

# A Day in the Life: Stine Gam & Enrico Fratesi

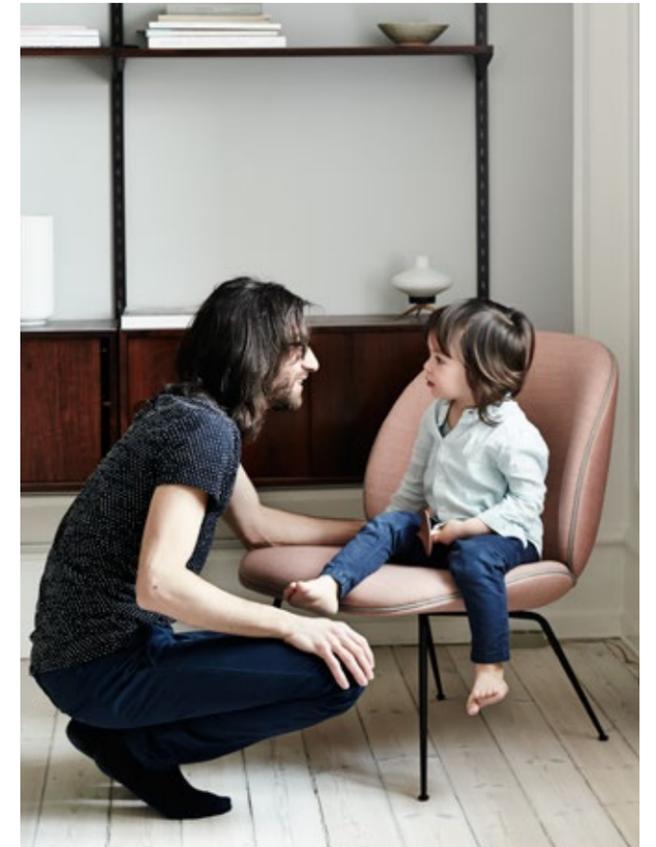
*Since launching a furniture design studio in 2006, Stine Gam and Enrico Fratesi have split their time between her native Copenhagen and his hometown of Pesaro in Italy. Although their growing business, GamFratesi, requires a wayfaring lifestyle, they've found ways to keep themselves grounded thanks to the daily rituals they engage in while traveling and the time they set aside for family.*

Stine Gam and Enrico Fratesi have managed to achieve a lifestyle many of us only dream about: The founders and designers behind the furniture studio GamFratesi travel regularly between their hometowns of Pesaro, Italy, and Copenhagen, Denmark. While the couple often misses the comforting rhythms of daily home life with their three-year-old son, Frederik, traveling has been a fertile ground for creative inspiration. Their designs, though rooted in the stark and practical Scandinavian tradition, incorporate conceptual elements that add a touch of playfulness to their minimalist aesthetic. Running a young company keeps Stine and Enrico busy, but they still make it a priority to carve out time for friends, family and lingering over scrumptious breakfasts each morning. We spoke with the pair about how their family stays in the present while hopping between homes.

**What kind of families did you grow up in? Were there any life lessons your parents passed down to you?** — *Stine:* We grew up in two very different environments. We recently found an old black-and-white photograph of Enrico's father at the age of six, sitting in a workshop while his father made shoes for postwar survivors. We inherited a sense of discipline and a pure dedication to our work from him, as well as the knowledge that everything is possible if you're committed and put in the work. We also found a photograph of my 30-year-old father from when he had long hair and was climbing a tree with his guitar. We got the freedom to dream and express ourselves without boundaries from him. These are two very different lessons, though both are equally important to us.

**What are some of the differences between the Italian and Danish approaches to life?** — *Enrico:* The Danes are true masters of creating intimate and welcoming domestic spaces. Perhaps this is due to the adverse Scandinavian weather conditions that force them to stay indoors all the time and encourage them to create warm and inviting home environments. They have a knack for adapting their homes to accommodate natural light, have a great eye for color and know how to bring aspects of nature into their everyday lives. In Italy, people seem to gravitate more toward gathering in communal areas such as large city squares rather than staying inside. More attention is paid to quality and developing these spaces rather than focusing on interiors. That said, we sometimes come across interesting historical interiors that mix unexpected styles and objects with sophisticated design solutions.





**How do the work ethics in Denmark and Italy differ?** — *Stine*: When we're in Copenhagen, we allow ourselves to linger over breakfast in the kitchen, making conversation and enjoying the food and each other's company. This is less common in Italy, where morning meals usually consist of a quick espresso and a croissant at the bar. The Italians prioritize lunch instead and tend to spend a long time partaking in this meal.

