



*Decorated Farmhouses  
of Hälsingland World Heritage*

# PALLARS



HÄLSINGE  
GÅRDAR



**Copyright:** Gävleborg County Administrative Board

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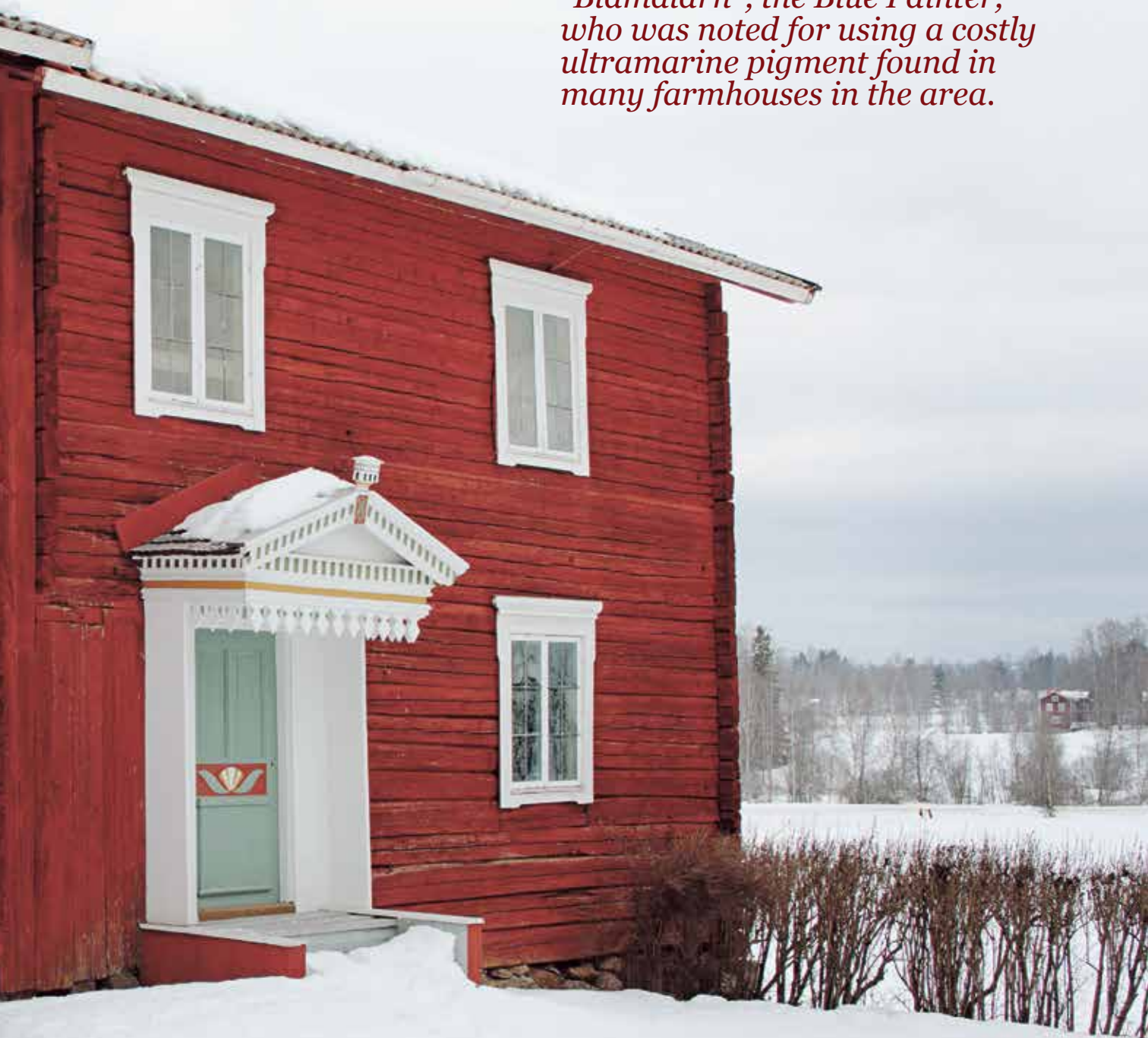
**Photography:** Jakob Dahlström, Lars Lööv,

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» The singular paintings preserved in one wing are the work of "Blåmålar", the Blue Painter, who was noted for using a costly ultramarine pigment found in many farmhouses in the area.



