



FormicaTrends

Limitless ideas with surface materials from Formica

No 2, 2007



SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Ordinary to extraordinary – it's all in the details | New installation technique ahead of the curve | Natural design in Skärholmen Mall



An eventful year



Fletcher Products Limited acquired Formica Corporation in July of this year. Fletcher, a building and construction company with sales of around €3 billion, is headquartered in Auckland, New Zealand. The merger of Formica's and Fletcher's laminate business has made us the largest supplier of decorative surfacing and high-pressure laminate in the world!

We also launched several new products this year. One is AR+, the durable, high-gloss laminate that has won several international awards. Furniture manufacturers Karl Andersson & Söner quickly picked up on the advantages of AR+. The result was the stylish "Cross" table shown on page 26.

In addition to AR+, we present unusual applications for Compact laminate in this issue of Formica Trends. We also paid a visit to the Skärholmen Mall outside Stockholm, Sweden, where restaurant seating for more than 1,000 people was created with Formica Impress: the laminate you design.

In other words, a lot is happening at Formica right now. To make sure you don't miss anything, drop in and visit us regularly at www.formica.com.

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Formica Trends is an idea magazine published twice a year by Formica Skandinavien AB, Helsingborg, Sweden. Total circulation is approximately 20,000 copies distributed among seven languages. Formica Trends is produced by ClapClap HB in partnership with Linda Tjårdal, Formica Skandinavien AB, +46 42 38 48 00. All texts by Louise Ribbing except pages 3, 4 and 20. The photographs were taken by Peder Siöberg, Rickard Sund and Stephan Bozic, or were borrowed from customers and archives. Printed by Printing Malmö AB.

Hans Lindegård
Hans Lindegård
President, Formica Northern Europe

ROYAL BREAKFAST

The cutting boards, coaster, eggcup/serviette ring and candleholder are all part of the timeless Sigvard range from Sassabrossa. All items are made of Formica Compact in varying thickness in the VirrVarr pattern (designed by Prince Sigvard Bernadotte of Sweden) using different colourways on each side. The white teapot from Höganäs Keramik is adorned with a lid made of 7 mm Compact laminate, F5162 Solid Oak. The teapot comes in eleven colours and holds 1.2 litres. Design: Cecilia Stööp. The blue background is called F7433 Marina, and the tabletop was made in F2274 Blanc Polaire and F6900 Neon Yellow. All from Formica Collection.



SPOTLIGHT ON SENSE



The **WORK** office table is the outcome of an uncompromising labour of reason. The goal was to optimise these parameters: production, transport, assembly, use and recycling.

Joacim Wahlström, a student at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, was fed a steady diet of sense and reason in his term as an exchange student at KTH, the Swedish Royal Institute of Technology. At KTH, everything had to be examined and justified down to the last detail. He found it a stark contrast to the playfulness, personal style and gut feeling that defined his studies at UCACD in the Department of Interior Architecture and Furniture Design. For his final master's degree project at UCACD, which is the largest art and design college in Sweden, Joacim chose to reflect his experiences in these worlds apart by polarising the concepts of sense and sensibility in two separate projects.

DURABLE SURFACE

The sensible aspect of the degree project became the WORK Office Table, a simple and stable knockdown modular table.

"This is a simple office table with no unnecessary details that is meant for fledgling entrepreneurs and people with similar needs," says Joacim, who personally belongs to the target group, although he was recently hired by White in Stockholm. He wanted a durable surface, so he contacted Formica about sponsoring his degree project, which Formica did with pleasure.

"To my knowledge, this is the best material in the market



for furniture applications when you want to protect and stabilise a substrate, so it made perfect sense to approach Formica."

The table is made of a laminate with all the parts face-milled on a CNC machine from a single board. The core is 16 mm birch plywood bonded to Formica high pressure laminate (HPL). The table is stocked in black and white, but can be ordered in a variety of other colours to create stunning effects in any office environment. Brand-building and madly whimsical in every colour of the rainbow or subdued but still dynamic in tone-on-tone.

FUN AND EDUCATIONAL

The table dimensions are 160 x 80 cm and the entire piece is packed and transported as a flat package. The eight round,

twist-in tightening "pucks" make it easy to assemble. It is also easy to separate the metal parts from the wood parts for recycling.

