Projects we love

FLOW — THE NEW COLLECTION

NATURAL HARMONY

Recycling magic

The spirit of design

BOLON GREEN

ILSE CRAWFORD
The world population is over 7 billion. Thinking about that number is like thinking about the shape of planet Earth, the size of the sun or how everything once started, at least for a non-physicist like me, but it must mean that there are over 7 thousand million brains around. All those unique brains have the ability to change the world, in every possible way, good or bad. That is an intriguing, almost overwhelming thought. In this third issue of Projects We Love, we have met and talked to a selected few in the global population, a number of interesting people who have influenced and changed the world through their chosen fields. I mean, what would fashion be without Rosita Missoni, the environmental movement without Boyan Slat, architecture without Jean Nouvel and interior design without Ilse Crawford?

Age also has a number that affects us all. Every year we add a “1” to ourselves. All we know is that our lives has a limit; we will all reach the end. I’m not the same person as I was when I was 20, 30 or even 35. I have experienced the joy in letting myself change, to be open to new impressions through the years. My curiosity keeps me going. In the past year I have taken up an old interest of mine, allowing it into my heart, finally giving it a proper place. The past decade has been about representing Bolon in front of the camera, now I prefer to be behind it. I love to be creative with images. The camera is my medium and it follows me wherever I go. It captures moments and creates memories. I don’t think my photography will change the world, but the creative process develops me, and what that will lead to, no one can forecast. That’s part of the beauty.

You won’t find my images in Projects We Love yet, but I hope you find lots of other things of interest. Happy reading!

ANNICA EKLUND, CEO BOLON
WINNING CONCEPTS

In May 2014 Bolon was presented with the prestigious Big Export Award by the organisation Business Sweden. The award, handed out by King Carl XVI Gustaf, celebrates a Swedish company that has had great international success. Bolon also became a winner in Germany, when the Wing flooring tile won a Special Mention in the German Design Council’s Premier Prize.

BOLON’S UNIVERSE

PROJECTS WE LOVE

- Austria and is currently planning for the opening of a showroom in Paris, France.

- of contractual spaces. During 2014 Bolon also expanded with a showroom in Vienna, Austria.

- with a Special Mention in the German Design Council’s Premier Prize.

- The creative crowd in Warsaw has a new design destination to flock to in the Lipowa Perfectly Polish

- Bolon’s collection for 2015.

- The number of floors in Bolon’s collection for 2015.


- on offer at the

- was models, drawings and photos the monochrome exhibition also served as an installation in itself. “The Bolon flooring held everything together, made it a unit,” says Martin Videgård.

- The Bolon forest is never transformed. They open up a world of possibilities.”

- Lesson in love

- When the sailors taking part in this year’s VOLVO OCEAN RACE enter the portable pavilions the organisers erect in each of the 11 ports, they’ll have Bolon’s Graphic Etch, String and Maché under their feet. The final leg of the race ends in Gothenburg in June.

- Perfectly Polish

- The creative crowd in Warsaw has a new design destination to flock to in the Lipowa

- Building for the future in Paris

- This year is set to be a busy one for architects Tham & Videgård, with three major projects coming to a conclusion in Sweden, as well as international engagements like the guest professorship the two architects held at PSSA in Dusseldorf. One of Bolon’s partners and Poland’s leading furnishers of contractual spaces. During 2014 Bolon also expanded with a showroom in Vienna, Austria and is currently planning for the opening of a showroom in Paris, France.

- NORTHERN EXPOSURE

- One of the highlights at Stockholm Furniture Fair is always to see what’s on offer at the Designbaren. This year, visitors can step into a boathouse from Norrköping. “It is based on the strong coastal memories from my grandfather’s boat-house,” says designer Matthias Stenberg.

- Using Bolon flooring to create the impression of water, rocks and greenery, Steenberg chose the new product Flow, in both rolls, tiles and Bolon Studio 29.

- Lesson in love

- Creating an inspirational setting for a school in an old office building and instilling a sense of pride in the students at the same time is no mean task. But architect firm Cobe is challenged by a tricky brief, and has in the revamped Gymniskoll to Stockholm shaped an interior the students thrive in.

- “We need small means to create great change,” says Peter Ullstad, architect and founder of Cobe.

- “Bolon has together with other companies sponsored the project and we used spare bits and odd rolls of flooring to cover thousands of square metres in a sort of unusual patchwork.”

- Sea Legs

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BOLON’S story is not only unique but almost hard to believe. A small-town industry in Sweden that becomes a global design phenomenon. A flooring company that earns the admiration of the biggest architects, designers and creatives in the world. And that still keeps business local and in the family...

Ulricehamn is quiet, quaint and home to just over 9,000 people, set in a part of western Sweden that is renowned for its industry closures and talent migration. But this town is bucking the trend – here is based a company that not only received the 2014 Big Export Award from the King of Sweden but keeps expanding without outgrowing its hometown.

“I’ve had my eyes on this place since I was a little girl,” says Annica Eklund, CEO and part owner of Bolon as we drove up to Villa Björkudden. The beautiful, white house a ten-minute drive from Ulricehamn stands among the autumn leaves and reeds along the waterfront. With its modern interiors and proximity to the beautiful landscape, it is a perfect spot to entertain international guests.

“A client from New York said that he felt as relaxed after two days here as he does after two weeks of vacation,” Annica says as she shows me the rest of the house.