**P**ALLARS, in Alfta parish, is among the largest farmhouses in the whole of Hälsingland. The farmhouse acquired its mansion-like appearance, with an unusual number of porches and carved doors, when the farm's eldest son married a wealthy farmer's daughter. It was then that the large new residential dwelling was built. The farm was already large, with an unusual number of residential rooms. The noted painter Svärdes Hans Ersson, from the

province of Dalarna, painted landscapes in the large residential dwelling. The singular paintings preserved in one wing are the work of "Blåmålar", the Blue Painter. He is noted for using a costly ultramarine pigment found in many farmhouses in the area. Here, his paintings represent various named locations in Sweden, something rarely seen in other farmhouses in the Nordic region. The farm has been passed down in the same family since the 1600s. Tours of Pallars are available only by advance booking.

M.S. + 185533



# THE VAST AND WIDE FARMHOUSE

**THE HUGE WHITE** residential dwelling, built in 1858, is two and a half storeys tall and unusually wide. The imposing impression is reinforced by the mansard roof, a distinctive design that became fashionable among the farmers in Alfta in the decades around the mid-1800s. The porch has a design typical of Alfta, but is much larger than others in the area. The carved doors, typical of the area, are also an expression of traditional local carpentry.

## *WALL PAINTINGS IN THE FARMHOUSE*

The residential dwelling once had several rooms for festivities. Today, wall paintings remain in two rooms: a former "dagligstuga", a room for day-to-day living on the ground floor, and the large living in the attic. The vestibule is decorated with stencilling in distemper, while the living room walls have landscapes by Svärdes Hans Ersson, the noted folk painter from the province of Dalarna. The paintings, in oil paint, depict a continuous landscape with trees and bushes.



## *EAST WING ACTUALLY TWO BUILDINGS*

The east wing actually consists of two two-storey buildings positioned end-to-end. Both buildings are believed to date from the 1700s. The one to the north was built as a guest house, while the other is a former stable, converted in 1853 to a dwelling for farmer Jonas Nilsson's parents when they moved out of the main house. Each building's porch is in a different style. The porch on the house to the south is typical of the mid-1800s, while the softer design of the porch on the guest house suggests an earlier date.

## *The history of the farmhouses of Hälsingland*

### *Many rooms for festivities*

A Hälsingland farmhouse could have up to fifteen decorated rooms, but only a couple of them were in day-to-day use. The others were used only for really important occasions, such as weddings. These festivities rooms are often richly decorated, and the painting technique indicates the room's use and status.



### *Linen, the forest and trade*

The farmers' healthy finances were based on agriculture and animal husbandry. Many Hälsingland farmers were also able to supplement their income with activities such as linen production, trade and the sale of forest land and timber rights.



### *GUEST HOUSE IN COSTLY ULTRAMARINE*

The guest house at Pallars is Hälsingland's best-preserved example of a detached building for providing sleeping accommodation during festivities. Its interior has been completely preserved since its construction around 1853, when it was decorated by Blåmålar, an unknown painter from the province of Dalarna. His distinctive style is known from several farms in the area. His generous use of the costly and status-enhancing pigment ultramarine typifies his work.

### *STOCKHOLM, VÄSTERÅS AND LAPLAND*

As in so many other places in Alfta, the painting in the main guest room depicts landscapes. Its division into arched panels, separated by columns, is also traditional. In contrast to other contemporary landscape painting in the parish, the landscape depicted is not completely imaginary, however. The painter has instead represented Swedish towns such as Stockholm, Västerås and Gävle. On the wall nearest the entrance door there is a unique motif from Lapland. It depicts goahtis, and Sami people in a traditional Sami sleigh pulled by reindeer. There is no similar motif in wall paintings in Sweden, or indeed anywhere elsewhere in the Nordic region.



### *FIRST FLOOR IN EAST WING UNDECORATED*

Above the main guest room, there is a corresponding room with four beds and bare timber walls. This room is also intended for sleeping accommodation, but for casual workers, such as hired haymakers and itinerant tradesmen, rather than for wedding guests. Occupants over the years have left behind various inscriptions on the walls and ceiling. These two rooms,

with their contrasting impressions, throw a unique light on the differences between day-to-day life and festivities in the culture of the farmers of Hälsingland.

### *EAST WING'S SOUTHERN RESIDENTIAL DWELLING*

The small residential dwelling farthest south in the east wing was also decorated by Blåmålar. However, the landscapes here are considerably less elaborate.