"The tightening pucks are reminiscent of children's toys and are meant to make assembly a fun project with educational elements. They also work as cable openings and connection hardware if you want to link tables into work islands. The tables are efficiently bundled on European pallets in their flat packages, which is a nice nod to IKEA," thinks Joacim. Launch Design Partner, headed by CEO Per Berglund, caught sight of the table at UCACD's final show and initiated a partnership with Joacim Wahlström. Sales of the WORK office table will start in September.

"I think the simplicity combined with high-quality craftsmanship makes WORK a very appealing table. Joacim is an extremely thorough and meticulous designer," says Per Berglund.

INFO

OBJECT: WORK Office Table

REFERENCE: Varied references from Formica® Collection

DESIGNER: Joacim Wahlström

MANUFACTURER/AGENT: Per Berglund/ Launch Design Partner, LADP AB

YEAR: 2006

A SWAN IN NEW PLUMAGE

The new **Svanen** (“The Swan”) block is right in the middle of downtown Borås. The architectural firm QPG were commissioned to design a new block based on an old detailed development plan, create an appealing oasis in the neighbourhood, while letting the building exteriors reflect a contemporary aesthetic.

The Svanen block consists of two six-storey buildings above a car park, with a total of forty tenant-owned apartments in the midst of Borås city centre. The façades are white plaster with beautiful Formica Exterior accents. The material is seen again in the horizontal wood-look siding covering the recessed attic storey, which gives the buildings a lighter impression.

NEW MATERIAL PROVIDES THE SOLUTION

The elegant feeling of wood is repeated in the balconies, making them an integral part of the building and limiting the palette. Architect Petter Lodmark is with QPG AB, whose design accomplishments include the offices of Svenska Hus in Göteborg, nominated for Forum Magazine Award in 2006, and Salviaterassen, an estate of semi-detached houses in Gårdsten that was nominated for the Swedish Association of



Architects' Housing Award in 2005. He explains that it was the various conditions and aspirations for Svanen that eventually led to the use of a new and fresh material for the façade.

“We made the basic design proposal for the buildings in the Svanen block, which follows the old detailed development plan from the 1930s, and which describes how the buildings could be placed in the area. We soon discovered that this would mean fairly large buildings, which made us think about how we could break down the scale. The Town Planning Department wanted the façade to reflect a contemporary aesthetic and have a light, plastered structure.”

