



DE HISTORISKE

A Historical Journey: Losby to Hadeland



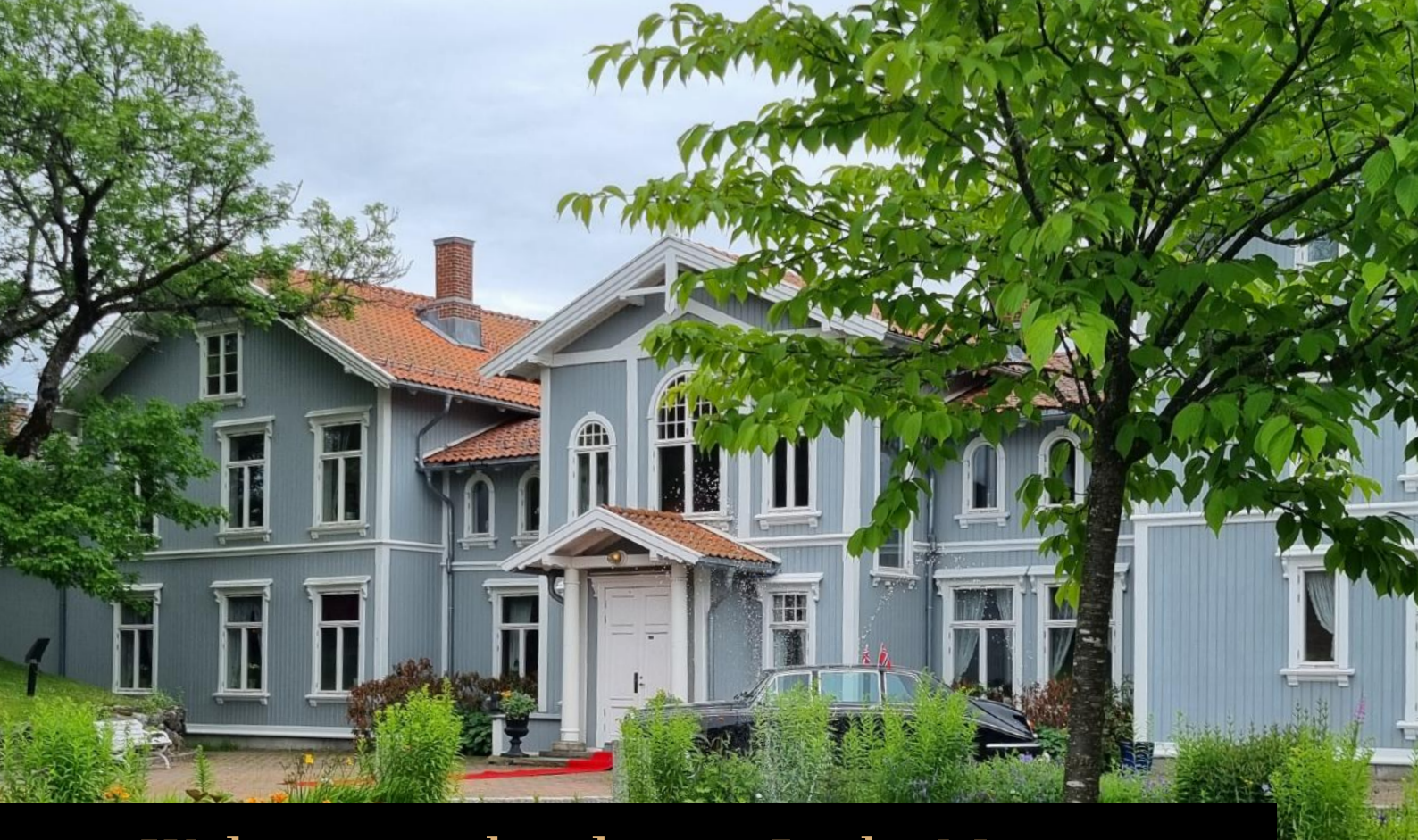
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PHOTO: EVA NEDREGAARD & CAMILLA IVERSEN, DE HISTORISKE

Summer has finally arrived in Norway, and while many choose to travel abroad in search of sun and beaches, there's a different kind of magic waiting at home — one shaped by dramatic landscapes, deep forests, and a rich cultural history.

Instead of international flights and crowded resorts, why not explore the natural beauty and heritage of Norway itself? Imagine scenic drives past towering mountains, green valleys, and majestic waterfalls. Enjoy meals made with local, seasonal ingredients, and spend your nights at charming historic hotels that offer a taste of genuine Norwegian hospitality.

In this travel letter, we'll take you on a journey through some of Eastern Norway's hidden treasures — from the ancient woodlands of Østmarka near Oslo, to the peaceful, pastoral landscapes of Hadeland, a region steeped in history and tradition.



Welcome to the elegant Losby Manor

On Tuesday, July 2nd, we say goodbye to rainy Bergen and fly east to Oslo. At the airport, we pick up our rental car from AVIS and begin a short, scenic drive toward Losby Manor.

After about 30 minutes, we reach Lørenskog and turn onto Losbyveien — a peaceful country road lined with green fields, grazing cows, and horses. Soon, the majestic manor appears in the distance.

We park the car and head to the reception. The first impression is striking: a stately manor house that seems straight out of a period drama. Losby Manor dates back to the mid-1800s, when the influential Meyer family, led by businessman Jacob Meyer, built it as a private hunting lodge. Over the years, it became a retreat for Norway's social elite — a place where royalty and aristocrats would gather to hunt and relax.

As we roll our suitcases up the gravel path, we can't help but feel a little bit royal ourselves.



“Have you tried the Losby waffle?”

After a refreshing journey, we arrive ready to explore the charm and history of Losby Manor. The peaceful surroundings and elegant atmosphere immediately invite us to slow down and unwind. At check-in, we're warmly welcomed by Live at the reception, who gives us a thorough introduction to the hotel's facilities, nearby hiking trails, and meal times. With some time to spare, we decide to start with lunch.

Losby Manor offers many lovely spots to relax and enjoy the day. The restaurant is divided into four elegant lounges, all decorated in classic manor style. We settle in the “Godsstuen,” a bright room with beautiful views over the manor gardens and valley. Pulling out the brochures from check-in, we read about the hotel's history and browse maps for hiking, running, and cycling routes. Around us, smiling golfers take a well-earned lunch break after playing on the extensive golf course.

While we're reading, Marianne Frilseth, the hotel's marketing manager, stops by for a friendly chat. “Have you tried the Losby waffle?” she asks enthusiastically.

The Losby waffle is a special recipe passed down through generations, attracting visitors from far and wide. Marianne mentions she even makes it herself at her cabin.

We shake our heads, and she leads us to the cozy “Godscafeen” - The Manor Café. Behind the counter, Sana welcomes us and prepares fresh waffles topped with sour cream, Norwegian brown cheese, and homemade jam.

The large, fluffy waffles have a hint of cardamom and truly live up to expectations. The café also serves hot and cold drinks, as well as light lunches like shrimp sandwiches, wraps, salads, and Losby's own burger, all available indoors or out.

Feeling happy and full, we head toward the manor's historic wing. Each room offers an interactive experience via QR codes, allowing guests to take a self-guided historical tour on their phones — narrated by the current director, Heidi Elisabeth Fjellheim.





