

Created by: Debra C. Argen  
**Gothenburg, Sweden**



As a true gourmand, if I had to select one of my new favorite food cities, I would definitely rate Göteborg, also called Gothenburg, in the western part of Sweden very high!

Founded in 1621, [Göteborg](#) has 481,410 inhabitants, and proudly and justifiably boasts 4 Michelin one-star restaurants, and has a total of 570 restaurants. Imagine the possibilities of not having to eat at the same restaurant for over 18 months!

Edward F. Nesta and I flew [SAS Scandinavian Airlines](#) from New York to Copenhagen, and then took a 45-minute SAS flight from Copenhagen to Göteborg, where we spent 3 fabulous nights in August 2005, sampling its culinary and cultural delights.

We stayed at the [Elite Plaza Hotel](#), Västa Hamngatan 3, the first five-star hotel in Göteborg, which opened in January 2000, received its five-star rating in December 2003, and was the former home of the Svea Fire and Life Insurance Company, built in 1889, with later additions made in 1897 and 1927. The Villeroy & Boche tile mosaic Svea logo remains in the lobby. The hotel has 143 total rooms over five floors. Although the hotel has a contemporary feel to it, old-world elegance remains from its intricately carved dark wood staircases to the pillars, where we felt like we were taking a journey back in time. They have an excellent restaurant, [Svea Hof](#), their intimate Plaza Bar, adjacent to the restaurant has an interesting martini menu, and there is an English pub, [The Bishop's Arms](#), at street level. Security conscious guests will appreciate the hotel's dedication to guests' safety, where a guest must insert their room key in a slot in the elevator, in order to operate the elevator, and their room key only allows them access to their own floor. Read about the [Elite Plaza Hotel](#) and the [Svea Hof restaurant](#) in our [Hotels & Resorts](#), [Restaurants](#) and [Chefs' Recipes](#) sections.

**Elite Plaza Hotel**  
**Västa Hamngatan 3**  
**Box 110 65**  
**404 22 Göteborg**  
**Telephone: +46 31 720 40 48**  
[www.gbgplaza.elite.se](http://www.gbgplaza.elite.se)

After settling our luggage in our room and freshening up, we were off to begin our culinary exploration of [Västsvensk Mersmak](#), which translates as Taste of West Sweden. West Sweden is fortunate in that the West Coast has the benefit of having the best shellfish, the forests are plentiful with game, and the region produces excellent cheeses. Västsvensk Mersmak was launched in 2000, to promote tourism to West Sweden, as a gourmet destination. The program began with 20 restaurants outside of Göteborg, who

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participated in rigorous training, and seminars before being judged by a jury to determine if they upheld the high standards that Västsvensk Mersmak was striving to meet. Those that met the criteria were given a certificate to participate in Västsvensk Mersmak. To assist visitors with making this gourmet exploration, they have published a gorgeous book, *A Culinary Guide to West Sweden*, which provides the history of the Västsvensk Mersmak, as well as delicious descriptions of the restaurants involved and includes their tantalizing recipes, as well as interviews with the master chefs.



Our first restaurant on our Västsvensk Mersmak program was [Råda Säteri](#), where we had a lovely lunch in the antiques-filled house that was built in 1772, with stunning views of the lake. Chef Pär Hamberger owns the restaurant that he runs with his wife, Helena. It is situated about 10 km southwest of Göteborg, just outside Mölnlycke. The restaurant features a rather unusual 'guestbook', where important guests in the 1800's would sign their signature with a diamond on the windowpanes! In June 2001, President George W. Bush visited the restaurant and he, too, signed the windowpane guestbook. Read about Råda Säteri in our Restaurants and Chefs' Recipes sections.

**Råda Säteri**  
**435 32 Mölnlycke**  
**Telephone: +46 (0) 31 88 48 00**  
[www.radasateri.se](http://www.radasateri.se)

Returning to Göteborg, we needed a bit after exercise after our delightful lunch at Råda Säteri. With our [Göteborg Passes](#) in hand, we decided to take a walk around the city. The Göteborg Pass can be purchased at the Göteborg Tourist Office, or even online at [www.goteborg.com](http://www.goteborg.com) for either 24 or 48 hours, and offers free or discounted admissions at attractions, museums, sightseeing tours by boat or bus, parking, and free travel on public transportation, as well as discounts at some stores. We love to visit museums when we travel, and we find these cards to be especially helpful and also cost effective.