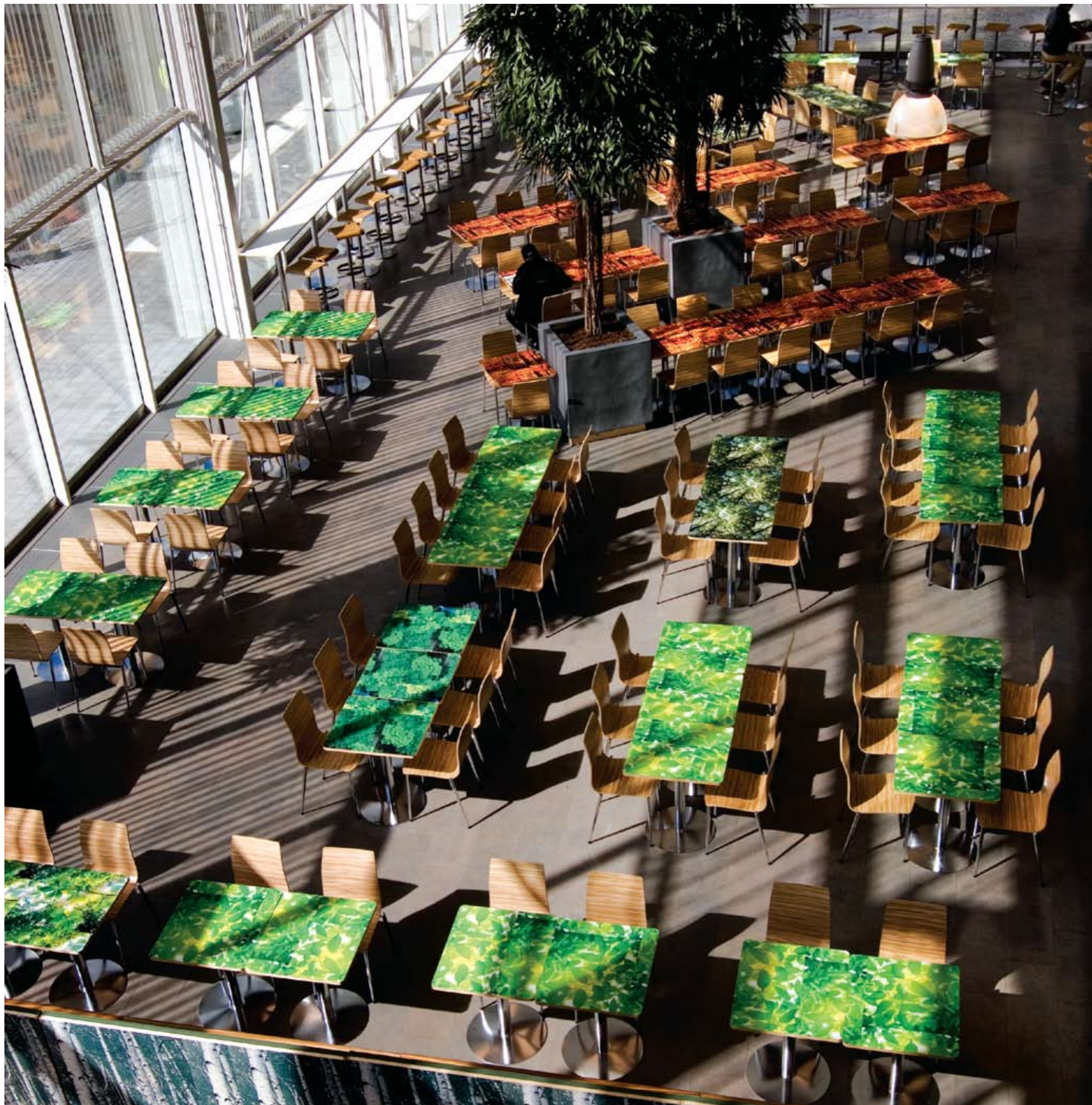
AS LIVELY AS WOOD

With such large buildings, there was a risk that a light façade would contribute to an institutional vision, rather than one of stylish and contemporary living.

“We didn't want it to look like a big white hospital. With that on one side of the scales, we went looking for a material that could be used instead of wood to accent the plaster, but still give the same lively feeling that wood does. Formica's exterior laminate creates exactly that, and the material is durable, demands very little maintenance and keeps looking good, rain or shine. High pressure laminate as a façade material isn't nearly as vulnerable to fire as wood. We worked out the design by trial and error to find just the right expression and meet Swedish fire regulations.

“I am very pleased with the results. The panels are a beautiful counterpoint to the plaster even from a distance. When you come close, you see the surface design in the material; it is like a subtle shimmer.”

INFO
OBJECT: Svanen block, Borås, Sweden
REFERENCE: K7572 Rubinga from Formica® Exterior
CLIENT: Mjölbackens Entreprenad AB
CONTRACTOR: Wäst-Bygg, Borås
Architect: QPG Arkitektur AB
BUILT IN: 2006



NATURAL DESIGN

Last November saw the opening of MetroNova, a food court in the Skärholmen Mall. With seats for more than 1,000 diners, it is the biggest restaurant in Sweden. Inspired by nature and set off by glass walls with a southern exposure overlooking the town square, the design of the light-drenched and expansive space is as exciting as the variety of culinary choices.

INFO

OBJECT: Skärholmen Centrum, Stockholm, Sweden

REFERENCE: Formica® Impress™

MANUFACTURERS: Tables: Ragnar Inredningar, Tray racks: C&D

ARCHITECTS: Ågrenkonsult, Göteborg
and TEMA Arkitekter, Stockholm.

BUILT IN: 2006



FORMICA IMPRESS MAKES NATURAL SENSE

Transformation of the Skärholmen Mall is being accomplished in phases and it will be open as usual throughout the refurbishment. Head architect Bjarte Haavaag from Ågrenkonsult says there is a green, eco-friendly theme to the entire project, from design ideas to choice of materials. The green theme is obvious in MetroNova's natural aesthetic. Colours and patterns in the food court are meant to give diners the sense of sitting outside in a garden. White, filmy textiles are suspended from the ceiling to symbolise clouds, and the floor is laid in granite that resembles an earthen carpet. Pictures of birches adorn the tray racks and the tables feature motifs of yellow autumn leaves and the green, just-opened leaves of spring. From the upper level looking down over the food court, the designs look like treetops. The tray racks and trays, tables, benches and chairs are all made of high pressure laminate.

"We chose Formica Impress because we could photograph the specific pictures we wanted for the tables. And the surface is as durable as it is easy to handle. After all, it has to look just as good five years from now," says Bjarte Haavaag.