Losby waffles

4 eggs

6 tablespoons sugar — whisked until fluffy (like a light sponge)

300 grams flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon vanilla sugar

1 teaspoon cardamom

Mix all the dry ingredients together.

150 grams butter — melted

4 deciliters (about 1¾ cups) milk

Add the dry ingredients and the wet ingredients to the egg mixture and mix well.

And voilà — you have the famous Losby waffles!



Every room tells the story of the manor's golden age, represented by estate owners Lorentz Meyer Boeck and Kathrine Boeck. If you close your eyes, you can almost hear the clinking of porcelain in the ladies' salon, smell the faint trace of cigars in the gentlemen's lounge, and catch the echoes of laughter from lively gatherings in the parlors. The grand ballroom once hosted dinners with royal guests, while the library set the scene for Christmas parties and intimate gatherings.

The décor throughout the manor reflects its rich past. Paintings carefully selected by the lady of the house and hunting trophies from the master are prominently displayed in several rooms. There's so much to take in that we keep turning to each other, exclaiming, "Look at this one!" — captivated by the unique artwork and historical details that bring each space to life.



Next, we head outside to explore the manor's beautiful grounds. At the top of the hill near the old estate house, the Boeck couple once created an English-style landscape garden, which was a favorite retreat during King Haakon VII's many visits to Losby. Recently restored, the garden is now both a peaceful hideaway and one of the most photographed spots on the property. With its winding paths, decorative trees, and serene atmosphere, it feels like stepping into another time.

But the garden is just one of many places to unwind. The estate is surrounded by open lawns and quiet corners perfect for a glass of wine or a good book. Trails wind in every direction, leading through scenic forests and past old farmsteads, historic cottages, and remnants of the once-thriving timber trade that played a vital role in shaping the region.



“Have you found the secret room?”

At Losby, you can explore the surroundings on foot, by bike, or on a jog. We put on our walking shoes and took the short stroll down to Mønevann, a peaceful forest lake. On the way, we pass the old waterwheel, Vasshjulet, which once powered Østmorksaga — one of the largest sawmills in the area and among the last water-driven vertical saws in Norway. Timber and sawmills were so important to the development of Lørenskog that the waterwheel now features in the municipality's official coat of arms. As we stop to read about its history, a small family of ducks paddles by — the scene couldn't be more idyllic.

We continue toward Mønevann, a lovely swimming spot with grassy areas, a sandy beach, diving boards, and smooth rocks. It's the perfect place to relax, swim, and enjoy the sun. You can even rent a canoe or paddleboard and experience the Losby forest from the water. We sit for a while, enjoying the view and the quiet, before heading back to the hotel for a bit of downtime before dinner.

After returning to the hotel, we settle into one of the spacious deluxe rooms, complete with a TV, Nespresso machine, and a charming balcony overlooking the lush greenery. The room combines modern comfort with subtle historical touches, making it easy to unwind. The hotel offers standard rooms, deluxe rooms, and elegant suites. For something truly special, you can book the exclusive Haakon Suite and sleep in the very bed once used by King Haakon VII. Located in the original manor wing from the 1950s, the room features the king's custom-made bed — specially designed to accommodate his height of 1.90 meters.

As dinnertime approaches, we begin the evening with an aperitif in one of the manor's elegant lounges, where we're treated to more stories from Losby's rich past. One of them is about Gunvor Kolstad — a true Losby legend — who spent over 20 years cooking for the estate's owners. In 2013, Losby Manor was gifted Miss Gunvor's handwritten recipe books, and many of her dishes are still served today, either in their original form or as inspiration for modern menu creations.

Dinner is served in the hotel's main dining room, where we enjoy a delicious à la carte meal featuring confit duck leg from Holte Farm and fresh skrei (Norwegian winter cod) with mussels and seasonal vegetables. Afterwards, we head downstairs to the manor's newest addition: Compagniet Bar — where tradition meets contemporary design in an exclusive yet relaxed setting. With plush seating, a pool table, darts, and shuffleboard, we decide to test our skills on the latter.





Before we begin, we strike up a conversation with the manor's bar manager, Jacques. Originally from England, he has worked at Losby for 25 years. As we approach the bar, he greets us with a smile. "Have you seen the secret room?" he asks with a wink, before walking over to one of Compagniet's bookcases.

To our surprise, the shelf swings open to reveal the hotel's "hidden" *Chambre Séparée* — a sophisticated private room with mirrored walls, deep wine-red tones, and classic dark interiors. It's available for exclusive group bookings and feels like a well-kept secret from another era.

Back at the bar, Jacques shows off his impressive mixology skills and serves us two custom cocktails based on our preferences. As we begin our first round of shuffleboard, we hear him coaching a group of young golfers trying their hand at darts. He demonstrates the technique with flair — no surprise, as Jacques is a former Norwegian national darts champion.





The next morning, we wake up to birdsong at the stately manor and make our way to the hotel's modern fitness room for a morning workout. The gym is well-equipped with a treadmill, machines, dumbbells, and weights. Humorous posters on the walls add a little extra motivation. Afterward, a warm shower awaits.

In the breakfast room, smiling staff greet us warmly. The famous manor breakfast does not disappoint, with freshly baked bread, pastries, cold cuts, hot dishes, and local cheeses.

Feeling full and ready for a new day, we check out of Losby Manor and set off for our next stop: Sundvolden Hotel. We wave goodbye to the green country road as we drive through Lørenskog. Then we switch from the E6 to the E18, taking the Opera Tunnel through Oslo's city centre. Upon reaching Sandvika, we change to the E16 and follow it all the way to Krokkleiva and Sundvolden Hotel.

The route itself holds a piece of history. The old main road to Bergen, known as Kongeveien (The King's Road), was built in the early 1800s. It stretches from Johnsrud in Lommedalen, over Krokskogen to Krokkleiva and Sundvolden. This road once carried kings, emperors, and other royalty to Sundvolden, making the hotel a popular destination for travellers and tourists alike.



The King's Road, Ringerike and Hadeland

The "Kongeveier" (King's Roads) were the main roads long ago, connecting different parts of Norway. The Bergen King's Road in the area was made into a proper road in the early 1800s. Before that, there were mostly simple paths that are hard to find today.

The Pilgrim's Route mostly follows the King's Road over Krokskogen, through Jevnaker, Gran, and Tingelstad to Brandbu. From there, the Bergen King's Road goes west along Randsfjord, through Valdres and over Filefjell. The Pilgrim's Route takes a different path over Høgkorsa to Toten.

This road has been used for a very long time. We know this because a bishop named Jens Nilssøn traveled here in 1594 and wrote about it.



Velkommen til Jevnaker og Sundvolden

After about an hour's drive, we arrive. The spacious parking lot shows that the hotel is a popular venue for meetings and conferences, with plenty of room for guests. We make our way to the reception, where we are welcomed by the friendly receptionist, Alvilde.

Right by the reception, we also discover Sundvolden Kolonial, an interesting shop offering everything from home décor and clothing to jewelry and local delicacies. If you happen to have forgotten your swimsuit, you can buy a new one here — which is handy if you're planning to visit the hotel's newly renovated spa.

