

SCANDINAVIAN LIGHT & DESIGN, VIENNA, NOVEMBER 2014

THE NORDIC COUNTRIES AS A SUSTAINABLE GASTRONOMIC REGION, AUTUMN 2014

SUMMARY

Scandinavian Light & Design is an export promoting activity, jointly organised by Business Sweden and the Swedish and Norwegian embassies in Vienna. The event, which was arranged for the seventh consecutive year, has established itself among the main target group; designers and architects, as an exciting and steadily growing opportunity to meet and to showcase the Nordic light and furniture exhibitors' products. Thus the concept has become a platform for networking and meetings between Scandinavian design enterprises and key individuals on the Austrian market. The Swedish export of furniture and lighting is worth over 2 million euro yearly. Sweden alone has over 800 companies operating on this market. The SLD event had a theme called Acoustics and a food designer, a visual arts designer and the embassy chef created a multisensory experience based on this theme. There were visuals showing the dense and quiet Nordic winter landscape when the guests entered the exhibition area supported by winter sounds. A seasonal Nordic dashi being served and the menu introduced to the guest to greet them. Then small portions of food were served throughout the evening to keep the guests at the exhibition talking to the exhibitors and making business connections. At the event in Vienna, 300 persons participated.

OBJECTIVES

To strengthen the Nordic ambiance and brand, this year Scandinavian Light & Design collaborated with the New Nordic Food Programme, financed by UD in Stockholm. The main purpose was to create a multisensory experience by serving food with an unmistakably

Scandinavian feeling and character. The event was realized by new collaborations between the Swedish and Norwegian Embassies, the Embassy chef, the visual artist, the food designer and Business Sweden.

ACTIVITIES

A menu was composed by elements that signified the different seasons and the sound of the Nordic winter nights. Through sound, taste, sight and touch the guests were brought the feeling of Scandinavia. The menu reflected typical Nordic elements such as the silence of the dense forests, the seasonal changes and the winter light.

Juniper, elderflower, root vegetables, Norwegian salmon and wild berries are natural and regional produce that were transformed into new, innovative and surprising dishes, significant of the new Scandinavian kitchen, as well as thinking and design. Something on Florians light

show accompanying the menu/event if we have text describing Christoph Fink, chef at the Swedish embassy in Vienna, together with Swedish taste designer, Vanja Franzén, and Austrian light designer, Florian Tanzer, constituted the creative team. Together they composed an all-encompassing Scandinavian feel in taste, light and design.

The extensive drinks menu reflected the theme of the event, i.e. the Scandinavian nature, the change of the seasons and the sustainable use of ingredients that are growing wild.

NETWORK & SUPPORT

The Nordic Food Diplomacy Tool-Kit was used throughout this process with success.

New and extended collaborations with the Nordic embassies and cross-creative pilot projects with the design and exporting industries and export promoting organisa-



tions. By working together in a team the embassies and Business Sweden saw the value of adding food as a branding tool to strengthen the whole Nordic feel and brand at the event..

By using a number of components, which together engaged all senses and thus connected the invited guests with an all-encompassing feeling of Scandinavia, the Nordic brand is further developed. The working processes and collaborations in this event, where all parts are gathering around a fellow aim is a creative model for future activities. In addition the chef got a more holistic approach of setting the menu for the event, based on the event theme.

RESULTS

There was lots of positive feedback from both exhibitors and participating architects. Among the feedback a quote from the leading architectural magazines editor Bernd Mandl that “All of Viennas design industry are here”. Also good feedback from the leading wholesalers and buyers. Many of the companies have come back saying they have made new valuable connections.



Regarding the Nordic Food experience this was also an appreciated added value. The Embassies and Business Sweden expressed that the idea of stimulating all five senses using food, light and sound to strengthen the Nordic design was successful and the feedback they have gotten from exhibitors and guests was so good that they want to use this approach in coming SLD events. The chef at the Swedish Embassy, Christoph Finch, who was responsible for the food part, said that he got much inspiration from working with food designer Vanja Franzen, who is thinking of the food and meal from a more holistic view.

To summarize, it is crucial to remember and develop the value of hostmanship and food as a creative branding tool, which is to seldom done. The idea to develop menus and settings that support the given theme really became obvious during the SLD event and it is something that they will develop in the future.

COMMUNICATION / DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

The Swedish and Norwegian embassies used their press registers to invite journalists and bloggers. Over 400 people were invited including press, architects and buyers. The event was communicated also via the Embassies' websites and also by Business Sweden. The aim is to get Austrian architectural magazines to write about Nordic design but no such articles have been published yet.

http://nynordiskmad.org/aktuellt/nyheter/visning/browse/1/artikel/nordic-food-joins-nordic-light-in-vienna/?tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=56&cHash=21bf2980c17c76a1fd84ac6ab288c1fo

<http://www.swedenabroad.com/de-DE/Embassies/Vienna/Aktuelles/Aktuelles/SPOT-ON---SKANDINAVIANLIGHTDESIGN2014-sys/>

<https://www.architektur-aktuell.at/news/learning-from-norway>

PARTNERS

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DISCUSSION

Having run for more than 5 years it was time for Scandinavian Light & Design to incorporate food in the exhibition experience. There had been served food before but in the form of canapes and with no direct connection to the theme. This year however it became obvious that food really can strengthen a branding activity in a very positive way. Having the menu based on the theme for the event, in this case Acoustics, and also using a visual arts designer who illustrated this theme even further using sounds and pictures adds many extra dimensions to an event. The feedback from guests, exhibiting furniture companies and the organizers regarding the Nordic Food experience was overwhelming and it showed the power of using food as a tool for communication.

One observation made is that it might be a good idea to work with a national PR Firm. A PR Firm could communicate the event in a more professional way and attract more attention towards the right media.