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PAINT

Swedish Colors

Vaporous blues, soft grays, milky whites—they capture light, especially northern light, in the most remarkable ways. *By Christine Pittel*

PAVILION BLUE 252
FARROW & BALL

"Swedish winters are long and dark, and anything that brings more light into the house—pale paint, chalky-white furniture, sparkling crystal—is embraced. This is the quintessential Swedish blue—very light and ethereal, as if you're floating in a cloud. A high concentration of mineral pigments reflects more light, so the blue feels layered and translucent, as if it's not a solid color at all."

RHONDA ELEISH



ONLY NATURAL SW 7596
SHERWIN-WILLIAMS

"I love Swedish style, but I like it mixed with more modern furniture to give it a twist. And the walls would be the color of bleached oak—a warm white with a blush to it. Then I'd add a little contrast with blackish gray or smoky mauve fabrics and an abaca rug. Whether you see it in candlelight, firelight, or daylight, the room would be radiant."

TORI GOLUB

BLUE GRAY 91
FARROW & BALL

"This is one of those indeterminate colors that hovers somewhere between gray and green, though interestingly, it looks a lot more blue in a well-lit room. It's so nuanced that it's difficult to categorize, which is why I find it appealing. Pair it with creamy whites and, for those who dare to broaden the boundaries of typical Swedish decor, not-quite black."

SHEA SOUCIE

PAVEMENT C2-988
C2 PAINT

"It's the color of stone, a soft gray with a touch of blue. Swedish houses are actually unbelievably colorful, but none of the colors are brilliant. It's as if somebody splashed ochre into every paint can, so the colors are muted and toned down. You seem to be seeing them by candlelight or under a brilliant sun."

JOHN DANZER

DKC-67
DONALD KAUFMAN COLOR

"The need for light is so inherent to the Scandinavian lifestyle. I've entered many manor homes during the dark days of winter to find everything white and light and lit by white candles. Nothing could be 'colder' and yet so cozy at the same time. It's magical. This happens to be one of those great whites that reflects light and changes constantly."

JILL DIENST

SKYLIGHT 205
FARROW & BALL

"This is a powdery blue with some earth in it, and that warms up the color. I love the combination of blue and brown. It's calming. I'd even use it in a living room, with mahogany furniture and natural linen. And then I'd go all the way to black somewhere and all the way to white—it doesn't have to be in large quantities—so you have the full spectrum."

WILLIAM CUMMINGS