SCA Wood Magazin

2/2026



SPACE FOR FOUR GENERATIONS

LODGEPOLE PINE MAKES ITS ENTRANCE

WINDOWS ON THE FUTURE

Faith in the future begins here

The Stockholm School of Economics is educating tomorrow's leaders, and not just in economics. President Lars Strannegård is keen to equip his students with a liberal education, good judgement and open minds; he sees their desire to drive change as a convincing reason to believe in the future.

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22 **SEA, SUN AND NATURE**
This modern timber building on the Hälsingland coast is rooted in its surroundings. .



Meet Lars Strannegård, President of the Stockholm School of Economics and an advocate for a liberal education and faith in the future.



The family has been gathering here since 1938. Now the new timber house is making space for four generations.



Future strategist Magnus Bergendahl embraces structured curiosity.

First spruce and pine now lodgepole pine, a new addition to Sweden's conifers.



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A dream shared with grandad became a home for four generations.

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Vanessa Pihlström

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Håkan Norberg

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CONTACT
SCA Wood
Skepparplatsen 1
851 88 Sundsvall
060-19 30 00
sca.com/en/wood

SUBSCRIPTION
woodinfo@sca.com

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Just fine through uncertain times

IT IS DIFFICULT TO SPEAK about the future today without also speaking about uncertainty. The horizon is hazier now than for many years.

Armed conflict, trade wars, energy prices and the continued weakness of the construction market are having an adverse impact on demand for sawn timber products. Meanwhile, we see a sometimes polarised discussion about the forest and how to reconcile active forest management with biological diversity and other values.

Given the climate crisis, there is much to suggest that a larger percentage of apartment buildings will be built in wood in future. However, change does not happen by itself. The construction industry clings to tradition and many major stakeholders have built up their own systems and production resources over a long period of time based on steel and concrete.

In this issue, we meet the President of the Stockholm School of Economics, Lars Strannegård, who discusses what tomorrow's leaders need to know in an age of rapid change. While the foundation remains facts and scientific thinking, he also advocates good judgement, empathy and the ability to deal with uncertainty. Strannegård cautions against overconfidence and emphasises the importance of considering different perspectives before reaching a decision. Meanwhile, his message is one of hope, something that I applaud, especially in an age of such great uncertainty.

Elsewhere in the magazine, future strategist Magnus Bergendahl asserts that guessing right is not the point: the point is to be ready for anything. We need to be prepared for multiple possible developments at the same time, without losing sight of the long-term perspective.

One thing that pleases me immensely is that, thus far this year, we have suffered very few work-related accidents at SCA. Our Zero Accidents programme has one clear objective: that no one should be injured at work. When this work bears fruit, it is important to acknowledge it and to celebrate our success.

I and a colleague at the Tunadal Sawmill are in the habit of always responding in the same way when asked how things are going:

"Just fine!"

While this is said with tongue-in-cheek, even when the horizon is a little hazy there is every reason to acknowledge when things are heading in the right direction. There is a great deal that is just fine.

Pleasant reading!



JERRY LARSSON
PRESIDENT, SCA WOOD

TIMBER BUILDING SHOWS THE WAY TO TOMORROW'S ENERGY

WHEN ACE POWERHOUSE is completed on Campus Skellefteå in 2027, it will be one of the most ambitious timber buildings in northern Sweden. The seven-storey timber-framed building will be home to the Arctic Center of Energy (ACE), which will gather research, education and innovation in the field of electrification.

Timber is the load-bearing material in the project. Some 3,000 cubic metres of timber sourced from regional producers will be used in the construction, and the entire building will be certified according to Miljöbyggnad Guld 4.0 and NollCO2. The building has also been awarded Green Building of the Year 2025 by the Sweden Green Building Council.

Designed by LINK Arkitektur, timber construction and reuse have been the guiding lights throughout the design process. Among other things, this is apparent in how elements of the design have been adapted to take advantage of materials from the old hospital in Skellefteå. A banister from 1915, doors, windows and limestone have been given new life in the building, which will also be a testing and learning environment for research into tomorrow's energy systems and sustainable building methods.

Luleå University of Technology, Skellefteå Municipality and Skellefteå Kraft are behind the initiative.

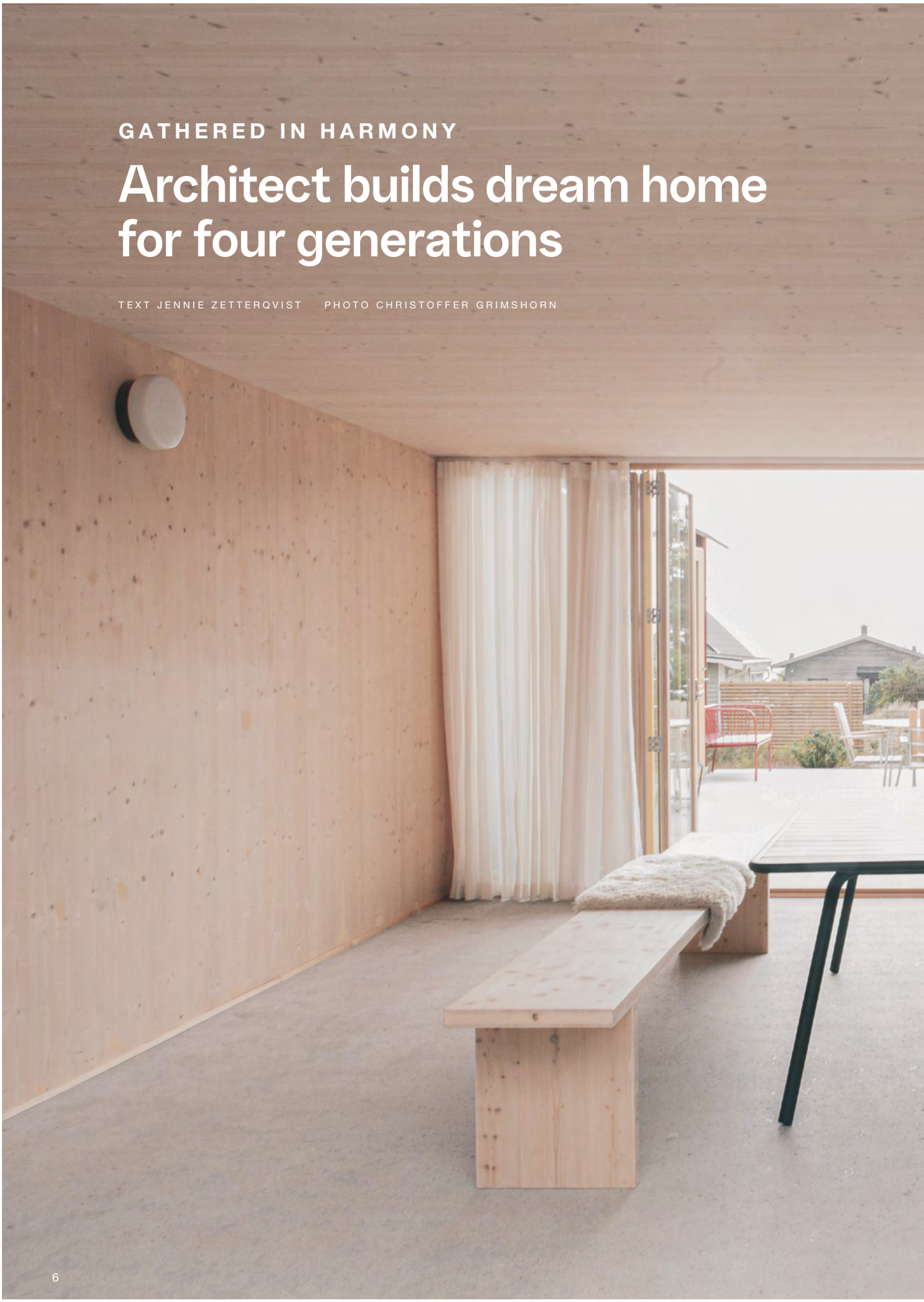


ILLUSTRATION LINK ARKITEKTUR

GATHERED IN HARMONY

Architect builds dream home for four generations

TEXT JENNIE ZETTERQVIST PHOTO CHRISTOFFER GRIMSHORN



A dream shared with his grandfather was the seed for architect Anton Köhler's multigenerational home in Beddingestrand on Sweden's south coast.

Now complete, the house features wood throughout, from the red cladding to the frame via the large rooms and down to the smallest details. The project has breathed new life into an old family plot for multiple generations, with a house that is both shaped by its location and transforms the experience of it.







Architect Anton Köhler took the step from dreaming and sketching to actually building his family's dream home, with space for multiple generations.

EDDINGESTRAND stretches along the southern coast of Skåne, with a long beach, gravel roads and old summer houses on large leafy plots. The family has owned a plot here since 1938. Granny and Grandad lived in a large house, the location of which failed to take full advantage of the view. Even while Anton Köhler was studying architecture, he and his grandad were already discussing how the family might live there in future. How could they create a place where everyone could be together?

Grandad was thrifty and would have preferred to do something with the existing house. However, the more Anton sketched, the keener he became on building something new.

"It was a cool dream. Grandad was over 90, but he didn't give much thought to his age. 'Let's get started,' he would say. Or: 'Of course, in the future you'll live here.' He'd dreamed of being an architect himself when he was younger, so he thought it was great."

