

Facts

PÅL ROSS
Born: 1961
Family: Wife, four children, two cats, one dog, one horse, and one parrot.
Home: Villa located on Ekerö, just outside Stockholm.
Nationality: Swedish
Profession: Architect, founder and CEO of ROSS Architecture & Design



THE RIDING ARCHITECT

Ross Architecture & Design is one of Sweden’s leading architectural firms and to date, the only one to be eco-certified by Nordic Swan (Svanen). Pål Ross, CEO & founder has received international recognition and awards for his health-affirming, sustainable creations. You may wonder what makes him tick. Here he is in his own words:

ON IF HE HAS TIME FOR HOBBIES? I have one important hobby; I have a horse. I am at the stable often, and I really enjoy it. Ideally, I would like to ride four times a week. My wife has always been interested in horses. She had a horse when I met her about 25 years ago. She still has her horse, and about three years ago I decided to give horses a try, thinking it would be a nice hobby to share with my wife. I love horses. To me riding in nature is like meditating. You have to be in touch with the horses, and not think about work while you are at the stable. There are hours of silence, and if you are not in the moment, anything can happen. I suppose you could call me the riding architect.

ON WHAT KIND OF A CHILD HE WAS? I was born at Södermalm, here in Stockholm, but I grew up in Spain. I lived there between the ages of six and 19, during the Franco-era. As a child I really only had access to LEGO and a bicycle. I had lots of LEGO-pieces. I used to build very complex mobile trains, small cities and things like that. I also remember being fascinated by interplanetary transportation, and I used to make drawings of spaceships, complete with interiors. I would have an entrance door, a place for my spacesuit, kitchen and bedroom, and a driver’s seat for the spaceship. And I added colors. I also made them for my playmates. I remember thinking that my friends had very boring bedrooms, just a square room with a desk in one of the corners, and I wanted to enhance their rooms. I used to fix the beds so they became sofas during the day, and created tables and bookshelves. This was before IKEA, and inexpensive, smart solutions weren’t available, so I built them. I think I just had it in me. My family always thought I’d become an engineer because my grandfather had factories in the south of Sweden and it was assumed that I would run them in the future. But that fell through when a company from the UK bought the factories, took all the machines to England, and that was the end of that. Still, the family thought I’d become an engineer.

ON WHY HE CHOSE ARCHITECTURE: I think I was probably around 24 when I finally decided that I would like to become an architect instead of an engineer. I was a little late doing my military service so I was thinking about the pros and cons of the different futures of the two choices. I had always been interested in architecture, but had not thought of it as something I could be doing. My mother is an artist, and a good one, so I had during my youth been used to beautiful surroundings and decorative interiors. It was, in part, through her, that I learnt how to decorate in a way that was inexpensive, yet stylish and clever. The part time job I had as a student helped me choose architecture over engineering as well. During my student days at the university, I supported myself by taking care of the elderly in their homes during the weekends, and I used to listen to them tell stories about their lives. A few of them had worked within different technical fields, and I realized how quickly their knowledge became obsolete with every new technological leap forward. I recognized that as an engineer I would have to go back to school every three or four years in order to be on top of things, and I think that architects just get better with time.

ON DEVELOPING THE ROSS-IDEOLOGY: Well, as I studied, it dawned on me that I could combine my interest in technology with architecture, and I think that one of the reasons my designs are so unique, is that I understand more of the practical aspects of building, because I’ve built so many projects myself. Another reason is that I am always asking why, and looking for alternative solutions. I want to get back to why and how things work. If and when you get back to the original question and then you can depart from the obvious answer because you are not buying someone else’s results, you are creating your own. Normal has already been done. I tend to find new answers using this way of thinking. I think it is important that I live in one of my own houses. Oddly enough, not many builders or house companies, or even architects do. Unfortunately, many of them create one product for the market and choose a completely different situation for themselves. I know of one example where one of the owners of a Swedish prefab-company lives in a ROSS-house. I’m really happy for them, and I understand why, of course, but as an architect I have more respect for those who live in the same kind of environment they are providing for their customers.



»»

ON READING FOR PLEASURE AND/OR INSPIRATION: There are times when I am able to read for pleasure, but for the most part I read with the company in mind. I enjoy books with topics-like “How to get More out of your Day” or “How to make a Better Business,” you know, typical self-help books. There are so many clever people out there with ideas that have not yet occurred to me, so I read their books as often as I can. I almost always buy a new one when travelling. I think all airport bookstores have that section. My thinking is that if I learn one good thing from each book I buy, it’s been worth the read.

ON WHAT MAKES HIM LAUGH: Silly things. A bad joke. A good joke. I laugh a lot. Just the other day, I laughed until I cried watching a clip on Facebook of a dog in the water. He was just wading along when something touched his leg and he leaps, like a rocket, out of the water and runs in a panic onto dry land. It was such a human reaction. I like animals, and I have good laugh when something like this happens and they don’t get hurt.

ON WISHING TO MEET SOMEONE HE HAS NEVER YET MET: That’s a tough one (pause). I can’t give you a name, but I would love to meet a like-minded person with the economic resources to develop homes and communities for the elderly. Some of the stories I hear about people’s living conditions are heartbreaking. I have some great concepts in mind and only need a special philanthropist behind me. That person – him or her – I have been longing to meet for 20 years.

ON DOMESTIC LIFE: Deirdre and I have been married for 22 years. We have four children, and I love children! We also have our horses, two cats, one dog and a parrot, and I have to say, I love the feeling of coming home and being greeted by a barking dog, and a flying parrot that lands on my shoulder before I’ve taken my shoes off, and sometimes even the bickering teens. Ekerö is a beautiful place surrounded by water and forests, and I am a very, very lucky architect.

ROSS - Live in a Work of Art ® / Tel: +46 8 84 84 82 / info@ross.se / www.ross.se