The hotel combines a historic building with a modern wing that houses one of the largest conference centres in Eastern Norway. Our rooms in the modern section have everything we need for a comfortable stay, including a large double bed, rain shower, and coffee machine. Two chocolates made by the hotel's own chocolatier are neatly presented along with a personal welcome note.

It's time to explore the hotel. We meet Cecilie Laeskogen, the hotel's general manager, who, together with her husband Tord, represents the second generation running this historic establishment. Cecilie takes us on a tour, and her passion for both the hotel and the local area shines through from the very first moment.

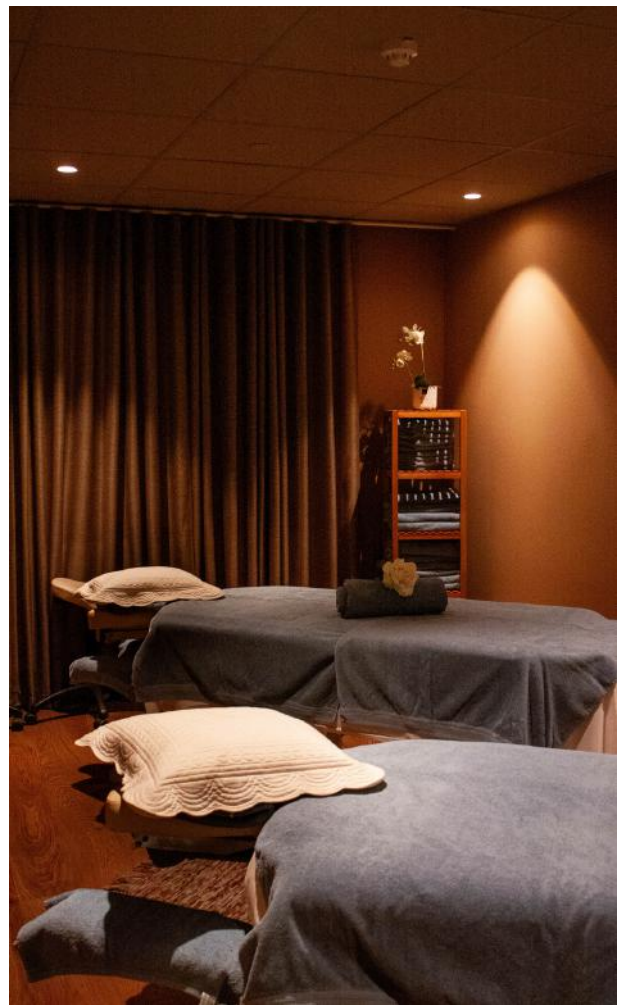




The hotel places a strong emphasis on sustainability, with signs encouraging guests to reduce food waste. They have their own herb garden and smokehouse, and source almost all ingredients locally. Sundvolden also invests in renewable energy like solar power to reduce its carbon footprint.

Sundvolden offers a harmonious blend of modern and historic elements. Local contemporary artists have contributed works that decorate the premises, with artistic treasures found throughout. Many of the pieces feature QR codes, allowing visitors to learn more about the art. In the Sundvolden Gallery, we also found a selection of beautiful ceramics for sale.

The hotel's newly renovated spa and wellness area reflects modern luxury, offering facilities such as saunas, cold showers, steam baths, and a unique relaxation zone.



Outside, you'll find a hot tub—perfect for unwinding—and a large hammock ideal for lazy summer days. The spa also offers various treatments, group yoga, and guided meditation. If you want to get your heart pumping, the nearby gym has everything you need for a good workout.

Despite its modern amenities, the hotel values its rich history. In the conference center, there's a landauer—a horse-drawn carriage from the late 1800s on loan from Ringerike Museum. The hotel also partners with the Hardraade Viking Ship Association, featuring an exhibit with Viking clothing and a replica of the Oseberg ship. The most authentic experience, however, is the old hotel building with its historic rooms.

We're excited to explore, but first, hunger calls—time for lunch.



“Don’t you ever get tired of chocolate?”

Cecilie takes us into the kitchen, where the chefs are busy preparing delicious lunch dishes for hungry guests. Here we meet Jeff, the hotel’s British chocolatier, who has been working here for over four years. He is known for his exquisite chocolates and cakes. Before coming to the hotel, Jeff worked in Brighton, where 70% of his chocolates were sold to Fortnum & Mason, a favorite of the late Queen Elizabeth. We get to taste some of the chocolates and quickly understand why these sweets are so popular.

“Don’t you ever get tired of chocolate?” we ask.

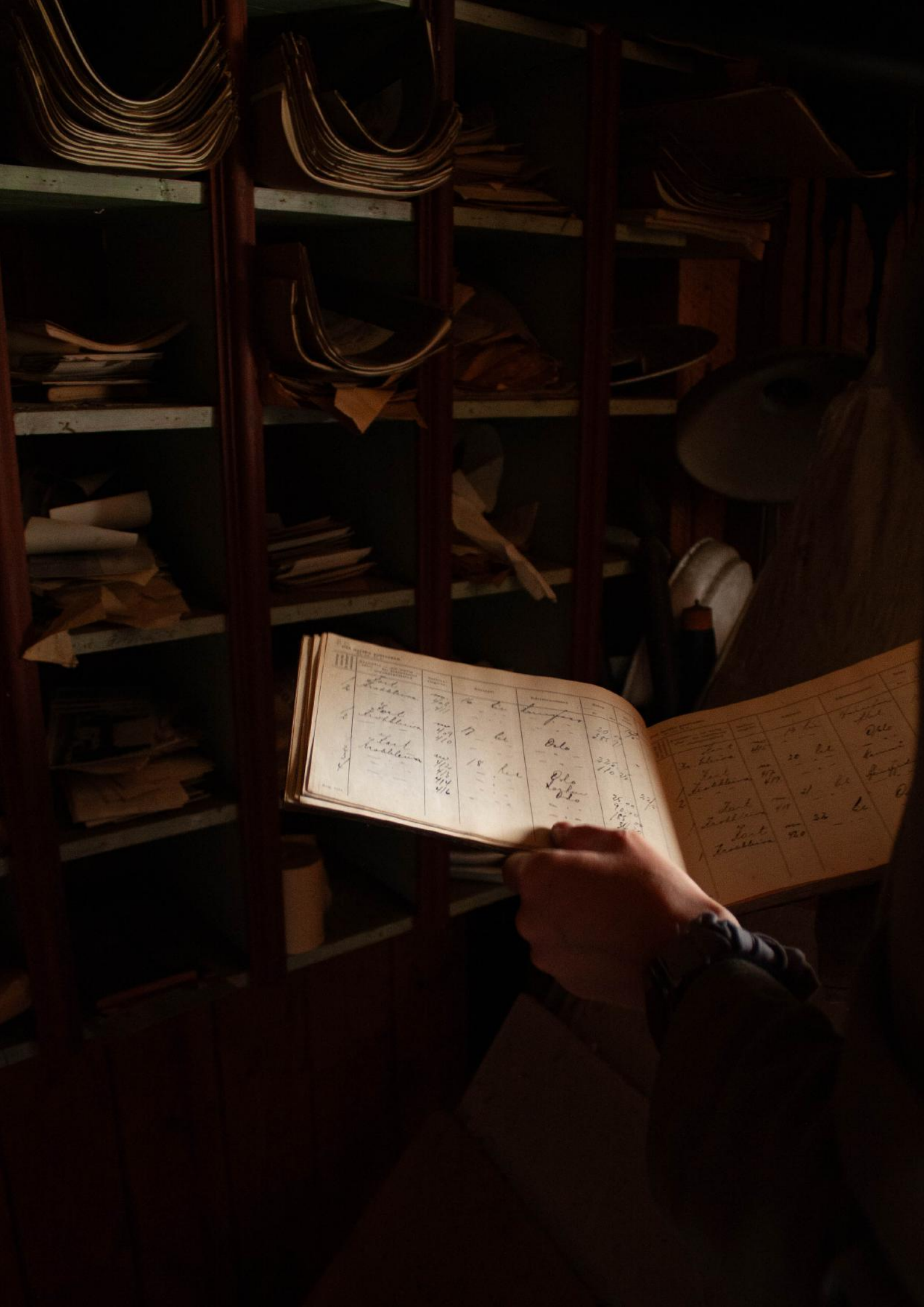
“No, unfortunately not,” Jeff laughs, joking he might not live to retirement age.

