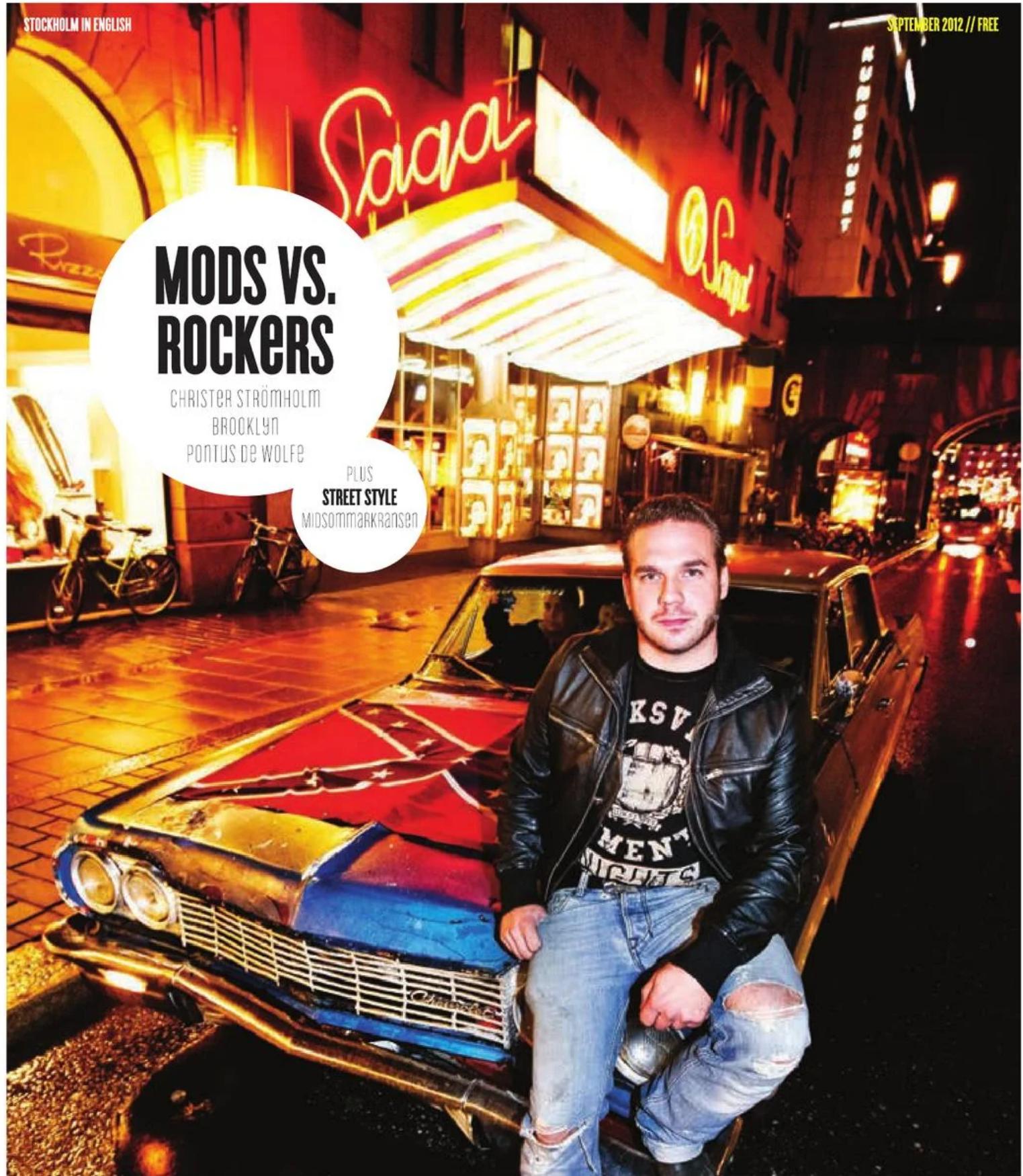


MODS VS. ROCKERS

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 **TOTALLY STOCKHOLM** 09



THE MOD SQUAD

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CLUB 5:15 is where Stockholm's mods meet, mingle and move to the booming sounds of soul and psychedelic music. Here, looks are everything and the common denominator is the swinging sixties. These dedicated followers of fashion bear their threads well, harking back to the golden days of Carnaby Street in their parkas, pinstripes and plaid skirts. There are bob cuts, moptops, slim-fit suits, winklepicker boots, Fred Perry polos, Ben Sherman shirts, sleeveless shift dresses, button down collars, mini skirts, and go-go boots. Yes, the ace face is alive and well in present-day Stockholm and he wants you to come out and dance.

