



An artist's impression of how Forêt Blanche will look

**CONCRETE JUNGLE**

The balconies and terraces of La Forêt Blanche will be covered with 2,000 plants

**LEADING THE FIELD**

The combined greenery is the equivalent of a hectare of forest

**BIRD'S-EYE VIEW**

Some lucky residents on the building's west side will be treated to a Parisian panorama

**In the eastern suburbs of Paris, work has begun on a tower that will change the way we build our cities.**

The 54m-tall Forêt Blanche – ‘White Forest’ – in the Balcon Sur Paris development will be constructed mostly of timber, aligned to catch the sun all day and covered with plants and shrubs, making it greener than an envious iguana. With apartments in its higher reaches, the skyscraper by Italian architect Stefano Boeri will mitigate smog, attenuate noise and require a team of specially trained mountaineer-gardeners to prune its sides at dizzying altitude.

You might be wondering whether this grand design will actually reach fruition. But the sight of the original Bosco Verticale (‘Vertical Forest’) in

the Porta Nuova district in Milan has me convinced of the idea. It comprises two residential high-rises, 111 metres and 76 metres tall apiece, with each impressive building shrouded in vibrant flora growing along thick geometric balconies. There are around 21,000 plants in all, inhabited by an army of pest-munching ladybirds, and over 50 species of bird.

Boeri’s also designing Vertical Forests for Utrecht and Eindhoven in The Netherlands, and dreams that the skylines of cities from Paris to Shanghai might one day be less glass, more greenery. “Cities are producing 75% of the CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere,” he explains to me from his Milan office. “If we move forests into the city we can fight the enemy in its field.”

**Clever constructions**



**AMAGER RESOURCE CENTRE**

Scheduled to open in 2018, this Copenhagen energy plant will turn the city’s waste into

electricity – and feature a 600m artificial ski slope on the roof and a climbing wall up one face. Maybe even cooler still, the chimney will puff giant ‘smoke rings’ of steam into the Danish sky.



**THE EDGE**

Nothing to do with the goateed U2 guitarist, the Amsterdam office of consultancy firm Deloitte is often called

‘the smartest building in the world’. As well as being super-energy-efficient, its app tracks users around the building, changing temperature and light to their preferences, and lets them order dinner to their desk.



**WILDSPITZE**

In Europe’s biggest inter-city redevelopment project, HafenCity in Hamburg, planning is underway on this

mixed-use tower, which when finished will be the tallest wooden building in Germany. It’ll be largely constructed of sustainable timber and will house a permanent exhibition about the country’s wildlife.

Not that his Paris project is set in concrete. Appropriately, it needs room to grow. “With nature,” philosophises Boeri, “you have to accept that you’re going to live with something that’s not completely predictable.” *Malcolm Jack*

**While in Paris**

In the western suburb of Boulogne-Billancourt is the 10-acre Albert Kahn Musée & Jardins: an in-the-know (horizontal) park for those seeking respite from the urban sprawl, featuring sections themed on gardens from around the world.