

SUN THING

NO.4



SOLEK HOLDING SE Magazine

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Total Investment:

11,330,069 CZK

Implementation Time (including grid connection):

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Performance:

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Estimated Annual Production:

449,131 kWh/year

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SOLEK
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EDITORIAL



Dear Readers,

I'm thrilled to bring you the fourth issue of our magazine, SunThing. As we continue to publish, we've taken great care to perfect every detail in our content.

It's clear that renewable energy, sustainability, and eco-friendly lifestyles are more popular than ever. I hope you'll read my 10 visions for the solar industry and energy sector. Also, don't miss our 22 simple tips for living sustainably. Personally, I found the article on glass designers pushing the boundaries of this craft particularly intriguing. It's a testament to modern Czech craftsmanship in the 21st century. The piece on sustainability in fashion is equally compelling, showing that eco-friendly wardrobes are the new cool. And fashion graces our pages with a stunning story blending beauty, stylish clothing, and photovoltaics. Where else would you find such content but in SunThing?

As we move past the first half of 2024, let me share some highlights from SOLEK. We've received awards and international recognition for our project financing, enabling us to build more photovoltaic power plants in Chile, including our largest project, Leyda, in partnership with BlackRock, the world's biggest asset manager. I also had the honor of welcoming Czech Minister of Industry and Trade Jozef Síkela to this plant. We won an auction in Greece for an 18 MW battery storage project, positioning us among leading international energy players contributing to sustainable energy development in Europe and globally.

SOLEK and SunThing are about pushing the boundaries of what's possible, fueled by hard work and determination.

Dive into these pages and let yourself be inspired.

Zdeněk Sobotka
Founder, Owner & CEO
SOLEK HOLDING SE

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SUNSHINE

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Travel the often-overlooked country in South America.

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SOLEK LIFE

Get insider report on life at SOLEK HOLDING SE.



As Paris gears up to host the 2024 Summer Olympics, it's breaking the mold with its medal design by Chaumet, a jewelry brand from the portfolio of the LVMH luxury group. Indeed, these medals are not just tokens of victory – they are a piece of Paris herself, incorporating metal from the iconic Eiffel Tower. The design doesn't stop at national landmarks, however, as its hexagonal shape is a nod to France itself, which is often referred to as "l'Hexagone" because of its geometric contours. This design marries athletic triumph with French heritage and pride. With the significance of the medals revealed, we're left wondering: Who will earn the honor of bringing one home?

EASY ON THE EYES



The mid-range TCL 40 Nxtpaper smartphone might not dazzle with its specs, but its display is where the lack of dazzle becomes a significant advantage. At CES 2024, the brand even snagged an Innovation Award for this feature as it introduced the first smartphone with a modern matte display — in an era of ubiquitous glossy touchscreens. Its unusual technology uses ten special layers on the cover glass, different from traditional matte screens or those with a standard anti-reflective layer, ensuring readability without glare and great eye comfort, even in direct sunlight. There's also a special Nxtpaper mode, making the screen background and color rendition resemble a document printed on paper, with options for both color and black-and-white display. The phone's only drawback? Power users might pass it up due to its modest hardware, and for nighttime reading, e-ink readers are still superior. However, if eye health is your priority and you view your phone as merely a tool for calling, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better option.



SNEAKERS

Forever

Picture this: sneakers that never go out of style. Not because the design is timeless, but because they're built to evolve with your taste. That's the reality Robin Luginbühl, a visionary designer from the prestigious Swiss school ECAL, is crafting with his eye on sustainability. He's introduced a shoe collection where every piece is interchangeable and every shoe component is thoughtfully designed for easy repair, update, or swap-out, aiming for a cycle of endless renewability. The Disassembly Lab isn't just about rethinking design, it's a manifesto for a new, sustainable fashion era. Luginbühl's design isn't just chasing looks: with soles made of TPU and uppers of 3D knit, these shoes are not only easy and quick to produce but are also straightforward to recycle, setting a new standard for the industry.



AI's vast potential is already addressing humanity's biggest challenges and now, it's tackling snoring. The company 10Minds has harnessed AI for their award-winning self-inflating pillow at CES 2024, solving a down-to-earth issue with high-tech innovation. This system consists of the pillow, a bedside Motion System, and a mobile app. It activates when snoring is detected, differentiating it from other sounds, to adjust the sleeper's position and stop snoring. The process is quiet and gentle, and the app tracks intervention frequency and snoring duration with audio clips. At just under \$365, it offers a peaceful night's sleep.