**Please tell us a bit about your weekday morning routines at home: Do you have any personal rituals?** — *Enrico*: I'm quite grumpy in the morning while Stine is calm and very good at gathering the family around the table for a wonderful, cozy breakfast. Our days often begin with homemade bread and cookies, fresh juice and chatting and playing with our son, Frederik, before we start our day. Stine loves mornings as she feels like she has the entire day in front her. I'm more partial to evenings as they feel like the calm after the storm of the day's activities.

**How do you like to spend time when you're at home?** — *Stine*: Listening to music, preparing some nice food in the kitchen, reading books and playing with our son. Our home is located above a busy street and we enjoy people-watching from our window. We also like going on long walks around Copenhagen if the weather outside is nice.

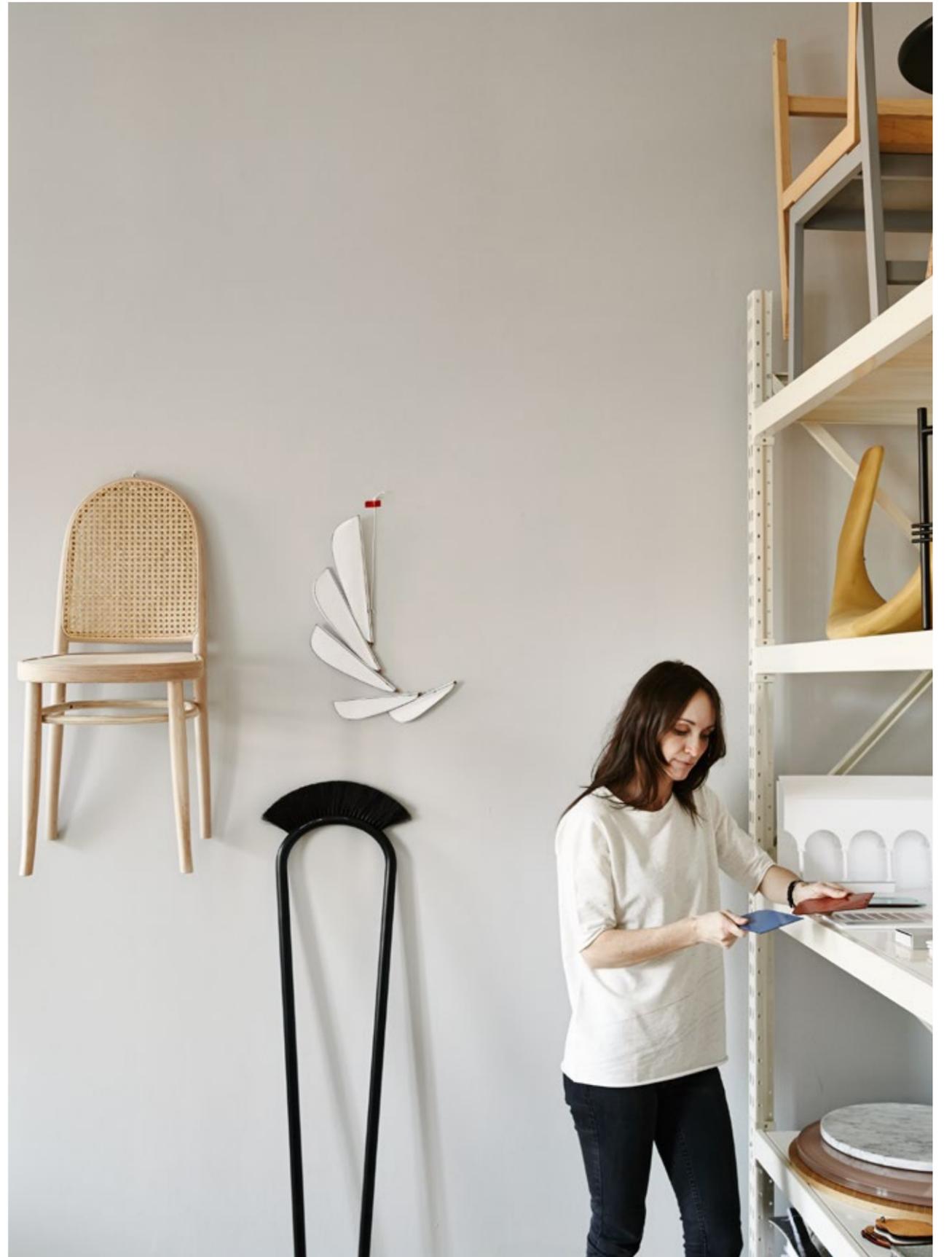
**What are your after-work hobbies?** — *Stine*: We're lucky that our work is also our passion and that our hobbies are all somewhat art- or design-related. Many of them become inspiration for our work, such as reading or listening to good music. We love these art forms for their expressive abilities and how they're able to convey a wealth of emotions in just a few words or notes.