“Granddad!” Annica’s 20-year-old daughter Linn runs down the stairs to greet Lars Eklund, who’d just walked through the front door. Lars was the second generation Eklund to run Bolon, the company having been started in 1949 by his father Nils-Erik manufacturing rag rugs from leftover nylon and cotton strips. One night at a dance at the town hotel in Ulricehamn, Lars met someone. “I had danced every dance with a specific girl, but she suddenly decided to dance with someone else. I looked over the room and saw Monica … and I haven’t danced with anyone else since.”

In 1966 Nils-Erik passed away, and the same year the couple had their first child – Marie. Three years later Annica was born. “I was so young, not much older than Linn is today, when my father died. And all of a sudden I was running a company,” says Lars.

Bolon changed direction under Lars’ leadership. As a keen camper he had noticed a need for a tough, exterior covering and Bolon’s lightweight range was created. In 1993, the foundation for today’s product was set as Bolon started making woven vinyl flooring.

Marie and Annica practically grew up on the factory floor, but none of them had any ambition in taking over the family business. “I had my mind set on being a professional show-jumper,” says Annica. “And Marie wanted to work in fashion. Our parents never put pressure on us to come work for them.” Annica moved to the south of Sweden to pursue her equestrian dreams, while Marie moved to Florence to study fashion. But eventually, they found their way back to their roots.

In 2003 Annica took over as CEO and Marie became Marketing Director. The same year, when they were travelling in Italy, they visited an Armani store and flicked through one of the catalogues when they made an exciting discovery … There was Bolon flooring on every page.

Re-branding the camping rug business as a designer flooring company wasn’t an easy task, and the sisters’ ideas raised more than a few eyebrows. “Since we’ve shared the vision for what Bolon should be it’s been really seamless,” says Annica. “And Dad has almost never complained about the re-vamping of the company.”

“Me and Linn went to designer Matthew Williamson’s show at London Fashion Week where Bolon flooring covered the catwalk. It was so surreal, I had to pinch myself – who would have thought that a flooring company could take us to Fashion Week?” says Annica.

Family comes first, then the business. But they often overlap. “Our family and business has always kind of intertwined. When I’d given birth to Linn, Marie and Dad came and saw us at the hospital on their way to a trade fair in Germany – the Bolon truck was parked outside!”

Linn is shortlisted to take over the company, as the oldest cousin and second generation Eklund to run Bolon, the company having been started in 1949 by his father Nils-Erik manufacturing rag rugs from leftover nylon and cotton strips. One night at a dance at the town hotel in Ulricehamn, Lars met someone. “I had danced every dance with a specific girl, but she suddenly decided to dance with someone else. I looked over the room and saw Monica … and I haven’t danced with anyone else since.”

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Three generations of Bolon. From left, the founders Lars and Marie Eklund, CEO Annica Eklund, Senior CEO Lars Eklund.
In a celebration of the most Nordic of events, HABITAT’S store in London was in June filled with greenery, good company and fine designs.
“We wanted a woodland look – hence the real birch trees – and aimed to create a natural, simple Nordic aesthetic.”

Midsummer is the most hedonistic and fun of Scandinavian festivals, with plenty of eating, drinking and dancing around maypoles decorated with birch leaves and flowers. In the summer of 2014, Habitat’s store on the King’s Road was transformed into an enchanting woodland café by London-based design firm Michael Sodeau Studio. The pop-up brought the alfresco festivity – complete with genuine birch trees – indoors to highlight the Scandinavian presence at designjunction, a part of the annual London Design Festival.

“The pop-up at Habitat gave us the opportunity to showcase a strong collective of Scandinavian designers who have stands with us each September,” says Deborah Spencer, founder of designjunction. “Due to the nature of the space in the store and its prime location in Chelsea, we decided to host a series of events which opened designjunction up to a new audience and we were extremely pleased with the results.”

Spencer asked Sodeau to create a month-long exhibition in the Platform gallery space at Habitat, that as well as host events could effectively function as a press and industry preview. “Since the event fell in June we thought of a midsummer café serving Scandinavian food,” explains Sodeau. “We wanted a woodland look – hence the real birch trees – and aimed to create a natural, pared-back, simple Nordic aesthetic throughout by specifying a range of pieces by an array of furniture and lighting companies.”

The roll call of brands featured is impressive, with classics like Fritz Hansen’s Egg and Swan chairs chosen for their sculptural forms, combined with colourful pieces by the likes of Hay and Musho and some of Sodeau’s own chairs for Offecct and Swedese to punctuate the scheme. Bolon flooring played a major role in the setting, not just in enhancing the forest feel, but as a grounding force for the eclectic furnishings. “The very natural green weave of Bolon worked really well with the white of the trees,” explains Sodeau, who devised a custom fitting to clamp the trunks between floor and ceiling, thus avoiding damaging the building.

A Bolon champion, Sodeau has specified the brand on several projects. “The flooring is just incredibly durable but also has a really fantastic palette of colours. Although it’s made from PVC it looks natural and is really suitable for these high-traffic scenarios,” he explains.

The café was a huge success, witnessing a flurry of activity for the duration of its tenure including a press breakfast, interiors industry lunches, a drinks reception for 350 people, plus weekend flower arranging courses – all as fleeting but memorable as midsummer itself, you could say.

