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SundayMail

# stellar

*Toni Collette*  
**boring...** and  
proud of it

**RICHARD WILKINS: PORTRAIT OF A FAMILY MAN** ★ *The McClymont sisters*  
★ **DARREN ROBERTSON JOINS COLIN FASSNIDGE IN THE KITCHEN**





## LITTLE LUXURIES

ACROSS THE WORLD, WE ARE EMBRACING THE DANISH ART OF HYGGE

The Danes, apparently, are the happiest people in the world, and they will tell you it's all down to *hygge*. It's a word I guarantee you will be hearing again and again... and then some. Let's start with the pronunciation. It's "hoo-gah". And that's the easy bit; defining *hygge* is the tricky part. It's variously translated as "cosy", "snug" - even "fun" - but it's far more than the sum of its parts. It's the warm glow that comes from everyday rituals, like the smell of fresh-baked bread, patting the dog, dinner with friends. Above all, it's an attitude - a national obsession even.

But it seems if you really want to understand *hygge*, ask a Brit. The UK has gone *hyggelig* (that's the adjective) crazy in the past 12 months. Nine books on the subject were published in the UK in 2016 and British stores are replete with snugglesome blankets, fake-fur throws and candles, candles, candles.

It strikes me that when Mary Donaldson married into the Danish royal family, mastering the language and protocol wasn't her only challenge. She had to get to grips with the complexities of *hygge*, an elusive cockle-warming that equals steaming mugs of cocoa and heart-shaped cookies at its most benign, and a strange form of national Valium at the other extreme.



### COMFORT AND JOY

Reveling in simple pleasures such as family meals, breakfast in bed, a cosy nook and aromatic candles are at the heart of *hygge*.

Copenhagen-based Australian writer Jeni Porter says: "Hygge is the best way to fight the gloom of a long Danish winter, but it's more about people making a conscious effort to have a good time together. It's resonating because people are seeking a more authentic way of living as a path to a greater sense of wellbeing."

Anne Weisz Mortensen, the Danish-born marketing manager for local furniture retailer Cult, agrees: "It's enjoying the simple things. Hygge is an integral part of Danish culture, but in Australia this could be a morning coffee ritual or admiring the ocean view at the beach."

So *hygge* can travel. It transcends seasons and hemispheres. The books of Sydney stylist Jason Grant, for example, with their embrace of laid-back, surfer hipsterdom, represent a curiously Aussie form of *hygge*. Substitute Havaianas for knitted socks.

Be warned, however. Checking emails and Facebook are distinctly *uhygge* (that's un-*hygge* to you and me), and let's not mention the lack of toasted marshmallows in those dark Danish TV crime series. It's complicated. ★  
*Neale Whitaker is editor-in-chief of Vogue Living.*

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### Neale's objects of desire COSY CORNER

1. **TIGMI TRADING** rug, \$3900, [tigmitrading.com](http://tigmitrading.com)
2. **BYREDO** candle, \$88, [mecca.com.au](http://mecca.com.au)
3. **MJG BY MR JASON GRANT** ottoman, \$299, [mjgstore.com](http://mjgstore.com)

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