We stopped at the [Goteborgs konstmuseum](#), (Göteborg Art Museum), a grand scale art museum that has a vast collection of famous works, including those by artists Edvard Munch, Renoir, Rousseau, Pissaro, Henri Fantin-Latour, Monet, Van Gogh, Carot, Gauguin, Cezanne, Chagall, Picasso, Wassily Kandinsky, and Degas bronze sculptures. They also have a gift shop. They are closed Mondays, and are open Tuesdays and Thursday from 11:00 am &ndash; 6:00 pm, Wednesdays from 11:00 pm &ndash; 9:00 pm, and Friday &ndash; Sunday from 11:00 am &ndash; 5:00 pm. Admission is charged, but is free with the Göteborg Pass.

**Göteborgs konstmuseum**  
**Götaplatsen**  
[www.konstmuseum.goteborg.se](http://www.konstmuseum.goteborg.se)

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We returned to our hotel and took a much-deserved nap before getting ready for dinner at [fond](#), a one-star Michelin restaurant, owned by Chef Stefan Karlsson. Fond, open for 6 years, was listed in the Michelin Guide its first year, and received its one Michelin star rating the following year. Located next to the Göteborgs konstmuseum, the restaurant features a contemporary ambience with a curved wall of wraparound windows, wood tables with glowing candles, and dishtowels used as napkins. The comfortable atmosphere is enhanced with a color scheme of slate blue and coral chairs, with brown nubby banquettes with beige bolsters.

Chef Stefan Karlsson said that he loves traditional tastes and produce, but modernizes it a bit. With that said, we were ready to sit back and put ourselves in the more than competent hands of the chef, as we planned our gastronomic journey at fond. Read about our journey at [fond](#) that includes an interview with Chef Stefan Karlsson in our Restaurantssection.

**fond restaurang, bar & café**  
**Götaplatsen**  
**412 56 Göteborg**  
**Telephone: +46 (0) 31 81 25 80**  
[www.fondrestaurang.com](http://www.fondrestaurang.com)

With a full day and evening behind us, we returned to the hotel and immediately fell asleep dreaming of all we had seen on our first day. We began our next day with breakfast at the Svea Hof restaurant, where they had a luscious buffet to tempt us, but after dinner at fond the night before, we limited ourselves to juice, coffee, and cereal, and then had to go back to have slices of still-warm homemade corn bread.

We took a sightseeing tour of the city with Ingrid Johansson, where we learned that Göteborg has the largest port in all of Scandinavia. The river divides the city into two parts, and there is a fort at the river. The city is a mix of cultures; the Dutch came to build to the canals and stayed, the Germans came for business, followed by the Scots in the 19th century. We made a stop at Feskôrka nicknamed the 'Fish Church' so named because of its architectural shape, where fresh seafood is available to purchase, or eat at their restaurant located upstairs.

For lunch, we went to [Hemma Hos Restaurang & Bar](#), which translates as 'At Home' in the artsy Haga neighborhood, with quaint shops, a custom clog shop, boutiques, and antiques. There is a limited menu, but the food was good, the portions were ample, and the service was friendly.

**Hemma Hos Restaurang & Bar**  
**Haga Nygata 12**  
**Göteborg**  
**Haga Telephone: +46 (0) 31 40 90**  
[www.hemmahos.net](http://www.hemmahos.net)

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It was a rainy day, and after we had explored the Haga area and poked in the shops there, we wanted to get out of the rain. We spent a delightful hour at the [Antik Hallarna](#) exploring the many small antique shops within the multi-floor building.

**Antik Hallarna**  
**V. Hamngatan 6**  
[www.antikhallarna.se](http://www.antikhallarna.se)

Afterwards, we hopped on the train, using our Göteborg Pass to visit the interesting [Röhsska Museet](#), (Röhss Museum), which is Sweden's only Design and Applied Arts museum. They are closed Mondays, and are open Tuesdays from 12:00 pm &ndash; 8:00 pm, Wednesdays &ndash; Fridays from 12:00 pm &ndash; 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11:00 am &ndash; 5:00 pm. Admission is charged, but is free with the Göteborg Pass.

