



# PLANET **one**

SOMETIME IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE, THOMAS LUNDGREN PREDICTS THAT HE'LL MAKE CHEAP, MASS-PRODUCED FURNITURE EXTINCT. HE CONTINUES HIS QUEST FOR WORLD DOMINATION WITH AN EVER-EXPANDING HOME FASHION BRAND, AND A PRICE POINT THAT HE REFERS TO AS MASTIGE: A HIGHLY EROGENOUS MONEY ZONE THAT LIES SOMEWHERE BETWEEN MASS AND PRESTIGE.

A small square red tag has become ever more visible of late. It's on furniture, bedding, glassware, music, and even - food. It was first spotted in Abu Dhabi, then Dubai, then Sharjah; Kuwait; Jordan; Bahrain, and very soon - it'll be appearing in Stockholm where IKEA-founder, Ingvar Kamprad, opened his very first store. If you haven't yet seen it, you must be shopping in the wrong place; living on the wrong planet; or perhaps - colour blind. There's a little message printed on these little red tags: THE One. It stands for TOTAL HOME EXPERIENCE and if anything you own bears the mark, welcome, you're already a resident of a bright and brave new future. This little red cube that may come to dominate the entire planet

belongs to Thomas Lundgren, the man responsible for changing the way dedicated Middle Eastern dwellers think about what they put into their living spaces. Lundgren, a one time Sony-music executive, and one-time penniless but ideas-fuelled entrepreneur, claims to be wired to the world; that's why he knows everything. And just to be clear, this knowledge isn't something he acquired through experience; it's just how he is. It's how he was made. With his extra-terrestrial design and retail-forward powers, he's planning to take over and save us all from boring furniture. So far, he hasn't done too bad a job; with nine interior retail hotspots standing testament to our ever-mindful desire to scale up from humdrum interior existences. When he opened his first store in Abu Dhabi in 1996, it was the breadth of his retail vision and the 'spirit' of what was on sale that singled THE One out from the competition. It was also the first time that a Middle Eastern furniture retailer took us out of flat packs, chip board, and all round crappy furniture and inspired us - with funky, sexed-up contemporary home furnishings, to the point where we started whipping

out our notebooks so we could jot down details of things we saw that might work in our own homes. Planet One was a vision that was revealed to Lundgren, a disillusioned IKEA employee, late one night, by an angel. But unlike the many banks who refused to help capitalise his venture, he knew this was no Fata Morgana. He raised the money he needed with the help of a few like-minded, soulful people, who knew that Lundgren's idea was capable of inciting consumer ramraiding. Incidentally, the bank letters of rejection line the walls of his office; all squared up in simple white frames. And when the time is right, Lundgren (and his partners) plan to send a copy to each of the soulless, visionless money men - just to prove a point. There are those who acknowledge that Ingvar Kamprad is the most influential taste-maker in the world today. Not sure he is, but in any case, **he'd better watch out; there's new breed of Swede with a fine-tuned smell for success.**

Text by Carlo dei Tedeschi

