

STAFFAN TOLLGARD

The Swedish designer opens offices both here, in his favourite London spot of Westbourne Grove, and overseas in the Algarve

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This has already been a very exciting year for Staffan Tollgard Design Group, which has opened a studio and showroom in Westbourne Grove and an office in Quinta do Lago on Portugal's Algarve coast.

Tollgard's studio has always been in west London — he set up the business in his attic in 2005 after graduating from the Inchbald School of Design. Within six months of trading Tollgard, employed Rosalind Calow, now the studio's most senior designer and a part owner of the company. Yoann Ricau joined a year later so it was time to move into the first office, also in Westbourne Grove.

The designers cite Scandinavian and Asian design as influences and the team's love of clean lines and warm woods can be seen in numerous residential projects, ranging from facelifts of rental flats to new builds and total refurbishments of large family houses.

The team is now eight strong — including the two designers who work on Tollgard's new commercial arm, Redthread — and the latest office move was prompted by the need for a larger client meeting space and to showcase favourite pieces of furniture and accessories.

The upgrade certainly has not lost the design group its contemporary edge; the studio sits beneath the graffiti-ed Westway flyover and the sound of a nearby skate park rings in your ears as you approach. 'I love this area' says the Sweden-born Tollgard, 'it is a young and creative environment. Notting Hill has always been known for its arty crowd and I feel that our business fits well here.'

The studio's large island unit, where the team work on schemes, is surrounded by drawers full of samples and the showroom space has the advantage of being set up as a dining room/lounge, which makes it a great place to meet clients.

And what of the new Algarve design studio? 'We believe a lot of people who bought there in the 80s and early 90s are now looking to turn their traditionally Portuguese summer houses into year-round homes as their lifestyles and work commitments change,' Tollgard explains. While most Algarve homes are still fairly traditional in style, the team has seen a definite movement towards adopting more contemporary and streamlined styles.

Closer to home, Tollgard's own workload includes a penthouse in Bloomsbury and a house in Notting Hill. 'The practice as a whole works simultaneously on around 15 projects that vary in size,' says Tollgard. 'I actually find it quite hard to plan ahead. No one calls up asks you to do their house next year. They always want you to start right away.'

www.tollgard.co.uk



CALM AND COLLECTED

*Above: an example of Tollgard's work in Portugal
Above left: a home office in Notting Hill
Above right: project for Freemantle Media, one of the first for new commercial arm Redthread*



INFORMAL DINING

*Above: Staffan Tollgard Design group team
Left: the living room set up for relaxed client meetings in the studio in Westbourne Grove*