



At Travbanevej the air is filled with the smell of

GLASS AND POTS

fresh from the kiln

The light plays on the glass, glazes and colours of the large urns in front of the wooden house on the old stand at Charlottenlund race course. This is where glass blower Anders Raad and potter Christian Bruun fashion glass and clay in their workshop overlooking the forest on one side and race horse paddocks on the other.



Christian Bruun, potter
"I work in a classic and traditional style but I like to experiment. For me, the most important thing is the relationship you have with the objects. I work with the idea of 'holding it in your hands'. 'Hold in your hands' one of my cups. It has to feel good in your hands and take on emotional value so that the cup becomes your first choice when you open the cupboard. Although pottery is something physical, on a higher plane it is about a relationship – the relationship you establish with the objects you use in your daily life."



Text: Lisbeth Brahe

Just a stone's throw away from the boutiques of Jægersborg Allé, at the edge of the forest at Travbanevej 12, is a remarkable oasis of creativity that contrasts with the gleaming perfection of the nearby shopping street. This is the site of a professional pottery and glass-making workshop and outlet, where you can appreciate good craftsmanship, the difference in the detail and the unexpected in the moment shared by the craftsman and his material.

Travbanevej may well conjure up equestrian images, but it is not the smell of horses that greets you when you open the door. The 200 m², light-filled building with 5-metre high ceilings and exposed wooden beams smells of baked clay, hot glass and craftsmen busy at their trade. The building originally housed race course facilities and was used as a garage until 18 years ago, when glass blower Anders Raad set up shop and established his glass workshop. He was joined 3½ years ago by potter Christian Bruun. Today the two artisans work side by side, each in their own section of the workshop, and it is here that they exhibit and sell their glassware, stoneware urns and unique ceramic artefacts. They also offer the public a hands-on experience, which anyone is welcome to try. But we'll come to that later.



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A free space

The doors of the workshop are always open, as long as one of them is there. Curious passers-by can pop in to watch the production process, enjoy the exhibits or maybe purchase a gift.

"We get visits from all sorts of people, and all of them are curious about our work. I think many are intrigued about how raw materials are turned into a finished product. Today it's rare for people to work with their hands. Most of the things we buy are manufactured in a faraway country, but at our workshop we take the raw materials, shape and craft them into objects, and the finished products are never identical," says Christian Bruun.

Not far from the workshop is a completely different world of high-end property, prestige cars and fast-paced living. A world in which there can be pressure for everything to be perfect. This trend is precisely what Anders Raad and Christian want to resist. They want their workshop to be a free space – a place where it is possible to just be and to take life's imperfections in your stride.

"At times we all feel burdened by the pressure of wanting to be perfect. It's a warning sign telling you to jump off the treadmill before something goes wrong. We live in a world where perfect is the new normal and that can be a dangerous thing. With all the objects I make, their quality partly lies in the small variations that make them imperfect. Here at the workshop we want to create a space in which you can relax and, by seeing our work, appreciate the fact that small nuances are actually very appealing," explains Christian Bruun.

Coming together to create

At their workshop, Anders Raad and Christian Bruun are not the only ones sitting at the potter's wheel or wielding the glassblowing pipe. You can come here as a group of 15 to 20 – work colleagues, friends or a family birthday – and try your hand at producing glassware or pots.



Anders Raad, glass designer
"It's exciting and challenging working with glass as a craftsman. You don't have much time to play with, as the glass has to be at exactly the right temperature. When I work I decide at the beginning what form I want to make, for example a bowl or a wine glass, but when the process starts, I let the glass partly determine what creative expression I end up with. Sometimes the result may be asymmetric or perhaps colourful, but all choices result in something. I love the speed of the process. I think it's fun having groups visiting the workshop, and it is enriching to see how they cope with a different type of challenge: they can feel rather cautious, but they end up creating their very own work of art."

Christian Bruun explains: "Our spacious and light workshop is a wonderful setting for an enjoyable, creative and alternative shared experience – a type of team-building if you like. We help with the organisation, of course, and offer guidance. And we are also happy to put a joint of lamb in the oven and let it roast while our visitors are busy at work.

Afterwards we sit down together and enjoy a meal. We have seen how lots of people start to unwind once they have got to grips with the creative process and start chatting to each other about all kinds of things.

Many start developing ideas for the projects they are busy with at their workplace, while Anders and Christian, each of whom have many years' teaching experience at the Kunstakademiets Designskole (Royal Danish Academy of Design), are at hand to provide assistance and guidance. This free space encourages people to have conversations they might not have had the courage to initiate at the office – almost as if it is easier to talk when you have your hands full of wet clay rather than sitting across from each other at a desk or conference table."

Of course, after a day at the workshop you take your creation home as a memento of your shared experience. And if it has a few flaws, then it's pretty much mission accomplished. Essentially, imperfection is perfection.

The workshop is open from Tuesday to Friday from 12 pm to 5 pm, but visitors are always welcome inside if someone is in the workshop. Travbanevej 12, 2920 Charlottenlund. ■