

SHARP ARCHITECTURE IN A SOFT LANDSCAPE

On a hilltop, with a stunning view of the landscape around Aarhus, the Møller family lives in a marvellous house that cuts into the rolling hills to commune with nature.

Words: Susanne Holte Photo: Jacob Termansen



THE SOFT, GREEN HILLS and the raw concrete create a high-contrast encounter between nature and culture. The fascias - the ends of the roof, terrace, etc. - which are covered with galvanised steel plates, emphasise the sharp and angular look. Architect Martin Wienberg is known for juxtaposing differences to create an interesting space for thought.

The razor-sharp lines bend becomingly and play with levels in ways that please the eye and make it tempting to see what is around the next corner. The architecture is tight, yet organic and is in both dialogue with and contrast to the evocative nature that surrounds the property with tall broadleaf trees as far as the eye can see. Inhabited by the four members of the Møller family, the modern house in the outskirts of Aarhus in Denmark is situated on a meandering, picturesque plot of land, the last on a residential road bordering the forest. In a rather unique spot, where a black wooden architect-designed house previously stood, architect Martin Wienberg's design for a functional home elegantly wedges into the hill.- I have designed a house that feels dynamic and interplays with the land. The house has a sloping roof and horizontal lines that create a highly private space that respects nature, Martin Wienberg explains. He has attached importance to very textural building materials, such as slate, concrete with visible screws and raw oak boards. Bold choices and rustic materials that contrast with and yet have a natural relation to the lush surroundings.

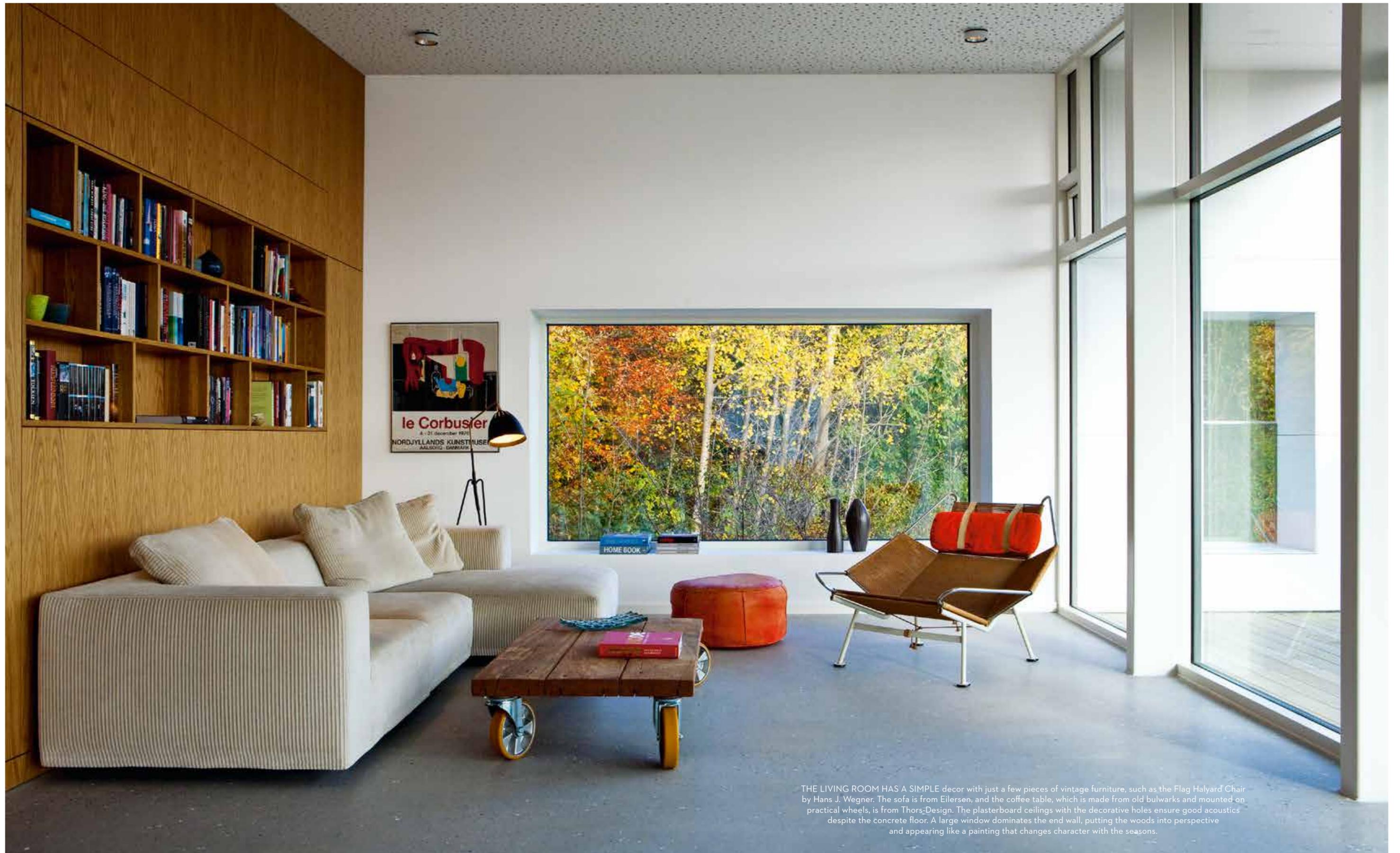
Inside, the simple and rustic materials also prevail. All floors are laid with polished concrete, and except for on the staircase between the two floors, the house has no carpets. This creates a sense of visual calm and makes it possible to move furniture around without having to think about permanent positions. The raw look extends through to the perforated acoustic ceilings, which are made of plasterboard. Floor-to-ceiling window panels let in the light and nature, creating a smooth transition between outside and in. The grey concrete floors inside come up to the rustic, grey, patinated oak planks outside, which offer the same materiality seen within. Much wood is used both inside and outside, and the fine workmanship can be credited to AS Tømmer og Snedker in Juelsminde and engineering company Tri-Consult from Aarhus. The core element of the building, and the principal architectural feature inside the house, is a 14.5-m-long wall covered with oiled oak veneer. Not only does the wall serve as a decorative element, giving the house visual warmth and a beautiful materiality, it also serves as a kitchen-equipment base that is integrated in the wall, thus providing a hideaway for refrigerator and freezer and storage space for all sorts of things behind the hidden, handleless cupboards.