We let Jeff get back to work and make our way to Værtshuset, the hotel’s restaurant. Lunch is served here, either inside the historic restaurant or outside on the terrace. Since the sun is shining, we choose to sit outdoors.

We order grilled Norwegian tomato salad with serrano ham and a seafood brioche salad — a burst of fresh summer flavors. A smiling server brings our food as other guests enjoy drinks nearby.

With the sun shining and our appetites satisfied, we continue the tour. Having already passed through the historic dining room on our way to the terrace, we now return inside to fully take in the restaurant’s stunning interior. The blend of old-world charm and elegant decor creates a warm, inviting atmosphere that perfectly complements the culinary experience.





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“I’m going to show you something few people get to see!”

In the restaurant, we meet Silje, the hotel’s operations manager. She leads us up a narrow, old staircase to the historic suites, which date back to 1648. Each room is unique, filled with fascinating historical details like paintings, hunting trophies, vintage skis, chess sets, and photo albums that offer a glimpse into the past. The interiors combine exquisite wallpapers, elegant rugs, antique furnishings, and delicate lace curtains — creating a feeling of stepping back in time. In the shared entrance hall, portraits of longtime guests hang alongside framed posters of Sundvolden Spring Festival held from the 1930s to 1950s.

“Now, I’m going to show you something that not everyone gets to see,” Silje says with a mischievous sparkle in her eye. Our curiosity peaks as she opens a small hatch, revealing a cramped, dust-covered attic room. In one corner, shelves overflow with old documents thickly coated in dust. Silje explains that this is where everything not on display ended up following extensive renovations and clean-ups. “Enjoy,” she smiles, before disappearing down the stairs.

The room is so small and narrow that we have to crouch to reach the farthest corner. We carefully lift some of the documents as if handling fragile porcelain. Dust drifts upward as we gently separate the papers. Inside, we find everything from postcard collections dating back to the 1940s to photos and pins from the Lillehammer Olympics. We also uncover old shopping lists, guest registers from the hotel, formal signed orders, and correspondence with bank directors.

We read and photograph with great enthusiasm, until our backs finally force us to stand up again.

Full of impressions, we then retreat to our room and take the opportunity to read up on hiking options nearby. From the hotel, you can embark on wonderful hikes like the summit trek to Mørkgonga, Djevelens Punchbolle, and Tiurtoppen. One of the most popular walks in the area is Kongens Utsikt - “The King’s View”, an easy 3 km hike up Krokkleiva that starts right outside the hotel door and offers a stunning view at the top. If you’ve forgotten your hiking boots, a visit to Kistefos museum is a must for hotel guests. We quickly realize that one night here isn’t enough to explore the area and decide to return with our hiking boots another time.







Back in the hotel's historic restaurant, we look forward to the evening's menu. After being seated, we quickly notice that all the waitstaff wear flag pins on their jackets, representing their home countries. Around us, we spot Danish, French, Spanish, and Norwegian flags. It's a wonderful way to showcase the industry's diversity while fostering good communication between guest and server. Nearby, we overhear guests at the next table chatting enthusiastically in French.

We choose entrecôte with red wine and start with sparkling wine while discussing the day. Mid-conversation, a historical detail on the napkin catches our eye:

It started with a complaint...

"The woman who runs the inn by the crossing at Steinsfjorden is in league with robbers, thieves, vagrants, and scoundrels; when she ferries travelers across, she behaves outrageously with both drunkenness and insults to those she transports, unless they satisfy her twice over."

The quote is from a 1648 complaint, where Marte Kroksund was reported to the governor by the bailiff for insulting passengers and being drunk while ferrying them. She lived on a farm on the west side of Kroksundet, ran a tavern, and worked as a ferryman.

We laugh heartily at the quote, imagining the woman, drunk and furious, ferrying distinguished guests across the strait. Thankfully, Sundvolden's history has changed a lot since then.

The entrecôte arrives, accompanied by local vegetables and a rich stew. Our eyes meet after the first bite—this is truly a juicy and flavorful meal. Mindful of Sundvolden's food waste policy, we skip dessert. If we get a craving later, Jeff's chocolates await us in the room.

After a good night's sleep, we pack our bags and prepare for the hotel's breakfast buffet, which we've heard so much about—and quickly understand why.

Sunlight streams through the windows as cheerful servers flip fresh pancakes and greet guests with a smile. The buffet offers everything from locally sourced cheeses and homemade jams to warm bread, fresh fruit, and perfectly cooked golden eggs. Coffee flows freely, and the morning hum of satisfied guests sets a relaxed tone for the day.

With renewed energy, we check out and wave a final goodbye to Sundvolden. The drive continues along the scenic E16 through Hønefoss, past the striking sculpture park and museum at Kistefos, before heading toward Jevnaker and the charming Hadeland Glassworks. The next chapter of our journey awaits



Welcome to Hadeland and Thorbjørnrud

Vineyards greet us as we turn off the road — no fewer than 6,000 carefully cultivated vines stretch across the expansive property. We pass the sign confirming our destination, “Thorbjørnrud Hotell,” and continue down to the parking area. The first thing that catches our eye is the vast, green outdoor space, where three gardeners are busy tending the flower beds. Everywhere we look, the grounds are bursting with life.

At check-in, the friendly receptionist, Hege, warmly welcomes us and hands over the keys to our rooms. On the way, we pass several artworks and sculptures, as well as cozy sitting areas with views of the garden or the glamping site. Just off the lobby, there’s also a playroom for children — filled with whimsical and creative LEGO constructions.

Back at the reception, we’re introduced to the hotel manager, Hege Bredvold Hunstad.

