



Varner Group is a Norwegian fashion group with headquarters in Billingstad, near Oslo. Varner Group includes 12 different store concepts, such as Bik Bok, Cubus, Dressman, Carlings and Volt. Varner Group has approximately 1,200 stores in the Nordic and Baltic countries, as well as Germany and Poland.

Varner Group builds or remodels 140 stores a year. Fagerhult Retail is responsible for the lighting design in several of these projects.

Creative collaboration provides bright ideas

“Crazy proposals lead to the best lighting solutions,” store designer Joakim Varner at the Norwegian Varner Group says. The fashion company worked with Fagerhult Retail to create a lighting design that gives their different store concepts optimum competitiveness.

TEXT: Jessica Holm

TODAY, CLOTHES mean much more than just something to wear. Garments are a strong expression of our identity. Shopping for clothing has become a pleasure, like going to a concert or seeing a movie.

“Competition is fierce. We don’t only compete against other clothing stores, but also against the theatre, opera and fitness facilities. We must dare to stand out and offer people an experience they cannot get anywhere else,” Joakim says.

He has been a store designer at the concept department within the family business Varner Group for about eight years. The company has been working with Fagerhult to produce ideal lighting solutions for many of their store concepts for about the same period of time.

“The lighting is as important as the interior. Lighting design is an extremely effective tool for clarifying our various concepts. With the help of the lighting, we can enhance the sense of Bik Bok as a trendy, high fashion store. Or Dressmann as an earthy and classic men’s store.”

Joakim says that over the years he has been fascinated by how light can create different atmospheres. Four years ago, Varner Group decided to remake the whole concept of Bik Bok. One of the challenges was to highlight the many garments that hang along the walls.

“I really like the solution Fagerhult worked out for us. Light rails and various types of wall lighting that direct light in a beautiful way at the garments. Moreover, they have managed to create a cool drama and a luminance that creates a sense of sparkling diamonds. By reworking the concept, Bik Bok increased turnover significantly,” Joakim says.

He argues that the lighting in a store plays a greater role than many people might think. The Bik Bok and Cubus stores, aimed at young women, are flooded with light. “More is more” is the motto, and the light creates a fresh and contemporary feeling.

“While Volt, in contrast, which offers fashion for young men, has a darker environment. It is flamboyant with strong spotlights on some garments.”

The concept department gets Fagerhult involved at an early stage for each new project.

“The sooner we start thinking about the light, the better. Fagerhult is like an in-house department that we involve in the entire process. We are creative together and exchange ideas freely. There is an open-minded atmosphere and everyone initially comes with quirky proposals. It is often from the craziest ideas that the most sensible solution emerges. This

isn’t brain surgery that we are working with here. We need to take risks and test different set-ups.”

Joakim Varner says that Fagerhult is responsive and embraces the corporate culture of the Varner Group.

“Having such a close working relationship is a big plus. A major difference from other lighting companies is that Fagerhult is always one step ahead. They come with lots of their own thoughts. Often long before I even start thinking about an upcoming project. They are constantly on their toes and it’s always exciting to hear what they come up with,” Joakim concludes.

JOAKIM VARNER ON FAGERHULT’S ENVIRONMENTAL THINKING:

“Today, every job must consider environmental awareness. I appreciate Fagerhult’s focus on creating solutions with the least possible impact on the environment. Part of that involves the use of LED light sources. We believe that LED is a sustainable technology, partly because of its long life.

We have discussed LED technology with Fagerhult for many years and have now started to use it in some stores. We are very fond of the light, which gives both a nice feeling and atmosphere.”



One of Varner Group's store concepts, Volt, in Gothenburg. Here, large exclusive chandeliers are installed above the staircase.



A pair of black suspended Cube is installed over the product display - not only does it add light it also matches the black display table.



Except from black Marathon LED spotlights there are a few special luminaires installed to complement the shop concept.



The exclusive chandelier appears in several places in the shop.