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

- **COLLECTION NAME:** Bolon Artisan, Madora
- **AREA:** 200m²
- **COMPANIES:** designjunction and Habitat
- **LINE OF BUSINESS:** designjunction is an annual design event showcasing contemporary and cutting-edge brands; Habitat is a furniture and home ware store selling affordable modern design
- **LOCATION:** Platform at Habitat, King’s Road, London
- **CURATOR:** Michael Sodeau Studio

**FACT TO FLOOR YOU**

- The birch trees were sourced from Rye, Kent from a ‘man in the woods’ who more typically供奉 their to make horse racing jumps. The trunks were ordered to very specific trunk measurements and were deep cleaned to remove the moss.
When wireless expert Cisco Meraki moved into a new HQ, the main focus was to create a space for dreams and collaborations.

Part of global net giant Cisco Systems, one of the backbones of Silicon Valley, Cisco Meraki started life as a creator of gateway devices, helping to set up free net across the city. The company then moved into the lucrative world of creating the routers and other hard-ware that shapes and maintains the world’s ever increasing cloud-computing networks.

When it was time to bring Meraki into the Cisco fold, the design of its San Francisco head-office was handed over to Studio O+A, a local design studio set up by Primo Orpilla and Verda Alexander with a portfolio spanning some of the biggest names in digital culture. Studio O+A started by polling the incoming team on the items and elements they liked best about their former (much smaller) home.

Top of the wish list was natural light, open space and an office plan that engendered collaboration, the core-quality of Meraki’s creative working culture. The new space featured floor-to-ceiling windows and far-reaching views as standard, and a rich mix of seating, meeting and breakout spaces were woven together with a carefully specified collection of furniture. This included a spectacular mixed floor made from four of Bolon’s collections, tessellated to perfection using a wide range of colours. “We wanted to explore how flooring could define space,” says Studio O+A Principal Denise Cherry. “The colours and textures available from Bolon allowed us to move people through the week environment in a subtle but meaningful way. In the open office, the light grey Bolon defines the communal areas while in the all-hands area, it takes centre stage as a large-scale herringbone.”

Natural materials are also extensively used in the tables, chairs, partitions and subdivisions, lending the space an informality and warmth that promotes a creative culture across the board. Furniture classics including the Eames Shell Chair, loungers by Patricia Urquiola and Hans Wegner’s elegant Wishbone Chair scatter the space, while the angular patterned Bolon flooring beneath them brings to mind the aesthetics of digital culture, evoking the migration of data across a network.

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He may dress mainly in black, but few architects are as colourful as JEAN NOUVEL. He is a magus of materials and a magician of buildings, creating architecture that interacts with how we live and view the world.
NATURAL HARMONY

Our new collection Flow represents both aesthetic and pragmatic innovation—join us in a journey into its depths.
Inspired by the timeless mystery of our oceans, Flow highlights design fluidity, visual motion and soft pastel shades. Transparent warp allows the subtle colours in the weave to shine through creating a look that is at once strikingly individual but always calming. The overall impression created by Flow is of a tranquil, watercolour vista. Mild and gentle with light glittering on its surface, the collection lends natural harmony and grace to any interior environment.

Flow features two designs – Shaded and Solid. The collection is available as rolls and tiles as well as in Bolon Studio – where it is our first collection to use a new tile shape we’ve called Scale. Soft and rounded, the organic design has a form reflecting the natural, glistening beauty within the ocean. To further enhance the collection’s aesthetic versatility, every article in the collection can be combined beautifully without adhering to strict pattern-based laying or compromising design integrity.

Look beyond appearances and further beneath its hypnotic surface and Flow offers an exciting new innovation. The bottom layer of the collection’s backing is made of recycled material from our own onsite recycling plant. In addition, like every other Bolon collection, Flow is phthalate free.

Mesmerising design characteristics. Soft, soothing colours. Sustainability in focus. With Flow, you’ll be making a dynamic, graceful and considerate flooring choice.
The overall impression created by Flow is of a tranquil, watercolour vista.
Soft and rounded, the organic design of Bolon Studio™ Scale has a form reflecting the natural, glistening beauty within the ocean.
La vita Rosita

With a life in Italian fashion, dressing her fans in trademark zigzags and stripes, the queen of colour now has her attention on brightening our homes.

Just as we sit down for coffee, Rosita Missoni encounters a disaster. “Quei cucchiaini sono troppo grandi per il caffè!” she cries out. The disproportional size between a spoon and the plate it rests on is not a matter of concern for most people – but then again, Signora Missoni’s attention to detail and sense of style is anything but ordinary.

Rosita founded fashion house Missoni together with her husband Ottavio (Tai) in the early 1950s – a label that has since gained international fame for its innovative knitswear and colourful patterns. Although the family-run company has grown into a major lifestyle brand, it stays true to its roots in the Italian city of Varese and to its visual vocabulary that Rosita has dedicated her life to define. Rosita’s home is grand but welcoming and surrounded by a picturesque garden, close to the factory that she built with her husband decades ago.

Rosita has been a fashion designer for most of her adult life and a design enthusiast equally passionate and at that point it felt more like a duty. I let my daughter Angela take the helm of the brand, whereas in design you show only once a year. I also believe that design is about creating something comfortable, something that will last forever, a philosophy that is very different from fashion. Notice for instance the chairs – we’re sitting on – I’ve had these Wishbone Chairs for more than 20 years and they’ve endured countless dinners and many grandchildren.” Henri Matisse once said, “Colour, even more than drawing, is a means of liberation.”