**How do you like to spend your weekends?** — *Enrico*: Apart from certain situations where an imminent delivery forces us to work, we devote our weekends to the family, experiencing the city and meeting friends. We've hoped for and have been working toward having nonworking weekends for so many years, but we've only recently achieved this goal.

**How often do you host dinner parties?** — *Enrico*: We love having our friends over to our house for fortnightly meals. We often serve a simple, family-style meal made using a small selection of high quality seasonal ingredients. Lunch is often Danish-style and consists of bread and an assortment of Scandinavian root vegetables. For dinner, we like serving well-made Italian pasta with a slow-roasted tomato sauce.

**What are the most important components to running a business?** — *Enrico*: Passion and patience.





**What do you enjoy most about traveling?** — *Stine*: Traveling has always been an integral part of our working process. We used to have more freedom and flexibility in the early stages of our company, but growing business opportunities in Copenhagen have required us to establish it as our primary work base and Pesaro as a refuge for when we need some time away from the city. We allow ourselves to make the trip to Pesaro when things get too hectic. It's a lovely city nestled between the sea and the hills. Everything is within walking distance and the rustic buildings provide a welcome contrast to the highly stylized and modern architecture you find in Copenhagen. It's essential for us to maintain a strong relationship with each location, and each has a special place in our hearts.

**Are there any simple traditions you try to preserve when you're traveling around in different cities?** — *Stine*: A key part of our everyday routine is valuing the little things and individual moments in the day. We try to implement this philosophy regardless of where we are in the world.

**What do you miss most about home when you're traveling?** — *Enrico*: We miss our son like crazy when he's not with us. We don't long for any material things when we're away, though we do miss the everyday routines that come with being in your own home, such as walking around barefoot in the kitchen or preparing a bowl of yogurt and muesli and enjoying it on the couch while chatting for hours. The first thing we do after returning from a long trip is to whip up something to eat, often a dish that's simple and homey.

**How do you strike a balance between the time you spend at work and the time you spend with friends and family?** — *Enrico*: While the fact that we're self-employed means that we invest tons of passion, dedication and time into our work, family comes first. We've had to make many personal sacrifices over the years for the sake of our business, but we make it a point not to let work compromise family time.

**How do you manage to stay true to the traditional aspects of European design while experimenting with new methods and techniques?** — *Enrico*: We don't think that you can create something out of nothing. Likewise, designers ought to have a thorough knowledge of what's come before. Our present gestures are dictated by our past, and we believe that true innovation comes from taking traditional design practices and developing them in new and exciting ways.

**What are some of your favorite aspects of Italian and Danish design? How are they different?** — *Stine*: Coming from two different cultures has been instrumental in how we've approached our design process. We strive to bring a sense of diversity to our designs. We have a deep respect for the Scandinavian

masters of the past, as their work utilized craftsmanship and quality materials to create functional and honest designs. We also admire the Italian masters for their intellectual approach to design. From this cross-cultural substrate, we create furniture that respectfully reflects both traditions while also featuring unique embedded stories, symbols and associations, often expressed in a minimalist aesthetic.

**In what ways has your work as a designer influenced your interior decorating process?** — *Stine*: As designers, we're pretty analytical and critical when it comes to interior decorating. We believe in quality over quantity and we'd rather have a sparse home than one filled with meaningless items that only add to the clutter. We have a variety of classical pieces in our home, though we like changing things up every once in a while by rearranging the furniture or seeing how the new pieces fit in with the overall vibe of the home.

**What's your philosophy on material possessions in the home? How do you determine which things are essential or will add value to your home life?** — *Enrico*: I love collecting small objects and believe that there's nothing more beautiful than beautiful things! But beautiful objects don't necessarily have to be expensive or luxurious. Beauty comes in many shades, and it's often surprising, unusual or unexpected choices that make an item interesting and give it a sense of beauty. Stine is less preoccupied with material things and finds it easy to live with less.

**Is there a philosophy behind your company, GamFratesi? What kind of impact does it have on your daily design process?** — *Enrico*: Our design process takes its creative drive from a fusion of tradition and renewal. We aim to create furniture that illustrates the process and the techniques that created it, which reflects a persistent exploration of the diverse border zone between harmony and disharmony. We believe that it's somewhere in between these qualities that you can obtain a sense of reflection and clarity.

**Why do simplicity, function and minimalism appeal to you?** — *Stine*: Simplicity, function and minimalism are words that encompass the meaning of honesty. As designers, we believe that honesty should be the foundation of our work.

**What do you consider the most important elements when it comes to creating a great design?** — *Stine*: Try approaching the process organically. Don't set out with the end goal being creating a great design. Think, create and question your products and be willing to fail and start all over again at any time in the process. While our work originates from a personal place, we come up with our designs based on the needs of the customer. Society and the way that people approach furniture and design are constantly evolving, and we strive to meet the changing needs of our community with each project we undertake.

