



TRAVEL

One memorable evening, I had the pleasure of attending a Jean Sebelius concert by the **Tapiola Sinfonietta** held at Helsinki University Hall, the very room where Sebelius began his career in 1899. Conducted by the renowned Leif Segerstam, rotund, dynamic and compelling, he lent an air of excitement to the entire concert. Segerstam is irrepressible and joyous so it was quite fun to glide along on his flourishing baton as he conducted the glorious Symphony #1 in E minor.

Porvoo Pleasures

A convenient hour's drive east from Helsinki, **Porvoo** is Finland's second oldest town, history-rich, with ancient red, wooden storehouses that line the river and testify to the city heyday as a major port for merchant ships plying the world's oceans. High on a hill sits Porvoo's most recognizable landmark – the **Luthern Cathedral**, which has dominated the town since the early 1400s. We strolled through Old Town, built on a dense labyrinth of narrow cobblestone streets and alleyways and lined with colorful cottages, galleries and boutiques.

It is there that we explored the **Porvoo Museum** with exhibits on the town's history, including artifacts and art. Recently opened is a fine exhibit on Porvoo's prehistoric times and the Middle Ages. Holm House, a part of the museum, was built in 1763 and offers an opportunity to see how a wealthy merchant family lived at the end of the 18th century. Porvoo is known for its sweets so naturally we wouldn't leave without answering the call of our sweet tooth. Locals told us to visit **The Little Chocolate Factory** on Church Square. True to its name, the shop was so tiny we were barely able to fit through the door. But let that deter us? I think not. We were rewarded with rich and sumptuous chocolates, a treat I'd squeeze through this door for again in a heartbeat!

Tooling Around Turku Town

This place has played a very vital role in Finnish history. It is the oldest city in the country and the first capital of Finland. Founded in 1229, Turku is situated in the southwest region, the oldest inhabited area dating back 8,500 years. Fast forward to modern times: this coming year Turku



will be the European Capital of Culture, together with Tallinn in Estonia.

Turku today, with its pristine countryside and its nearby fabulous archipelago, provides lush and imposing sights to behold. The area is famous for its manor houses where historical figures lived and reigned, surrounded by lovely parks and gardens. We climbed up Unikankare Hill to **Turku Cathedral**, the heart of the Lutheran Church in Finland and the country's national shrine, completed at the end of the 13th century. How fortunate were we that, as we stood gazing at the intricate carvings in the ceiling, the cathedral's famed 81-stop organ, built by the Finnish organ-building company extraordinaire Veiko Virtanen, began playing. Surrounded by so much imposing beauty and the soft, musing tones of this special organ, it seemed an authentic moment drawn from medieval times – and it was magical.

Travel Editor Barbara Barton Sloane is constantly globe-bopping to share her unique experiences with our readers; from the exotic to the sublime. As Beauty/Fashion Editor she keeps us informed on the capricious and engaging fashion and beauty scene.

FINLAND 411

IN HELSINKI

Where to Stay

Sokos Hotels
www.sokoshotels.fi

Where to Dine

Kosmos Restaurant
www.ravintolakosmos.fi
Salutorget Restaurant
www.royalravintolat.com
Olo Restaurant
www.olo-restaurant.com

Things to Do

Suomenlinna UNESCO World
Heritage Sea Fortress
www.suomenlinna.fi
Design Forum Finland
www.designforum.fi
Ateneum Museum
www.ateneum.fi/en

Fiskars Village has ongoing exhibits, events and a Christmas Market; it is along the route to Turku, www.fiskarsvillage.fi
Royal Line Dinner Cruises, www.royalline.fi

IN PORVOO

Haikko Manor
www.haikko.fi

Manor House
www.haikko.fi

Porvoo Museum
www.porvoomuseum.fi
Luthern Cathedral
www.porvoocathedral.fi

Finnair Airlines
www.finnair.com

Wonderful food, gracious treatment – and they're on time!

For General Information on Finland

www.visitfinland.com

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