SILENCING SNORING

Smart rings are shaping up to be the future of wearable tech, taking health tracking to the next level. Leading the pack is Finland's Oura with its acclaimed Oura Ring, but it's far from the only player in town. Tech giants like Samsung are diving in, and rumors swirl about Apple throwing its hat into the ring as well. But at CES 2024 in Las Vegas, it was the titanium RingConn that stole the spotlight. Fresh off a successful Indiegogo campaign that netted over a million dollars, this ring packs a 3D accelerometer, temperature and PPG sensors, and low-energy Bluetooth into a sleek shape. While its health monitoring features are par for the course, RingConn's real magic is its endurance — thanks to a special charging case, it can go for up to 150 days on a single charge. Plus, with free cloud storage and a price tag significantly lower than its rivals, RingConn isn't just entering the market, it's looking to redefine it. Other brands, take note.

ONE RING to Rule Them ALL





IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

Echoing their Swiss peers, a growing number of German watch brands are steering towards sustainability. Mühle Glashütte, celebrating its 30th anniversary in the wristwatch game, is leading by example. This venerable family-run business from Glashütte, Saxony, is investing its marketing dollars in local events only. Their watches travel the globe in eco-friendly packaging, thanks to a partnership with Koehler Paper, a neighbor in the region. The sustainable approach also applies to the newly unveiled Sportivo Compass Date, a nod to adventurers. Not just a pretty face, its steel case and rotating bezel with a ceramic compass point insert border a dial reminiscent of the sea. Inside ticks a mechanical, self-winding movement that embodies sustainability, promising decades of reliability with the option for repair.



Hi-tech Valet

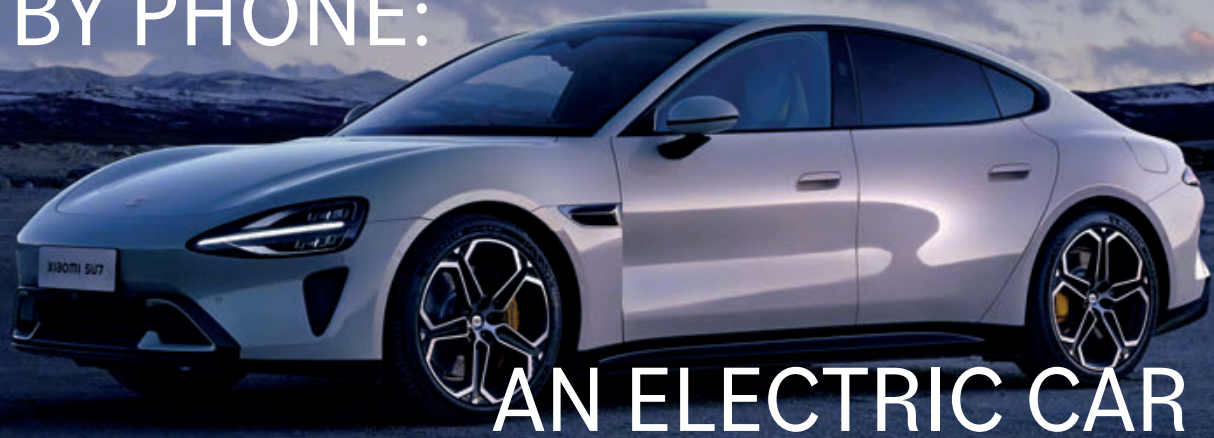
The Rabbit R1 has been the talk of the tech town lately, looking like a love child of a modern smartphone and a 90s Gameboy. However, this orange throwback is more than meets the eye—it's an AI voice assistant with a twist. Unlike the text-based ChatGPT, the Rabbit R1 uses a Large Action Model or LAM to potentially master nearly any online task you throw at it, from streaming songs on Spotify to ordering pizzas and even booking your next vacation. With all ten thousand units flying off the shelves at \$199 apiece on day one, it's clear the Rabbit's got some serious tricks up its sleeve. And we're betting that once it hops into the world of smart glasses, we'll see its user base multiply like... well, rabbits.