Grandad did not live to see the finished house. But his attitude has stayed with Anton throughout the project. "'That's not a problem,' he used to say. I'm somewhat similar; for the most part I feel we can solve it. Especially when it comes to building. Most things are doable; it's just a matter of time and cost."

LOCATION DETERMINES FORM

When the plans were eventually realised, there were more needs to consider. The old house was in poor condition and proved to function less well for its ageing occupant. Ownership had passed to Anton's mother, and the family was looking for a long-term solution that allowed Granny to continue living there. Meanwhile, Mum was planning to take up permanent residence and room was needed for Anton and his sister to live there periodically with their families.

The solution was to demolish the old main building, with Granny moving into an existing smaller house on the property. Anton then designed two parallel buildings that utilised the location in an entirely new way. "It's about finding some kind of harmony between the buildings and the plot. The house itself and its placement can make you look at the site through completely new eyes," he says.



PHOTO ANTON KÖHLER



The new buildings have saddle roofs with the eaves facing the sea. Along with Granny's existing house, they form a group of buildings that Anton describes as a hybrid of traditional Skåne farm and small fishing village. "There's a bit of a boathouse feel when you see it from the sea."

The interior layout has also been shaped around the location and the family's desire to be able to both spend time together and to have some privacy. The more sheltered north-facing bedrooms each have their own door, so that the occupants can come and go without disturbing the others. The social spaces face south, making the most of the natural light and sea views. The two residences are connected by a shared conservatory. "In a way, this is the heart. It's where everyone in the house can meet."

AN ARCHITECT-BUILDER

In Anton's case, the step from drawing board to building site is short. He is both a builder and an architect and he was on site virtually everyday during the construction period. The multigenerational home reveals his interest in the building work itself, not least in working with wood.

Anton thinks that Grandad would have appreciated the result. "He might have grumbled a bit about some our more extravagant choices, like the windows, but I think he would have loved it and enjoyed seeing how much the house affects the experience of the place."

When Anton Köhler began sketching with his grandfather, their idea was to create a place for three generations. By the time the house was finished, the family had grown to four.





PHOTO ANTON KÖHLER

Wood is the common thread running through the house – from frame and facade to the meticulous interior design.

The buildings have timber frames, and the interiors feature wood heavily on walls and ceilings. The material is both structural and a major element of how the rooms express themselves.

"Wood is a warm and inviting material. Many people lay wooden floors and have painted walls; we've taken the opposite approach. We have durable concrete floors and wooden panels on the walls and ceilings. We wanted that cosy, warm feeling. And, of course, wood smells so good as well," he says.

When wood covers such large areas, the junction between materials is even more important. Anton describes himself as fastidious in this regard and has had the end result in mind throughout the process. "Things that look simple aren't always the easiest to achieve. My role as architect-builder has been important there. Those of us working on site have had the finish in mind since day one."

A CRESCENDO OF WOOD AND LIGHT

One of the most obvious examples of Anton's eye for detail is also the house's crowing glory. The large skylight was one of the solutions that Anton was most concerned about. It is here that the wood panelling joins the wooden jamb of the skylight.

"The skylight is the house's crescendo, where everything comes together. Many visitors comment on how much it contributes. The light is so diffuse and beautiful when it cascades into the room and down the stairs."

The results may look simple, but that does not mean that getting there was easy. "Of course, I could have taken on an easier dream home than this one, where everything had to work well for Granny, Mum and my sister as well. But now the challenge has been met and it turned out as we imagined, I can enjoy the results that much more."

FROM BLUEPRINT TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Since the completion of the building work, the family has begun to discover how the architecture functions in day-to-day life. And many moments have already approached the life that Anton and his grandfather once sat down and sketched out. One favourite place is the sofa, or actually the entire living room, from where Anton can see the sea between the pines. "When the pines sway in the wind and the waves are high, it's wonderful to just sit here and look out at the spectacle. The binoculars are always at the ready, and when it's calmer you might see a sailboat gliding by."

The family has grown over the past year. Anton and his partner Maja have had a daughter, Sonja. Suddenly a fourth generation has entered the picture – one that was not conceived when the first drawings took shape. Anton spent his first 10 days as a father with his family in the house by the sea.

"We were here everyday just enjoying it. Mum was able to have her first grandchild nearby during the first weeks. It was then that I felt that everything was fine."

Architecture takes shelter in the forest

TEXT JENNIE ZETTERQVIST PHOTO TOMMIE SVANSTRÖM OHLSON

Three shelters, three different meetings between wood and the landscape. When the ARKNAT Scandinavian Architectural Festival came to Norrbotten, Sweden's northernmost county, European architecture students had the opportunity to explore how architecture can be shaped by and interact with nature.

ARKNAT INVITES students from around Europe to create shelters for selected locations in the Swedish landscape. This year, the 12th iteration of the festival saw three new shelters constructed along the 220-kilometre-long Solander trail on the coast of Norrbotten.

Taking inspiration from the landscape, three teams of students worked with timber from SCA SmartTimber. Design and placement have been dictated by boulders shaped by the sea and ice sheet, the straight trunks of pines and Nordic folklore. The result is three entirely different approaches to creating spaces to rest, shelter and enjoy new perspectives on nature

THREE SHELTERS, THREE EXPRESSIONS



THE FOREST NYMPH

The Forest Nymph is inspired by the guardian of the forest in Nordic folklore. Her flowing skirt provides shelter among the silver birches, as well as views across the lake. A viewing platform is accessed through an opening in the back.



TWO

This shelter stands at the meeting of two planes: the low horizontal stone blocks and the tall vertical pines. Each of the two identical wooden structures responds to the landscape in its own way, one balanced between three pines like a birds nest, the other hunkered down on the rocks like a cave.



45°

A simple cube tilted at an angle of 45 degrees sits between the trees and rocks. The angle creates multiple spaces within a single structure: a sheltered sleeping area, a communal area and openings that frame the landscape and admit the light.

TIMELESS DESIGN WITH FOREST FIBRES

SINCE ITS LAUNCH in Stockholm in 2015, Asket has been forging its own path through the fashion industry. Rather than constantly launching new collections, the company releases a limited selection of timeless essentials that are refined over time. The aim is a smaller, better thought-out wardrobe in which each garment has a distinct function and is made to last.

Jakob Sazon Dworsky and August Bard Bringéus are the designers behind the Asket brand. A decade in, the brand has grown from purely e-commerce to include physical shops in Stockholm and London. Meanwhile, the permanent collection and thoughtful product development remains at the core of the business.

Choice of materials is a key component of this philosophy. Asket uses exclusively natural fibres, including Lyocell, a regenerated cellulose fibre made from wood pulp sourced from certified forests. The fibres combine softness and durability with a resource-efficient manufacturing process, reflecting the company's ambition to choose materials with the minimum possible environmental impact.

For Asket's customers, the brand is as much about attitude as it is clothing. By investing in a handful of well-made garments instead of constantly following fashion, the company has built a faithful customer base that values quality, transparency and clothing that stands the test of time.



PHOTO ASKET

A CRYSTAL WITH A CORE OF WOOD

THE STRIKING PINK ARTWORK *Lithium Crystal Sauna* soars above the Skellefte River in northern Sweden. Artists Bigert & Bergström have designed a fully functional sauna shaped like a giant asymmetrical lithium crystal, clad in titanium-plated pink mirror steel that reflects the surrounding landscape.

Within the futuristic shell, the duo have crafted a warm "wood grotto". The sculptural interior has a frame of pine and heat-resistant wood veneer, with handcrafted alder benches and flooring in local heartwood pine. According to the artists, the grotto design connects to humankind's earliest shelters and to fire as a source of warmth. *Lithium Crystal Sauna* is part of WasteLand, an art and climate-action park emerging from a formerly contaminated industrial area on the outskirts of Skellefteå.



PHOTO JONAS WESTLING

The power of timber construction

THE KVARTERET Omställningen housing development in Gothenburg has been named Construction Project of the Year 2026 by trade magazine Byggindustrin. Timber framing and prefabricated wooden modules have made a significant contribution to reducing the project's carbon footprint, earning praise as a model for sustainable housing development.

By challenging ingrained working methods, building in wood and reusing materials, the project has reduced its climate impact by 57 per cent compared to a comparable traditional construction project, exceeding the goal of 50 per cent.

The wooden building system was prefabricated in the factory by Derome with minimal material wastage and short transport routes to site, helping to reduce environmental impact.

The project was undertaken by developer Framtiden Byggutveckling together with design-build contractors Tm2 and Derome. The 63 rental apartments are owned and managed by Poseidon, the City of Gothenburg's municipal housing company. Tenants in the new neighbourhood also have access to climate-smart solutions such as bicycle and car pools, communal laundry rooms and nearby public transport.

"With Kvarteret Omställningen, we have created a new benchmark for sustainable construction," says Dan Sandén, CEO of Framtiden Byggutveckling.

PHOTO FRAMTIDEN BYGGUTVECKLING





President Lars Strannegård in the magnificent aula of the Stockholm School of Economics. The aula was recently meticulously restored to its former glory and equipped with modern technology. Accessibility was also improved.



