



*Decorated Farmhouses  
of Hälsingland World Heritage*

# BOMMARS



»» *Together, the various rooms at Bommars provide an unusually clear picture of the Hälsingland farmers' aesthetic appreciation and of the broad repertoires in the art of interior decoration at the command of the province's folk art painters.*



**Copyright:** Gävleborg County Administrative Board  
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Hälsingebilder, Hälsinglands museum  
**Translation:** Semantix Språkcentrum



**BOMMARS** occupies an elevated location on the outskirts of Letsbo, a village in a thickly forested part of the valley of the river Ljusnan. With its tall, weathered farmhouse, it is representative of how the wealthier farmers in Ljusdal built their farms in the 1800s. The interiors and decor consist of wallpaper inspired by that used in mansions combined with folk painting, a combination

that was very unusual. Even the room for storing clothes is decorated with Stockholm newspapers from the mid-1850s. The farm is mentioned as Oppigården as early as 1542, but acquired its present name in the 1900s. Today, Bommars is privately owned, but offers guided tours and events during the summer.



# WEATHERED FARMHOUSE WITH TWO ENTRANCES

**THE ELONGATED** farmhouse was built in 1844, and consists of two floors. The timber facades show traces of red paint, but have been left unpainted over the last 150 years, which explains their weathered dark brown colour. The house has two entrances, the west leading to the dwelling and the east to a separate, larger room that seems to have been used as a guest room during festivities. Each entrance has its own porch, added later rather than when the house was built.

## MIXTURE OF PRINTED WALLPAPER AND FOLK PAINTING

The farmhouse's most lavish room is on the first floor. There are two beds fixed to the wall, and an unusual fireplace with a columnar top. The walls are covered with a hand-printed wallpaper with a large floral pattern in



strong colours. The painter has copied a French wallpaper that can be seen at Ekebyhov Castle near Stockholm, for example. The locally made copy at Bommars differs from the original, in terms of both printing technique and colours. The wallpaper has also been hung in an unusual manner. The wallpaper seams are covered with pasteboard strips stencilled in yellow and blue, colours that are repeated in the wallpaper pattern. The interiors at Bommars show that while both farmers and the higher strata of society chose the same wallpapers, the farmers used the printed wallpapers in accordance with their own interior decoration traditions.

## THE HISTORY OF THE FARMHOUSES OF HÄLSINGLAND

### MANY ROOMS FOR FESTIVITIES

A Hälsingland farmhouse could have up to fifteen decorated rooms, but only a couple of them were in day-to-day use. The others were used only for really important occasions, such as weddings. These festivities rooms are often richly decorated, and the painting technique indicates the room's use and status.



### LINEN, THE FOREST AND TRADE

The farmers' healthy finances were based on agriculture and animal husbandry. Many Hälsingland farmers were also able to supplement their income with activities such as linen production, trade and the sale of forest land and timber rights.



## TWO CHAMBERS WITH DIFFERENT STYLES

In the east there are two chambers that were decorated at the same time but in completely different styles. One has marbled walls framed by stencilled borders. The dado imitates an exclusive burl veneer, while the mouldings are painted in limestone grey. The walls in the other chamber are decorated with a wallpaper in the Renaissance Revival style, a style inspired by 1500s Europe.

## ROOM FOR STORING CLOTHES, WITH STENCILLED CEILING BORDER

On the first floor, there is also a room for storing clothes. It has no fireplace. In Hälsingland, rooms like this are usually undecorated, but this one is papered with Stockholm newspapers from around 1850. The stencilled ceiling border goes with the newspaper on the walls, showing that it really was intended as decoration.



## ELEGANT LANDING AND HALLWAY

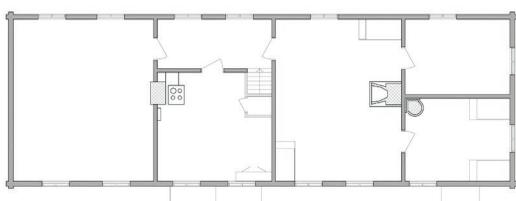
The first floor landing combines marbling in shades of green with a dado imitating grey limestone, creating a light and elegant impression. The same combination of colours and techniques is repeated in the hallway on the ground floor.



