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THE CROSSROADS

Lined with brightly coloured townhouses, bars and restaurants, Nyhavn is a colourful 17th century waterfront and popular entertainment district in Copenhagen, *writes David Messiha*



On a warm sunny day in Copenhagen as we make our way to Kongens Nytorv where Denmark's most popular and

luxurious shopping venues are found, we are fortunate to stumble across one of the most talked about streets in Danish history.

Nyhavn, pronounced 'new hawn', is known for its restaurants and pubs as well as its easy-going atmosphere (especially during the summer). For both Danes and tourists, it's a getaway.

In Danish, Nyhavn means 'new harbour' or 'new port' even though it was more than 300 years ago when the first sailor disembarked here.

History has it that King Frederik V established the harbour close to the city. It was easy for sailors and ships to unload

their cargo and it's close to the centre of town.

Nyhavn is graced by pretty Danish houses overlooking the canals and the waterfront. The houses are painted in vibrantly bright colours, so when the sun shines it makes Nyhavn look brilliant; adding to its scenic beauty are many boats and old wooden ships docked in the nearby canal. One of the most well-known Danish writers of all time lived here. Overlooking the canal at house number 20 lived Hans Christian Andersen. He is popular for penning many fairytales like 'The Little Mermaid', 'The Ugly Duckling' and others.

During the summer when the clouds disappear and the sun shines, Nyhavn is transformed into an open-air bar. It would almost be impossible to find a seat on the bulwark, because it does not only separate water from land but also serves as an extension to the bars.



Top: The colourful facades of Nyhavn District (the New Port), graced by old pretty Danish houses overlooking the waterfront. Above: House number 20, the historic house in Nyhavn where the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen began their magic.

Traffic is not allowed on Nyhavn, so restaurants can put their tables and chairs on the road. All told, there may be space for 700 streetfront diners.

Dining in Nyhavn is a remarkable experience. Many restaurants and pubs serve traditional Danish cuisine with traditional open sandwiches, marinated herring, shrimps and smoked eel.

In the belly of Nyhavn, two boat companies offer tours of the canals and the harbour. The tours include major attractions, such as the church at Amager, the Royal Palace, the Royal Library and Christiania, all of which are interconnected by canals.

Even during the winter holidays Nyhavn is colorfully decorated. What makes it truly special is the juxtaposition of history and urbanity, as students and adults alike enjoy drinks set against a backdrop of buildings dating back to the 18th century.

For Nyhavn is a crossroads where the present and the past meet and mingle. ☘

SMOOTH AS SILK

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Left: People relax and congregate in a sidewalk café of Nyhavn. Right: A produce and flower stand in the Amager, a public square at the centre of the Strøget with a century-old fountain.

We preserve this for fellow Nature Lovers...

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