

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Handelsman Flink Restaurang

West Sweden not only appeals to the eye, but to the palate as well. Setting out to fully experience West Sweden as a culinary destination, we began in Gothenburg, and then continued by visiting the restaurants in the outlying areas that participate in **Vastsvensk Mersmak**.

[Handelsman Flink Restaurang & Handelsbod](#), is located about 1.5 hours north of Gothenburg on Flatön Island in the Bohuslän archipelago. It is family owned and operated; Stefan Hjélmer oversees the 12 guestroom hotel, his wife, Siv, manages the gift shop that looks much like it did back in 1912, son, Björn, takes guests out on their boat, daughter Maria, a Drew Barrymore look-alike manages the restaurant, and son-in-law Niclas Krafft is the Executive Chef.



The pride this family takes in Handelsman Flink Restaurang & Handelsbod is evident everywhere you look; the shop is filled with interesting gift items and candy reminiscent of yesteryear, they turned an old herring shop into a wine cellar, they make their own beer, Skärgårdspilsner Handelsman Flink, and their restaurant participates in [Vastsvensk Mersmak](#) or Taste of Sweden, a rigorous training and certification program that awards only allows restaurants upholding the high standards of the program the opportunity to participate.

In late August 2005, Edward F. Nesta and I drove from Gothenburg, Sweden, and then took a car ferry to Flatön Island, to have lunch at Handelsman Flink. The restaurant is done in blue and white, and features a nautical theme with fresh flowers on the wood tables, and a sketch on the wall of Ebert Taube, the famous troubadour who spent countless time at Handlesman Flink.



We began our lunch with their Handlemans Flink sillbuffé (Handelmans Flink Herring Buffet) followed by their Handlemans Flink Fisksoppa med tomar, fankål och lax serveras med saffransrouille (Handlesmann Flink fish soup with tomato, fennel and salmon with saffron rouille), which we paired with a 2002 Duck Pond Chardonnay from Columbia Valley, Washington, which was well suited to the fish. The fish soup was

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presented in a large bowl that was set on a platter and accompanied by a glass bowl filled with shrimp. The soup was a delicious meal in itself, as the rich broth was loaded with tomatoes, slices of red onion, potatoes, large pieces of salmon, and a crayfish that was presented with its claws hanging over the edge of the bowl.



Their lunch menu changes daily with a focus on Swedish traditional food, and their dinner menu, which has more of a French focus, changes every 2-3 weeks. The restaurant has a large wine selection, which includes many wines from the United States.

After lunch, we took a tour of the hotel that features a sauna and Jacuzzi for its guests, as well as Carpe Diem beds of Sweden, French wallpaper, and pretty tile bathrooms. Stefan has an eye on environmental conservation, and utilizes a system where he pumps warm water from deep underground and uses it to heat the guestrooms through heaters in the parquet floors.



It was a beautiful sunny day, and Stefan convinced us that we should go out for a ride on his zodiac. With Björn as captain, his friend Joar, Stefan, Edward and I, took an exhilarating boat tour where we experienced the rugged beauty of the island, saw sheep on the rocks, and enjoyed the postcard-perfect fishing village scene of Grundsund.

Back on shore, we had savored coffee and chocolate truffles on their terrace before continuing on our journey to explore more of the Taste of West Sweden.

Read [Chefs' Recipes](#) where Chef Niclas Krafft shares one of his recipes.

Handelsman Flink Restaurang & Handelsbod

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For more information on Sweden, please visit: www.visit-sweden.com, www.west-sweden.com and www.vastsvenskmersmak.com.

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