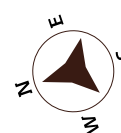
*Plan of east wing*



*First floor*



*Ground floor*





Stockholm

Lisddinom

*WEST WING PREVIOUSLY  
MAIN BUILDING*

The west wing is larger than the east, and was probably once the farm's main building. The wing accommodates three residential rooms and a bakery. It is built on one floor with a low, furnished attic. Instead of the traditional low windows to the sides, the attic floor has a line of circular windows, an arrangement with no equivalent elsewhere in Hälsingland. The porch is dated 1819, which probably also indicates the year the house was built.



*MARRIAGE AND CONSTRUCTION  
OF HOUSE*

Pallars farm has been passed down in the same family since the 1600s. It is not known how long the farm had existed before then. The village is mentioned in written sources as early as the 1200s, however, and very likely has its origins in the Iron Age. Until 1809, windows were taxed in Sweden. Tax records from that year show that Pallars was one of the farms in Hälsingland with the most windows – all 25 of them – and consequently an unusually large number of residential rooms. The large farmhouse was built in 1855-1858, following the marriage of the son of the farm, Jonas Nilsson, to Brita Olsdotter, daughter of Alfta's richest farmer.

*TWO OLDER OUTBUILDINGS REMAIN*

The farm has a large cowshed, built in 1930. The remaining older outbuildings comprise two "härbre", which are raised log storehouses, and a stable.





*A LITTLE ABOUT WORLD HERITAGE SITES*

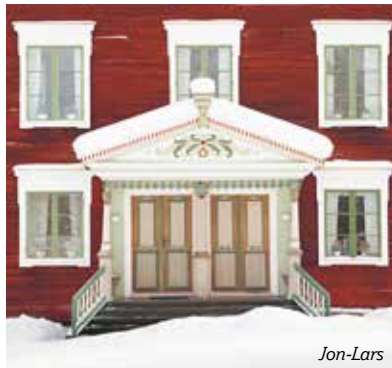
A World Heritage site is an environment considered globally unique and therefore important to all of humanity. The criteria that must be met to warrant designation as a World Heritage Site are governed by a 1972 convention adopted by the UN agency UNESCO. Once something is entered on the World Heritage List, the country where it is located is obliged to ensure that it is preserved for posterity.

*THE DECORATED FARMHOUSES OF HÄLSINGLAND ARE ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST*

The World Heritage List has nearly a thousand sites, with about thirty being added each year. Italy accounts for most, while Sweden has fifteen. Since summer 2012, seven farmhouses in Hälsingland have become a World Heritage site, Pallars being one of them.

The Hälsingland farmhouses were inscribed on the World Heritage List under the name “Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland”.

The focus is on what is truly unique about the farmhouses, the vernacular architecture and the interiors. It is unusual for ordinary farmers to have built such large houses with so many large rooms exclusively for festivities. There are also more decorated domestic interiors preserved in Hälsingland than anywhere else in the world. Most of these farmhouses were built in the 1800s when construction reached its peak.



*Pallars during the early 1900s.  
(Photographer unknown)*



» It is said that the young wife Brita Olsdotter imposed a condition on moving to the farm. A new dwelling house should be built that could measure up to her parents' home in Sjols. That home was owned by Alfta's richest farmer, and served as a model for several mansion-like buildings in the area.

## THE SEVEN WORLD HERITAGE DECORATED FARMHOUSES

**Gästgivars** in Vallsta, Arbrå

**Kristofers** in Stene, Järvsö

**Jon-Lars** in Långhed, Alfta

**Bortom Åa** in Fågelsjö, Loos

**Bommars** in Letsbo, Ljusdal

**Erik-Anders** in Asta, Söderala

**Pallars** in Långhed, Alfta



### TOURS AND OPENING HOURS

Pallars is a privately owned residence. This means the farm is not open to the public. Tours for groups can be arranged. Please contact the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage Visitor Center in Ovanåker Municipality ([www.ovanaker.se](http://www.ovanaker.se), Tel. +46 (0)271-200 22) for more information. **Please respect the private nature of the site, and do not enter the farm without first having booked a tour.**

### GET TO KNOW YOUR HERITAGE – BUT NOT WITH YOUR HANDS!

It is important to remember that our common heritage must continue to be protected. Do not smoke in the area, and do not touch the painted surfaces, wood and fabrics.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland  
World Heritage Visitor Center/Tourist  
office in Ovanåker Municipality  
[www.ovanaker.se](http://www.ovanaker.se)

Farmhouses of Hälsingland's own website:  
[www.halsingegardar.se](http://www.halsingegardar.se)

Gävleborg County Administrative Board  
[www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg](http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg)

*We reserve the right to make changes.*

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and do not enter the farm without first having  
booked a tour.