The roots of the mod run to England's post-war fifties, as young people started growing restless in pre-Beatles Britain. Tired of the bleakness of their working-class heritage, the mods dreamed of a different way of life, seeking inspiration from two sources: American jazz music and beat culture, and Italian and French leisure culture. The mods weren't a "tribe" or a "gang" but like-minded people who shared the same attitudes towards clothes and music. Their keywords were individuality and nonconformity and by turning their backs to whatever they considered dull and dated they looked towards the future, praising everything that had a futuristic appeal, identifying with anything new, exciting, and modern. The group therefore became known as Modernists, which was later shortened to Mods.





Stockholm's mod movement is currently in revival mode, but its core group has been active since the 1980s. One thing that's defined mod culture from the beginning is their fascination with scooters, which fitted the image well as it was both futuristic and foreign, and it soon became the mod's ultimate accessory. Stockholm actually boasts quite a few scooter clubs, with Svenska Scooterklubben serving as an umbrella for all the smaller clubs. In collaboration, the various clubs plan major events such as the Scooter Premier at the beginning of the season, and The Day of the Scooter at the end of it. Then there's the Scooter Fika every Wednesday where scooterists gather for smaller ride-outs around town.

Founded in 2009, the Stockholm Mods Scooter Club is central to the mod scene. Four mod friends who'd just been to the Scooter Premier felt inspired by the great turnout of people who'd been mods since the eighties, and started the club. It has since organised the "Gotland Mod Weekender" which has been a smash hit for the past couple of years. "Our aim is obviously to ride our scoots (which can be Vespa or Lambretta but nothing plastic) but also have lots of fun!" says Stephanie Gill, one of the founding members.

The club also runs the abovementioned 5:15, taking its name from the song by mod band The Who, featured on the soundtrack for mod-revival film Quadrophenia. "There's a growing interest in

the mod culture and I think 5:15 has been instrumental in this. One of our goals was to attract young people to the mod sounds and style. And of course to create an opportunity for us in the SMS to get together out of scooter season and have fun. We have never aspired to be a nightclub with professional DJs et cetera but mainly a club made by mates for mates."

"It's fun to see new mod faces finding the club and really enjoying the music and style," says Sven Hallberg, current president of SMS. "I found the style in the early 90s from acid jazz and Britpop bands like Blur and Oasis. I've always loved the architecture, style, music and aesthetics from the 60s so it felt like I had always been a mod but without the label."

"There's basically two sorts of mods in Stockholm: the ones that have been a part of the scene since the 70s and 80s (and even some from the 60s), and then there's the new mods, like me, that got into the style and music from later groups like those of the Britpop era. For me being a mod is a compass in style."

"Mod is a way of life, the sounds, the style, the scooters," continues Stephanie. "There's a quote from Horst A. Friedrichs' 'I'm One 21st Century Mod' which I think says it all: 'A real mod does not choose to be a mod, they discover that they are a mod. It is not just a fashion statement; it is the way you feel and act and express yourself. Mod is in the soul.'"

VESPA CLUB STOCKHOLM is the oldest scooter club in the city, established in 1951. It then went on a long break in the early seventies, and was restarted just a couple of years ago after having lain dormant for nearly three decades. "There are quite different lifestyles attached to the scooterists depending on their age," says member Tobias Reiner. "50s scooters are generally owned by pretty ordinary people, 60s scooters belong to mods, 70s scooters appeal to skinheads, the 80s saw the mod-revival and Scooterboys, and 90s to present scooterists are ridden by café hipsters."

"The Vespa and Lambretta scooter clubs are not strictly mod clubs, although I must say that a lot of the members do like the 60s music and lifestyle. I'm a member of both clubs, as well as a member of the board of the Swedish National Scooter Association, and I have noticed that mods have had a revival in the last five years. Prior to that they were not at all as visible as they are now."