RELIEVING THE RIGIDITY

A vast glass wall ornamented with a vertical pattern is echoed in the vertical birch trunks on the tray racks. Visitors to the food court and mall walkways encounter real trees and plants of various kinds and sizes. The granite is repeated in sculptural elements and benches along the walkways.

"Malls tend to be rigid in their shopping-focused nature and we wanted a contrast to that. So, we decided early in the process to use vegetation, trees and natural details to create a sense of the outdoor environment inside the mall," explains Thomas Perslund, project manager for the property owner Centrumkompaniet, which is investing construction value of SEK 1.8 billion in the renovation.

MAJOR INVESTMENT INSTEAD OF MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

When the Skärholmen Mall was built nearly 40 years ago, the inspiration came from Italian streets, squares and alleys. Much of the precinct was glassed-in in 1984 and an entirely new in-



door environment was created. Not much was done in the mall after that. When Centrumkompaniet took over the property in 2001, they finally decided to go with a total solution over maintaining the mall with minor refurbishments. The project involves refurbishment of almost 100,000 square metres along with an equally large parking deck to meet the needs of an expected 14 million visitors a year. The architects and consultants for the project are Ågrenkonsult, one of the leading firms in Sweden specialised in commercial development of shopping centres, commercial buildings, gallerias and hypermarkets.

CAPITAL CITY FOR DEDICATED SHOPPERS

The vision is to become a capital city for dedicated shoppers and a place where visitors can find the same range of services usually found in a city centre. Skärholmen is a city within the city, with everything from a medical centre, post office and social insurance office to stores, restaurants and cafés.

"The new food court is a great complement to the rest of what's on offer in the mall, and visitors say it is a tremendous improvement," says Thomas Perslund. The grand opening of Shoppingstaden Skärholmen will be happening in November 2008, right in time for Skärholmen Mall's 40th anniversary.





HORISONT

Designer **Jörgen Backman**'s guiding concepts were happiness, need and state of mind when he developed the Horisont modular stool. Horisont is an interactive furniture concept for meeting places in public spaces – which demand highly functional materials.

Formica sponsored Jörgen Backman with laminate for his degree project at the School of Design and Crafts at Göteborg University (HDK). His project focused on the problems of order and chaos. The ambition was to eliminate the disorder created by the users of public spaces when furnishings are portable. But he wanted to find a way users could still adapt the furniture to their needs – and so chaos became part of the concept. The Horisont module does that by having only one of the stools fixed permanently to the floor as an anchor. The stools are held together and stabilised by a linking sideboard. Each link can be twisted around the centre of the stool.

FOR CHANGEABLE SPACES

The goal was to find an independent, charismatic shape that can stand repetition and be adapted to blend into changeable spaces. Jörgen Backman exhibited the modular stool at the Stockholm Furniture Fair in the "Grow Up with HDK" project. The project explores the process of growing up and the importance of being aware that we are all doing precisely that - growing up - all the time. Jörgen Backman and three other students continued with the project afterwards and represented HDK at "That's Design," a new exhibition for young designers and design schools at the Milan Furniture Fair.



INFO
OBJECT: Horisont Modular Stool
REFERENCE: K1238 Carnaval from Formica® Collection
DESIGNER: Jörgen Backman
YEAR: 2007

OPTIMAL LAMINATE

When the concrete elements for the stair and lift tower in the **Rönnen** block of Malmö could not be delivered in time, architect Niklas Olsson was faced with the challenge of finding an alternative. He and Formica worked together until they found a compact laminate with the required flexibility – ideal for the elliptical construction.

The nine-storey tower housing the stairs and lifts will soon be finished in the Rönnen block, in what was once Vårnhem Hospital. The entire construction project is an investment by the City of Malmö to make eastern Malmö an attractive inner city district with transformed areas, green thoroughfares and better public transport. Student housing and academic life will share the space with offices and clubs to spark vibrant life and movement in a once somewhat shabby part of the city.

HIGH, CURVED TOWER

The architects, Arkitektgruppen i Malmö, have won several awards including the 2005 Cityscape Award from the Municipality of Vellinge for the Sutaren block, and the 2000 Cityscape Award of the Year for IMP Förlagshus in Malmö. The firm was commissioned to design the 30-metre high stair and lift tower that connects floors 4-11 in the converted former hospital. The stair and lift tower was originally meant to be an all-concrete construction, but there were difficulties obtaining the concrete elements for the façade in time.