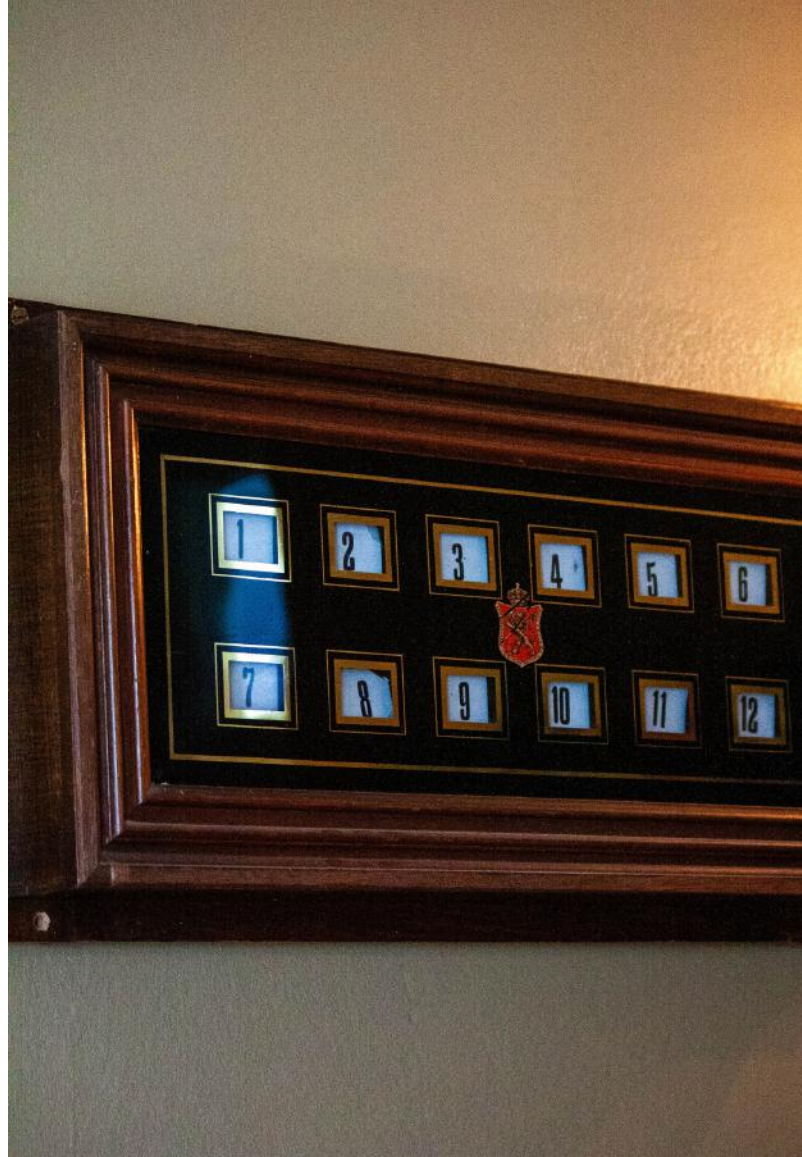
She greets us with a warm smile, fresh from a live radio interview. As we pass through the lobby, we also encounter the hotel’s owner and businessman Atle Brynestad, who is visiting the new tea garden with his wife, Linn Stokke. They greet us kindly, and Atle enthusiastically mentions a new art piece that has just been installed in the restaurant. It quickly becomes clear that we’ve arrived at a place run by passionate and hands-on people.





We move from room to room as Hege shares the story of the building's rich past—from its origins as a farm in the 1300s to its time under the ownership of Hadeland Glassworks. For over 200 years, Thorbjørnrud and the glassworks have been closely intertwined: the farm supplied the workers with agricultural goods and, at times, housed both laborers and directors.

In more recent times, Thorbjørnrud underwent a major transformation. The intersecting hallways and large windows were added in 1985, when the Norwegian Iron and Metalworkers' Union converted the property into a training and conference center. In 2008, farmer Olav Lie Nilsen purchased the hotel and turned it into a culinary destination with a strong focus on local food production from the surrounding farmland. Today, the hotel is once again in Hadeland hands, owned by the company 3 Norske and led by Atle Brynestad.



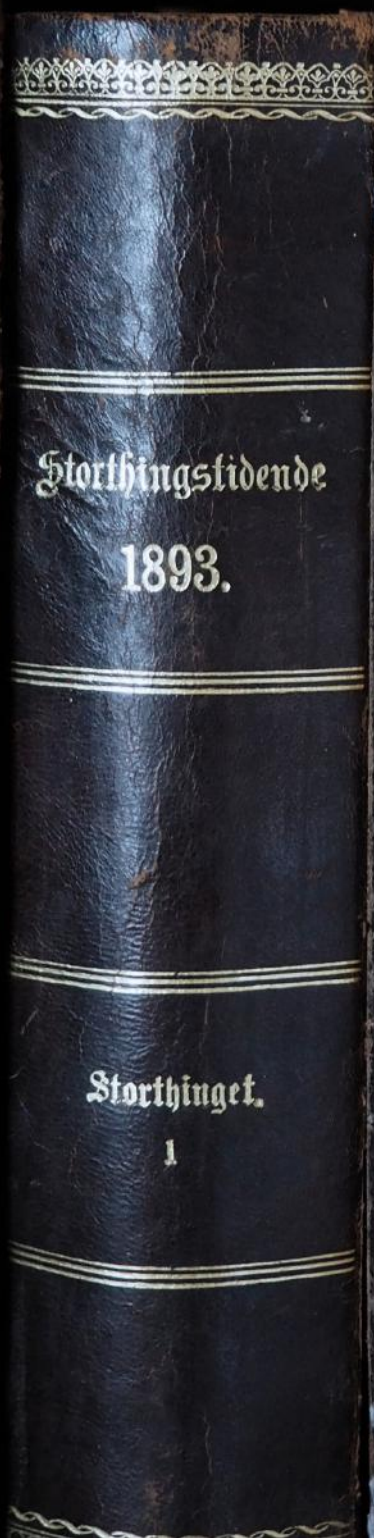
Much of this history is woven into the walls of the old director's residence, a charming Swiss-style villa with traditional architecture. To preserve the house's atmosphere and soul, colors, furniture, and patterns from its heyday have been carefully reintroduced—while a few original features remain. In the entrance hall, an antique servant bell still hangs, once used by guests to summon the household staff.

In the dining room, a restored version of the original wallpaper now adorns the walls, discovered beneath seven layers of materials during renovations. Overhead in the hall, a stately chandelier from a 19th-century Danish church casts a soft glow. The library still echoes with past discussions, and its shelves are lined with books marked *Storthings Forhandlinger 1883*—a fitting nod to the hotel's history as a favored meeting place for members of government.



