, Restaurant Liefroy overlooks the waters of the Storebælt, the broad strait connecting the Baltic Sea to the rest of Denmark. Set within the century-old Hesselhuset villa, this Franco-Danish house continues a family story deeply rooted in the country's culinary landscape. Patrick Liefroy, son of Jean-Louis Liefroy – long regarded as a defining figure of Falsled Kro – crafts a cuisine inspired by French tradition and enriched by the exceptional produce of Funen, often referred to as the “garden of Denmark.” Alongside him, Helle Liefroy oversees service and the wine cellar with equal precision and care. Facing the sea, among forests, orchards, and farmland, the restaurant celebrates the seasons and invites guests to extend the long summer evenings over a meal, savoring leisure time and fine dining in equal measure. This destination reveals another side of “coolcation” : a way of life where gastronomy, landscape, and conviviality become one.



A CASTLE OF WIDE HORIZONS

Dragsholm Slot, Hørve, Denmark

For more than 800 years, Dragsholm Slot has stood guard over the landscapes of Odsherred. Founded around 1215, this moated castle – among the oldest surviving secular buildings in Denmark – has been welcoming travelers since 1937. Set within the Geopark Odsherred, recognized by UNESCO, the estate is far more than a hotel: it serves as a gateway to one of the country's most distinctive regions. Its 41 rooms and three restaurants – including a Michelin-starred fine-dining table – nestle among gardens and terraces, inviting guests to explore the flavors of Lammefjord, a former bay shaped by the Ice Age and transformed into one of Denmark's most productive agricultural lands. Beyond its remarkable historical heritage, the estate cultivates its own vegetables, berries, and herbs on the grounds surrounding the castle. Here, the preservation of biodiversity and a deeply rooted, terroir-driven cuisine coexist in perfect synergy.



A HAVEN FOR GREAT TRAVELERS

Hotel Union Øye, Norangsfjorden, Norway

On the shores of Norangsfjorden, deep within the fjords and Sunnmøre Alps of Norway, Hotel Union Øye belongs to that rare category of places that seem to hold the very memory of travel within their walls. For generations, the hotel has drawn writers in search of inspiration, as well as adventurers in pursuit of extraordinary landscapes and distant narratives. Its 38 individually designed rooms are named after notable guests who have passed through its doors, including Karen Blixen, Arthur Conan Doyle, Edvard Grieg, and Roald Amundsen. The summer season is the ideal moment to explore this fjord country: narrow waterways, towering mountains, and tailored trails through some of Scandinavia's most untamed terrain. At the height of summer, daylight lingers for nearly twenty hours, extending each day into a long, luminous continuum. Union Øye is not an easy destination; it must be earned. Yet within this setting, at once mineral and lush, gentle and profoundly powerful, travel takes on an unmistakably literary dimension.



