

Don't ask a Swede who Camilla Läckberg is. I had no idea either, yet it seems everyone I come across has an opinion of Sweden's literary star who sets all her crime novels in her tiny native town of Fjällbacka, a two-hour drive north of Gothenburg.

She even comes up in conversation when I meet Linnéa Sjögren and Jonas Pettersson – ex-city workers and founders of trendy seaweed farming company Catxalot, which supplies most of Sweden and many international restaurants too. They aren't wholly impressed. My immaculately-dressed Fjällbacka tour guide Åsa, on the other hand, seems thrilled to show me all the sites mentioned in the novels, despite coping with up to ten busloads of tourists per day in the summer season.

Fjällbacka was originally put on the map by Ingrid Bergman. The actress visited the nearby island of Dannholmen every summer from 1958. When she died, her ashes were scattered there. Before this stardom though, locals relied on unpredictable herring seasons and granite quarrying to stay afloat.

The first Monday after 20 September marks the start of the lobster season, which ends in April. I witness this daily ritual first-hand in Sweden's oyster capital, Grebbestad – around half an hour north of Fjällbacka – at Everts Sjöbod: a rustic lodge named after a legendary local fish dealer.

We pull up ten baskets that have been luring in the ocean's 'black gold' since dawn. When it's my turn I find an enormous female lobster, but she is carrying a number of eggs and under conservation laws I must return her to the ocean. These same laws apply to any other lobster that is shorter than a certain length, which changes annually. On our way back to shore, we enjoy a fika – a traditional Swedish coffee break usually accompanied by pastries, which I find I am quite adept at.

In order to make the most of a trip to Bohuslän, I'd recommend driving: it will take you through mountainous tunnels, over epic bridges, and above glassy lakes. And it's not just the outdoors that will satisfy the senses, but the Instagram-worthy interiors and fascinating cuisine too. There's a lot more to West Sweden than Camilla Läckberg.



KAYAKING AT DAWN, IMAGE CREDIT: HENRIK TRYGG

[GREAT ESCAPE]

West Sweden

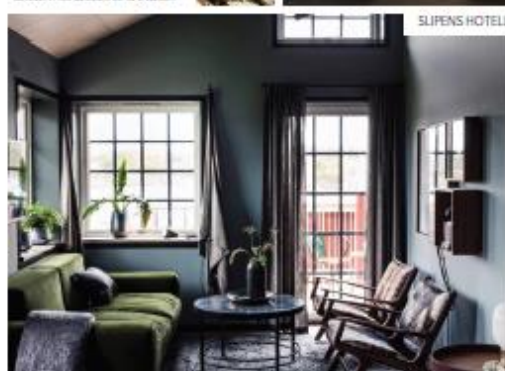
There are around 8,000 islands scattered along the Bohuslän Coast, but the best way to explore this picturesque region is by car, **Marianne Dick** finds



CATXALOT WORKSHOP, IMAGE CREDIT: MADELINE LANDLEY



SLIPENS HOTELL, IMAGE CREDIT: MAGNUS SKOGLÖF



SLIPENS HOTELL



CAPTAINS TABLE, IMAGE CREDIT: LISA NESTORSON



EVERTS SJÖBOD, GREBBESTAD,
IMAGE CREDIT: ROBERT DAHLBERG



BRYGGHUSET, SLIPENS HOTELL



FISKEBÄCKSKIL



FISHING BOAT AT EVERTS SJÖBOD,
IMAGE CREDIT: ROBERT DAHLBERG

Where to stay

If you fancy completely shutting off for a few days, then make a short detour to Fiskebäckskil, where you'll find pretty fishing cottages, two modern hotels, and not a great deal else. Slipens Hotell is cosy and full of character, with an outstanding restaurant, Brygghuset, plus a whisky bar. Just a couple of minutes along the coast is Gullmarsstrand: a minimalist hotel that has been owned by the same three brothers for 35 years. During this time it has steadily expanded and now boasts two spas that overlook the expansive ocean. slipenshotell.se, gullmarsstrand.com

Where to eat

Stenungsbaden Yacht Club is only half an hour outside of Gothenburg, yet it feels more like a Hamptons members' club with its American East Coast-inspired décor. The top-floor restaurant, Captains Table, boasts panoramic views over Hakefjord beach and the menu revolves around locally sourced fish. The gratinated seafood platter includes some of the finest shellfish I have ever tasted. stenungsbaden.se

Mayfair recommends

Fjällbacka is dominated by the Vetteberget cliff, which is accessed by climbing through Kungsklyftan: a rocky path above which four massive boulders are wedged. This dramatic tunnel is an unusual sight, and the views over the peaceful archipelago from the top are unmissable – especially around sunset. Another way to experience the archipelago is on the water (no less adventurous). An excursion with kayak specialist Skårgårdsidyllen to Grebbestad usually includes a locally sourced picnic – including a sample of Caixalot's moreish seaweed salt – on a nearby island. skargardsidyllen.se

SUITCASE ESSENTIALS



BINOCULARS,
FROM £910,
SWAROVSKIOPTIK.COM



SCARF, £255,
ETRO.COM



CARDIGAN, £395,
DRAKES.COM



BOOTS, £299,
TIGEROFSWEDEN.COM



BAG, £675,
RICHARDANDERSONLTD.COM