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Could This Be The World's Most Eco-Friendly Furniture Factory?

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The Plus has been designed by BIG Bjarke Ingels Group for Vestre and is situated in the heart of the ... [\[+\]](#) VESTRE

Earlier this month, Norwegian furniture manufacturers, [Vestre](#), unveiled their bold, revolutionary plans for one of the most innovative and avant-garde factories the furniture industry has seen to date. Based in Magnor, a town in the Norwegian forest just over 100km East of Oslo, [The Plus](#) is the largest single investment in the Norwegian furniture industry in decades. With a completion date of late 2021/early 2022, Vestre's new factory will provide up to 70 new jobs for the industry alongside producing 250,000 kWt of renewable energy thanks to the 1200 solar panels situated on its

roof. And, with a 90-95% process water recycling rate from the factory's production line itself, this development will set a new benchmark across ⓘ BETA industry worldwide.

Vestre, producers of urban furniture for over 70 years, has continued to push the boundaries within the industry, with its third-generation CEO, Jan Christian Vestre, shaping the company to become a leader within the design sector. Taking over the company eight years ago, at the age of 25 after his father passed away suddenly, Jan Christian Vestre has since grown the company by more than 300% (tripling its turnover since 2012), collaborating on projects across the globe and taking an uncompromising stance on sustainability.



Jan Christian Vestre and Bjarke Ingels discussing plans for the upcoming development which is ...
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This latest development will see the company take its next step towards the vision it has in being the world's most sustainable furniture manufacturer. With an investment close to 300 million NOK, construction gets underway in August to create the state-of-the-art development designed by renowned architects [Bjarke Ingels Group](#) (BIG). "Yes, we are effectively reducing our own environmental footprint even more." says Jan Christian Vestre as he discusses his plans. "But more

importantly, we are not only showing the world, we can actually prove to the world, that green growth is possible.” Set to achieve an *Outstanding*

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[AAM](#) environmental certification, the materials and production methods have all been chosen in coordination with the immediate surroundings. The facade is made using the pine trees which were removed to make way for the factory and, in placing the building so close amongst the ecosystem, it highlights the vision the brand has in redefining the relationship between manufacturing and the environment.



Visitors will be able to hike up the building to reach this rooftop which looks down onto a communal ... [+] VESTRE

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Aligning their commitments and [manifesto](#) with the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#), Vestre is focusing on renewable and clean energy for this new factory which will have at least 50% lower greenhouse gas emissions than comparable projects. Alongside the production itself, the company is also switching to an all-electric Tesla fleet of trucks which will

shuttle between their existing plant in Torsby, Sweden and the Magnor location. The current factory, designed by [Snøhetta](#), will continue to

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manufacture the components of each furniture item while the new venue will look after finishing and assembly. “Some would say it’s too much of an excitement to make the biggest investment in the Norwegian furniture industry for decades in the middle of a pandemic,” Vestre continues. “But I believe we need green investments like this more than ever before. We should use this situation to accelerate the green shift, and if Vestre can, so can others.”

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Looking at the design of the building itself, Bjarke Ingels highlights how the intentional geometry will allow visitors to feel immersed within the forest at all times. With a pathway leading up to a roof terrace which overlooks the event space central to the plot, as well as a 360-degree view of the pine woodland, it will offer a unique experience combined with an efficient internal production flow. The factory will not only provide a workspace which is catered to the well-being of its users, but one where nature is a residing presence throughout allowing inhabitants to feel at one with the environment around them. And, not only functioning as a factory, the site will also house a visitor’s centre and 300-acre park making the location a popular destination for many.