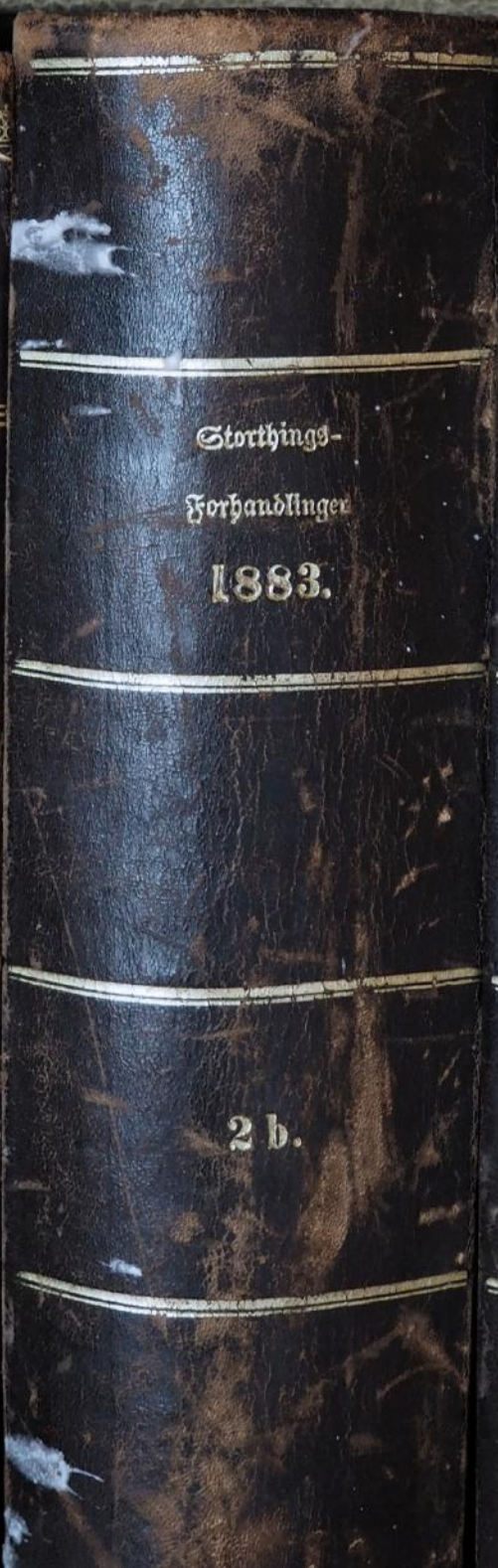
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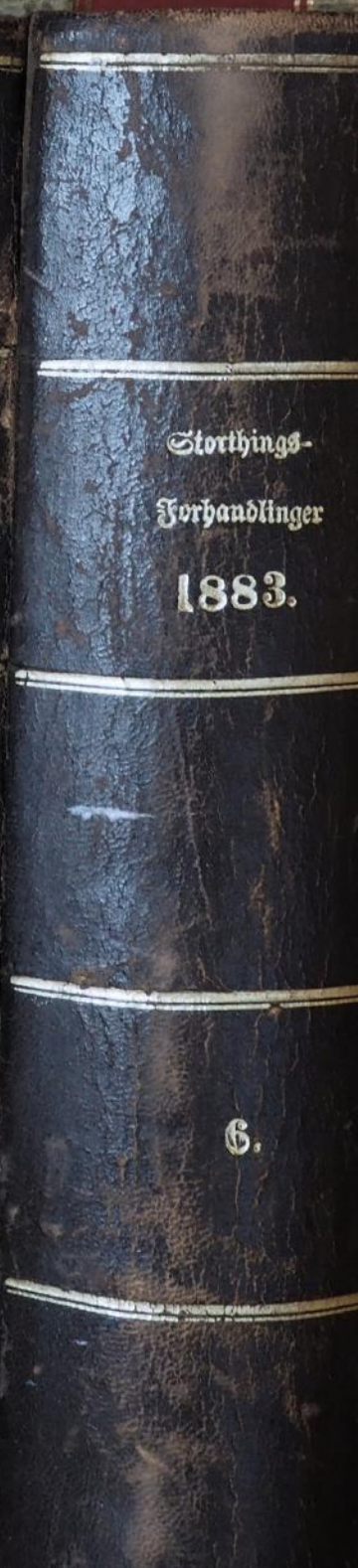
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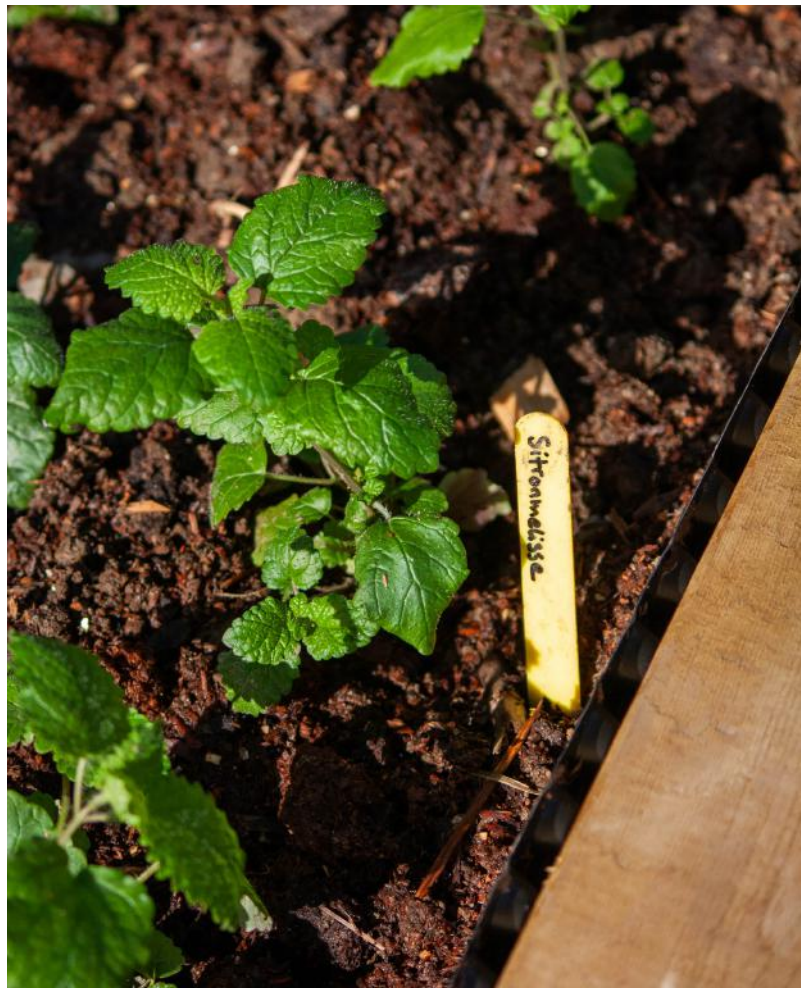
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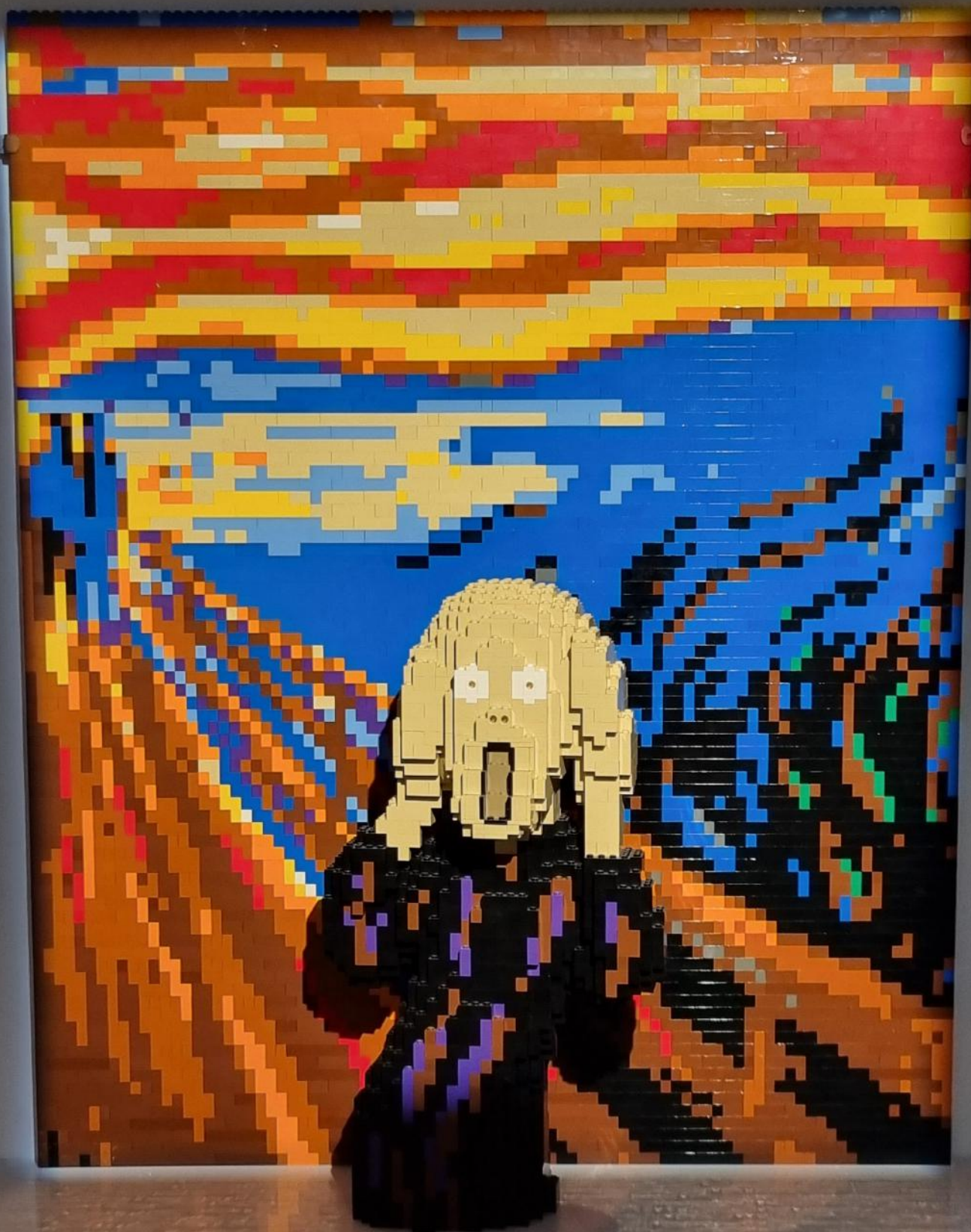
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Today, the former director's residence is used for meetings, private dinners, and special events. It features both a balcony and a private exit leading into the hotel's beautifully landscaped garden, which offers sweeping views of the fjord.

