

Anne Lise Kjaer –The Scandinavian Home in London’s Highgate

The Scandinavian born futurist and visionary thinker Anne Lise Kjaer lives and works from her 4 bedroom Victorian house in North London’s Highgate. Her exceptional eye for social trends is matched by an original and inspiring way of translating fledgling concepts into commercial business propositions.

Her company [kjaer global’s](#) clients range from today’s leading executives to tomorrow’s brand developers. Kjaer’s insight into every area of futures – from interiors to home decor, food to fashion, cars and electronics to the next big thing in retail – has given her a worldwide client base and a unique ability to engage and inspire her audiences. Some of her [clients](#) are: Herman Miller, Fritz Hansen, iittala, Ikea, Sony, Nokia, Toyota. ***The future is not some place we go but one we create,***’ she says.

Location

The house was purchased in 2006 and we spend almost one and a half year on a complete a-z renovation. On the ground floor we made a completely new kitchen and made the reception rooms one big space. The hallway was completely opened up with roof lights and a new staircase to the loft, which we converted into a bright studio space with 6 large Velux roof lights. In the loft we also build an extra bath and shower wet room.

The overall concept of the house was versatile and white. Once my Indian friend Sadhna told me that white is the most spiritual colour or non-colour of them all and I think she is right. A clean canvas with lots of natural daylight to curate a space fitting any occasion: from family get together, dinner parties and clients visits.

Less than 20 minutes away from London’s West end and a stone throw away from Highgate village I found my dream oasis in the midst of the pulsating city. It was really Hampstead Heath the attraction in the first place as we go for walks at least twice a week. This part of London has so much history. Firstly the architecture both historical and new is very impressive. Secondly artists, poets and statesmen have lived here and in fact Karl Max is buried on the Highgate Cemetery nearby. [Audrey Niffenegger](#) set her second novel: “Her Fearful Symmetry” in Highgate Cemetery and loved it so much she became an official guide. In one line it’s my favourite place in London.

Interior Description

My home is like yin and yang. It’s located on a busy road but at the back it’s a peaceful heaven of green. It’s the perfect symbioses of fast and slow and an ideal work/live space. I just love to get up early in the morning and have a ‘slow coffee in the garden and then ‘go to work’ without any transportation time – it’s good for the environment but even better for your soul.

1. The Garden

When you are in the garden the only sound you hear is the running water from the stone feature in the massive fishpond. The sleeping Balinese statues were

bought in an antique shop and blends perfectly in with the Zen like garden that also has a lot of scented plants and herbs. Energies of my environment have always been a focal point in my life. So I asked Feng-Shui expert [Michael Warden](#) to calculate the perfect placement of my pond and the laughing Buddha's to balance the energies of my home. In fact we use the garden almost 8 months of the year and the outside energies greatly influence the inside space. In fact Michael created a Feng-Shui plan for the whole house and I can only say it has worked wonders. De-cluttering is key in Feng-Shui and by getting rid of things you don't need you create more space to think and dream.

2. The Studio

At the back of the garden we installed the Finnish log cabin and painted it black on the outside and white on the inside. My Norwegian husband who is an architect specialised in sustainability uses it as his studio. It's the perfect space to feel inspired and contemplating 'green' architecture. In the future more and more of us will work from home and we already see a big trend in eco [home studios](#).

3. The Kitchen

The large kitchen is the heart of our home. In fact the large oval versatile Scandinavian table can seat up to 14 people with two extra table plates. This is great for dinner parties and meetings. Usually we just have our Eames Eiffel chair around the table where we meet for lunch and a café latte or espresso during the day. We simply love coffee and in fact the Scandinavians drink more than any other nations in the whole world. Therefore my husband bought a professional machine to make sure we had the real thing on our doorstep at all times.

4. Kitchen Detail

Another passion of mine is fresh flowers and fruit. Once a week we go to the local market to get some of the local produce. Art is another thing that plays a big role in my life and in fact a lot of my inspiration come from artists. I absolutely love the works of [Louise Bourgeois](#) last she showed at the Tate Modern I bought the 'Be Calm' tea towel. It a lovely reminder for me to stay focused and centred in my daily life.