**Röhsska Museet**  
**Vasagatan 37-39, Box 53178**  
**SE-400 15**  
**Telephone: +46 (0) 31 61 38 50**  
[www.designmuseum.se](http://www.designmuseum.se)



In the evening, we went to Sjung I Trägarn, celebrating its 25th year song jubilee at the Trädgårdsföreningen, the central park of Göteborg, where the audience sang along with the help of programs, which provided the lyrics for the songs.



Afterwards, we had a fabulous seafood dinner at [Restaurang Trädgåår'n](#), which is in the Trädgårdsföreningen. The restaurant is owned by the brothers Dahlbom, Anders (Chef of the Year 1993) and Jonas, (Chef of the Year 1996), and Karin Andersson is the Head Chef. The décor is modern with a wall of windows overlooking the park and fountain, with a parallel wall of wood. Black upholstered chairs, charcoal tablecloths, celadon green napkins, and a tree in the center of the restaurant provide the ambience, as well as the lavish seafood buffet and large screen over the stylish bar, where images of crashing surf, alternated with enticing photos of the restaurant's creations. The restaurant has a 2-cutlery designation from the Michelin Guide Read about Restaurang Trädgåår'n in our Restaurants and Chefs' Recipesection.

**Restaurang Trädgåår'n**  
**Nya Allén**  
**411 38 Göteborg**  
**Telephone: +46 (0) 31 10 20 90**

[www.tradgarn.se](http://www.tradgarn.se)

The next morning after breakfast at the Svea Hof, we were off on a different type of adventure; driving a Volvo around West Sweden to explore the countryside and continue our culinary discovery of Västsvensk Mersmak.



We took a taxi from the hotel to the [Volvo Center](#) and picked up our shiny black Volvo XC90 V8 AWD, and although Edward really couldn't wait to start driving his new "toy" around Sweden, we decided to first visit the [Volvo Museum](#) to learn more about the Swedish carmaker. Volvo made their first car in 1927 and their first truck in 1928; and by 1935 the company went public. Always with an eye on safety, Volvo was responsible for introducing the safety belt. The museum combines history with some interesting cars including several prototypes and concept cars that never went into production.

Of special interest was their P1900, their first sportscar - a 1954 2-seat roadster, which was discontinued in 1957 after only 67 cars were built. The P1800 built in 1969 had an interesting feature of wipers on its headlights. The prototype P1900 was Volvo's second venture into sportscar, and was successful because it was used on the television show, 'The Saint.' Also exhibited was a bus from 1928, planes with Volvo engines, boats, as well as Volvo racecars. One of the strangest cars we saw was a concept car built in 1967 called 'The Rocket' or 'The Barrel', which was a design proposal from the Italian coachbuilder Frua, based on a modified P1800, for the future P1800 ES model. The rear glass window of the car earned the car its nickname, and the car was deemed too radical for public taste. It still remains unconventional. The museum is closed on Mondays. They are open Tuesdays &ndash; Fridays 12:00 pm &ndash; 5:00 pm, and Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00 am &ndash; 4:00 pm, but hours vary during the summer.

### **Volvo Museum**

**Götaverken, Arendal**

**Telephone: +46 (0) 31 66 48 14**

**[www.volvo.com/museum](http://www.volvo.com/museum)**

Finally, we were almost ready to take to the open road in our Volvo! After some brief instructions from Peter Carman of Volvo on how to use the navigation feature, we were on the road, heading back to the hotel. City driving while trying to follow written directions can be a bit hectic at times, but with the Volvo navigation system, if we missed a turn, it automatically corrected us to get back on our route. We arrived safely at our hotel, and parked the car for our last remaining day in Göteborg, so that we could explore the city on foot, by train and even by boat!