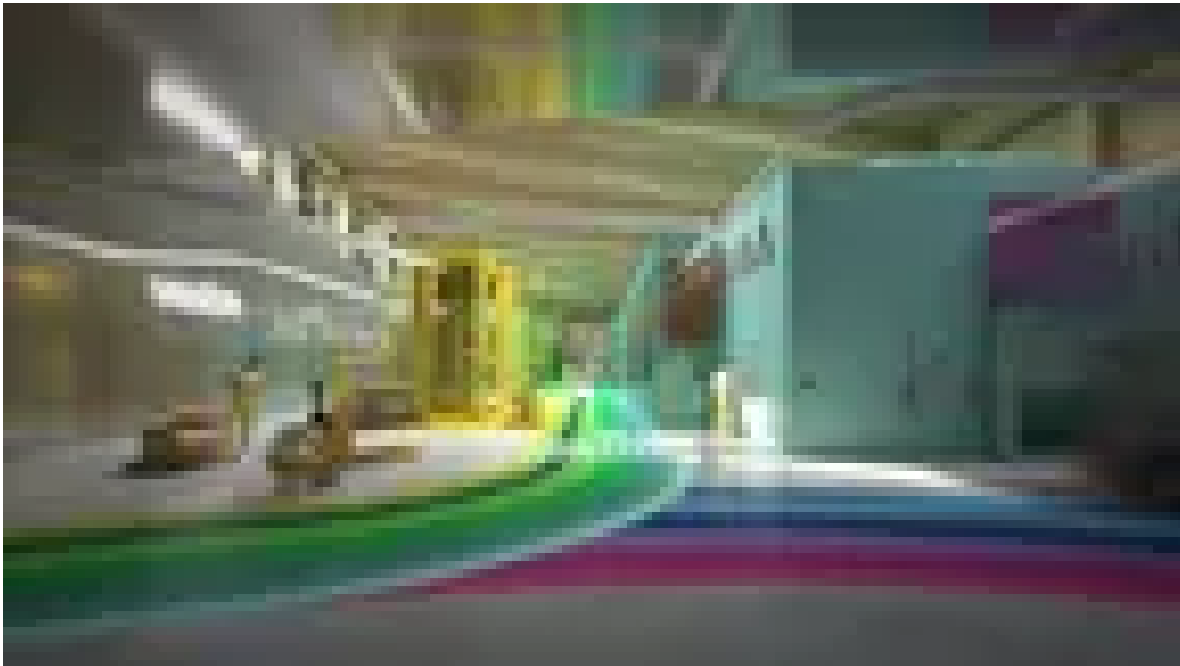
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With the development housing a visitors centre and 300-acre public park, it will become a ...
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While drawing visitors to the site comes with its own impact, the Vestre team are working hand-in-hand with the local council to draw up a plan which both develops and protects the local flora and fauna. Natural vegetation will grow along the factory roof and the surrounding forest will be left to grow wild without the introduction of non-native species or forest management clearing, which often removes animals' homes and sources of food. However, *The Plus* was not the original intention for the site. A much larger industrial development was planned to take its space which would have seen the felling of over 30 hectares of woodland. Thanks to this new direction, with a building which is working harmoniously with its surroundings, the ecosystem will now be preserved.

This attention to detail is a common thread in every part of Jan Christian Vestre's long-term vision. Using surplus heat to warm the building itself, coupled with geothermal wells and ice-water plants for cooling, the factory will reduce the supplied energy consumption by at least 90% compared with similar conventional factories. And, not stopping at the factory itself, each product is designed with longevity in mind. Complete with a lifetime guarantee on rust and a 15-year guarantee on surface coatings and woodwork, the manufacturer will also begin to take back products at the end of their life to ensure they can be recycled and

restored correctly for reuse. This circular mindset and accountability is helping to close the loop on its production systems and, in doing so, © BETA des full transparency and confidence in those seeking to work with Vestre on any design project. Moving forward, the brand will also be piloting circular production models and take-back initiatives through its 'Vestre Vision Zero' platform on which the brand pledges to only make products that are intended to last forever.



The production line has been designed with efficiency and productivity in mind, all while keeping it ... [+] VESTRE

While many factories like to keep their systems behind closed doors, Vestre hopes that, in opening up the factory for all to see, it will encourage this concept to ripple further throughout the sector. After all, with time moving quickly and the window of opportunity to beat climate change closing, sharing resources and ideas is the only way we can speed up progress. “*The Plus* will probably become the most transparent factory in the world. Nothing is hidden and there are no fences or closed off areas,” explains Vestre. “People can watch our manufacturing through the large windows in the public park whenever they want. So instead of trying to protect our business secrets, we are not only willing to share knowledge, we are actually sharing information actively, even with our competitors and industry colleagues. By doing this we hope to inspire more brands to help in accelerating the green shift.”

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Nature takes priority throughout the entire plant with detailed attention to renewable energy and ...
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Primarily having a positive impact on the local vicinity, *The Plus* could shift global mindsets towards the urgent need for change. And, added to this, Vestre's refreshing, open and honest attitude is one which needs to become the norm. "The manufacturing industry can be a part of the solution, not the problem." He concludes. "We can create new profitable jobs and still save the climate and protect nature and biodiversity. Today, there is way too much talk and too many polarised debates on these issues, I want to see real action and I want us to join forces. *The Plus* is real action and I hope the project will act as a global and optimistic frontrunner, inspiring and encouraging many more to follow."

In a time where we perceive what a new normal could look like, this development provides hope that, when the right priorities are put at the forefront of a mission such as this, revolutionary results can be achieved. Follow me on [LinkedIn](#).



Roddy Clarke

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