Would you agree with that?
“Let’s put it this way: I want to liberate myself from colour. As a fashion designer, I had to eliminate my own imprint in a very colourful environment by dressing in black and white. I realised that I had to do this in order to truly see and understand the play between colours, and as you can see, that philosophy has affected my personal wardrobe, too.” (Laughs)

What has been your greatest accomplishment so far?
“My husband and I encouraged our children to work in fields other than fashion because we never wanted to make them feel as if they were obliged to join the family business. We achieved the exact opposite result as they all work in the company. That is the greatest accomplishment – it means that they really believe in and love the brand that is Missoni.”

With a life in Italian fashion, dressing her fans in trademark zigzags and stripes, the queen of colour now has her attention on brightening our homes.

And how did it differ from working in fashion?
“One striking difference was, and still is, the pace. Fashion is the chaos that produces many collections, whereas in design you show only once a year. I also believe that design is about creating something comfortable, something that will last forever, a philosophy that is very different from fashion. Notice for instance the chairs – we’re sitting on – I’ve had these Wishbone Chairs for more than 20 years and they’ve endured countless dinners and many grandchildren.” Henri Matisse once said, “Colour, even more than drawing, is a means of liberation.”

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Shades of play

With shared family business values, a love of colour and a mission in bringing style and warmth to the global interior design scene, MISSIONI and Bolon form an organic partnership.
In a bid to nurture local talent and harness its energy, Taipei’s centre of all things creative is the perfect display case for new design.

The Songshan Cultural and Creative Park is a grand reimagining of one of Taipei’s largest industrial sites. Once home to the major tobacco factory, it is an early example of post-industrial re-use and by the turn of the century the warehouses, factories and grounds had been transformed into a creative hub.

That means new construction sitting alongside the historic structures, and a programme that includes a design museum, restaurants, stores and cafés. The Mobile Digital Life Hall is a concept store in the heart of the complex, a technology-focused take on the traditional community centre for people to come together, talk and interact with the latest products and services offered by one of the country’s largest telecommunications companies, Taiwan Mobile Co.

The fit-out was overseen by K+Spacing, an architecture and interiors firm set up by Yu-Tsen King in 2010. Eschewing a hi-tech look in favour of a more down-to-earth, crafted approach, the design studio used Bolon products to realise a vision inspired by the traditional life of the small village, and in particular how natural elements like banyan trees were once a focal point of a community to meet and interact.

“I wanted to reproduce the scene,” says King, “so we designed great big green light shades to function as a symbolic banyan.”

Installed above the desks and meeting areas, these “banyan pods” seem to grow down and envelop the display tables and seating beneath them. The wide range of colours, textures and patterns helped K+Spacing extend the natural metaphor to the surfaces of the new space. The original building’s angled steel structural pillars are treated as if they were great tree trunks slicing through the space, an effect accentuated by the use of Bolon’s Botanic and BkB ranges, each offering a selection of natural-looking tones and textures to enhance the relationship between wood, steel and the Banyan-inspired custom light fittings. The end result is a space that’s warm and accommodating, from floor to ceiling, ensuring that the technology-driven desire to communicate is paired with a human sense and scale.
From Morocco to Mallorca via Ulricehamn, Bolon went on a grand tour to explore the materials’ affinity with nature and people. The result is a photographic journey that transports the flooring far from its everyday usage into the realms of free-flowing inspiration and aesthetic vision.
These Bolon patterns are customizable.
Using the sparse surrounding landscape as inspiration for its new HQ, ETIKHUS turned to Bolon to create an indoor field of dreams.

Business ethics are so central to this company’s modus operandi, they form part of the name. A family business set up in 1997 in a small village outside Varberg, on the west coast of Sweden, by brothers Ulf Werner and Per Börjesson, the concept is simple, but astute - a superior-standard building service that guides discerning buyers through a project, from drawing to completion. "Some clients come into the office with architect plans in hand, and need someone to run the project and manage the build. Others have a plot of land and are looking for a suitable architect," says Britta Andersson, marketing manager at Etikhus. "Our customers feel completely at ease. They get allotted a team of two carpenters who run the project, build and manage any exterior contractors, painters, plasterers etc. We have just finished a beautiful summerhouse near Kungsbacka for a German couple, who live too far away to supervise. One of their main criteria, except quality, was that the house was finished for Christmas, as they dreamed about gathering their grown-up globetrotting child­ren there to celebrate! Which we of course were happy to make a reality."

The growing company, with 23 employees, expanded into its present main offices in 2014, and Andersson was put in charge of the interior. "At first I thought it was great fun, but then I got a bit apprehensive. It was such an important project! I was creating the first impression of the company, and spent a lot of thoughts on how we should be perceived. Should it be the universal architect look, monochrome and sleek, with minimalist furniture? Or should it be something more homely and welcoming? I wanted to reference the beautiful landscape around Varberg, and have always been inspired by the products and thinking behind Bolon, so I quite quickly decided that their floor should be the focus of the space. The words that came into my mind was earth, sea, grass and patches of ice, so together with Bolon we came up with this fantastic pattern. Not only does it look beautiful, it can also handle the winter mud and grime that gets dragged in under the boots from our carpenters who come in from the builds. We just whip out the vacuum cleaner when they’re gone and it’s as good as new."