“We have a duty to be hopeful”

TEXT JENNIE ZETTERQVIST PHOTO JOHAN MARKLUND

Lars Strannegård has transformed the Stockholm School of Economics during his 12 years as president. Education has been broadened as art has taken its place in the classroom and empathy, culture and critical thinking have been given greater prominence on the curriculum at one of the world’s foremost schools of economics. In an age marked by the advance of artificial intelligence, political instability and accelerating change, he sees light and hope in the energy of his students and he works tirelessly to ensure that they have the courage to realise their potential.

“Our students have an enormous appetite for life and a strong will to drive change and contribute to something greater than themselves. That is plain to see,” he observes.



LARS STRANNEGÅRD

Family: Wife Maria and teenagers Stella and Ruben.

Lives: Östermalm, Stockholm.

Position: President of the Stockholm School of Economics since 2014. Holder of the Bo Rydin and SCA Chair in Business Administration and Leadership since 2010.

Career: Graduated with a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the School of Business, Economics and Law at the University of Gothenburg in 1998. Appointed as docent at the Stockholm School of Economics in 2002, visiting professor at Uppsala University in 2006 and Professor of Business Administration at the Stockholm School of Economics in 2009.

Art meets economics in the SSE Library. The work *Banca Rotta* by Goldin + Senneby is an oak table originally used for financial transactions, sawn in half. It is a play on the word bankrupt, which derives from the Italian words banca (bench or table) and rotta (broken), reflecting on the risk of failure inherent in economic life.

"When you describe a cultural experience, you are also saying something about yourself. It leads to more ardent and interesting discussions that deepen relationships – even business relationships."

LATBED TRUCKS FILLED with graduating high school students thunder along busy Sveavägen in Stockholm, the thudding bass from their sound systems rattling the windows of the president's office at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE). Singing, jubilation and whistles approach from one direction and disappear in the other as they celebrate their freedom. Some of the youths passing by will soon step through the same five-metre-high oak doors through which we have just passed.

"Yes," Lars Strannegård chuckles, "perhaps they're passing by right now chanting their incantations in the hope of being admitted."

The heavy oak doors are a test of strength for anyone wishing to pass, and it is equally tough, if not tougher, to earn a place at SSE, much less to successfully follow in the footsteps of the alumni who have gone on to occupy the highest echelons of business and finance.

A HUNDRED DOORS

Founded in 1909 by Swedish business leaders, SSE moved into this palatial brick and granite building in 1926. The founders' intention was to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world by combining academic scholarship with hands-on experience, educating a new generation capable of shaping business, society and economic progress.

Today, with SSE established as one the world's foremost schools of economics, that mission seems more relevant than ever. The future policymakers, corporate leaders, asset managers and company directors who train here will one day make decisions with ramifications far beyond their own organisations.

"It is part of our mission to prepare people to deal with an uncertain world. The objective of our education is emancipation. The idea is to offer those who pass through these oak doors new knowledge and new mindsets. When they leave through those same doors, a hundred new doors will be open to them," says Lars Strannegård, striding into his office with its brimming bookshelves and furniture and decor from the classic Swedish interior design firm Svenskt Tenn. Two pairs of shoes stand next to the full-length mirror. Clutching two pieces of fruit he settles into a velvet armchair. He has just returned from a meeting with local politicians at Stockholm City Hall. Before that, he met with the CEO of one of SSE's 110 corporate partners, checked in with the King's Young Leadership Foundation, and visited art museum Moderna Museet, where he sits on the board. In a couple of hours, he will be welcoming the vice-chancellors of 33 other higher education institutions to Stockholm to inspire them with developments at SSE.

"My job is largely a matter of listening to our various stakeholders and finding out what society needs in terms of knowledge and expertise. One significant factor for SSE is that only 16 per cent of our funding comes from the government, making it even more important for us to remain relevant. Moreover, in an era when AI has taken on such a vital and problematic role, and is exerting pressure on all institutions, what is relevant changes extremely quickly," says Lars Strannegård.

FROM EDUCATION TO SHAPING PEOPLE

During his term as president, SSE's promise to students has expanded from simply providing an education to encompass an educational philosophy that SSE calls FREE, meaning that, built on a foundation of facts and scientific thinking, students should be reflective and self-aware, empathic and culturally literate, and entrepreneurial and responsible (see fact box).

"FREE is tremendously helpful and governs all our decisions. It shifts us from simply being an education institution to being an institution that shapes people. The objective is to provide students with an approach to the world by which they constantly seek new knowledge, and the insight that [their education] will never be complete – and nor should it be," explains Lars Strannegård.



The art that now fills the historic corridors and lecture halls of SSE is a visible sign of this change. Internationally renowned artists have been invited to create works and entire learning environments. Most classrooms are art installations in themselves.

When we continue our conversation in the classroom created by Marie-Louise Ekman, inspired by her own studio, the razor-sharp, articulate president is himself transformed, into an engaged narrator. He embarks on a show-and-tell, filling the room with stories about the artwork, why the classroom looks as it does and how the art continues beyond the walls.

AN EXERCISE IN UNCERTAINTY

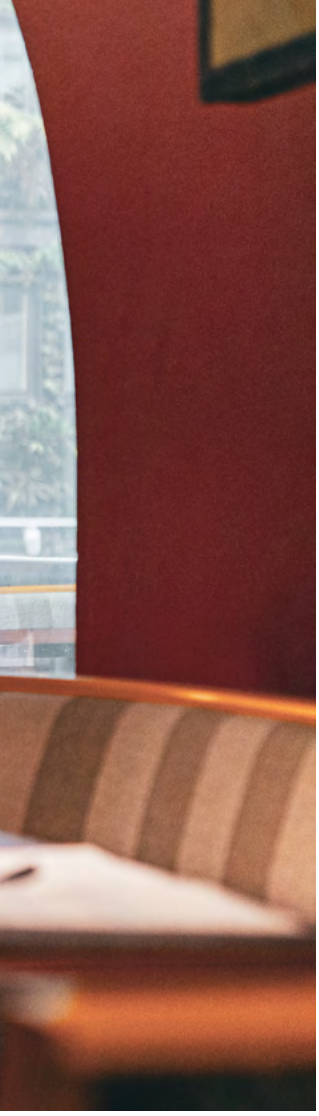
He describes the art as a means of teaching something that tomorrow's leaders will increasingly be in need of: the ability to live with uncertainty.

"Experiencing art is a good way to build humility. It makes us realise that we don't always need to understand, that uncertainty is part of life and that it can be a good thing. In an age of 'opinion corridors', 'fake' news and artificial intelligence, it is critical to be able to think freely and avoid overconfidence bias. That's why we need to doubt rather than think we are always right and, of course, that's exactly what an academic education is all about," he explains.

Lars Strannegård himself has practised free-thinking and keeping an open mind from a very early age. Growing up in Gothenburg with three elder siblings and parents who were both doctors, the family spent periods living in both the United States and Kuwait. "I was constantly placed in new situations and trying to interpret them. This taught me the importance of deciphering my surroundings, of understanding the underlying norms, which is a very useful mindset," he says.

Today's marathon of meetings paints a revealing picture of how, in his role as president, he functions as a link between various logics, with SSE the common denominator.

"We have the scientific logic, which differs from business logic and political logic, which differs from philanthropic logic. And then there's artistic logic, which is something else entirely. When it comes to norms, I'm operating in a field of tension, and I find it very enjoyable to help people try to understand one another," he says.





When Lars Strannegård steps into the classroom designed by Marie-Louise Ekman, the joy of storytelling takes hold. The room is an artwork in itself: the installation *Testamentet* (2023) includes elements from Ekman's own studio, with saved objects, tools, memories and original works. Today, almost all of SSE's classrooms are also art installations.

THE STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (SSE)

SSE was founded in 1909 by pioneers of Swedish industry and commerce. Today, it is one of the world's highest ranked higher education institutions in the fields of economics and business administration. The school educates future business leaders, entrepreneurs and policymakers, offering internationally recognised bachelor's, master's, doctor's and executive study programmes.

While he was socially adept at school, it was not until the final year of upper secondary school that he began to take his studies seriously. By his own account, up until then his efforts were "lamentable". He then worked in the art world, including at auction houses. The more time he spent there, the more he realised how much time was spent discussing economics and how little attention was paid to the art itself. This prompted a return to university and further education in business administration, organisational theory and leadership, which became his research domain.

"I discovered a very exciting world when I began researching. How do organisations work? And what makes people reach certain decisions? I've remained in academia because I love it and it has never really felt like a job. And then, I'm not keen on having bosses," he laughs.

A LIBERAL EDUCATION AS A COMPETITIVE EDGE

The decision to give art and culture a prominent place in study programmes at SSE has raised eyebrows. Lars Strannegård is not, however, particularly interested in measuring the effects. Rather, he hopes that the perception of culture and art as a cost – a view that remains prevalent in Sweden – will be superseded by an attitude that affords them the value they have in many other countries.

"Art and culture are a matter of human experience and how we perceive the world. When you describe a cultural experience, you are also saying something about yourself. It leads to more ardent and interesting discussions that deepen relationships – even business relationships," he notes.

There are however signs that the initiative is having an impact. In the school's verdant atrium, preparations are underway for the reception of 33 vice-chancellors from other universities who are on their way to learn more about SSE's working methods. As the President guides us through the venue, a grand piano is being rolled in among tables covered with white tablecloths.