After a quick lunch, we decided to take the 30-minute ferryboat sightseeing trip to [Nya Elfsborg Fästning](#), (Elfsborg Fortress). Sitting on the top deck of the Hebbe Lelle, we had picturesque views of Göteborg. As we stepped off the ferryboat, we were greeted by the 'Pastor's wife' in period clothes, who led us up the hill to meet the 'Warden', and a 'prisoner' who provided us with a tour and history of the island. In 1644 the

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Danish built a small embankment to take over Göteborg. The fortress was built in 1660 and filled with soldiers to protect Sweden from the Danes. In 1717, the Danes again tried to take Göteborg, but were sent back. In 1719, there was a last big battle, and the Danes surrounded the fortress, but through an ingenious plan by the Swedes, they drove the Danes back. In 1725, the Swedes decided that they no longer needed a fortress, and it began a new chapter as a prison. There are daily ferryboat departures in May &ndash; August from Lilla Bommen to the fortress. Admission is charged, but is free with the Göteborg Pass.



After our boat 'cruise', we decided to visit one more museum in Göteborg, and went to the [Varldskulturmuseet](http://www.worldculture.se) (The Museum of World Cultures). The museum features contemporary art, as well as cultural exhibits from around the world. The Dahlbom brothers, who own Restaurang Trädgår'n, also have a restaurant at the museum. The museum is closed on Mondays. They are open Tuesday s from 12:00 pm &ndash; 5:00 pm, Wednesdays &ndash; Fridays 12:00 pm &ndash; 9:00 pm, and Saturdays and Sundays from 12:00 pm &ndash; 5:00 pm. Admission to the museum is free.

**Varldskulturmuseet**  
**Södra Vägen 54, Körsvagen**  
[www.worldculture.se](http://www.worldculture.se)



After exploring the city's restaurants, it was time to enjoy dinner at our hotel in the Svea Hof Restaurant. We began with drinks in their Plaza Lounge, where Bartender Lars NydeD has created an interesting Martini menu, which includes famous martini quotes, including those by E.B. White, "Before I start to write I

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always treat myself to a nice Dry Martini, just one to give me courage to get started. After that I'm on my own"; and Marilyn Monroe, "I must slip out of these wet clothes and into a dry martini." The little martini menu book also includes famous martini drinkers, including of course, Agent 007! We tried the Fläder Draja, made with Hallansfläder, Noilly Prat and Martini & Rossi vermouth; it was a perfect summer drink, which we enjoyed with delicious bar snacks of shrimp and dill on toast, and foie gras with fig marmalade.



In the evening, the [Svea Hof](#) restaurant at the [Elite Plaza Hotel](#) changes from its more casual day attire, and takes on an elegant ambience with tables draped with cafe au lait colored linens and cream-colored napkins embroidered with Svea Hof. Tea light candles set in silver holders on the tables, and tall white tapers in silver candlesticks illuminate the room. There is an open kitchen to watch the chefs in action. The restaurant has a 3-cutlery rating from Michelin. Read about our dinner at the Svea Hof Restaurant in our Restaurantssection, and recipes from Chef Björn Tagesson in our Chefs' Recipessection.

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After dinner, we decided to try our luck at the [Casino Cosmopol](#), conveniently located just a short stroll from our hotel. Although not big gamblers, we do like to try our hand at the casinos around the world, and have played at some of the best casinos including Monte Carlo, Las Vegas, Budapest, San Remo, Marrakech, and Berlin. Unfortunately, 'Lady Luck' wasn't with us, but we did have fun trying! The casino is open daily, with a minimum age requirement of 20 years. Smart attire is required. Admission is charged, but is free with the Göteborg Pass.

**Casino Cosmopol**  
**Packhusplatsen 7**  
[www.casinocosmopol.se](http://www.casinocosmopol.se)

After a whirlwind visit to Göteborg, we returned to our hotel for some much-deserved sleep, because in the morning, we would begin driving our black Volvo XC90 V8 AWD through West Sweden. Read about our continuing West Sweden adventures in a future edition of the magazine!

Read more about Göteborg in our [Hotels & Resorts](#), Restaurants and Chefs' Recipessections.

For more information on Göteborg and Sweden, please visit: [www.goteborg.com](http://www.goteborg.com), [www.visit-sweden.com](http://www.visit-sweden.com), <http://www.west-sweden.com> and [www.vastsvenskermersmak.com](http://www.vastsvenskermersmak.com).