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The growing company, with 23 employees, expanded into its present main offices in 2014, and Andersson was put in charge of the interior. "At first I thought it was great fun, but then I got a bit apprehensive. It was such an important project! I was creating the first impression of the company, and spent a lot of thoughts on how we should be perceived. Should it be the universal architect look, monochrome and sleek, with minimalist furniture? Or should it be something more homely and welcoming? I wanted to reference the beautiful landscape around Varberg, and have always been inspired by the products and thinking behind Bolon, so I quite quickly decided that their floor should be the focus of the space. The words that came into my mind was earth, sea, grass and patches of ice, so together with Bolon we came up with this fantastic pattern. Not only does it look beautiful, it can also handle the winter mud and grime that gets dragged in under the boots from our carpenters who come in from the builds. We just whip out the vacuum cleaner when they’re gone and it’s as good as new."

EARTHY DELIGHTS
Ilse Crawford is a living legend in the design world. The Brit has racked up an impressive CV—launching Elle Decoration UK as editor-in-chief at the age of 27; two president of Donna Karan Home, head of the Man and Wellbeing department at the world renowned Design Academy Eindhoven and founder of her London-based design studio, Studioilse. She has designed the interiors for hotels, shops, offices and homes all over the globe; created lamps for Wästberg, accessories for Georg Jensen and published three books. Ilse Crawford is all about the human perspectives of design, letting it dictate how homes and public spaces should be shaped.

This year she’s the guest of honour at the Stockholm Furniture & Light Fair in February, where she coincidentally first met the Eklund sisters.

“I’d been aware of Bolon prior to this, but meeting the sisters brought the product to life for me.”

What was your first impression of Annica and Marie Eklund?

“It’s clear that they are serious about the potential – which is huge.”

Are you planning any collaborations with Bolon?

“Possibly. Having visited the factory and spent time with Annica and her team we have a greater understanding of the product, its properties and its potential – which is huge.”

Who do you think Bolon has become so successful?

“Family working together can be a very powerful thing and Amica and Marie have made good decisions in the decade or so since they’ve been at the helm.”

Speaking of family, your mother was of Danish sensibility, best described as hygge. And a love of candlelight.

What is your design philosophy?

“I strive to create environments where people feel comfortable. Public spaces that make you feel at home and homes that make sense for the person who live in them. It means designing furniture and products that support and improve everyday life.”

You’re the designer behind some of the most talked-about Swedish public interiors, such as restaurant Matbaren and the hotel Ett Hem. How do you feel about the Swedes’ general sense of design?

“It appeals to the primal sense of being human, it has a strong appreciation of natural materials and of nature and light. Together these combine to create a powerful atmosphere and mood. My team and I at Studioilse have an appreciation of the Scandinavian sensibility and we like to think we are able to put it in a global context.”

You’ve been a magazine editor, VP of Donna Karan Home, interior decorator, furniture designer… is there anything you can’t do?

“It’s not about ticking off a list. I’ve been lucky to have a varied and fascinating career but each step has been about applying the same thinking to different media. There was never a plan!”

How do you think the mixed fields of your past career has shaped your understanding for design?

“Each job has certainly added to the next. Each experience has been so valuable in shaping my understanding of the new realities we live in.”

What is your biggest source of inspiration?

“Watching people.”

Do you have any dream projects? What’s next for Ilse Crawford?

“I take life one step at a time. Currently my goal is to make the projects we [Studioilse] have as good as possible.”


The spirit of design

Candlelight, natural comfort and hygge is what Ilse Crawford appreciates most in Scandinavian design, things that bring a touch of humanity to her global projects.

In 2001.

London-based design studio, Founded Studioilse, her academic and creative director.
In the northern reaches of LAPLAND, where the darkness settles early and there are more reindeer than people, a whole new tribe of visitors is ascending for an icy thrill – racing car drivers.

Arvidsjaur might not be one of the first names that spring to mind when you think of Formula One (it’s a long way from Monaco and Monza), but here, on the ice, is a perfect replica of the Hockenheimring, the German racetrack. From January to March, the pristine, snowy landscape surrounded by tall spruce and pine is filled with the sound of cars roaring around the eight-kilometre track laid down by Exclusive Car Events, a local company who has brought the racing world to this quiet part of northern Sweden.

One of the key markets is Germany, with flights during the winter months arriving three days a week. After a day of speeding and skidding on the ice and soft snow, guests retreat back to the Clarion Collection Hotel Arvidsjaur for fine dining and relaxation after their adrenaline-fuelled activities.
PROJECT WE LOVE
CLARION COLLECTION HOTEL ARVIDSJÄUR

The hotel was created from an old hunting master’s lodge built in the 1890s and later extended. It was completely revamped in 2014 to house a collection of rooms to satisfy the most jaded of travellers. Linda Rönnlund at local company Nyans Design was commissioned to do all the interiors, a project the one-woman business took on with gusto.

“It was the biggest project I’ve ever done, and I spent 6 months there, working day and night at the beginning, but it was brilliant working with such old houses, though they always threw up surprises – wonky walls, uneven floors etc.” Rönnlund’s inspiration was “modern manor”, a cosy yet clean-lined environment, with brass details running through the rooms. “It’s a strict kind of luxury, with influences from both graphic design and the history of Arvidsjaur. I wanted to anchor visitors when they come on a flying visit.”