Fashion Is in the Air

Greek visual artist Ioannis Michaloudis has teamed up with fashion label Coperni to create the Air Swipe handbag, crafted from silica aerogel — a NASA-born material initially intended for capturing interstellar dust. Debuted at Paris Fashion Week, this bag consists of 99% air and just 1% solid material, weighs a mere 35 grams, and is about the size of a standard iPad. Silica aerogel, the substance from which the bag is made, can withstand pressure 4,000 times its own weight and temperatures up to 1200 degrees Celsius. Its gas-like properties and sky-blue hue not only mimic the color of the sky but also symbolize the need to protect planet Earth.



BY PHONE:

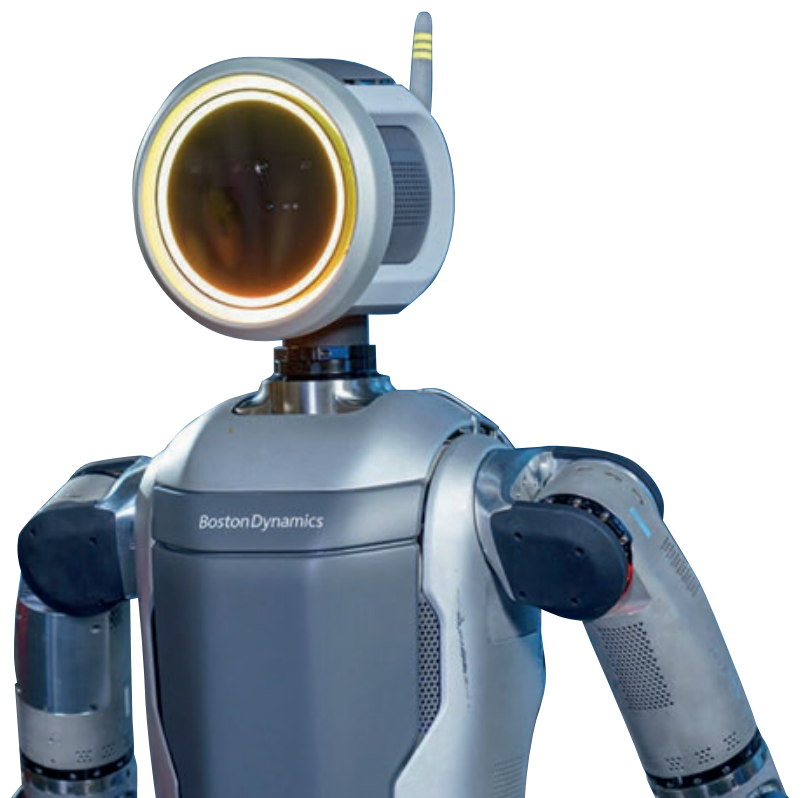


AN ELECTRIC CAR

"This is my last major business project," announced the founder of Xiaomi, referring to the company's foray into the electric vehicle market. And the company's first move was a hit — photos of their debut electric car, the SU7, quickly went viral, and reservations started flooding in. The company unveiled a sporty coupe that rivals high-end Teslas in terms of specs, yet it's priced similarly to the popular Honda Civic. While Xiaomi admits it will initially take a loss on each car sold, the global smartphone giant knows a thing or two about good business.

Atlas is Dead, **Long Live Atlas**

Boston Dynamics made waves with its robots, especially the robot dog Spot. They later introduced Atlas, a humanoid robot designed to closely mimic human movements. Now, Atlas has received a major upgrade, moving beyond its original design to fully utilize the flexibility of its artificial body. The new version boasts a much wider range of movements than a human body. For example, it can rotate its head and torso 180 degrees and is smarter than its predecessors. It can adapt to new situations in real-time and better predict its own movements, resulting in greater fluidity and control.







ZDENĚK SOBOTKA'S 10 VISIONS

What lies ahead for the solar industry and energy as a whole? Where will new technologies lead us? What should we be wary of, and what will be our saving grace? Zdeněk Sobotka, founder and CEO of SOLEK, shares his thoughts on what the coming decades hold for our planet. Here are his 10 visions on energy, sustainability, and technology.

Text: JANA MERTO VÁ Photo: ONDŘEJ PÝCHA

1.

THE SOLAR
TIPPING POINT

Solar energy has come a long way over the past few decades and is approaching a crucial juncture. We're nearing the efficiency limits of silicon solar panels, which are capped by physical and thermodynamic laws at around 29%, with today's panels hitting about 24%. We're also close to hitting the price floor solar panels from China now cost seventeen times less than they did in 2010. And while prices will continue to fall slowly, they'll soon stabilize, with further reductions possible only through economies of scale. Solar panels will become a common commodity, with little room for further innovation.