EXPERIENCE *FRILUFTSLIV*

Storfjord Hotel, Øvre Glomset, Norway

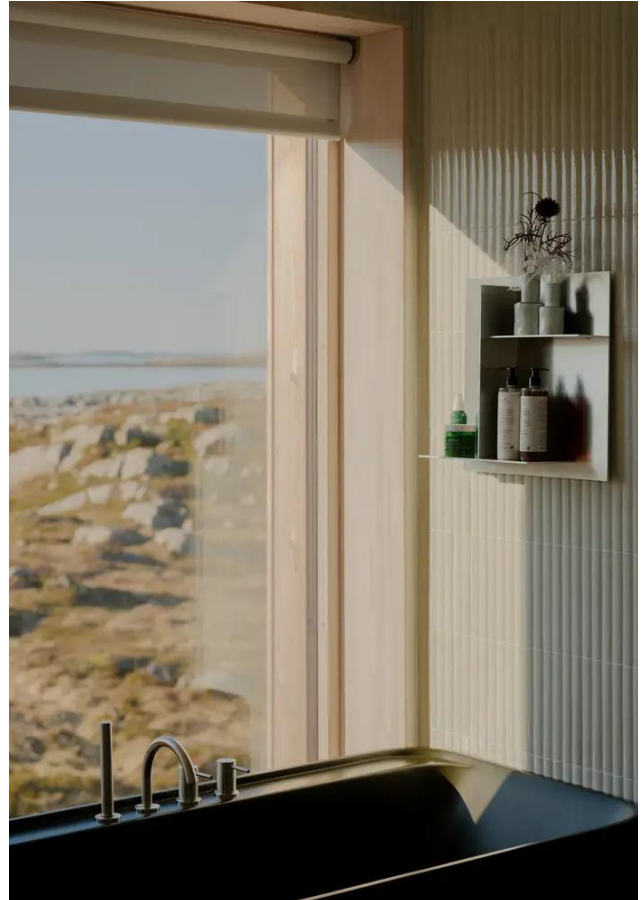
High above Glomset, between the Storfjord and the Sunnmøre Alps, Storfjord Hotel embodies one of the most refined expressions of *friluftsliv*, the Norwegian philosophy that celebrates life lived in the open air. In this glacier-carved region, where peaks seem to rise directly from the fjords, the long summer days invite a succession of experiences: hiking along ridgelines, kayaking across still waters, venturing on a boat ride, or simply lingering in quiet contemplation from the terrace of a turf-roofed cabin. Just a short distance from Ålesund and its renowned Art Nouveau architecture, the hotel offers privileged access to one of Norway's most iconic landscapes. With 30 rooms, a sauna, and a kitchen rooted in local produce, Storfjord Hotel offers an immersion into a Scandinavia where nature is never a backdrop, but a way of life.



ON THE VERGE OF THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

Ytri Island Retreat, Træna, Norway

Træna is among the oldest fishing communities in Norway. Set far off the Helgeland coast, this isolated archipelago has been inhabited for millennia, shaped by a life lived in close dialogue with the sea and counted among the country's oldest continuously inhabited territories. In midsummer, when daylight stretches almost endlessly and the nights never fully darken, time itself seems to follow a different rhythm. It is here, far from crowds and heat, that Ytri Island Retreat has chosen to settle. Opened in 2026, this spectacular sanctuary offers a contemporary interpretation of Nordic hospitality through an architecture designed to engage directly with the elements. Ash wood, Norwegian wool, linen, local stone, and expansive ocean-facing windows create a haven where nature remains the primary spectacle. Chef Sean Ryan's refined cuisine extends this immersion, focusing on fish, shellfish, seaweed, and coastal botanicals. At this destination, summer is measured less in degrees than in hours of light.



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Fondée en France en 1954, l'Association est aujourd'hui présente dans 65 pays et célèbre l'art de vivre propre à chaque région. Portée par des hôteliers, des chefs et des restaurateurs passionnés, chaque propriété cultive un ancrage local en valorisant un patrimoine culturel, gastronomique et environnemental, et en collaborant avec les artisans locaux.

Nombre de ces maisons sont familiales, transmettant leur savoir-faire de génération en génération. Relais & Châteaux incarne ainsi un héritage propice à des expériences de voyage inoubliables, en harmonie avec le vivant.

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RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX IS AN EXCEPTIONAL WORLDWIDE COLLECTION

of 580 unique, independently operated hotels and restaurants, united by strong values and a devotion to excellence across every aspect of hospitality.

Originating in France in 1954, and now present in 65 countries, the Association works to celebrate the distinct *art de vivre* of every global destination. Led by passionate hoteliers, chefs and restaurateurs, each of its properties cultivates a meaningful sense of place by nurturing its individual cultural, gastronomic and environmental heritage and collaborating with local artisans.

With many of its properties run by families, who pass their *savoir faire* down from one generation to the next, Relais & Châteaux represents an evolving legacy of memorable travel experiences, in harmony with all life on Earth.

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