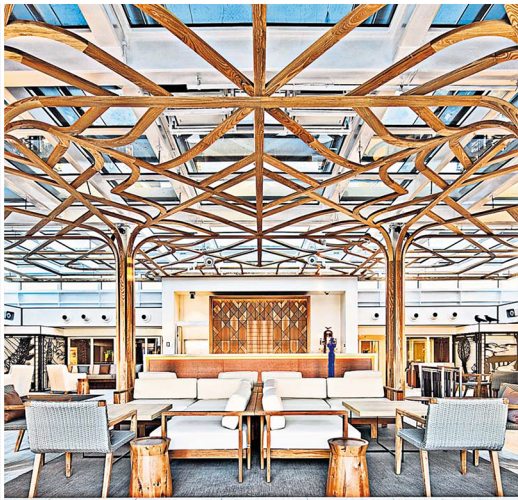


The climate in contemporary Scandi

Awash with simple clean lines, sleek sophistication and subtle shades, Viking Star epitomises classic Scandinavian interior design at its modern best, says **Sara Emslie**

There's such a tremendous amount of sophisticated simplicity at the heart of modern Scandinavian design that it's no wonder we can't seem to get enough of it in our interiors. Wood – in pale and dark tones and whether on the floor or walls – is the perfect backdrop for the clean lines, calm neutrals and natural elements that make up the key ingredients of Scandi style. It's a look that would scream elegance and luxury – so if it wasn't so politely understated, it would be no wonder that the designers of Viking Cruises' new Viking Star have taken this on board, quite literally, as the creative inspiration for the ship's interior design. Viking has openly embraced the culture and ethos of its homelands to create a nautical feel that is rich in Nordic history and is bound to date on style, too. Wherever you may wander on board – and there are over 200 decks on which to do so – there is the feeling of a phenomenal sense of light and space but without a compromise on intimacy. Despite being smaller than the average mega cruise ship, Viking Star accommodates just 950 guests – an intimate size that also provides plenty of open-plan areas for ultimate relaxation, enjoyment and socialising with others, as well as cosy areas for individual moments of peace and quiet.

There isn't a better place to experience this than in the Viking Living Room with its connecting atrium spanning decks 1, 2 & 3. With a stark simplification of a boutique hotel that wouldn't look out of place in a *Waldapfer* interior, the other top deck spaces are glossy, and a restricted palette of coffees and creams with hints of burnt orange and teal, plenty of blonde and dark cherry wood tones, the entire scheme imbues a sense of calm and echoes modern Scandinavian design at its best. It's a confident space with a wide-open staircase connecting the atrium with the main deck to the atrium with a high-resolution digital screen alongside the "painting" backdrop, as well as a smattering of design classics such as the Eames lounge chair, the internet hot and Mario Bellini's iconic Cal chair in the lounge. Low level dividing bookcases around the ship with varying levels of individual seating areas within the open-plan area as well as showcasing decorative



glassware and exquisite artisan ceramics that give the interior a hugely personal feel. There are plenty of nautical touches, too, such as rug designs, ribbed detailing in the ceiling, integrated metal work and wood paneling all inspired by the architectural design of ancient Viking ships, and nautical wood dressings reminiscent of traditional Norwegian handrails. There's even an indoor "garden" that defines the Scandinavian love of natural elements: under the staircase is a large-scale contemporary geometric mosaic of multi-coloured lichens – a theme that is picked up and repeated with much smaller dimensions at table decorations throughout the ship with tiny displays of dried twigs, pods, lichen and birch bark that

resemble little foraged collections from the Nordic forests. The whole of the ship's interior is an enormous visual feast of Scandinavian colours, textures and materials such as birch, oak, juniper woods, Swedish granite, slate, etched and recycled glass, hand-woven natural fibre textiles, arctic and ocean hues, alongside historic, mythological and natural references that link the spaces as a whole while allowing each to maintain an individual sense of place. A carefully curated collection of artwork by celebrated artists in all mediums – photographs, sketches, paintings, lithographs and sculpture – is on display throughout the ship and acts as a reference to the Vikings who as travellers were collectors too, as well as being a nod to the range of

cultural ports of call on each voyage. It's a diverse collection that includes lithographs by Norwegian artist Edward Munch, ceramic relief artworks by British and Brazilian contemporary artists, illustrations bearing scenes from the Bayeux Tapestry, and a range of exquisite black and white photographs depicting the serenity of the Nordic landscape as well as some of the shores and cities on the Viking routes. Inspired by the early adventurers and travellers of the past, the Explorers' Lounge and adjoining atrium at the bow of the ship, however, is the area that embraces the Viking legacy of travel and exploration and is a spectacular observatory-like space in which to sit and watch the world outside pass by during the day – and at night also when a light