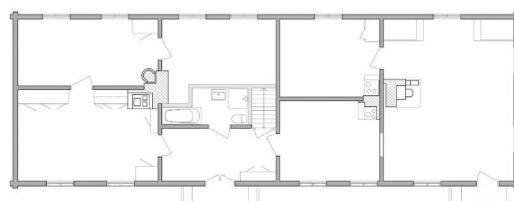
## CONTINUOUSLY MODERNISED GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor residential rooms have been continuously modernised, and are now a private residence. However, the guest room in the east section retains much of its original interior from 1848. A fireplace and two beds fixed to the wall are preserved. The walls are stencilled blue, yellow and red in a diamond pattern, while the beds, doors and dados are painted to imitate walnut. This exclusive wood species was the height of fashion in the mid-1700s, but it is rarely seen imitated in the farmhouses of Hälsingland. The guest room was probably intended only for festivities, but has nevertheless seen a lot of wear. This probably happened during a period in the early 1900s when the farmhouse was let to accommodate forestry workers.

## PLAN OF BOMMARS FARMHOUSE



First floor



Ground floor





## SUMMER RESIDENCE AND OUTBUILDINGS

At right angles to the farmhouse there is a smaller residential building that was built at the same time. The farm also has a large cowshed and a group of well-preserved old outbuildings from the 1800s. These comprise a three-storey raised log granary, a smaller cowshed for summer use and a smithy. There is also a hay barn from the 1650s.



Ground-floor hallway

## ON THE SAME SITE SINCE THE MIDDLE AGES

The Bommars farm is documented as early as 1542 under the name Oppigården. The name Bommars accompanied new owners in the 1900s, a family who had lived previously at Bomma farm in Järvsö.

In 1827, the only daughter and heiress to Bommars, Gölin Jonsdotter, married farmer Sven Johansson. He owned and worked another farm that was much more centrally located in the parish, so Bommars was then occupied by tenants and employees. The buildings at Bommars were destroyed in a fire in 1844, but the farm was rebuilt immediately. The farm was taken back into use in 1887, as a residence for the owners, when Gölin Jonsdotter's grandson Sven Persson moved in and took over the operation. The farm was passed down in the same family until 1901. The present owning family took over the farm in 1930.



First-floor landing

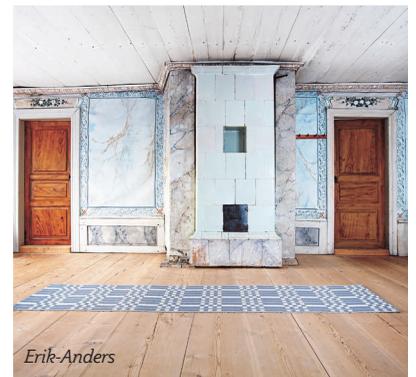
## A LITTLE ABOUT WORLD HERITAGE SITES

A World Heritage site is an environment considered globally unique and therefore important to all of humanity. The criteria that must be met to warrant designation as a World Heritage Site are governed by a 1972 convention adopted by the UN agency UNESCO. Once something is entered on the World Heritage List, the country where it is located is obliged to ensure that it is preserved for posterity.

## THE DECORATED FARMHOUSES OF HÄLSINGLAND ARE ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

There are over 1 000 sites on the World Heritage List, with about thirty being added each year. Italy accounts for most, while Sweden has fifteen. Since summer 2012, seven farmhouses in Hälsingland have become a World Heritage site, Bommars being one of them.

The Hälsingland farmhouses were inscribed on the World Heritage List under the name “Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland”. The focus is on what is truly unique about the farmhouses, the vernacular architecture and the interiors. It is unusual for ordinary farmers to have built such large houses with so many large rooms exclusively for festivities. There are also more decorated domestic interiors preserved in Hälsingland than anywhere else in the world. Most of these farmhouses were built in the 1800s when construction reached its peak.