"It is an irrefutable fact that all of our curves are pointing upwards. Donations are increasing, we have an enormous number of applicants per place, and researchers from the world's foremost universities are coming here. We are also a member of the high-profile international networks we want to be part of," he says.



Lars Strannegård presents his latest memorable experience of wood: *Crystal Sauna* in Skellefteå.

Having met alumni who have taken the FREE philosophy with them into working life – and who have realised the value of an open mind – Lars Strannegård is convinced that the philosophy provides a good foundation for sustainable leadership in any industry.

"It can be really helpful to not be so sure of oneself. It's important to gather facts widely and try to take in as many facets of a problem as possible, so that one can then reflect on the likely consequences for both oneself and others before making one's assessment. Because decision-making is important. There's no escaping that."

A WELL-KNOWN VOICE

Lars Strannegård has become a well-known voice in the public discourse, well beyond academia.

"I believe very strongly in the direction we have chosen, and I consider it my duty to stand up for these things. SSE is here to further Swedish competitiveness, hence the importance of participating in public debate. I'm delighted that we've garnered so much attention," he says.

With the ever-increasing use of artificial intelligence in more and more areas, he is aware of the need to place even greater emphasise on human values.

"It is vital that we develop our analytical capability, our judgement and our empathy. This really is the be-all and end-all as we learn to use AI and evaluate information. Computers are great at mimicking empathy; they can easily deceive us but it isn't genuine, so leaving decision-making to them could be life-threatening. It's essential that we practice, including by meeting people from other backgrounds and exposing ourselves to high-quality expressions of culture," he says.



LEARNING SPACES

The study and working environments at SSE are incorporated into education in many ways. Aside from the ever-present art, the beautifully and meticulously restored rooms contribute to a general sense of comfort and well-being. The hallowed aula conveys gravitas. Gazing upwards in SSE's famous library, the vertical bookshelves towering four storeys into its dome tickle both the imagination and the pit of one's stomach.

"We strive to create a soulful environment here, so that it feels pleasant, stimulating, thought-provoking and beautiful; creating a sense of: 'this is where I want to be'. All environments communicate with us aesthetically, which is why we put so much effort into this," he explains.

Wood is a vital element throughout the stone building, and all the furniture in the president's office is wooden – a choice that clearly reflects the Swedish identity.

"Wood is the best! Wait, I'll show you a photograph," says Lars Strannegård.

He searches his phone for his most recent intense experience of wood, which took place in Skellefteå the previous day. The sculpture *Crystal Sauna* by Bigert & Bergström is shaped like a giant asymmetrical lithium



FREE: THE SSE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

At SSE, education is viewed as an emancipatory process. This philosophy is based on four attributes that SSE strives to develop in its students. FREE stands for:

Fact- and science-based. A strong foundation in facts and scientific thinking.

Reflective and self-aware. The capacity to question, analyse and develop independent thinking.

Empathic and culturally literate. Understanding other people and different perspectives in a global world.

Entrepreneurial and responsible. Encouraging curiosity and the desire to create change – and to take responsibility for the consequences.

"Vad är det jag ska vittna om?" (What Shall I Bear Witness To?) The question hovering above Lars Strannegård is part of Sent på jorden (Late on Earth) by Jan Håfström, an installation consisting of 15 works created for SSE's Red Corridor. The work addresses questions of responsibility, observation and the role of the individual as a witness in society.

crystal and clad in titanium-plated pink mirror steel. The sculpture conceals a wooden grotto that is also a fully functioning sauna.

"It has an incredibly complicated interior pattern and one feels completely embraced by the organic, living wood. I think it's absolutely amazing," says Lars Strannegård, who very much appreciates nature's embrace. He walks from his home in Östermalm to SSE every day, both for the exercise and to find time for reflection. A walk in the woods induces an even more meditative state of mind.

"One feels, well, connected to the universe, whether one likes it or not. My mother-in-law calls the forest 'the poor man's fur coat'. When it's cold, whether literally or figuratively, you can enter and warm yourself, surrounded by silence."

INVESTING FOR THE FUTURE

Opportunities to stroll in the forest will soon be a little more plentiful, as this academic year will be Lars Strannegård's last as president. He will remain at SSE, but intends to take things somewhat easier. He has held the Bo Rydin and SCA Chair in Business Administration and Leadership since 2010 and will return to his research.

"I'm delighted about that and it's a fantastic initiative that was taken by SCA before my time. Considering how well things have gone for SSE over the years, one would have to say that it was a wise investment in Swedish competitiveness," says Lars Strannegård. There are also plans to create a foundation specialising in cultural research.

"This doesn't exist in Sweden at the moment and, in my opinion, it is needed to support Sweden as a cultural nation. It would be interesting to know how our art and culture would have developed had it received the same economic support from foundations as other academic research."

When it comes to the future, he chooses to look on the bright side.

"We have a duty to be hopeful. I heard an expression recently that I very much liked: Don't feed the dark.

" There can be no doubt about where Lars Strannegård primarily finds hope.

"Our students are splendid. In the midst of the polycrisis in which we live, I see the brightest beacon of hope in them."



DESIGNED FOR THE SITE, BUILT FOR THE LIGHT

TEXT HÅKAN NORBERG PHOTO KRISTOFER LÖNNÅ

Architect Martin Wulff has allowed the sun, sea and site to dictate the design of a modern timber house on the coast of Hälsingland that remains deeply rooted in Swedish building tradition.

"The exterior is part of the interior, and the interior is part of the exterior," he says.

STATE AGENT KATARINA Bufvers had one specific wish for the summer house she and husband Bosse Pargéus were planning to build in Sörfjärden: she wanted to be able to see the sea while lying in bed.

Architect Martin Wulff, a longstanding friend of the couple, was receptive and included a glass door in the corner of the bedroom, opening up a view of the sea and horizon that is only interrupted by a few lone pines standing between the deck and the shoreline. This detail says a great deal about the house. In utilising the plot, the architect's choices have consistently been based on the location: the sea, the light, the wind, the sun, the pines – and being able to move freely between indoors and out.

"It's a fantastic place. Location, location, location, as estate agents say. When you have access to the horizon in this way, it's simply a matter of bringing it into the building. It's like a painting hanging there all the time, changing from morning to evening," says Wulff.

On his first visit to site, the conditions were less idyllic. A storm was coming in from the sea blowing the snow horizontally. Aside from taking full advantage of the view, this raised the question of how the house would shelter its residents when the weather makes it abundantly clear that we are, after all, in northern Sweden.

The initial drawings revolved around an enclosed atrium courtyard. This idea eventually evolved into an elongated main house with two distinct sides: one facing the sea and the other opening onto a courtyard on the sheltered side.

The residents can seek out or take refuge from the heat depending on the season.

The house covers 150 square metres. The bedrooms and bathrooms are situated at each end, while the middle is occupied by a 65-square-metre open-plan kitchen and living room. Extensive glazing on either side draws the gaze through the building and out into the landscape. Transparency is a recurring theme. Nature is not confined behind the glass but becomes part of the room.

"The most important thing has been to bring the sea into the house. And I think we succeeded," says Wulff.

The concept encompasses movement through the house, something emphasised by equipping the building with no less than nine exterior doors. One can step straight out onto the surrounding 300-square-metre wooden deck from almost any part of the house, blurring the boundary between the residence and its surroundings. The central open-plan room continues out onto the deck on both sides; the door to one of the guest rooms opens directly onto the swimming pool; of course, there is a front door, and a door into a utility room; and there is the door to Katarina and Bosse's bedroom.

THE SUN AS A DRAWING INSTRUMENT

Nor is the placement of the swimming pool a coincidence. When the time came to design this, Wulff studied the angles of the sun crossing the plot.

"I've calculated the sun's position between the spring and autumn equinox, so that the pool will always be in the sun during the summer months.

The same calculations affect how the light strikes the house. The sea-facing facade gets the morning sun during the summer. In winter, when the sun is lower, natural light enters the building from the opposite direction. This is architecture that is very much about reading the location rather than simply plonking a ready-made house onto the site.

The placement of buildings in general contributes to this. The main house is at the front of the plot, closest to the sea, while the garage and outbuilding create two smaller volumes further in. Wulff likens these to the wings of a stately home – not because the house is striving to look like a historical building, but because the form is familiar.







The land in front of the buildings has been designed around a single preserved pine, allowing the existing nature to encroach between the buildings rather than replacing it with completely new landscaping.

WOOD WAS THE OBVIOUS CHOICE

From a distance, the house first appears as a low, horizontal line in the landscape. As one approaches, the materials and details are revealed. The choice of wood as the main material was never up for discussion. For Wulff, this is both a contemporary and a historical choice. For 16 years he worked as Construction and Property Manager at Skansen, the world's oldest open-air museum, where he was responsible for some 300 buildings, including 200 of cultural historical value. While there he followed the work of craftspeople and conservation officers on roofs, facades and windows.

"I learned a great deal during my years at Skansen, not least about attitudes to wood."

This experience has influenced his view of sustainability. A timber building does not need to be protected from ageing, but it does need to be designed to age well. In the house in Sörfjärden, among other things this is reflected in the extended eaves, which to a large extent protect the wood cladding from the direct effects of precipitation.

"In this regard, I adopt the Skansen perspective: the building should remain functional for the next 50 or 100 years."

The facade is clad in untreated heartwood pine. The wood will grey over time and the house will gradually fade into its surroundings.

