

# Side hustle

How Danish design firm Vipp accidentally evolved into a niche hospitality brand

Once upon a time, Kasper Egelund's grandmother needed a practical bin for her hair salon. Dissatisfied with the ones available, her husband designed and created the pedal bin and so Vipp was born. This family-run Danish business, now in its third generation, operates on the premise of only designing – whether homeware, furniture or kitchens – what you yourself would want.

And so, in 2014, Vipp CEO Egelund found himself wanting a place to escape from the hectic pace of city living and the daily grind. "A bit like Apollo landing on the moon, I wanted to create a tiny house you could buy, assemble and drop in a remote setting of choice. So, we designed the Vipp Shelter, but it failed." It failed in as much as it didn't sell. It succeeded, however, in generating interest from design lovers worldwide – from Japan to South Korea, the US and UK – who were keen to rent the space for a short stay, effectively evolving the company into a hospitality venture.

Now, Vipp has six guesthouses, the latest launching this spring in Andorra as the first outside of Scandinavia, with a seventh to follow later in the year. Each property is unique, fitted out with Vipp products while united by a homely aesthetic. These tiny houses range from five-star camping in a Swedish forest to the upcoming Vipp Beach House in Denmark's largest national park, Thy (dubbed "cold Hawaii" for its similar, if chillier, wind conditions, making it popular with surfers).

Casa Vipp in Andorra is special because the impetus came from Vipp's local partner, Bau Studio. Owners D. Gaspar Saludes and Sandra Riera approached the team with the idea of turning an old stone house that once stored grains into a Vipp house. Together with designer Julie Cloos Mølsgaard, they created a home with a calm, neutral interior to allow the

architecture of the building to breathe. With round porthole windows, high ceilings and original wooden beams, the space is surrounded by mountains, ideal for skiing and hiking. Yet, it's the little details that bring the charm, from regional clay pots and pans to a tagine from Saludes' parents; each item lends a lived-in feeling while connecting to the local life.

For Mølsgaard, it's about creating memorable experiences, like standing under the beautiful ceiling brushing your teeth after a day of skiing, with the Vipp bath module contrasting and complementing the original wooden features with high-end industrial design. With Iceland, Tasmania and upstate New York on the horizon, this venture has turned Egelund's pipe dream into a new rendition of the brand.

So, is Vipp now a hospitality brand? "We don't want to be put in a box," says Egelund. "Yes, we've moved into hospitality, and design remains at the core of our products, but the key is that we do things differently. These aren't hotels, they're highly curated guesthouses. Personally, I see them as a supplement to other travel accommodation." Living alongside Vipp products in these mini-hotels has also afforded a level of feedback that in turn is influencing product development, inspiring new colour schemes and design progression. For Egelund, it's about having fun, being bold and proud of what you produce.

And what would his late grandfather make of it? "It would be such fun to have a day with him, to show him what Vipp has become. He would love it, I'm sure. But in all honesty, we may not have achieved this move with him here...he may have questioned the viability of this venture. My mother is the visionary – she's the one who is always keen to try things out." With such an open-minded approach, there's no telling what Vipp might do next.

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Facing page  
Casa Vipp,  
Andorra, based  
in a traditional  
stone building  
in the Pyrenees



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Above  
On the shores of Sweden’s Lake Immeln, Vipp Shelter started off as a product idea: a small, easy-to-assemble building that could be dropped into a remote location

Facing page  
Vipp Shelter failed as a business idea – but spawned a series of guesthouses, where visitors can live amid Vipp’s products, from kitchens to lighting and furniture