The oldest continuous scooter club in the city, Lambretta Club Stockholm, was formed in 1995 by veteran mods and scooterboys. "The club was started because the people who'd been around the scene for many years wanted to organize the slumbering scooter scene in Sweden. And since Lambretta scooters are cooler than Vespas, they decided to start up a Lambretta club for the coolest people at the time," says Christian Rudheim, president of the club. "Lambretta is a smaller brand;



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there's only about 900 Lambrettas registered in Sweden compared to many thousands of Vespas, so it's a bit more exclusive to own a Lambretta. Lambretta is also less reliable and will make demands of its owner. By being a Lambrettist you show that you have what it takes when it comes to true scootering."

"I used to be a young mod in the early eighties. It all started when I watched Quadrophenia. We were a young mod squad from a suburb of Stockholm and many of the faces from those days are still spotted in parkas and on scooters. To be a mod means you never go out of style. It keeps you young to ride a scooter and look cool. Being a mod means you don't really do anything to achieve the mod look. You are mod, rather than try to be a mod. There's a big difference."

The Lambretta Club organizes events such as Mods vs. Rockers, which has been a staple in the mod landscape for the past few years. The happening involves a group of mods and a group of rockers starting out at opposite ends of Sankt Eriksbron and meeting in the middle for a mock riot. The event refers to the age-old clash between the two subcultures, made notorious in the 1960s and eventually leading to the downfall of the original mod movement. "Today, mods, skinheads and rockers have mixed up in a bigger movement. This was absolutely impossible in the eighties," says Christian.

And how does a seasoned mod like Christian define the Swedish scene? "The mod scene in Stockholm is closely linked to the British scene, although Swedish mods in the sixties had very little to do with the mod ideals that we know from England as they were mainly interested in heavy drugs and heavy rock music. The first real mods in Sweden were the ones from the 1979 mod revival linked with Quadrophenia. It seems like every ten years there's a new mod revival, even though many of the mods nowadays are old farts like myself. A few of the diehard mods are into scooters, and most of them go clubbing. Northern soul is the biggest movement in the mod music scene. So in a way the scene is divided in two different directions: scooters and northern soul."

THE MOD & ROCKER SHOP

brilliantly balances the old and new of the mod world. The shop itself serves as vintage packaging for its modern products, displaying Doc Martens, parkas, tassel loafers, Union Jack and Royal Air Force roundel adorned helmets, and traditional British mod brands of high quality such as Fred Perry, Ben Sherman, and Merc to the backdrop of old scooter parts and tools. There's a couple of classic scooters propped up in the middle of the shop, and one can kick back on the retro couch with a copy of "I'm a 21st Century Mod" while enjoying the funky acid jazz sounds that fill the space.

"The original shop owner had been working with scooters since the early fifties and started his own business in 1965," says current owner Börje Persson. "The interior and some of the parts inventory are from the early fifties, while the clothing was added by me about five years ago. We now work as a spare part shop/clothing shop with roots firmly in the sixties. We've been repairing and maintaining some of the mod scooters literally for decades. We know some of the bikes from the seventies and it's nice to notice that they keep on rolling, being passed on from one mod generation to another."

POW IS NOW

was founded in 2006 by Marielle Hasselblad and Joakim Holmberg, who wanted to build a store with a greater range of 60s mod brands than the common Fred Perry look. At first they planned on selling vintage clothes for men, but as they noticed how rare well-preserved men's clothing was, they decided to sell new and obscure 60s menswear brands. They still kept the vintage idea by ordering a limited stock on each item to make the buyer feel more unique and avoid having ten other mods walk by in the same outfit. In addition to the various brands they order, they produce their own clothing line under the name Satisfashion. Today the store exists as a web shop run by Marielle and fitting appointments can be arranged through the shop's website.

"Retro and vintage fashion has always loved to set down new roots through society. It's a never-ending process of mixing and matching and many people see it as freedom and a way of expression," says Marielle. "Stockholm has always been a great city to





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shop for girls, lots of good clothes and shops with good prices and quality. The male vintage scene is a bit stale though. Men tend to dress in things they feel comfortable in. If they like a brand, they can die in it. You can see this in most vintage shops right now, they're pretty safe with more casual styles. Men tend to buy clothes with their heads, while girls shop with their hearts - which is actually the other way around when it comes to record shopping."