- I want to build personal houses that revolve around feelings, experiences and moods, Martin Wienberg explains.

Backed by the beautiful wooden wall, the living room and kitchen face nature and the almost endless view. A window cut on the end wall reveals its thickness and gives it the quality of a painting. The two children's rooms downstairs also overlook the garden, while the master bedroom is in a more secluded part of the house. One of Martin Wienberg's signatures is the interaction between the introverted and the extroverted, between bright and dim. For example, he has used black tiles in the bathrooms to create the enfolding sense of a cave as a contrast to the other bright rooms in the house. However, the bathrooms are not entirely without daylight. A low-placed window provides a view of the scenery outside, thus bringing nature up close and emphasising the interplay of the house with its surroundings. ■

THE WOODEN WALL imbues the living room with a warmth that goes beautifully with the Octo 4240 lamp designed by Seppo Koho for Secto Design. Along with the concrete floor, it brings a special energy to the room. The large room combines the kitchen, dining room and living room, and cabinet maker Morten Pedersen from Culina has put considerable effort into adapting the pattern of the wooden wall. Culina is also the company behind the kitchen whose appliances are concealed behind the panels. In the middle of the wall, a seating area with leather cushions.





THE LIVING ROOM HAS A SIMPLE decor with just a few pieces of vintage furniture, such as the Flag Halyard Chair by Hans J. Wegner. The sofa is from Eilersen, and the coffee table, which is made from old bulwarks and mounted on practical wheels, is from Thors-Design. The plasterboard ceilings with the decorative holes ensure good acoustics despite the concrete floor. A large window dominates the end wall, putting the woods into perspective and appearing like a painting that changes character with the seasons.



He wants to innovate new Danish architecture

Martin Wienberg, architect MAA and partner in the renowned architectural firm Friis & Moltke A/S in Aarhus, has an ambition to innovate new Danish architecture. He is continuing the functionalist legacy from the founders of architectural firm Knud Friis and Elmar Moltke, whose philosophy centred on unity and simplicity, and whose focus was always on the needs of the client. The design studio takes on a wide range of assignments, from single-family houses and subsidised housing to large housing estates. From small public institutions to large hospitals, sports facilities, museums and educational institutions.

Martin Wienberg explains:

- The design of our single-family houses reflects the breadth of our projects. On this basis, we offer individual and original solutions and buildings with a reasonable balance between function, aesthetics and economy.
- I actually really enjoy the small-scale work once in a while. You get eye to eye with the client, and that is a quality that we at Friis & Moltke can transpose to the big projects.
- The result shows the firm's close relations - also to business partners such as engineers and craftsmen. We often work with the same craftsmen, because trust and flexibility are important factors.

THE LARGE WINDOW PANELS afford an unhindered view through the kitchen and living room. The concrete floor inside and the oak flooring of the terrace are on the same level, accentuating the smooth transition between inside and outside. A relatively large overhang blocks the sun. The balcony is covered with rustic oak boards, whose lovely patina adds a fine materiality to the house. The boards interact with the white fibre concrete slabs, the galvanised flashing and the large glass surfaces. The family has prioritised having maintenance-free materials.





AN EVENING AMBIENCE ON THE LARGE BALCONY - the slim glass guarding reflects the lights from the living room, creating an amazing sense of trompe l'oeil that the living room continues beyond the balcony. In the twilight, the unbroken view stretches across the full expanse of the forest, a setting that, like the location of the house at the end of a road, highlights the sense of privacy. Opposite page: The entrance is a beautiful combination of slate, white fibre concrete and galvanised steel.