OPTIMAL WIDTH FOR THE DESIRED RADIUS

Architect Niklas Olsson was already familiar with Formica Compact laminate and knew it was flexible to some extent. He and Formica worked out the optimal width for the sheets to achieve the desired radius that fit the curved shape of the construction.

INFO

OBJECT: Rönnen block, Malmö, Sweden
 Reference: K3734 Radon and K3735 Krypton
 in 6 mm Formica® Exterior
ARCHITECT: Arkitektgruppen Malmö,
 Niklas Olsson
CONTRACTOR: Byggcompagniet
BUILT IN: 2007



“We discussed the possibility of using the panel with Formica technicians, since we had an elliptical planform. That means the bending radii of the sheets vary across the façade. The contractor, Byggcompagniet, figured out a good way to install everything on a specially designed wood construction behind the sheets.

“The choice of material was actually an alternative solution, but now that it’s done, we think it turned out much better than the originally planned concrete elements would have. The façade of the stair and lift tower has really helped erase the institutional feeling of the old former hospital,” says Niklas Olsson.

MAINTENANCE-FREE AND WEATHERPROOF

Hans Laurén, product manager at Formica, is always willing to make “house calls” when knowledge and information about laminate are needed at building sites.

“Compared to traditional building materials like brick and concrete, you can say that Formica Exterior is still a relatively new material in the construction industry. But more Swedish builders all the time are realising the advantages of using the material on façades and balconies.”

“Formica’s exterior laminate is specially adapted for outdoor applications and is both maintenance-free and weatherproof. The material comes in so many different designs and colours, the possible variations are seemingly endless.”



Details for a solid whole

When it was time to refurbish the old building that housed the **Swedish National Defence College**, it soon became clear that it would be better and cheaper to build an entirely new building.

July 2005 saw the final move to the area next to KTH and the new 17,000 square-metre building connected by a glass link to a smaller converted building that was originally built for the Technical Research Institute of Sweden in 1920. The new build-

INFO

OBJECT: Storage lockers, Swedish National Defence College, Stockholm, Sweden

REFERENCE: M4748 Isis Vertical from Formica DecoMetal®

CONSULTANT AND INTERIOR DESIGN FIRM: AD Analys & Design, Stockholm

MANUFACTURER: Alnäs Möbelfabrik, Mårdaklev

BUILT IN: 2005



ings made it possible to adapt meeting rooms, classrooms and offices from the beginning to the needs of the Swedish National Defence College. Anneli Lindstedt is head of public relations at the college and she loves the new premises.

"The facilities are simply outstanding. The space is open and it is much easier for people to meet than it was in the old building. We share the space with others including the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, so there is always something going on. Even students from KTH and Stockholm University come here to take a break or study in the new Anna Lindh Library."

OAK AND METALLIC LAMINATE

The storage lockers built on-site in metallic laminate are a small but still important part of the whole. The lockers are built into a 70 mm-thick oak "shadow box" frame fitted with downlights directly above the lockers. Mårten Welin works for AD Analys & Design, which was the building technical adviser for the National Defence College and the Institute of International Affairs. Interior designer Eva-Karin Svedberg from the same firm



created the interiors. The choice of three-dimensional metallic laminate was a cost-effective way to add character to the lockers and enhance the sense of serious and solid purpose that the designers wanted to express in the premises.

"Laminate is used quite a lot in this type of space, but we chose an unusual solution to eliminate the feeling of an endless institutional corridor. We thought it was very important that the lockers were perceived as part of the overall environment," says Mårten Welin.

EYE-CATCHING DESIGN

The contract to manufacture the 150 lockers was awarded to Alnäs Möbelfabrik and Bertil Lind, whose job it was to devise a solution that met the designer's requirements.

"It was a pretty special interior and we had never done anything like it before. We couldn't produce everything in the factory, so some components of the lockers had to be built on site. But it turned out really well. A lot of people notice the lockers and think they are beautiful."





SIGGE B

The SIGGE B lounge/coffee table premiered at the Stockholm Furniture Fair in February 2007. The base is made of stainless steel and the surface is high pressure laminate in the VirrVarr design bonded to 24 mm birch plywood.

The table is designed and manufactured by PTV Verkstad och Butik in Göteborg and the name is an homage to the "Design Prince of Sweden," Sigvard Bernadotte, who designed VirrVarr almost 50 years ago.



