

SWEDEN DREAMS

From Stockholm's chicest boating bolthole to the herring heaven off Gothenburg, the Scandi food scene is worth exploring - and the best way to do it is by sea. Nicci Perides reports

PHOTOGRAPH: CORBIS

Stockholm, the Venice of the North, is made up of 14 islands connected by 57 bridges



Stockholm's old town, Gamla Stan, dates back to 1252



Rågskär is on the outer ring of the Stockholm archipelago



Gothenburg is known for its seafood and VRÅ, below, is particularly good



Gothenburg's archipelago

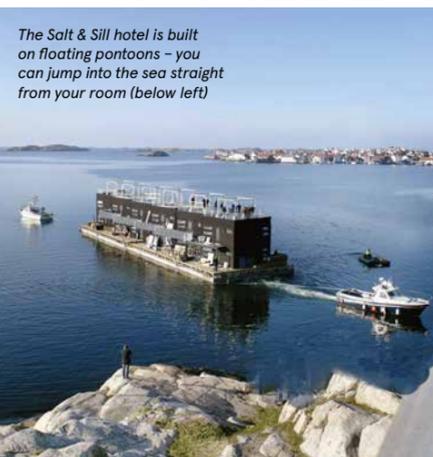
AUTHENTIC EATS

• **Rågskär**
Yachts approaching the private island of Rågskär, on the outside edge of the archipelago, must navigate rocky islands and skerries (islets) – which makes it even more of a secret. Owner Björn Åkerlund insists that the island's cuisine is caught or grown locally. The atmosphere is rustic, calm and tranquil, with lush green vegetation and deep blue seas the backdrop to a feast of freshly smoked eel, grilled fillet of perch and homemade caramel pie. Lunch and dinner is served (weather permitting) on a terrace with views across the archipelago. The experience is warm and informal – as if you have turned up at an old friend's house for supper. In the afternoon, work up an appetite for dinner the traditional way: three minutes in the sauna and then jump into the sea before returning to the dinner table under starry skies. ragskar.se



SHUCK STOP

• **Grebbestad**
Grebbestad is oyster country. Ask the captain to drop anchor while you tender into this mainland stop, before transferring to the charming old-oak-and-pine fishing boat circa 1952, belonging to Lars and Per Karlsson. The brothers will take you out deeper into the archipelago to search for lobsters, oysters and shrimps. On board, you will learn how to crack open freshly caught oysters – the brothers advise chewing, since it brings out the flavour – and back on terra firma you'll devour a seafood banquet in the boathouse. evertsjobod.se



The Salt & Sill hotel is built on floating pontoons – you can jump into the sea straight from your room (below left)



Boiled potatoes, lingonberry jam and herring soured a hundred ways: for years Sweden's culinary reputation was such that it didn't draw many superyacht owners – or many others for that matter.

But for some time now a gastronomic revolution has been sizzling in Sweden. The country's new wave of Michelin star-spangled chefs and hearty traditional cooks focus on local, seasonal ingredients and clean fresh flavours, and are helping raise Scandinavian cooking to the top table.

Most excitingly for yacht owners, some of the best restaurants are scattered over two eminently cruisable archipelagos – around Stockholm and Gothenburg – with elegant cities, beautiful scenery and 20 hours of sunlight a day in the height of summer. You may not avoid the herring entirely, but thanks to this gastronomic adventure, you won't want to.

Stockholm's archipelago



The Grand Hôtel is home to two fine restaurants

GASTRONOMIC GRAVITAS

• **Stockholm**
Sweden's capital is spread across 14 islands at the mouth of Lake Mälaren and most of its celebrated restaurants (it holds eight Michelin stars) are seafood focused. Visiting yachts can moor in the city centre across from Stockholm's chicest bolthole – the Grand Hôtel – which proved its culinary mettle at the 2013 marriage of Princess Madeleine of Sweden and American financier Chris O'Neill. At the hotel's Matsalen restaurant, which has two of those eight Michelin stars, chef Mathias Dahlgren serves simple, natural cuisine that evolves with the seasons – it is light and refreshing with an emphasis on texture. And there are fun surprises in presentation: from painting the sauce over your food with brushes to swapping plates for carved ice blocks. An evening here is far from a traditional Michelin-starred experience. grandhotel.se



Elegance is standard at the Grand Hôtel in Stockholm



Dining on Rågskär is a deliberately informal experience

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Käringsön, pronounced "Share-ring-an", is home to Peterson's Krog, below, which is right on the water's edge

NEED TO KNOW

Where to go to make the most of your Scandinavian stay

Local knowledge: Superyacht Services Scandinavia can help arrange a cruise in Sweden, as well as offering provisioning, logistics and chandlery. yachtservices.se
TR Shipping Sweden has bunkering, customs and immigration assistance, supplies and travel arrangements. trshipping.se

Bookend your holiday: the Grand Hôtel, Stockholm, does majesty Scandi-style, with towering ceilings, muted tones and opulent touches such as chandeliers and art deco lamps. grandhotel.se

Upper House, Gothenburg, exudes pared-back Swedish style. The expansive city views from its rooms are embellishment enough. upperhouse.se.

SMALL TOWN SECRET

• Käringsön

The red wooden houses on Käringsön island are packed so tightly together – to keep off the harsh winter winds – that it feels like a toy town. As you wander the metre-wide streets, people greet you from their kitchen windows. For such a small island it is hard to believe that the restaurant here, Peterson's Krog, has a waiting list for a table. Near the small harbour, it serves hearty seafood, locally sourced – as indeed are the waiting staff (blonde, blue-eyed and beautiful). The courses are huge and, for dessert, an enormous slice of cake and coffee is recommended.

If you're too full for the sweet stuff, they'll insist on packing it up to take back to your yacht. Don't tell your chef. petersonskrog.se



SMOKING COOL

• Åstol

A short sail from Klädesholmen is the quiet island of Åstol, which came into its own during a mid 18th-century herring boom. The neat whitewashed fishermen's houses around the harbour (which has a depth of about 4.5 metres) contrast with the rugged natural beauty of the island's other side, which has been left to cope with the elements. Locals nip over purely for a spot of lunch or dinner at the renowned Åstols Rökeri Smokehouse. Run by Pia and Leif, the smokehouse not only offers smoked eel, mackerel, rainbow trout and shrimp in banquet-like quantities, but live music too. astolsrokeri.se



Above: every year Gothenburg's best chefs converge on the island to cook at Åstols Rökeri smokehouse