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## THE SEVEN WORLD HERITAGE DECORATED FARMHOUSES

**Gästgivars** in Vallsta, Arbrå

**Kristofers** in Stene, Järvsö

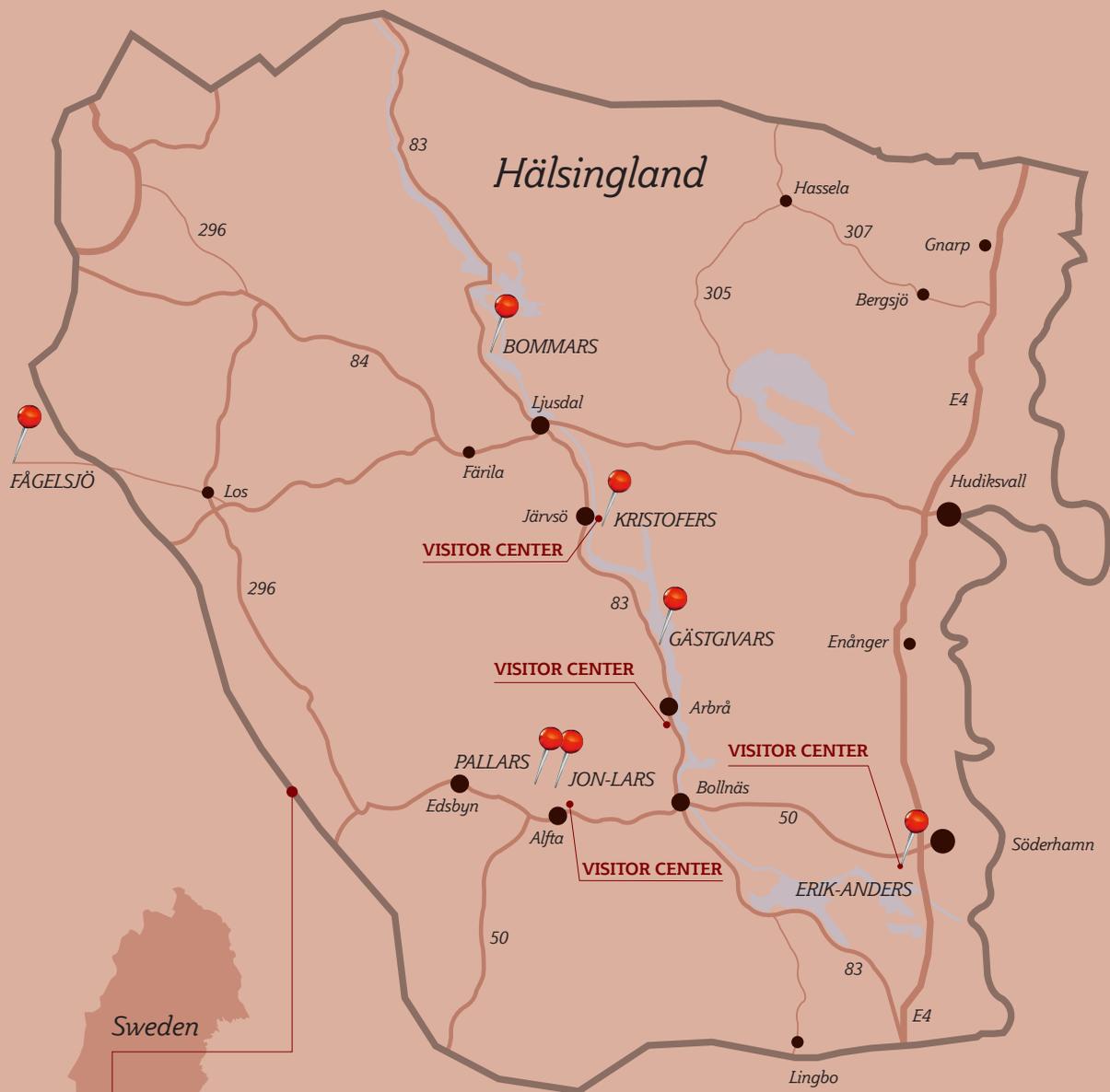
**Jon-Lars** in Långhed, Alfta

**Bortom Åa** in Fågelsjö, Loos

**Bommars** in Letsbo, Ljusdal

**Erik-Anders** in Asta, Söderala

**Pallars** in Långhed, Alfta



### TOURS AND OPENING HOURS

Bommars is a privately owned residence, but offers guided tours and events during the summer. Please contact Bommars ([www.bommars.se](http://www.bommars.se)) (in Swedish) or the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage Visitor Center in Ljusdal Municipality ([www.stenegard.se](http://www.stenegard.se)) for more information.

**Please respect the private nature of the site, and do not visit when it is not open.**

### GET TO KNOW YOUR HERITAGE – BUT NOT WITH YOUR HANDS!

It is important to remember that our common heritage must continue to be protected. Do not smoke in the area, and do not touch the painted surfaces, wood and fabrics.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The farm's website:

[www.bommars.se](http://www.bommars.se) (in Swedish)

[www.varldsarvethalsingegardar.se](http://www.varldsarvethalsingegardar.se)

Gävleborg County Administrative Board

[www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg](http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg)

*We reserve the right to make changes.*

## VISITOR CENTER

Stene Gård, Järvsö

[www.stenegard.com](http://www.stenegard.com)

Gästgivars, Vallsta

[www.varldsarvetgastgivars.se](http://www.varldsarvetgastgivars.se)

Hälsingegård Ol Anders, Alfta

[www.ol-anders.se](http://www.ol-anders.se)

Erik-Anders, Asta

[www.erik-anders.se](http://www.erik-anders.se)

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