Light and space
Cocktail room, main picture, relax in the beautiful Westergarden, Penthouse Junior Suite, Veranda
Dining room, Penthouse bathroom

panelled bar consisting of illuminated constellations transforms the space. Full glass windows provide a panoramic lookout as the ship sails forth and a host of explorers' and maritime paraphernalia such as compasses, maps, and models of ships, including the famous Cheeborg "Jarr" ship dating from 1826, considered one of the finest finds of the Viking age, set the scene. There's also a library corner where shelving is filled with Nordic artefacts that make reference to the Viking history and a plethora of books on global exploration, geography and natural history to whet the appetite for further adventure. But no ocean cruise ship would be complete without a pool. Viking Star has two pool areas, each with accompanying hot tubs and both as enticing as the other. A third hydrotherapy pool may be enjoyed in The Spa with adjoining sauna and snow grotto for the complete nature-inspired Nordic bathing ritual (see page 7).

The main pool is part of the expansive hot tub garden with its retractable roof, intricate pale wood lattice-work tree structure, built-in sun panels and sculptures depicting Hugin and Munnin – the ravens that fly over the world, too, to provide information to Odin, the Nordic god of local mythology. Here, the contemporary resort-style loungers and outdoor seating, represented with designer brand Gately Cross Check chairs, can be enjoyed in any weather and provides the perfect spot for an indulgent afternoon tea. And then there is the quite spectacular cantiered infinity pool at the stern of the ship that is styled in a classic, clean, stainless steel Aquavip bar. This is complemented by an equally impressive modernist colour block restaurant in polar white and punchy blue and grey, accented by similar geometric detailing in tiles and lighting in the adjoining relaxed poolside dining area.

It's a theme that no matter where you are on board, from your stateroom (see panel), right to the lounging areas in one of the many restaurants – choice from smart and classic formal to informal indoor or alfresco options – you will be immersed in a deluxe interior experience at every level.

Without a doubt and in true Viking shipbuilding tradition, Viking Cruises has created a superior vessel that is not only capable of embracing life on the ocean wave. Unlike those fondly known as the Bent Neesen, though, this is one where travellers on board can not only back, relax and enjoy the utmost in luxury, comfort and sophisticated Scandi interiors and style while watching the world float by.



STATEROOM

REVIEW

DESIGN
All 465 staterooms are furnished with modern Scandinavian decor, including comfortable lounge seating, a desk area, a built-in ironing board and private veranda.

Price categories range from the ultimate best of the Penthouse and the 270 sq ft Deluxe Veranda Stateroom to the 339 sq ft Penthouse Veranda Stateroom, 405 sq ft Penthouse Junior Suite and 257 sq ft Explorer Suite, all with very nice amenities. Or for the ultimate best of for the stateroom suite at a deluxe 1,448 sq ft with large living room, dining nook with food pantry area, and private sauna offering views over the ocean.

MOD CONS

Every stateroom has free Wi-Fi, large flat-screen TV with entertainment programmes and films on demand, direct-dial satellite phone service, security safe and hairdryer. Amenities, depending on stateroom, include a private range from complimentary bath and champagne, free shoe shining and laundry service, priority main restaurant booking and 24-hour stateroom access on day of arrival.



BATHROOM

Contemporary design with large walk-in shower, pale wood vanity units, stainless-steel accessories, under-floor heating and fluffy white towels. Linen closet, slippers and toiletries are also provided.

SERVICE

Welcome touches include champagne on board, complimentary Wi-Fi and complimentary 24-hour room service.