She chose Bolon’s Wing for the entire ground floor of the main building. “The floors were completely right for this project, both in terms of budgets and the graphic style. What I appreciated most was the staff at Bolon’s willingness to be creative, and daring to be a bit different. If I had chosen wooden floors, I would have had a complete manor look – but that would have been too much. The Bolon floors add the modern.”

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“It’s a strict kind of luxury, with influences from graphic design and local history.”
AGE: 43  
HOMETOWN: “I live in North London with my dogs, Coco and Mr Plum.”

CAREER HIGHLIGHT: “It’s so hard to choose just one. Having Kate Moss, Jade Jagger and Helena Chris-tensen walking in my debut show was out of this world.”

UNKNOWN TALENT: “I’m a good dancer. I’d love to be on one of those celebrity ballroom shows.”

PROUDEST MOMENT: “When I returned to London Fashion Week for our 10th anniversary. Prince performed at the show and it was incredible. That got me up and dancing.”

DREAM DINNER GUESTS: “I’d invite Adam Ant for his unique, stand-out character; he was one of the first people I was keen on for their look when I was a kid. Then Frida Kahlo, because of her body of work, her single-mindedness and her aesthetic generally. And finally, my mum, of course!”

There are few creatives who are as adept at working with colour, pattern and texture as Matthew Williamson. For over 17 years the British fashion designer has been catching the eyes of the world with his bright neon fabrics, hothouse prints and barefoot bohemian glamour. His brand is now an international fashion house with a number of clever collaborations, including working with Bolon on his most recent catwalk show.

“It all started with my mum,” says Williamson, sinking into a jungle-print covered sofa in the lounge of his North London home. “Back in the 1970s, when I was growing up, people were drawn to her because of her appearance and I soon realised that how you dressed could be powerful. Oh, and I lived in grey, rainy Manchester and wanted to do something that was the antithesis of that; something colourful.”

In 1994 Williamson graduated from Central Saint Martins. While work experience with Zandra Rhodes had a definite influence on the young designer, it wasn’t until Williamson boldly contacted British Vogue that his career really took off.

“I sent a postcard asking them to come and see my swatches,” explains Williamson, “and 24 hours later I was taking orders from the entire staff. I met Jade Jagger and before I knew it I had Kate Moss in my tiny flat begging to be in my debut show. It was odd, but so fabulous.”

That was 1997 and Williamson has barely looked back since. His success lies in understanding the women he designs for, their desire for colour, pattern, fun. “When I started out everything was quite androgy-nous and masculine, monochrome,” he says. “My eye was just drawn to more vibrant shades. It’s a very heartfelt aesthetic, I just prefer optimism and energy and uplifting clothes.”

Williamson and CEO Joseph Velosa have always managed to build the brand through careful and considered collaborations. As well as one of H&M’s most successful designer partnerships and a long-time associ-ation with UK department store Debenhams (“I’m not a fashion snob,” says Williamson, “I like seeing a woman wearing my dresses no matter what the price tag is…”), he has also recently completed a set of designs for wallpaper and fabric brand Osborne & Little.

“I’m secretly obsessed with interiors,” says Williamson sheepishly. He describes his London home as “softer than you might imagine – in my old age I’m getting more refined and subdued”. There’s the odd pop of colour, leafy jungle fabrics and finds he’s collected over the years. “I call them antiques,” he says, “but I’m using that term loosely, that might be more appropriate! I like to mix things up. Like with my clothes.”

Bolon first came to Williamson’s attention during the preparations for his SS15 catwalk show. “My production team came to me with this flooring for the show and I just loved it. The attraction for me is that it’s not carpet, but a new concept; naïve, crafted – I love that you can get dif-ferent colours and patterns. It almost looks like I could have designed it!”

And would he consider creating specific designs for the company? “I’d love to work with Bolon in the future,” he says. “It would be a pleasure.”

For someone so immersed in colours and patterns, it was natural for MATTHEW WILLIAMSON to turn to Bolon for a catwalk floor. Here he talks about interior obsessions, collecting tat and being far from a fashion snob.
“I like seeing a woman wearing my dresses no matter what the price tag is...”
Inspired by the timeless mystery of our oceans, our new collection Flow celebrates design fluidity and visual motion.

“In depths and shallows, perspective and light toy with our senses.”

READ MORE ABOUT THE NEW FLOORING COLLECTION FLOW ON PAGES 16–23.
Cleaning up the oceans from the millions of tonnes of plastic debris that float there seems a hopeless task. But a set of young, innovative thinkers and entrepreneurs seem to have come up with the solution.

Enter the words plastic and ocean in a search engine, and endless images of floating waste appear, alongside stomach-churning photos of dead seabirds, guts filled with rubbish, and turtles with six-pack rings wound around their necks. At the moment, there is six times more plastic in the oceans than sea life, the refuse soup allegedly covering an area the size of continental USA. But there are those fighting back. A new generation of environmental warriors is launching projects that take not just one step forward from the present recovery plans but surge past them on a giant wave of innovation. There is the Dutch architecture firm Whim, with its plans to turn the refuse islands into floating gardens, or mountain Pharrell Williams who is collaborating with G-Star Raw to produce denim made out of recycled ocean plastic.

But the man who has garnered most attention globally is Boyan Slat, a Dutch 20-year-old engineering student who after a diving holiday in Greece was shocked by the amount of plastic in the blue Mediterranean. But he was even more dismayed by the lack of willingness from international scientists to tackle the problem.