While the initial design called for traditional vertical panels, Katarina Bufvers also came across a profiled panel that piqued her interest: the finely grooved SCA Lynx A1, which has an angular profile. Wulff inserted single panels at irregular intervals across the otherwise smooth facade.

The effect was discreet. At first one notices the house's long horizontal shape; the variation in panels only becomes apparent when one approaches, and at close range further details emerge in the surface and profile of the wood.

HISTORICAL INSPIRATION

When describing the house, Wulff refers back to older Swedish traditions of building in timber. Among his sources of inspiration are the robust timber buildings of architect Jan Gezelius. The combination of materials also has historical roots: timber cladding with a double-folded sheet metal main roof and green roofs on the lower parts of the building.





Martin Wulff, architect, SAR/MSA.



Katarina Bufvers, homeowner.



Whitewashed, planed spruce on the ceiling and walls meets light ash floorboards, almost entirely without skirting.

“If you look at historical buildings, materials are actually used in a very similar way. Sweden is a land of wood and wooden houses. In Italy, they have more stone, so they build in stone more often. Different parts of the world each have their materials.”

Wood also takes pride of place inside, where the client had a greater influence over the design expression. According to Bufvers, the ambition was to create something with “Nordic light”. The choice fell on whitewashed, planed spruce for the walls and ceilings and light ash flooring. The fitted pine kitchen is a collaboration between the architect, client and the Vikarbodarna Joinery.

The main room has a wooden floor, walls and ceiling. The material is repeated in the kitchen cabinets. The wood and the angles of the room contribute to the acoustics. The scent of wood still hangs in the air.

“It’s beautiful visually, but its also tactile. Then you have the sound and scent. This gives an overall natural sense of quality with which we in Sweden feel very much at home.”

The doors do not have traditional architraves and the hinges are recessed into the door leaf. Structural timbers are joined to steel beams when the span requires it. Designed specifically for the house, visible wood detailing was crafted on site by the builders.

Making this type of house look effortless demands precision building. Christoffer Idén Nordin, who via his company Byggidén Norr was responsible for the build,

FACTS

Site: Sörfjärden, Nordanstig Municipality, Hälsingland, just under 60 kilometres south of Sundsvall.

Architect: Martin Wulff, SAR/MSA.

Building contractor: Byggidén Norr.

Main house: 150 m2.

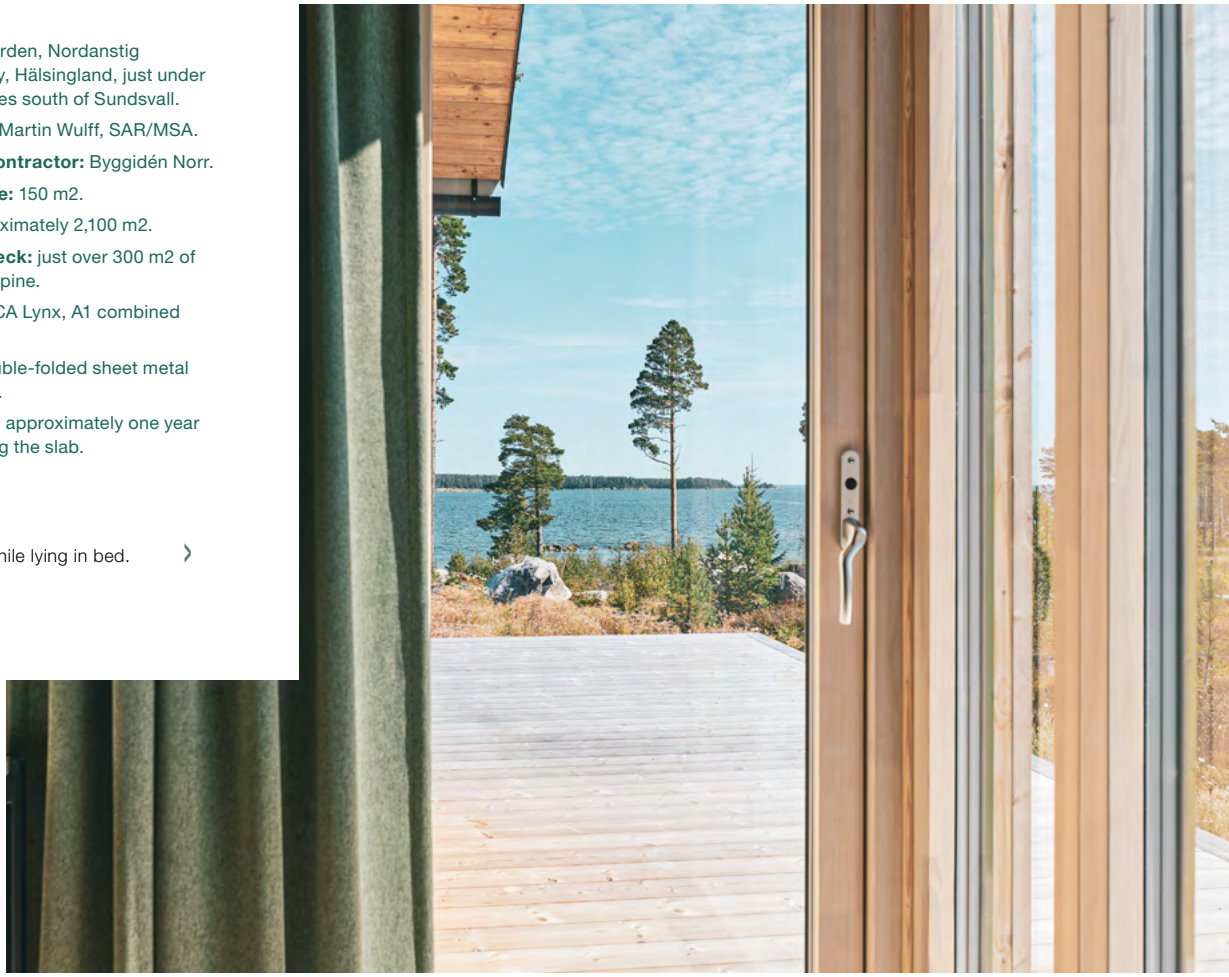
Plot: approximately 2,100 m2.

Wooden deck: just over 300 m2 of heartwood pine.

Facade: SCA Lynx, A1 combined with A3.

Roofs: Double-folded sheet metal and sedum.

Build time: approximately one year from casting the slab.



The view while lying in bed. ›

describes a project in which communication between tradespeople, architect and client was crucial. Many details needed to be resolved as work progressed, not least concerning the panels, openings and joints between materials.

A HOUSE THAT BELONGS

Behind the visible materials is a technically advanced villa, with geothermal heating, water-based underfloor heating and a hot-water circulation pump. In summer, the borehole is used to cool the house – a vital function in a building with such large expanses of glass facing the sun.

Still, when standing on the deck all of this technology is difficult to discern and the house feels closely connected to the pines, the sea and the sky. The untreated pine cladding will grey. The sedum roof will be allowed to grow with the seasons. The passage of natural light through the house depends on the month and time of day.

This is similar to how Wulff describes his own role as architect. He arrives with a concept, the client with their experiences and wishes. They then develop the house in collaboration. At Sörfjärden, the process began with a plot in a snowstorm and the question of how to shelter from the sea while coming as close to it as possible. The result was a house that does both. And, for Katarina Bufvers, the horizon is exactly where it should be.



‹

The facade combines two SCA Lynx profiles.

Sculptural furniture with minimal waste

TEXT JENNIE ZETTERQVIST PHOTO EBBA GREEN SALMONSON

CAN DESIGN BE BOTH more expressive and more resource-efficient? This was the point of departure for Alexandra Lindmark, whose furniture collection received recognition at Young Swedish Design 2026 and earned a scholarship.

Using simple bandsaw technology, she shapes sculptural furniture from whole pieces of wood. Rather than sawing off large quantities of material, she utilises the wood's shape and volume, reducing waste and incorporating the natural curving lines into the design.

The Young Swedish Design jury praised the project as both intelligent and resource-efficient, with clear commercial potential. Alexandra Lindmark is keen to demonstrate that sustainable production does not require advanced technology, but rather new ways of thinking about materials, design and production. In her design process, wood becomes a creative tool uniting aesthetics, functionality and smart material choices.

Young Swedish Design is an annual award and touring exhibition highlighting young designers. Each year, an expert jury selects 25 participants. The project is arranged by Svensk Form in collaboration with Dunker's Cultural Center. In addition to the exhibition itself, Young Swedish Design awards 18 scholarships in collaboration with outstanding representatives of the Swedish business community.



"Wood is both my inspiration and my cocreator. I try to collaborate with the material rather than control it."

ALEXANDRA LINDMARK, SCHOLARSHIP, YOUNG SWEDISH DESIGN 2026.



Growing value

TEXT JENNIE ZETTERQVIST PHOTO MARIA FÄLDT

In a construction industry struggling with cutbacks and bankruptcies, Lindbäcks is one family business that continues to go from strength to strength. While the company's end-to-end timber frame construction system is arousing interest far beyond the borders of Sweden, its premise remains the same as a hundred years ago: to create value from the forest.

THE STORY BEGINS in 1924, with a modest sawmill in Kallfors, a village southwest of Piteå in northern Sweden. Today, the business has grown into a family-owned group of construction and property development companies. With some 300 employees, subsidiary Lindbäcks Bygg expects to complete between 800 and 840 homes during 2026. The company is Sweden's largest prefabricator of apartment buildings, and the second largest home builder overall in terms of apartments produced.

