

Southern LIGHTS



The appeal of Scandinavian style is its combination of gentle romanticism and northern restraint and practicality. We asked decorator Nikki Lange how to make it work in South African homes



The two existing sofas in the **living room** were slipcovered in white bull denim. "I designed the fireplace with space for wood to bring in the natural texture," says Nikki. Also adding texture are two wicker ottomans from Bentwood Antiques. The cushions are from SHF and the throws from Amatuli.

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COMPILED BY JO TRAPPITT PHOTOGRAPHS ROELENE PRINSLOO



Traditionally, Scandinavian style features natural materials in a clean, pared down manner. It's devoid of fuss and frills and yet lends itself to both contemporary and traditional homes. Nikki Lange of Design & etc. has always loved this look and took the opportunity to use it when she renovated a house in Lonehill, Jo'burg. "I wanted to create a home that's warm, stylish and inviting and I started with a blank canvas, white walls, and wooden floors," she says. "I also wanted to use existing items like old sofas, headboards and pieces collected over the years. Although this look is inspired by Scandinavian interiors, why not acknowledge where you live and give it an African twist." ▷

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ● A large pivoting glass door opens into the **entrance hall** where a collection of vintage items sets the mood. The books and wooden bowl are from SHF. ● "For the **TV room**, I painted a Bali-style cabinet white to fit in with the look and house the television and sound system," says Nikki. The stump stool was made from a tree chopped down in the garden. Pulling the room together is a sisal rug from Rebtex. ● In the **kitchen**, Nikki disguised an alcove with a built-in unit. The table came from Design & etc. while the ghost chairs bring it up to date.





THE SHELL

The reason the Scandinavians use a lot of white is to lighten their rooms, especially in long winters. Start by painting the walls white to make them brighter and appear more spacious. If you want to introduce a feature wall, choose grey or a subtle earth tone. While floors are usually wooden, you can get the same effect with vinyls and laminates or screed the floors.

FURNISHINGS

Look for pieces with simple silhouettes. Use items you already have and give them a new look with paint, fresh upholstery or slipcovers in washable fabrics like linens and cottons. You'll be amazed at what a slipcover, new throw and fresh cushions can do for an old sofa. But check that the shape's not too chunky or outdated. Stick to a palette of beige, grey and shades of white and then make it interesting with different textures such as timber, linen, cotton and wool. Introduce wicker and driftwood for a relaxed feel.

WINDOW TREATMENTS

Keep the window treatments as simple as possible. Opt for plain drapes in linen or cotton hung from just below the ceiling, or use blinds and shutters.

WOODEN ACCENTS

As pale woods are readily available in Scandinavian countries, these play an important role in the look. If you don't have exposed beams or wooden floors, incorporate wooden shelving or cladding. Timber accessories or small items like a tree stump side table will give the same effect.



GOOD STORAGE SPACE

To achieve a clean, uncluttered Scandi look, you must have plenty of storage space. In addition to cupboards and cabinets, you can use baskets, antique boxes and old trunks. Remove anything that is superfluous to daily life before you begin layering with accessories.

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ● "I kept the kitchen cabinets simple and used open shelves instead of wall-mounted cupboards," says Nikki. The countertops are in Sorbet from Café Quartz. ● "You can unify a collection of old furniture by repainting it or giving it an aged finish. The secret is not to overdo it. Just one distressed piece works here with a cabinet painted cream. To keep the feel casual, the mirror is just propped against the wall." ● "For the main bedroom, I slipcovered an existing headboard in linen. It has ties on the sides so it can easily be taken off for laundering. To give the bed more presence, I placed two vintage shutters on either side," Nikki explains. The chrome bedside lights are from Design & etc.



LIGHTING

Bring in natural light through large glass doors and windows. Add ambience in the evenings with floor lamps, table lamps, hurricane lanterns and candles.

GREENERY

Scandinavian interiors always have greenery, such as indoor plants or fresh flowers. Keep it simple with a vase of foliage or fynbos or an aloe for an African feel.

ADDING THE AFRICAN TWIST

Think natural here but instead of fur throws, drape sheepskin over chairs. Cowhide rugs fit in well and as an alternative to antlers use buck horns; faux ones are readily available. **GH**

DECORATOR'S TIP:

"I find mood boards very helpful when decorating," says Nikki. "Start by gathering pictures of features you like – look at magazines, Pinterest and websites. Collect fabric and flooring samples to get a feel for your desired colour palette. Add pictures of furniture such as couches, armchairs, coffee tables and cabinets, then accessories. You'll soon see what's working and what's not."

ABOVE: "When renovating, I've found it best to build in as much as possible. The vanity in the bathroom was painted and the basins mounted on top. Wooden drawers fitted by a carpenter and wicker baskets soften the hard lines," explains Nikki.

Get the look

Combine neutral shades with natural textures and add a touch of greenery

Banded linen cushion covers, from R429, Zara Home.



Sienna floor lamp, R3 500, La Grange Interiors.



Plastic indoor and outdoor rug, from R1 029, Zara Home.



Set of three numbered black boxes, R995, Vintage Vista.



Edgar chair, R7 995, Weylandts.



PC rustic mirror, R5 495, Weylandts.



Olive tree in pot, R249,99, Woolworths.

SOURCES Amatuli amatuli.co.za **Bentwood Antiques** 046 622 5171 **Café Quartz** cafequartz.co.za **Design & etc.** designandetc.co.za **La Grange Interiors** lagrangeinteriors.co.za **Rebtext** rebtextrsa.com **SHF** shf.co.za **Vintage Vista** vintagevista.co.za **Weylandts** weylandts.co.za **Woolworths** woolworths.co.za **Zara Home** zarahome.com/za.