The garden, now fully restored and replanted, has regained much of its original charm. Just beyond lies the hotel's glamping area, where adventurous guests can wake to birdsong and morning sun filtering through canvas walls.

Along the hotel's main wing are several lush atrium gardens, where a vibrant mix of plants, flowers, and trees flourish. Cozy seating areas are nestled throughout, inviting guests to enjoy a cup of coffee or dive into a good book. Not far from here, the hotel's busy bees produce fresh honey for the breakfast table, while rhubarb, apples, greens, and herbs grow across the grounds. A new tea field is even being planted—we look forward to tasting the harvest on our next visit.





A visit to Hadeland Glassworks is a must while in the area. Just a short walk from the hotel, we head there after a pleasant tour of the grounds. We stop for a quick lunch at one of the Glassworks' many eateries before meeting Martin Johanson—a sixth-generation glassblower. His great-great-great-grandfather was the very first glassblower hired at Hadeland Glassworks, and his grandfather, Willy Johansson, was one of Norway's leading glass designers in the 1950s and '60s.

Martin enthusiastically shares nearly 300 years of history before taking us behind the scenes to watch the glassblowers at work. We get close enough to the furnaces to feel the intense heat—glass is melted here in ovens reaching temperatures of up to 1400°C! After our warm and engaging conversation with Martin, we move on to the exhibition Art of the Brick.

This remarkable LEGO exhibition, created by American artist Nathan Sawaya, is currently showing in major cities like London, Melbourne, Philadelphia, Paris—and now, surprisingly, in tiny Jevnaker. Sawaya has used over one million LEGO bricks to craft more than 100 sculptures, captivating for visitors of all ages.

The collection includes playful original creations, as well as reimagined versions of some of the world's most iconic artworks—Michelangelo's David, Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, and da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, to name a few.

A stunning and imaginative exhibition that fits perfectly within the artistic and creative spirit of Hadeland Glassworks. The Glassworks hosts a variety of temporary exhibitions throughout the year, and Art of the Brick is one of this summer's highlights.





With newly purchased glassware and LEGO treasures in hand, we make our way back to the hotel to relax before dinner. The choice is between a four-course meal in the director's residence or à la carte in the restaurant. We opt for the latter, each ordering a stone-baked pizza topped with fresh ingredients from the kitchen garden. Prepared in authentic Italian style by sous-chef Solveig-Marie, the pizza then slowly cooks to perfection in the restaurant's large pizza oven.



We also enjoy the pizza topped with award-winning cheese from Thorbjørnrud Ysteri, made by the hotel's former owner Olav Lie Nielsen at Kjekshus Farm, just 20 minutes away. The rich, creamy flavor perfectly complements the fresh ingredients from the kitchen garden, making each bite a true taste of the region.

Full and satisfied, we stop by the hotel bar for a nightcap before bed. There, we strike up a conversation with the bartender and mention that we're working on travel content. "Make sure to mention the handsome bartender," he jokes. "That's a selling point!"

We laugh together as he tells us he's from the area and has worked here part-time for years. Although he's studying IT, he really enjoys being among the guests at Thorbjørnrud. After sharing some of the day's experiences, we head back to our room, ready for a new day and excited for breakfast.

The next morning, we wake up to a soothing view of the fjord. After a refreshing cup of coffee in the room, it's time to explore the hotel's varied breakfast buffet. Freshly baked pastries, wholesome cereals, and local delicacies tempt us—cheeses from Thorbjørnrud Ysteri, cold cuts from Brandbu Pølsemakeri, and fresh herbs and honey from the kitchen garden.

We take our time, soaking in the calm atmosphere and watching the diverse mix of guests—families with excited children, adventurous motorcyclists preparing for a ride, and retirees enjoying a leisurely start to their day. Many are likely headed to the glassworks or Kistefos, both just a short distance away. Feeling refreshed and inspired, we pack our bags and set off toward Gran and Granavolden Hotel & Gjæstgiveri, eager for the next chapter of our journey.





Welcome to Gran and Granavolden

The drive to Gran is a beautiful experience, taking just under half an hour. We follow County Road 240 along Fjordlinna, enjoying stunning views of green fields and the sparkling fjord as we pass charming farmsteads with freshly painted houses and white picket fences.

Arriving in Granavollen, the summer idyll continues up to the hotel, which sits beautifully atop a hill in Hadeland's distinctive landscape, where nature and history are closely intertwined.