"The mod scene in Stockholm is small but dedicated. There are a lot of experienced mods here, as well as good DJs and a great crowd! I love this culture because it has many aspects I like and it never grows old. My heart is tuned to the mod culture because of the atmosphere, music, fashion, society, and art. There is so much to devour and it all tastes really delicious! The recent post-Mod style is loosened from its locked boundaries, more experimental and open to new ways of thinking as a mod. Being a girl, or a modette, in this scene is interesting. You are adored but at the same time you have to prove you're as big a 'nerd' as the guys are! I've met some amazing mods and modettes that don't give a crap about gender but instead focus on the person's spirit and passion."

HIDE AND GO SEEK is the latest club addition to the Stockholm mod scene and has earned an esteemed status over the few months it's been in existence. The club was started by 20-year-old university student Carl Ivinger, a pioneer of a new mod generation.

"I started Hide And Go Seek as a reaction to the northern soul and psychedelic oriented clubs in Stockholm. I love northern soul but that's not the only thing I listen to and with Hide And Go Seek I wanted to expand beyond these genres and show that there is so much more music to dance and listen to. It was the music that made me a mod and slowly I started to dress in the right way. I started to look back on the original mods because I didn't like the revival scene with The Jam, Chords, Purple Hearts et cetera. I think that's something I share with other mods in my generation, the return to the mod roots."

"The mod scene here is very small but it's alive. There are very few mods my age though and that's not so good, but I think that will change because I can't be the only one my age in this city to like this culture. Mod is something that is so different from everything else. The most appealing aspect of mod culture is the subtle reaction against conformity. That was something I could relate to because I have never felt the need to dress or behave like everybody else. I also think mod culture attracts those who dream of yesterday because the present seems so uncertain."

Scot James is a loyal patron and regular DJ at both Hide And Go Seek and 5:15. A Scottish mod who emigrated to Sweden in the late 90s, Scot's been immersed in the Stockholm scene over the past years. "For me, the Stockholm scene nowadays is all about the music and the people. In the last couple of years I've gotten to know a lot

of the older mods in the Stockholm Mods Scooter Club - a friendly bunch of enthusiastic people who believe in what they do and in their style."

"The mod scene for me was down to one man: Paul Weller. I was a big Jam fan and started to get interested in his influences, such as The Small Faces, The Who, The Kinks and of course the Tamla Motown record label. I then really got into clothes and getting tailor-made suits, shirts, and so on. All my money went on the mod scene, travelling to mod rallies or clubs and gigs. Give me a DJ playing old soul or R'n'B on vinyl and I will give you a smile to last the evening, there is nothing better, nothing. I'm 43 years old and am still working as a DJ, playing the best music this planet has ever known."

Marielle Hasselblad and Joakim Holmberg of Pow Is Now are both resident DJs at Hide And Go Seek, recruited by Carl for their good variation of 60s music that he wanted for the club. Joakim has over two decades of DJing both in Sweden and abroad under his belt. "I've been into different genres through the years, such as 60s mod-beat, northern soul, R&B, garage/psychedelia, jazz, indie pop, funk, French 60s, and acid jazz. I think the reason the club has gotten so popular is that we've had good quality 60s mod dance music from different genres, keeping both obscurity and quality and leaving the standard stuff behind."

"My first contact with mods was at school in the early 80s and I realized I wasn't alone, that there were other people who dressed cool and listened to good music," he continues. "You could actually dress like your heroes in the bands you liked! In the mid-80s it felt like the mod thing was starting to fade away, although some of us never left but went through some different kinds of mod-related styles. Among 'normal' people at the time there was unfortunately a kind of hatred against mods and many of us had our doubts whether to continue or not, but we would get our revenge in the 90s when mainstream fashion was slowly drifting towards the mod style. As a friend of mine pointed out to me - 'now you don't look so strange anymore!' If you really love something you keep on keeping on."

"The mod culture is a never-ending source to dig into, there is always something new to discover. As the years have gone by the mod scene has developed and new mod-related styles have emerged. The mod scene is no longer just a youth subculture, but something that people hang onto throughout their life - I hope!"

EVENTS:

- **Hide And Go Seek** (Aug 18, 21.00 at The Lock & Quay)
- **Eskilstuna** (Aug 25 - location to come)
- **Scooter Day** (Sep 15 - location to come)
- **Scooter Fika** (Wednesdays 18.00 at Skåningen kafébar)
- **Club 5:15** (fall dates and new location to come)