“It was as if this was an impossible mission. I realised that we'd need to work with the power of the oceans to solve it, to make them clean themselves,” he says.

Instead of using the old technique of giant trawlers slowly sweeping the water for rubbish, taking a whole lot of sea life with them in the process, Slat conceived the idea of platforms that are anchored to the seabed in strategic positions. The ocean currents then carry the marine debris to the platforms, in what Slat calls passive collection. After a TED talk, which went viral on YouTube and has so far hit over 1.6 million views, Slat now runs The Ocean Clean Up, involving over 100 people and having so far raised over $2 million. He has come up against a steady stream of detractors and resistance against his project, but has always battled back the attacks with meticulous information and reports that show this is not only a viable solution technically, but that it could also be financially beneficial. “This can never be the main reason for going through with the project though,” Slat claims. “Only if we realise change is more important than money, money will come,” he says. And if anyone can bring about that change, it’s Boyan Slat and his fellow green champions.

Malin Andén is Quality and Environmental Manager at Bolon.

Malin Andén on Bolon’s green strategy

What is Bolon’s stance on the problem with plastic in the world’s oceans?

We are keen followers of many environmental and sustainability issues. Although there is not the kind of plastic we use in our own products, we still realise how huge a problem it is and are always looking out for good initiatives to support.

Do you think a project like The Ocean Clean Up could work?

As a company, we have great belief in the potential of every individual and every organisation to make a change by which to take part. We are constantly working with questions around sustainability and the environment and set the bar for our own materials, so yeah – we don’t want to simply follow existing rules and regulations but to set a precedent for others.

“We don't want to simply follow existing rules and regulations but to set a precedent for others.”

An initiative such as The Ocean Clean Up is a good start to our journey towards a more sustainable world, and we definitely think it’s a project that will present results and increase awareness. Can Bolon use recycled materials from the ocean in your products?

Not with our current product line and not in the production facility we have today, but with what we know is possible in the future? Our floors are manufactured from PVC, which is considerably heavier than the type of plastic floating in the ocean. PVC has been a material been much questioned, but in the past 10 years European regulations and the Vinifin initiative has made the industry more geared towards sustainable targets, though of course there is still a lot to achieve in the rest of the world.

We at Bolon are extremely proud of the PVC we use now.
CLOSELY KNIT

Interlacing business contacts with student projects, Bolon joined forces with Capellini and Istituto Marangoni to create a whole new way of using weaves.
In the heart of Milan's design district lies the new campus of the Istituto Marangoni Design School, smartly located in a former bank and designed by renowned Italian interiors company Cappellini. Art Director and long-time Bolon collaborator Giulio Cappellini says the project was an important one for his family company. “For Cappellini, the relationship with young students is very important,” he says, “they are the designers and the customers of the future.”

The Italian furniture company was started in 1946 by Giulio’s father Enrico. Giulio himself was set for a career in architecture when he one day in 1979 decided to enter the family firm – when he did, the company had 14 employees. Now, Cappellini works with international star designers like Shiro Kuramata, Jasper Morrison, Marc Newson and Tom Dixon, and has showrooms all over the world.

“The spirit of Italian design has changed a lot,” he says. “In the 1980s there were Italian design companies and Italian designers. Now there are Italian companies with international designers. People are free to mix different projects and styles but the most important trend is the use of natural and eco-friendly materials with new textures and finishings.”

The Marangoni institute has an equally illustrious history, and can claim some 40,000 alumni, including the fashion designers Domenico Dolce and Franco Moschino and Tod’s Creative Director Alessandra Facchinetti. With outposts in London, Mumbai, Paris and Shanghai, the Milanese base is the school’s spiritual home. “At Marangoni you can work with students from all over the world,” says Cappellini.

When he designed the interior of the school, Giulio introduced furniture by Marcel Wanders, Shiro Kuramata, Fronzoni and Studio Cappellini, creating a warm, inviting but also inspirational space, which included a vast library of books and materials, as well as
advanced computer labs and studios. Tying everything together is the Bolon flooring, used throughout and picked for its hardwearing yet stylish surfaces, providing the perfect counterpoint to Cappellini’s design and the iconic piece.

Bolon and Cappellini have a long-running partnership. “They work with the same spirit as us: a contemporary company that uses research and works hard on product innovations,” explains Giulio Cappellini. “Bolon and Cappellini really speak the same language in design.”

BOLONVARIATIONS
From shoes to rainwear via jewellery, the students’ products put a whole new spin on how to use Bolon’s materials.

1 Irisa born MERVE UCAR crafted a bracelet from Bolon flooring, leather and mirrored buttons, with a matching mobile phone case, both of which play on the nature of reflection, in both light and thought. “The cinnabar leather bracelet has been re-interpreted through the modernity of Bolon material. The eye-catching buttons turn it into a fashion object.”

2 QING FENG used a new black Bolon weave in combination with genuine leather to shape a fluidly elegant but functional men’s business bag that maximizes the recycling and reuse of materials. “The profile is dominated by straight lines, representing masculine strength and determination, matched with spiral lines and sharp angles, signifying forward-looking and evolution.”

3 TIMUR SHIBAEV’s work was inspired by his hereritage and its infinite future, putting a whole new spin on how to use Bolon’s materials. From shoes to rainwear via jewellery, the students’ products put a whole new spin on how to use Bolon’s materials.