The heart of the business is the state-of-the-art factory in Haraholmen, Piteå. Here, the guiding light is sustainability based on a high degree of robotisation and automation and meticulously planned production flows. Since opening in 2017, the factory has welcomed a steady stream of international visitors and attracted considerable media interest in Asia, Australia and the United States.

"Sweden is a global leader in prefabrication in general, and we are a leader within industrial timber construction. This is why there is so much international interest in what we do – in how we build and how we develop systems," says Lindbäcks Bygg CEO David Sundström.

PREFABRICATION WITHOUT STANDARDISATION

Building with modular systems is often associated with standardised solutions and limited architectural ambition, or even dull buildings. While Sweden's Million Homes Programme of the 1960's and '70s delivered on its promise, it did reinforce the impression that efficient production equals monotonous, soulless design. This is no longer the case.

"The Million Homes Programme may not have exactly gilded our communities, but today the possibilities of prefabrication are something else entirely. Lindbäcks has been driving the development of timber construction since the 1990s, and this includes architecturally," says David Sundström.

There is a long tradition of innovation at Lindbäcks, where it is viewed as part of the corporate culture. Investment in developing modular timber systems has honed the ability to prefabricate taller, geometrically more complex apartment buildings, resulting in greater efficiency and shorter build times.

"We are also particularly strong at utilising development rights by using all of the land set aside for a building, which is important for the customer from a cost-effectiveness perspective," says David Sundström.

STRENGTH IN A WEAK MARKET

While much of the construction industry has struggled, Lindbäcks has consistently strengthened its market position over recent years. There are several reasons for this, including a reorganisation in the early 2020s and the adaption of the construction system to the current demands of the market.

"Since the pandemic, demand for prefabricated homes has increased compared to other building projects. The economy has taken a downward turn and price has become more important to our customers, who are also looking for less complex buildings than previously. We can construct the apartments our customers want, but it should also be noted that we have a particular competitive edge in the more standardised designs that are in demand right now," says David Sundström.



“There’s a great deal of engagement in what we do, even outside our gates. Many forest owners take part in creating value. It brings joy to my working day,” says David Sundström, CEO of Lindbäcks Bygg.



THE FOREST AS COMPETITIVE EDGE

Given the unrest beyond Sweden’s borders, it has also proved to be a major competitive advantage to have one’s raw materials close to hand.

“Being a Swedish company utilising Swedish raw materials has benefited us in a turbulent world. We work with Swedish suppliers and Swedish labour. We had very few supply problems during the pandemic compared to many others,” says David Sundström.

While other construction companies have been hunting for in-demand parquet flooring in Ukrainian wood, which is now difficult to obtain, Lindbäcks Bygg has continued to use Swedish wood for interiors.

“Sure, we’ve also suffered from price rises, but to a lesser extent than others who have foreign suppliers, and we have always had security of supply for materials. The forest is our core product. We can see it out of the window, and we can see it continue to grow with our own eyes,” says David Sundström.

The crises that have affected so many people demonstrate the importance of Sweden and the EU being self-sufficient in wood from a national security perspective.

“The closer I am to my suppliers, the more secure I feel. If you work with a broader global perspective, it’s difficult to obtain an overview of the risks, whether today, this year or next year. And we’ve seen how quickly conditions can change,” says David Sundström.

FINDING JOY IN BUILDING COMMUNITIES

It is not, however, simply a matter of securing business. Lindbäcks Bygg also takes great pleasure in collaborating with so many highly committed forest owners in both Sweden and Finland, who also take enormous pride in being community builders.

“Everyone should contribute to building communities at some point! It’s so enjoyable. Of course, most of us create some kind of value for society but, for us, it’s so very clear when we build homes and can see people move into them.”

A couple of decades ago, wood accounted for around 5 per cent of the housing market. Today, the figure is around 20 per cent. The development of robust, fire-resistant systems, the lightness of wood and the fact that working with the material causes less noise than conventional building methods have all contributed to demand. That said, for Lindbäcks Bygg at least, the single most significant factor behind the increase is the fact that the material binds carbon.

“It’s a given that, as it grows, the forest binds carbon dioxide. And what shall we do with it when it’s full-grown? Well, if you put it in an apartment



Lindbäcks' factory in Haraholmen, Piteå, combines prefabrication with sustainability management. The factory runs on renewable energy, sorts 90 per cent of its waste and is designed to create a safe, efficient work environment.

LINDBÄCKS IN BRIEF

- Founded in 1924 when Frans Lindbäck opened a village sawmill in Kallfors just outside Piteå.
- Family business currently managed by the fourth generation of Lindbäcks.
- Developed from a sawmill business to a group of some 20 companies in construction, property development and industrial production.
- Lindbäcks Bygg is Sweden's leading prefabricator of timber-framed apartment buildings.
- Opened in 2017, the present factory in Haraholmen, Piteå, attracts visitors from all over the world.
- Vision: To think and act long-term to become the go-to customer choice for building, living and flourishing sustainably.

building that will stand for a hundred years, then you bind it again for a very long time," says David Sundström.

Recently, as so many other crises influence business decisions, Lindbäcks has noted declining demand for climate-friendly products in certain areas.

"But of course, we haven't resolved the climate crisis yet, so it will increasingly become a factor in the debate once again, and that will lead to more timber buildings. As a society, we need it," says David Sundström.

Lindbäcks is currently building rental and cooperative apartments, residential homes for the elderly and hotels in many locations around Sweden, from Kiruna and Luleå in the north to multiple projects in the Stockholm region and Linköping in the south. At the time of writing, a new city district in Gothenburg is being planned, and discussions are underway on future developments in Finland.

David Sundström has been the company's CEO for three years. He was enticed to the post from his previous position as commercial director by the opportunity to continue to be part of a company that is important to both the region and the building of Sweden.

"I was attracted by the group's ability to create value from the forest, which we have so much of," he says.

When the chance arises, he likes to meet the people who move into the new-build homes to hear how they are enjoying life and to witness how day-to-day life unfolds there. They often have requests and suggestions for improvements. For example, one elderly lady who had just moved into a customer's building had a distinct opinion that warmed the CEO's heart:

"She was very satisfied but thought that the lift was too slow. She didn't have time to wait."



LODGEPOLE PINE

TAKES ITS PLACE BESIDE SPRUCE AND PINE

TEXT KERSTIN OLOFSSON PHOTO SCA

Swedish Wood now includes lodgepole pine as a third wood species alongside spruce and pine. "Launching a third wood species is an unusual event and very welcome. We need more renewable raw materials, making lodgepole pine a valuable addition," says Mattias Fridholm, Senior Advisor at the industry organisation Swedish Wood.

THE GOVERNMENT research institute RISE Research Institutes of Sweden has conducted extensive testing and classification of lodgepole pine timber, providing a strong understanding of the species' properties. Swedish Wood, whose role is to promote knowledge about wood products and timber construction, is now presenting this data to make it easier for the construction industry to compare lodgepole pine with other wood species.

Lodgepole pine has, among other things, been included in the standard range of the Swedish Wood Product Catalogue.

"We present data on strength, density and other technical and environmental properties that are important to the construction industry," says Mattias Fridholm.

EASY TO SEE THE POTENTIAL

According to Fridholm, it is generally the physical properties – rather than the wood species itself – that are of greatest interest to timber customers.

"It is the properties that determine whether a timber product is suitable for a specific end product. Now that the properties of lodgepole pine are clearly presented, it becomes much easier to see the species' potential. This also helps ensure that the timber is used for the highest-quality products possible, meaning that forest raw materials from Swedish forests are utilised in the best possible way," says Mattias Fridholm.

Johan Fröbel, Head of Technology and Trade at Swedish Wood, looks ahead to an exciting period.

"As more timber customers begin using lodgepole pine, both we and the construction industry will continue to learn more about how lodgepole pine products should be handled."

A WELCOME ADDITION

Fröbel highlights that the introduction of lodgepole pine comes at an important time, as larger volumes of timber raw material are needed.

"Wood is a renewable raw material that can, in many cases, reduce the need for fossil-based materials. Although Swedish forests are growing well and growth exceeds harvesting, timber availability remains limited. Access to timber products made from lodgepole pine therefore represents a welcome addition of renewable raw material. This strengthens opportunities to build more with renewable materials and take further steps towards a more circular construction sector."

GROWING DEMAND

Swedish Wood expects demand for sawn timber products in Europe to continue growing.

"We are likely to see increasing demands for low-carbon building materials, which will drive greater demand for wood. The launch of lodgepole pine as a construction material is positive for the construction industry, the climate and Sweden's competitiveness," says Mattias Fridholm.



Mathias Fridholm, Senior Advisor at industry organisation Swedish Wood.



Johan Fröbel, Head of Technology and Trade at Swedish Wood.



Decking that yields to the mountain

TEXT AMANDA SJÖKVIST

PHOTO AMANDA SJÖKVIST

High above Lake Åre, Anna and Frederik have built a house with views across the mountains, forest and water. When the time came to build a veranda, they chose impregnated nordic lodgepole pine from northern Sweden and shaped the deck to its surroundings, rather than vice versa.