5. The Studio

This massive 40m² studio has 3 workstations hidden away in the white cupboards on the left side of the room that doubles as a wall. I usually work from my studio on the top floor of the house, as it is more intimate. However when we put together big projects our freelance consultants; researchers and designers use the workspace and it's ideal for meetings and client's visits. The space also doubles as a movie theatre as we can black out the light. We use our projector and laptop to watch DVD's on a massive 2x2 meter canvas and with the fireplace lit this is just so cosy and intimate for a family evening. Over the fireplace hangs a painting by Persian artist [Koushna Navabi](#) and the

framed photographs are by the Danish artist [Agusta Atla](#) and one of them was a wedding present.

6. Hallway

This was the space that made the biggest difference to our home. When we first bought it was quite dark. The space over the kitchen contain my son's bedroom and a bathroom. We decided to go very 'Scandi' and create a 'Hems' which is basically a space on top of a room that can double as a place to sleep. Here we installed 3 Velux windows and we have a heavenly light space with clever Ikea storage for foot wear and even a big wall for the large painting by my friend German painter [Sybille Berger](#) who sadly passed away in 2008. This painting was one of my first real art investments I bought many years back. The staircase was specially build to create a feeling of openness when entering the top floor studio.

7. The Bedroom

Everything in the bedroom is white apart from the framed art over the fireplace and the objects on the mantelpiece. This room is my calm white heaven and recovery zone – a place for recharging. The energies are just amazing for meditating early in the morning. The hand crochet bedcover is from Columbia is almost 100 years and a gift from my son's grandmother's home in Cartagena.

The two framed art pieces over the fireplace in the bedroom is a limited edition of 50 by Danish artist [Nina Saunders](#) who lives and works in London. I bought them in 2002 from the Kiosk Project curated by my friend Regitze Bondesen (the granddaughter of Denmark's renowned iconic lamp manufacturers in Louis Poulsen). It's lovely to have artwork and objects from friends as it feels like their energy surrounds you. Other art pieces bought from the Kiosk Project include a miniature sculpture by [Trine Olrik](#) in the living room.

8. Living room and reading area

In fact in the reading area I have some art pieces on the window seal curated with some fresh flowers. The 1930's banana coach refereeing to the slightly rounded shape and the chairs was re-covered with a lovely durable linen material in a neutral colour to bring a feeling summer into this room. I bought them second for £50 back in Denmark 20 years ago and they traveled from Denmark via Germany (where I lived for 4 years) to London where they have had several homes. We have so many books that it's unreal. The reference books we use all the time are here, my studio and the garden studio is also full of books and our country house in Norway has all our Scandinavian books. Thankfully my husband designed the shelves to utilize the space 100%. The large white standing wall lamp is from [Gubi](#) design company and the matching ceiling lamp is from Norman – both bought in Copenhagen.

9. The Living room

The most iconic feature throughout the whole house is the blond wooden floor. The original planks were striped down and treated with lye followed by 2

coats white oil to keep them fresh and blond looking at all times. The handmade rug makes creates a perfect cocoon and lounge setting for relaxing and contemplating. To keep the yin and yang balanced in this space we used our dark wood furniture. Like the desk, the chair from my grandmother and the old travel trunk I bought from a friend for £50 almost 30 years ago. We placed the antique Spanish corner cupboard so we could hide all our technology. The B&O radio & DVD player, our play station and Wii all lives perfectly in here with all our DVD's and connects perfectly with the old B&O television over the fireplace. The table is our old kitchen table that we repaired and reduced to match the seating area. We have a good collection of Scandinavian glassware, as I can't stop buying vintage and recently since working with iittala in Finland I have added a few Alva Alto pieces. My dream piece is the the new glass art by Harri Koskinen. I think I will have to wait to give myself a piece for Christmas. I have 3 artepieces on the wall. One is a bitumen print on craft paper and canvas by Columbian artist [Oswaldo Macia](#), on the desk is a framed glove by Persian artist [Koushna Navabi](#) and finally the oil painting at the back by Scottish artisk Alan McDonald.