4 QING PENG designed and prototyped her Graphic Creeper shoes, a reinterpretation of the classic brothel creepers from the 1950s from an industrial punk perspective. “The Bolon material is bare, enabling it to play an industrial look, with the intention not to mask it as if it were a fabric commonly used in accessories. The use of studs antacimates the shoe’s trans-geometry and urban nature.”

5 GIULIO MASCIOCCHI from Como has worked in London and now designs costume and products for Italian and international brands. His Firma range of furniture pieces Bolon material with textured steel to create elegantly minimal forms. “Firma is a series of industrial designed objects whose shapes develop naturally, or as a signature. These proposals are drawn rather than designed.”

6 LIJA KHAEROVA has a previous career as a welding dress designer in Russia, but for her Marangoni project she brings Bolon material together with leather and digital printing to shape a ski leg with a very natural fit. “When you find yourself in a forest, your senses disappear and your pulse slows down. The concept behind Bolon is balance, the connection between different types of material.”

7 MIJAO from Japanus MAIKO OCHI designed a playful series Botanic Invasion out of textile waste with which she created a bracelet and a charm to which she added a base material, produced with synthetic fibres, and also wood beads and chains composed of natural materials like wood, glass and metal. The coope-ration reflects the contrast between different types of material. “The project Botanic Invasion cuts and matches existing Bolon materials naturally, as in a signature. The concept behind Bolon is balance, the connection between different types of material.”

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PROJECT INFORMATION

COLLECTION NAME: Bolon Graphics; Mache Graphic; Mache
AREA: Living/Comfort; Microsoft
LINE OF BUSINESS: International computer and software giant
LOCATION: Stockholm, Sweden
ARCHITECT: Murman Architects

FACT TO FLOOR YOU: The areas in the office created for meetings, conversations and collaborations have doubled after the refurb, with a downstairs space to relax with a coffee and a turn on the Xbox.

To synch with MICROSOFT’s corporate strategy of working anywhere, Murman Architects designed a whole city plan for the Stockholm office, with squares, streets, a library and coffee houses for the staff to inhabit.
Look of 2016

The future is an unwritten leaf. We search for the in-betweens, the gaps in time, the pearls of the everyday life, a sudden flower in bloom. Cut and torn paper in naïve shapes let new perspectives shine through. **Meetings between different materials shake traditional thinking.** A small branch and a powdery chalk, a fringe of a weave and a fallen feather, papery tapes and shiny treads, set the mind free. Contrasts and compliments.
PROJECTS WE LOVE
RECYCLE
PHOTO TOBIAS REGELL AND CHRISTIAN GUSTAVSSON

With its new recycling facility in Ulricehamn, Bolon makes sure discarded flooring gets a whole new life.

In modern-day business, having a sustainable outlook is no longer a choice but a necessity. Customers increasingly look at a company’s environmental credibility and choose products accordingly. “For Bolon, sustainability is part of our DNA,” says Malin Andén, Quality and Environmental Manager. “That’s where it all started, when the founder Nils-Erik Eklund recycled scraps of materials and turned them into rag rugs. We’re still challenging ourselves, staying one step ahead of legislation – not because we have to, but because we think it is so important. And we don’t stop there. We want to raise the bar for both collaborators and competitors, so that everybody works towards a more sustainable world.”

Maybe it’s the company’s location in the lush and scenic landscape of Västergötland, next to the Åsunden lake, that is rubbing off on Bolon’s green thinking; the company is keeping the manufacturing in Sweden as this makes sense both in terms of shorter transports and logistics, but also allows full control of the production process, the PVC flooring is phthalate free; and the factory, warehouse and offices are cooled by geothermal means, using locally drawn groundwater rather than refrigerants that damage the ozone layer.

“We care deeply about sustainability in all levels of the company – in the environment we live and work in, in the manufacturing process, from a management perspective and also how our staff feels about it,” says Malin Andén. “It’s like a chain where every link plays an equally important role.”

The new collection Flow is Bolon’s first recycled flooring, and is a product of the company’s latest initiative, the recycling plant located in the Ulricehamn factory. Bolon has invested SEK 90 million in the process that grinds and modifies old bits of flooring into granules that can then be bound and reshaped into a new material, starting the cycle over. The plant will also have an impact that stretches outside the company itself. “We have plans in the pipeline to accept waste products from other manufacturers, but that is a very step-by-step procedure,” says Torbjörn Klaesson, Chief Supply Chain and Technical Officer. “We will be ready to accept cut-offs and leftover flooring from our European distributors as well, so our vision is that in future we’ll be able to reclaim our floors and turn them into new ones.”

Getting rid of dangerous substances and recycling materials demand both time and financial commitment, but Bolon also prides itself on smaller but equally important actions that help the environment, whether that is using clean energy or filtering out particles in the factory air. Malin Andén concludes: “The well-being of our colleagues, being an ethical company and practicing what we preach is what matters to us – both now and in days to come.”
A NEW JOURNEY

With its sunny feel and family-friendly vibe, SPIES travel agents wanted an environment that got its customers in the mood for a holiday and kept the call-centre staff on top form.
Projects we love

Recyclingmagıc

BOLON GREEN

NATURALHARMONY

FLOW — THE NEW COLLECTION

The spirit of design

ILSE CRAWFORD