



The exclusive Sunset Water Hill villa is a combination of classic style and modern features.

Ross thinks outside the box

Ross Architecture & Design has created the most beautiful villa in Sweden, and head architect Pål Ross is an expert at thinking outside the box. Now the award-winning firm is crossing the pond to Silicon Valley.

By Ellinor Thunberg | Photos: Ross Architecture & Design

A typical Ross house is a unique combination of ultra classic and ultra modern, and the flow in the house is inspired by human movements and nature. "It is more important to have the building adapt to the people living there, than having people adapt to the building," says co-founder and head architect Pål Ross.

His passion for creating environments in harmony with man and nature has turned

into a one-of-a-kind style and school of its own.

Heading for Silicon Valley

The company is now targeting a new market in Silicon Valley, and is right now in the process of building a network of high-end contractors and estate agents. Ross is excited about the expansion: "We look forward to not having to hold back. In the US, houses as large as 2-, 3- or 4,000 square

metres are nothing unusual," he says, adding: "We include pools in all our projects; we have had that from the start. I think life is too short not to have a pool, and in America it is absolutely a given."

The architect says that the firm loves working on smaller projects too, mainly back in Sweden, but in the US it will revolve exclusively around major commissions. He admits that he cannot wait to see the results, but concludes: "Rome wasn't built in a day either."

Through the expansion, Ross brings an energy-efficient way of thinking overseas, although the challenge there will be re-



LEFT AND MIDDLE: The island Åland is about to get its first Ross property. RIGHT: Pål Ross likes to include a swimming pool in every project.

versed from Sweden, where the problem is to keep the heat inside and stand the cold. Ross Architecture & Design works with REHACT, a local energy system for cooling, heating, hot water and ventilation, that can help save up to 85 per cent energy.

Designing a work of art

Exciting news is on the cards for Ross in Scandinavia too, with two firsts: the first Ross property on the island of Åland, between Sweden and Finland, and a new residential area with flats in Ekerö. "A request from the housing corporation was to show that for the same amount of money, you can achieve a more interesting architecture," says the architect.

This rhymes with his calling to explain to the market that there is not necessarily a connection between beautiful and expensive or ugly and cheap. "In fact, things are often both ugly and expensive," he says.

Ross, of course, knows a thing or two about beautiful homes. The firm has worked on over 300 projects since its inception in

1996, including the award-winning Villa Victor, named the Most Beautiful Villa in Sweden by home magazine Vi i Villa.

Timeless style

Ross is not afraid to think outside the box and the lead the way. The philosophy behind Waldorf schools and biodynamic farming, anthroposophy, is an important influence, and the architect Erik Rasmussen shared insights about the meaning of flow and well-being in designs, something that Ross is highly inspired by.

"It is a good thing that it was God who designed the human, and not an architect, because we would have had squared heads and it would not have been so good looking. Everything would be square or rectangular; a four-cornered heart would be easier to fit. But people are not box-shaped – people's souls are not square, and neither is nature," he insists.

Ross is looking for more natural alternatives in harmony with people's movements

and patterns. He believes the conventional box shapes and straight lines in architecture, widely considered as the norm, do not make the right solution to people's need for a habitat. His style has become a genre of its own and is also timeless, or as Ross puts it, "without a best-before date".

The houses the firm made 20 years ago might as well have been designed yesterday, and the lead architect makes a comparison with old castles: "10 years here or 50 years there doesn't matter – they stand firmly rooted in a cultural heritage."

AWARDS IN BRIEF:

2013: Gold in the Europe Property Award; Best Architecture Single Residence in Sweden

2010: Building Preservation Prize for Best New Construction

2009: The Most Beautiful Villa in Sweden

For more information, please visit:

www.ross.se



LEFT: The award-winning, Most Beautiful Villa in Sweden, Villa Victor. TOP RIGHT: Pål and Deirdre Ross receiving the first prize at the Europe Property Award. BOTTOM RIGHT: A Ross design is more than just a property – it is a work of art.