

# The House of Sweden Interior “*The Swedish Style*”



The beautiful interior of the House of Sweden was inspired by the home of Carl Larsson and his wife Karin. Sweden's most famous artist, Carl (1853—1919) met Karin Bergöö (1859-1928) when they were both studying art in Grez, near Paris, France. They married in 1883 in Stockholm, then returned to Grez, later traveling to several other European countries, and finally returning to Sweden.

In 1888 they were given *Lilla Hyttnäs* by Karin's father. *Lilla Hyttnäs* is the home that has become world famous through Carl's paintings. It is located in the village of Sundborn, province of Dalarna in central Sweden. The family lived there only during the summers, then lived there permanently from 1901.

Carl pursued his painting career, including monumental paintings, murals, frescoes, portraits, etchings and prints, illustrations, cartoons, calligraphy and watercolors. Karin bore eight children between 1884 and 1900: Suzanne, Ulf, Pontus, Lisbeth, Brita, Matts, , Kersti, and Esbjorn. Matts died in infancy and Ulf died of a burst appendix at 18.

The book *A Home (Ett Hem)* was published in 1899. More than any other of Carl's artistic achievements, the charming intimate scenes of family life at *Lilla Hyttnäs*, painted in watercolor, brought fame to Carl and his family. This was followed by *A Family* and *A Farm*. His family was often included in the commissions he painted for prominent people and various buildings.

In 1897, they bought two farms: Spadarvet, next to *Lilla Hyttnäs* and Kartbacken, which was also near by.

*Lilla Hyttnäs* grew as the family grew. At first a rustic cottage of four rooms, it was added on to as needs and money allowed. Karin was a full artistic partner with Carl in the development of what has become known as “the Swedish style.” The rooms are intimate and cozy, colorful and comfortable. The carpentry and furnishings have a liberating simplicity and functional design.

Contrast this with dark Victorian over-opulence in the same period. All rooms are open and user-friendly -- there is no shut-off “best parlor” as in earlier times; no closed doors; no restrictions. Colors are light, bright, and in some surprising combinations such as red and green. Carl painted on the walls, borders, doors, cabinets, windows, and even portions of the ceilings. He painted portraits, designs, murals, and lettering of mottos and sayings which he composed.

In the dining room above the door to the kitchen (which was later closed off), he painted the motto “Älsken Hvarandra, Barn, Ty Kärleken är Allt,” meaning “Love One Another, Children, for Love is All.” This loving motto is painted above our archway as well.

Most of Carl's paintings of the activities and scenes in and around *Lilla Hyttnäs* give proof of Karin's artistic achievements in textiles. She had a loom on which she wove tapestries, upholstery, pillow covers, portieres, chair seats, and rugs. She designed and sewed her own clothing and the children's clothing. She wove and/or embroidered tablecloths, table runners, window curtains, chair seats, cushions, bedspreads, wall hangings, and portieres. She developed all the design motifs, then created the textiles.

Karin also designed some of the furniture including the children's beds, rocking chair, plant stand, tables and chandelier. Local craftsmen carried out Karin's and Carl's designs, doing the construction, building, and painting. Some of these craftsmen are at work in Carl's paintings, as are some of the women who helped with the tasks of the large family.

The copyright on Carl Larsson's published images expired in 1969, fifty years after his death. In the early 1970s, Carl Larsson's delightful charming paintings received international distribution, and with their universal appeal, brought “the Swedish style” to even wider acclaim.

The members of the House of Sweden invite all visitors to look closely and enjoy our lovely interior done in “the Swedish style.” Special appreciation is due to the artist Lance Jordan. It was his idea to cove the ceiling (like a room in the Larsson's home) on which he hand painted lovely floral garlands after he researched wildflowers in Sweden. He designed and made the trestle table, the benches and the graceful settee. He also designed and built a replica of the tile stove (kakelugn) which appears in every room in Carl Larsson's home and paintings. Lance Jordan's artistic accomplishments are what sets our cottage apart and above any others and his work makes the HOS exceptional.

The House of Sweden is one of the cottages in the House of Pacific Relations International Cottages in beautiful Balboa Park in San Diego, California.