THE ROAD LEADING UP to the red house winds up the steep slope. When the car comes to a halt outside the house, it is easy to understand why Anna and Fredrik fell for this place. The lake stretches out beneath us, the mountains providing a spectacular backdrop.

The family left Stockholm for Åre a year ago, since when Anna and Fredrik have been spending their days building their new house. They have done almost everything themselves apart from raising the frame and making the building weathertight.

"We've lost track of time somewhat and it's sometimes felt like we'll never be finished. But when you take a step back, it's actually gone very quickly," says Fredrik.

Building a house at this altitude poses certain logistical challenges and demands a great deal of planning. It has proved difficult to get large deliveries up to the house so building materials have been collected in small batches and driven up on a trailer.

"We've bought as much material as we thought we would use during the day and taken that home," Fredrik explains.

A VERANDA FORMED BY ITS LOCATION

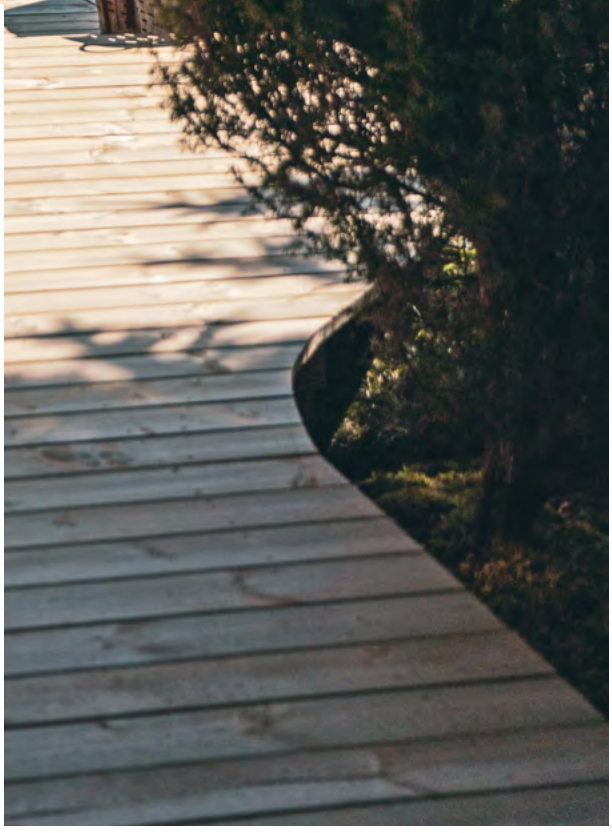
At one end of the house, where the landscape opens up to the lake below, Anna and Fredrik have built a veranda in impregnated nordic lodgepole pine.

The idea was to create a place for outdoor living without altering the character of the surroundings any more than necessary. Rather than removing rocks and vegetation, the decking has been adapted to the existing landscape. The structure follows the shape of the land and in several places the wood meets the natural mountain terrain.

"We wanted to create a place where we can enjoy the view while retaining the sense of being surrounded by nature. That's why we've allowed the decking to yield to the location rather than vice versa," Anna explains.

The chosen material was nordic lodgepole pine, a tree species that is still relatively new to many Swedish consumers and carpenters. SCA has been cultivating Pinus Contorta in northern Sweden since the early 1970s and more and more of the trees are now reaching the age at which they can be used as industrial raw materials. The wood has properties well-suited to outdoor structures and when impregnated can be used for decking, among other things.





“Our customers are increasingly recognising the benefits of buying sawn contorta pine to replace the spruce and pine in their products. In the example of the decking laid in Åre, we see many positive aspects of appearance and function compared to standard pine. That’s why it’s so interesting to see the material used in a completed project, and in an environment where the veranda is really integral to the house,” says Ola Wilhelmsson, Sales and Marketing Manager for SCA Wood Scandinavia.

After an intensive year, the house Anna and Fredrik built with their own hands is taking shape and outside a veranda awaits with a front-row view of Lake Åre.

“Unfortunately the summer was fairly rainy. Now we’re crossing our fingers for a fine autumn, so that we can spend many beautiful days out here,” says Anna.

Nordic lodgepole pine is a bright, lightweight wood with straight fibres and a high percentage of healthy knots. The wood is easy to process and can be used for products such as decking, cladding, edge-glued panels, battens and packaging, and is suitable for heat treatment.

Structured curiosity about the future

TEXT HÅKAN NORBERG PHOTO BRUNO KLOMFAR

Future strategist Magnus Bergendahl is motivated by the desire to understand change – in society, in organisations and in himself – and to optimise accordingly. "I love renewal and to summon the innate curiosity in individuals and organisations," he says.

MANY PEOPLE SEEK the security of the familiar. And then there are those who, while living a seemingly quite ordinary life, like to stand slightly on the outside looking in. Magnus Bergendahl sees himself as fitting both descriptions. With the house and everyday family life in Gothenburg, he is very much living the archetypical Swedish life, while at the same he has a strong drive to examine the concept from every angle and test whether things really must be the way they are.

"Like an iron fist in a velvet glove, I like to shake things up to demonstrate that there are other perspectives. Almost everything around us is a social construct that we can influence, both in private life and at work," he says.

Magnus is employed as senior consultant and future strategist at Kairos Future, an international consulting and research company that helps companies and organisations understand and shape their future. Through trend analysis and business intelligence, Kairos helps its clients turn big picture insights into concrete action.

Magnus summarises the profession in two words. "It's about being structurally curious, with a polymath's ability to speak many languages." He is not talking about guessing what the future might hold, but rather helping people and organisations to glimpse it. To detect signals, capture different wavelengths, understand change and have the courage to ask questions before it is too late. To distinguish between what is urgent and what is important. And to grasp just how critical it has become to be able to learn and relearn.

"Two generations ago, a five-year study programme would see you through your entire working life. Today, we need to continuously recreate ourselves. This is a brutal change that demands both individual drive and organisational permissiveness," says Magnus. "If everything is constantly changing, it is not the strongest who wins but the most adaptable. And I can help with that work."

THE SOCIAL ENGINEER

Magnus grew up dreaming of becoming an inventor, which led him down an engineering path. He discovered a knack for structured thinking and turning things on their head; as it turned out, both structures and behaviour. While at university he realised that many engineering roles would not give free rein to his curiosity, an impression confirmed by his mother. One Saturday morning at the kitchen table, she observed: "But Magnus, you're really too social for this. Is it really right for you?"

"After KTH, I promised myself that I would work in a dynamic, bubbling organisation, not just sit in front of a computer," explains Magnus. Still, this proved to be far from a straight path. While studying, he met his future wife and for a few years after graduation they got by on what Magnus calls "subsistence jobs".

"I thought to myself that there must be more exciting ways to make a living, more interesting jobs than those entry-level jobs."

While his reasoning was barely formulated, his logic was: If competition is high in the usual places, why not search further afield? This led to Italy and a job with Electrolux, and exposure to other ways of living and working. "The company was Swedish-owned, the project I worked on was based in China, and the end-user was in the United States. It was a round-the-clock project."

After two years in Italy, Magnus and his partner returned to Sweden and started a family. Magnus got a job as a product developer at what was then SCA's Hygiene Products Division. While managing a project on innovation and change management he was also conducting research, leading to a PhD in Innovation Management.







"I'm proud of my time at SCA. It's a company with enormous strength and it was very valuable to be able to improve myself in the ecosystem of such a large organisation."

Magnus went on to work at Sahlgrenska Science Park connecting academia, industry and the public sector, and then matching startups with the business community at the national programme Ignite Sweden, both assignments that are close to core interests: many stakeholders, many domains of knowledge and many potential connections.

A NEW VIEW OF PERFORMANCE

This ability to move freely between engineering, behaviour, organisation and human driving forces eventually led him to his current position at Kairos Future. He affirms that much of his job is about helping organisations to avoid becoming self-satisfied. Not allowing the tempo of the internal organisation to fall below competitors.

Magnus has his own experience that altered his view of performance, work and vulnerability. A few years ago, while skiing with his children, he fell and struck his head, losing consciousness for a few seconds. Only later did he understand the extent of the injury. Concussion gave way to cognitive fatigue. Magnus describes a chaotic period of sick leave and extended rehabilitation. Unable to perform in the manner he was used to, he was forced to confront other questions: "Who am I? What use am I? Who am I when I can't perform?"

He describes this as a journey of tremendous learning. Painful, but also crucial. He has taken something from that experience that still characterises his work today: acceptance as a prerequisite for progress. "Progress is fastest when you accept things as they are. Embrace it instead of shutting it out. Accept, adapt, advance."

WITH THE WIND AT HIS BACK

The ability to adapt to changing conditions and to move forward quickly is also a hallmark of Magnus' hobby, sailing. Over the years he has sailed skiffs ("they tend to capsize"), keelboats ("a large crew working together") and catamarans ("with my brother"). He sails to recharge his batteries and to be completely in the moment. At present, he usually sails WASZP, a single-handed dinghy lifted above the surface of the water by a hydrofoil. This results in very high speeds and a soft sensation of flying without friction.

"There's something magical about rising above the waves and flying forward at 20 knots on wind power alone," explains Magnus.



He consistently uses positive language when he speaks, with elements of encouragement and fortitude. He “allowed” himself to take a PhD in Innovation Management; in Italy, he was given the “chance” to learn a new culture and a new language; and his employer had the “courage” to wait for him while he was on sick leave. This has the effect of making him pleasant to listen to. And inspiring.