Since 1657, this site has operated as an inn, serving as a vital crossroads for lodging, food, and drink. It has been a key meeting place for locals and travelers alike, thanks to its proximity to churches, the district court, and the old coaching station.

With the historic Sister Churches from the Middle Ages and the Glass Barn art center as neighbors, the sense of history is palpable from the moment you arrive.





The two sister churches, Mariakirken and Nikolaikirken, were built in the 12th century in Romanesque style and later expanded in Gothic style. Their compact stone walls have provided shelter for pilgrims and served as the setting for festive services attended by kings and bishops. Legend has it that the churches were built by two sisters who quarreled and each wanted their own church, but in the Middle Ages, it was not uncommon to build several churches close to each other. During the summer, both churches are open during the day.


Many pilgrims still stop by Granavollen on their journey to Gudbrandsdalen. Near the Sister Churches lies the Granavollen Pilgrim Center, an informative center offering maps, information, selected books, magazines, and more.

The guesthouse comprises five buildings surrounding a charming courtyard, housing hotel rooms, lounges, and a modern conference center. The area around the hotel is idyllic, with beautiful flowers and currant bushes adding life and color. Guests enjoy a nice lunch in the sun at the summer café. Upon arrival, we are warmly welcomed by receptionist Gro and general manager Arne Ivar Johnsrud, who takes us on an exciting tour.

The premises are bright and modern, creating a pleasant balance between past and present. One of the first things we see in the entrance is an exhibition with pictures and documents from different eras at Granavolden, including the very first wallpaper that adorned the guesthouse.

The hallway leads us further to the hotel's restaurant, where flowers from the garden decorate small vases on each table. Behind the restaurant, we find two cozy lounges, perfect for relaxing with a good book or playing a board game with new or old friends.





We move on to Gregerstua, built in 1657, the oldest building in the courtyard. Gregerstua served as the courthouse for Hadeland from the 17th century until the mid-20th century and was also Granavolden's first guesthouse.

Thor Heyerdahl was one of its notable residents, staying here for several months. From the window of Gregerstua, he found peace to write about life on Easter Island in the Pacific Ocean, which resulted in the book *Aku-Aku*, published in 1957. One of the hotel's rooms is also dedicated to him, decorated with fascinating details related to the book. Today, Gregerstua is often used as a gathering place for events, and storytelling frequently takes place here.

“One of them is a horse...”

Arne Ivar leads us to Glasslåven, an art center and studio housed in a charming red barn from the 1880s. The old barn now contains a glass workshop, workspaces, and exciting exhibitions. This summer, visitors can experience works by textile artist Daniela Bergschneider. The stable stalls remain intact, and two of them have been converted into small sections where you can learn different techniques and create simple textile art. Each stall has a name painted at the top. One reads “Viktoría b. 1962.”

“Is that the name of one of the horses that lived here?” we ask curiously.

Arne Ivar smiles slyly. “One is a horse, the other is the mayor,” he laughs.

Laughter spreads, and we thank him for the interesting tour before heading back to the reception, where Gro serves us a cup of coffee. Our next stop is Gardermoen, and this time we had to reluctantly skip lunch to dive deeper into the site’s rich history — there is truly so much to experience here. As a consolation, Gro gives each of us a local apple juice.

Thirty minutes later, we’re back at the airport, ready to return to rainy Bergen.



Would you like to experience this yourself?

Below, we've gathered some of the destinations we've visited, along with a few we unfortunately didn't have time to explore this trip.



Losby Manor

Experience timeless elegance and peaceful surroundings just outside Oslo. Enjoy luxurious rooms, charming gardens, and easy access to outdoor activities like golf, hiking, and canoeing.

[Read more about the hotel here](#)



Sundvolden Hotel

Relax in a historic setting by the fjord with stunning views, cozy rooms, and a rich tradition. Perfect for enjoying local cuisine, cultural events, and nearby hiking trails.

[Read more about the hotel here](#)



Thorbjørnrud Hotell

Savor fresh, local flavors inspired by the nearby vineyards and artisan producers, relax amidst beautiful natural surroundings and discover captivating exhibitions at Hadeland Glassworks.

[Read more about the hotel here](#)



Granavolden Hotel & Gjestgiveri

Step back in time in a historic manor surrounded by beautiful gardens. Discover rich Norwegian history, relax in modern comfort, and enjoy nearby cultural landmarks and outdoor adventures.

[Read more about the hotel here](#)



Hadeland Glassverk

Experience traditional glassblowing craftsmanship at Hadeland Glassworks, where skilled artisans create beautiful glassworks in a historic setting.

[Read more here](#)



Kistefos

Kistefos Museum offers world-class architecture, industrial history, contemporary art exhibitions, and an impressive sculpture park, including the iconic "The Twist" building.

[Read more here](#)



The Sister Churches and Steinhuset

Visit Granavollen's medieval stone churches, Mariakirken and Nikolaikirken, built in the 12th century and expanded in Gothic style. Nearby, explore Steinhuset, a unique 13th-century building that served as a parsonage, representative house, and fortress.



Farm Shops and Culinary Experiences

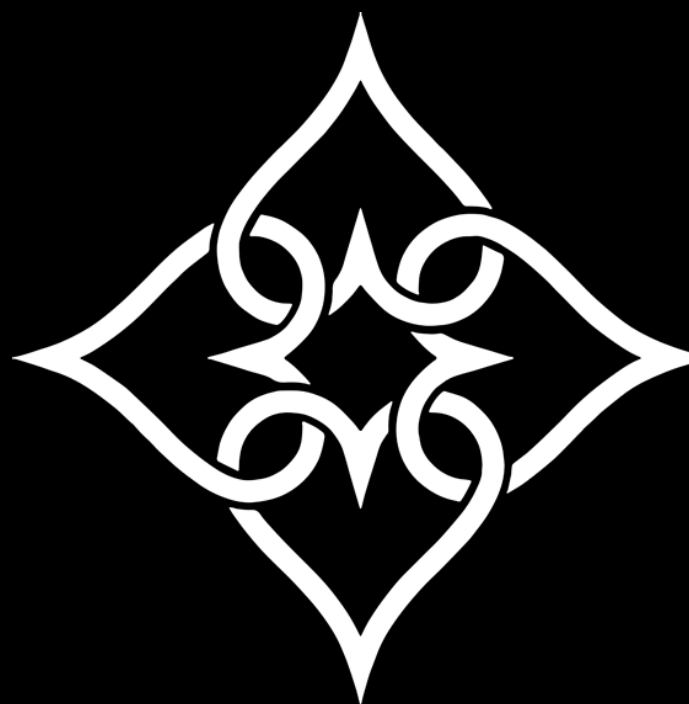
Discover local farm shops and taste authentic Norwegian delicacies. Visit Kjekshus Farm, where the award-winning cheese from Thorbjørnrud Ysteri is produced, and enjoy meals made from fresh, regional ingredients.



Hiking Trails

The Gran and Hadeland region offers beautiful hiking opportunities. Enjoy panoramic views from Kongens Utsikt near Sundvolden or take scenic routes from Granavollen to Sølvsberget. For more challenging hikes, try Mørkgonga and Gyrihaugen.

[Read more here](#)



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