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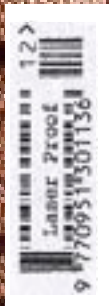
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Swedish cottage

'This house was meant to be ours'

Christina and Rainer Tradt fell for the charm of the quaint red cottages of Sweden while on holiday... then they set their hearts on buying their own ➤



With its steeply pitched roof and red-painted, wooden cladding, Christina and Rainer's cottage typifies Swedish style. Its simple appeal is complemented by the tranquil setting, surrounded by trees.

About the owners

Christina Tradt is a hairdresser and her husband Rainer is in publishing. They live with Scully, their Labrador, and Pauline, a golden retriever

What we love most about living here 'The countryside, in particular the lake, the forest and

the silence. There are few people here, but they are all so friendly. We love to relax in our candlelit bathroom, sip champagne, and see the stars through the window'

Our biggest decorating disaster 'Having a loo outside was hard until our bathroom was ready'



What began as a holiday, turned into a love affair with Sweden for Christina and Rainer Tradt. The couple first visited the country in 1997 when they spent three weeks touring around in their motor home. 'We fell in love with the scenery and the pretty red and white houses,' says Christina, 'and we decided that we'd like to buy a place there.'

The forests and the appealing cottages of the Småland area of Sweden make it very popular, and this was where Christina and Rainer decided to begin their search. They hunted for almost three years before they spotted a pretty house on the internet. 'We decided we'd go and see it and, as it turned out, it was owned by a fellow German who'd lived in Sweden for 30 years,' says Christina. 'We planned a trip over to see the house, but the owner told us that it had already been sold. However, he had a similar cottage for sale, but the downside was that it had an outside loo. We decided to go and see it anyway. When we opened the door, that was it. We had this special feeling that it was the one for us.'

The key ingredients the couple wanted were wooden floors, a traditional stove and a range cooker. It had all these things – and more. 'When we pulled up the plastic mats that were in the house,' said Christina, 'we found the original wooden floorboards underneath. The house had two stoves, rather than just one, and a range cooker too, so it really was a lucky find. It also came well within our budget, mainly because the loo was outside.'

That still left Christina and Rainer with something of a dilemma, as they were keen to have an indoor bathroom. As luck would have it, the owner happened to be a builder and he said he'd create a new one for them, exactly to their specifications, so the deal was sealed.

As the building of the bathroom was such a big job, it was the first project tackled. Christina and Rainer decided to go for the traditional

At home in...

Location Småland, Sweden

Building Timber-clad cottage built in 1926

Rooms Hall, kitchen, sitting room, reading room, cellar; two bathrooms, two bedrooms

Moved in 2001 from Steinau in Germany

pine table and chairs came from Ikea, as did the shelving above the sink, which was skilfully converted into a plate rack by Rainer's father; a traditional rise-and-fall lamp from Berliner Messinglampen reflects the 1920s origins of the cottage.

2 One corner of the reading room is dominated by a floor-to-ceiling, wood-burning stove dating from 1926. The white writing desk and chair are from Car Selbstbaumöbel, while colour comes from the soft tones of the Ikea blue and neutral rug on the pale floorboards.

A pretty glass clock and accessories add individual touches to the room.

1 Sun streams into the bright kitchen on to vanilla-painted units. Panelling on the ceiling and the walls and the rustic porcelain sink all give the room an authentic country feel. The

tongue-and-groove style typical of Swedish bathrooms; they also wanted bare floorboards – to make them waterproof, they were treated four times. 'We read English homes magazines and saw that the English often choose blue for their bathrooms,' says Rainer, 'so we chose a similar blue shade, too.' The beautiful, slipper-style roll-top bath that now sits beneath the window provides a handsome focal point.

Christina and Rainer next turned their attention to the kitchen, which they were keen to replace as it was such an old-fashioned design. Now decorated with lemon walls and cream units, the traditional-style country kitchen is sunny all year round, and has become their favourite room. 'We love to spend time here, sitting with friends, talking and drinking,' says ➤

'We have added a sense of period charm with **Gustavian furniture** and Swedish colours'



The reading room has an authentic Gustavian feel with its creamy furnishings; although the dresser looks old, Christina and Rainer bought it new from Countryline Walz in Germany. A delicate ceiling light near the window came from Lars & Bo – find similar at Stiffkey Lamp Shop.



On our doorstep

Christina and Rainer Tradt's insiders' guide to what to see and do during a trip to Småland in Sweden

■ **Visit...** 'The Orrefors Glassworks (below, (00 46 481 341 87, orrefors.se) and museum, or the Kosta Boda glassworks (00 46 478 345 00, kostaboda.se). Children will love Astrid Lindgren's World in Vimmerby (00 46 492 798 00, astridlindgrensworld.com), a fairy-tale park and home to her Pippi Longstocking'

■ **Go for a meal at...** 'Hotel Dacke's (00 46 495 319 00) restaurant for fine local food'

■ **Shop at...** 'Åhléns (00 46 383 55 38 00 ah lens.se) in Vetlanda for clothes and homewares'



3 Lamps and pictures add interest in the green-painted hallway. The chair in the reading room came from Car, but Scumble Gooseie has similar.

4 Yellow enhances the main bedroom, where a Louis XV-style chair from Car has been upholstered in a Laura Ashley fabric. The bed and quilt are from Ikea.

5 A window in the eaves overlooks the classic roll-top bath; Aston Matthews sells similar.



Christina. The work on the kitchen and bathroom took three months. Once that had been done, the wooden floors throughout the rest of the house were cleaned and stained, and the 1970s-style wallpaper was replaced or painted over: the renovation took four years altogether.

The Tradts were keen for the interior of the house to look in keeping with the exterior, but although it now looks as if it is brimming with antique pieces, Christina and Rainer have in fact made clever new purchases. Some of their furniture came from Car, a German company that sells unpainted, self-build furniture in a traditional style. Two of its chairs were upholstered by Rainer's father and the couple added accessories from Italy and Germany to give a more individual look. 'We've gradually found

interesting pieces, so the house has slowly evolved over the years,' says Rainer. 'We have introduced a sense of period charm by using typical Swedish colours, Gustavian-style furniture and traditional lamps. There are some other influences in the house, but it is largely Swedish. Christina has a very good eye and combines things well.'

Altogether, the renovation has taken four years but has been well worth all the hard work. 'We love it here,' Rainer enthuses. 'We didn't have lots of money to do the cottage up, but we have realised our dream of buying a lovely home in another country on a small budget.' *Christina and Rainer Tradt's house is available for holidays. For further information call 00 49 666 376 81, schwedenhaus-tradt.de.*