“I put a great deal of thought into how things come across, because then I have the greatest opportunity to exert influence. My leadership isn’t revolutionary or disruptive, it’s based on trust and confidence. It takes a while to build, but once there it brings us closer to implementation and results.”

Read Magnus Bergendahl’s thoughts on the future of the forest and timber industry.

Those who wait for the storm to pass wait too long

THERE IS A PARTICULAR KIND of silence in a forest. It can convince you that change happens slowly. That what stands firm today will remain so tomorrow. But everyone who works with the forest recognises that this is an illusion. Beneath the bark, in the soil, in the climate, in policy and in the market lurk forces that wait for no one. We live in an age in which, in forestry, we can no longer plan for a single future. Climate change is redrawing the map of plant hardiness zones, wild fire risk, pests and storm patterns. Regulations are tightened and oscillate. Demand grows for biodiversity, carbon sequestration, traceability and local roots. Meanwhile, the world is crying out for more renewable materials, more timber construction and more alternatives to fossil-based industrial flows. The forest has become the arena in which economics, ecology, technology and geopolitics meet. It would be easy to respond cautiously. To mark time. To trim costs. To seek the middle way and hope that the turbulence will blow over. But in a world in which the goalposts are constantly moving, passivity is also a choice. And often an expensive one.

I believe that tomorrow’s strongest forest actors will not be those who best preserve yesterday’s model. I encounter the same pattern in many other industries: tomorrow belongs to those who learn quickest when conditions change. Not to those who wait and see, Not to those who simply press costs. But rather to those who ensure freedom of action by staking out several possible paths forward: new cultivation methods, new digital decision-making support, new ways to measure value, and new partnerships. And, not least, new business practices that do not pit climate benefit, resilience and profitability against one another, but rather develop them side by side.

In this regard, Swedish forestry begins from an unusually strong position. We have a wealth of experience of active forest management and practical problem-solving, and we have the technical expertise, industrial value chains, data and research. We already have the capacity for innovation: in the forest, in the sawmill, in logistics and in the development of timber-based solutions. That said, our strengths may prove dangerous if they lead to overconfidence. What we already know is valuable, but it is far from certain that it will suffice. This is why we need to work with scenarios to a greater extent. We need to create the tools to test different worlds. A world with stricter regulation in which fewer raw materials are extracted. A world in which climate change accelerates. A world in which wood becomes a strategic resource in a geopolitical tug-of-war. A world in which biodiversity is as worthy of investment as volume growth.

Guessing right is not the point. The point is to be ready for anything. The future will not reward those who wait for things to clear up. It will reward those who learn quickest while the trees are still wreathed in fog.



MAGNUS BERGENDAHL
SENIOR FUTURE STRATEGIST,
KAIROS FUTURE

WHEN EVERY PIECE COUNTS

TEXT AMANDA SJÖKVIST PHOTO AMANDA SJÖKVIST

At Gelfa in Gällö, wood in grades that are not suitable for products such as flooring and cladding is instead used to make components for pallets. A scanning system identifies defects in the boards so that the usable parts can be put to good use. Offcuts are used in wood pellets production.

GELFA IS LOCATED a stone's throw from the Gällö Sawmill, which delivers raw materials for the production line. The wood that arrives here is called side boards; this is wood that does not meet the requirements for products such as flooring and panels, and is sorted out by the sawmill. These parts can however be utilised at Gelfa.

Precision cutting involves scanning and analysing the timber based on the requirements placed on the finished product. The system identifies defects and then determines where the board should be cut. This results in boards of specific lengths and grades, while defective parts are discarded.

"The scanner scans the boards and optimises cutting based on the product and the customer's quality requirements. Among other things, we can sort out knots, bark, waney edges and mould," explains Niclas Svensson, Site Manager at Gelfa.

The boards are cut to lengths of between 400 and 3,000 millimetres, meaning that part of a board can be used even if another part does not meet quality requirements.

"If there's a defect in the middle of the board, we can cut that part away and use the rest. This means that more of the raw material can be used," says Svensson.

The offcuts are sorted and shipped some 50 kilometres from Gällö to the SCA planing mill in Stugun, where the material is used in wood pellet production. So, even the parts that are not suitable for further processing create value, as more of the log is utilised.

READY FOR PRODUCTION

For Gelfa's customers, this process means that timber is delivered as components in the lengths and grades they require. The material can therefore go straight on to the next production stage without the need for cutting and sorting.

"Our customers receive the components they use in production, in the right length and grade. This reduces the need for cutting and waste management," says Svensson.

Meanwhile, the location adjacent to the Gällö Sawmill means that the raw material is close to the production line. This allows for flexible planning as requirements for different dimensions or grades change.

"One major strength is that we can quickly adapt our planning to our customers wishes. As we are close to the raw material, we can obtain it to meet day-to-day demand," says Svensson.

MULTIPLE AREAS OF USE

At present. production is primarily geared to components for the pallet industry, with Scandinavia the main market. However, the ability to control both length and grade opens the door to other areas of use. Bed bases and packaging are two areas highlighted by Svensson.

Going forward, the aim is to reach more customers in both Scandinavia and the rest of Europe. Svensson also sees opportunities in segments of the pallet industry that place other requirements on raw materials.

"We see potential growth within segments that place higher demands on the quality and appearance of pallets. For example, this might be pallets that accompany the product further along the distribution chain, perhaps all the way to the retail outlet. The visual impression may then be more important, and different demands will be placed on the raw material," says Svensson.





Niclas Svensson, Site Manager at Gelfa.

GÄLLÖ COMPONENT PLANT

Established: 2019, rebuilt in 2025.

Employees: 10.

Production: Cutting line with two optimisation cut saws, planing line with an integrated optimisation cut saw, and a lamella saw.

Wood species: Spruce, pine and nordic lodgepole pine from Gällö sawmill.

Markets: Primarily Sweden, Norway and Denmark.





Warmth on the water

TEXT JENNIE ZETTERQVIST PHOTO MARINBASTUN

On a floating sauna, the view is never still. The light shifts across the surface of the water, the landscape changes with the weather and the gentle bobbing is a constant reminder that the sauna is afloat. Marinbastun's sauna rafts are built to handle this demanding environment, and carefully selected spruce timber from SCA is a critical structural component.



THE MAN BEHIND Marinbastun is Jonatan Tuori, who brought with him a wealth of experience of building jetties and other marina infrastructure when he began constructing sauna rafts almost 15 years ago. The combination of sauna and water was something he was keen to develop further.

"Of course, water is an element ideally suited to the sauna in terms of taking a refreshing dip, but so too is the sound and motion. Sensing the water while taking a sauna adds something to the experience. If anything, I find taking a sauna on the water even more agreeable than on the shore," he says.

FROM PRIVATE SAUNAS TO SPA HOTELS

Marinbastun builds sauna rafts in various sizes and designs in the company's factory in Söderfors, each adapted to the customer's wishes and the location where it is to be berthed. Projects range from modest private saunas to large facilities for spa hotels, including in Northern Norway and England. One of the company's most recent deliveries was to Hornstull in the City of Stockholm, which now boasts the capital's first public sauna.

One thing that all of the company's products have in common is high demands on quality. A sauna raft is in an unusually exposed environment, its exterior timbers exposed to the wind, water, cold and strong ultraviolet radiation from sunlight reflecting from the water.





Jonatan Tuori, founder and owner, Marinbastun.

Water is a constant presence around Marinbastun's rafts. Large sections of glazing make the view part of the sauna experience.

The interior climate shifts between high heat and humidity and considerably drier periods. Moreover, in public spaces and spa hotels, saunas may be in use for large parts of the day.

"It's a very challenging environment. That's why we need to use the best possible quality of spruce, so that we minimise cracking and other damage when the wood is subjected to these strains," Tuori explains.

TIMBER ADAPTED TO THE TASK

Finding the right to spruce timber has been a matter of trial and error, but Tuori now knows exactly what he wants: raw material from SCA's forests sawn at SCA's Gällö Sawmill. From Gällö, the sawn timber is shipped to Hoo Timber in Torsåker, where it is planed to Marinbastun's exact specifications.

"Jonatan is a great customer to work with as he is extremely thorough and always wants the very best available material. He goes the extra mile and is always thinking one step ahead," says Pontus Larsson at Hoo Timber.

Over the years, these exacting demands have resulted in a number of custom solutions. Marinbastun has its own set of blades that plane the timber at specific angles, among other things so that water that finds its way in can run out of the structure. The two companies have also jointly developed a special inner panel for sauna rafts.

"Jonatan is actually the only customer we have who has his own blades with us. We've come together over our shared interest in wood, so you might say that to some extent we're both nerds in this particular field. We are constantly trying to develop and together we explore new opportunities to make something good even better," says Larsson.



Sauna rafts come in various sizes and designs adapted to their location and intended use.



PHOTO: AMANDA SJÖKVIST

TUNADAL

62° 25' N
17° 23' E

28 AUGUST 2026, 11.32 AM

SCA's planing mill in Tunadal processes timber products for framing, facades and outdoor environments. The majority of deliveries are destined for the Swedish and Norwegian markets. The saw blade in the photograph is used on a ripsaw, which splits lumber into boards that are then planed to make panels.


SCA