INFO

OBJECT: X-ray Tools
REFERENCE: F2255 Polar White
 in Formica® Compact
DESIGNER: Kajsa Bobjer
YEAR: 2006

X-Ray Tools

Laminate is a tough material that is easy to clean. That makes it a good choice for medical environments, which industrial designer **Kajsa Bobjer** has made use of.

On a visit to a hospital radiology department, Kajsa Bobjer was shocked by the medical tools. In her view, they lacked quality, hygiene and convenience. She developed X-ray Tools for her degree project at the Faculty of Engineering, LTH, Lund University. It is a rolling storage cart made of Compact laminate with space for radiology tools. Formica sponsored her degree project by providing materials.

"Laminate works well in medical environments and has a gentler feeling than shiny metal. There is a wall feeling in the material that was a good fit, since I wanted to create the impression of a tool wall."

The response to Kajsa Bobjer's design has been very enthusiastic, especially from nurses, and she is now investigating whether there is any market demand for X-ray Tools. As for her future, she would very much like to continue with medical devices. "It's a narrow but important niche in industrial design."

**BOLD
AND
UNIQUE**

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The famous Stockholm silhouette **Skrapan** will be ready for its grand re-opening this autumn. (The name translates to “The Scraper.” Formerly the headquarters of the National Tax Agency, the building was known for years by the perhaps ironic sobriquet of “the Tax Scraper.”) Students, commercial tenants and visitors to the only lifestyle galleria in Sweden will be welcomed into a building that is as intriguing today as when it was first inaugurated in 1960, when it was the tallest building in Europe.



Skrapan is 86 metres tall and 29 storeys. The walls and doors in the “core” of the building – a square mid-section in the stair and lift well – are covered in 6 mm compact laminate in Fog, a pearly grey. It is an unconventional application for the material. Mikael Karlsson from L.A.S Interiör AB was given the huge task of installing the laminate sheets according to architect Per Ahrbom’s directions.

“How to go about the installation demanded a great deal of thought, and at first I suppose I thought it was pushing things a bit much. But now I actually think it is a superior material, from both the aesthetic and functional angles,” says Mikael Karlsson.

NEW APPLICATIONS A PLEASURE

Since a full sheet could not be installed on the 6 x 2.5 metre wall, the laminate was sawn into smaller rectangular pieces of about 50 x 120 cm. An elastic glue was used between the drywall and the laminate before fixing the sheets with screws in the same grey shade as the wall cladding. The drywall underneath was painted black, which is echoed in

air columns around the laminate sheets and creates a stylish grid pattern on the wall.

“There’s a bit of engineering artistry behind the installation. We had to consider a lot of steps and factors. The laminate reacts in one way to moisture and heat and the wall behind in another. The door cladding was something of a challenge too. The doors from the core of the building lead to the students’ storage areas and have to stand up to heavy use. They not only had to be aesthetically pleasing in the same style as the wall cladding, but also withstand wear and tear. The laminate added extra weight of almost 16 kilos, which neither the hinges nor the lock mechanisms were designed for. The wood joists were reinforced to hold the extra weight.”

Mikael Karlsson is very pleased with the final result and enjoys using laminate in new and unconventional ways.

“It adds variation to façades, in buildings and on balconies, and you can play with different colours and accents. It has created a unique design sense in Skrapan, and is much more impact-resistant than a painted surface.”

INFO

OBJECT: Skrapan, Stockholm, Sweden

REFERENCE: F7961 Fog in 6 mm Formica® Compact

ARCHITECT: Ahrbom & Partner

Contractor: L.A.S Interiör

BUILT IN: 2007





INFO

OBJECT: Cross

REFERENCE: F6903 Cassis in AR+ grade

DESIGN: Roger Persson

MANUFACTURER: Karl Andersson & Söner

YEAR: 2007

Award-winning innovation in a new table

The **Cross** table from Karl Andersson & Söner features a totally new type of tabletop in high-gloss laminate. The product is called AR+, an award-winning innovation that is more scuff-resistant than its predecessors.

Maria Wadskog-Emme at furniture manufacturers Karl Andersson & Söner believes the new laminate product brings many advantages. High-gloss surfaces are fashionable interior accents and the colour palette offers a wide range of choices.

"You have to have a completely dust-free environment to paint high-gloss surfaces, which can be problematic. Ordering high-gloss laminate instead is a great alternative."

Formica AR+ can be used on both vertical and horizontal surfaces. Combined with its postformability, the material provides many creative possibilities. It is an innovative product that was recently given the "Best of the Best Award" for intelligent material and design at the Interzum fair in Cologne.



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