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Sweden: Finding Designer Boutiques

A personal shopper to show you the best fashion in Malmo



Sweden knows a thing or two about style, sleek design and minimum fuss.



It's rare to read something about Sweden without the word Ikea thrown into the mix as an example of just how much the world loves their forward-looking vision. But I'm going to tell you about something different when it comes to style.

I'm going to talk about the fresh and edgy designers who are flourishing in the southern Swedish city of Malmo. And I'm going to introduce you to the woman who knows about them all: Mia Berg of Stilverket Berg.

Mia is a woman who loves her job. A personal shopper with a business she created from scratch, she leads me around the wintry streets of Malmo dressed impeccably in a faux fur hat and scarf secured by a gold ribbon.



She's determined to entice me away from my rather functional style of dress to something modern yet feminine with a tough, surprising finish. To this end, we check out floating chiffon dresses and chainmail-like waistcoats and jackets. Blouses in soft peach and apricot blended with a working man's cap.

Mia usually starts her meetings in women's homes, where she surveys their existing wardrobe with a kind but ruthless eye. For travellers such as myself, however, we have to hit the floor running with my travel-happy-non-wrinkle combinations that, I already know, leave a lot to be desired.

One of the best things about Mia is that she is fast. She knows the side streets, the best shops, and the short cuts around the city. She runs her hands through clothes racks like a musician playing the harp, pausing only here and there to whip out a suggestion or two.

I think she's finding me tough going, although I am trying to be more open-minded. For example, I smile at the slogan "Give Peas a Chance" on a T-shirt at the Uma Bazaar, but I know I couldn't carry off the colours.



Soon, though, I am getting into the swing of things. We visit a smorgasbord of shops: Tjallamalla, Milonga, Attewaisaome and Svensson – a magazine turned trendy menswear brand that even has a bite displayed full frontal in the shop window.

By the end of the day, I'm full of ideas if lacking in cash. And it's probably a good thing that today's my last day here otherwise, I might never be able to afford to go back home. But then, I would look much better...

▶ www.umabazaar.se

▶ www.stilverket.se/om_mia.html

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■ Abigail King

Abigail King is a British journalist and photographer who swapped a career as a hospital doctor for a life on the road. She also blogs about cultural travel and adventure at Inside the Travel Lab, where she experiments with the world.

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