2.
HARNESSING
THE SUN
AND WIND
TOGETHER

In my opinion, the future of renewable energy lies in integrating solar power plants with battery storage and wind turbines, as these technologies are separate and rarely combined today. Small wind sources are less efficient than solar panels, so installing a wind turbine in your backyard isn't practical. However, a village powered by wind turbines, especially when combined with a solar plant? That makes sense. The downside of both sources is their intermittency, but when combined with battery storage, they can provide a nearly 24/7 power supply, with the mix changing from season to season. The only problem is the price of batteries although they are dropping rapidly, it will take at least five to seven years before they become truly affordable.

3. THE FUTURE FRONTIER

Quality software is essential to seamlessly integrate solar and wind power, optimize numerous decentralized local sources, and minimize the burden on the transmission network. In our industry, IT is becoming increasingly influential and is a key area of innovation. If the software is done well, it can regulate production, manage energy storage, and respond flexibly to consumer demand.



Not just electricity production we also need to decarbonize heating for homes and industries. Green hydrogen is poised to replace natural gas, and it should become economically viable around 2030-2035. Right now, hydrogen production is too costly and inefficient; however, if we can harness hydrogen for both electricity and heat, it will be a game-changer. Yet, don't expect hydrogen to become commonplace in personal vehicles, except perhaps in trucks. Fusion reactors, on the other hand, offer another tantalizing glimpse into our energy future. These reactors, which mimic the workings of our Sun, could provide a powerful energy source. However, scientists predict that building functional fusion power plants will take decades. If successful, fusion might replace solar and wind energy around 2050 or 2060.

THE PROMISE OF FUSION

4.

Fusion power is the energy source of the future. However, scientists predict that building functional fusion power plants will take decades.

5. TECH TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

In the fight against climate change, we've fallen behind, leaving us with no choice but to ramp up our decarbonization efforts. The recovery of the ozone layer after banning freons proves that such efforts are worth it. Beyond switching to renewable energy, we need to invest in technologies like carbon capture and storage. While this process is incredibly expensive and time-consuming, it may be our only option.

Desalination technologies will also be crucial in tackling drought, especially in countries like Spain and France, where people rally against golf courses using vast amounts of water while fields are left to become infertile.

We can also expect significant advancements in technologies to clean oceans of microplastics and other waste. But smart ideas alone won't save us: We must brace ourselves for the consequences of climate change and accept that occurrences like tornadoes, floods, and alternating extreme heat and cold in previously stable areas are now inevitable.



AI LEADING THE WAY

Artificial intelligence is set to revolutionize our world. While it may replace some jobs, especially those focused on managing, I suspect that AI will primarily act as an assistant. We'll see it embedded everywhere, from internet-connected refrigerators to cleaning robots. However, I don't see a massive influx of humanoid robots; after all, machines don't need to look like us to be effective.

LIFE IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD



These days, virtual reality glasses can create spaces that are even more stunning than the real world. Fast forward 20 years, and young people will be hanging out for virtual drinks with friends from across the globe, effortlessly switching languages thanks to AI translation all from the comfort of their living rooms. While this future might seem unsettling to older generations, our kids might not even want to live in the physical world as we know it.

Trends like longevity and biohacking will become increasingly significant.

DNA modification will allow us to eliminate certain diseases, but it will also bring new threats.

8. HACKING DNA

One hot topic on the horizon is boosting life expectancy and the quest to stay healthy for as long as possible. Trends like longevity and biohacking, focused on keeping both body and mind in shape, will become increasingly significant. DNA modification will allow us to eliminate certain diseases, but it will also bring new threats. We'll need to find ways to protect ourselves from these kinds of dangers. Just like we have hackers today who can break into our computers, there will be hackers who can hack into our DNA in a similar way. Imagine sitting on a needle in public transport that injects a DNA modifier into your body, altering your genetic information to your detriment. We'll need to find ways to protect ourselves against such threats.

9. THE FUTURE OF DELIVERY

Self-driving cars are poised to revolutionize transportation, but they're not yet a common sight. Meanwhile, automated drones are already beginning to make their mark, starting with cargo and eventually moving to personal transport. Imagine having a landing spot at your house where a drone delivers your package with pinpoint accuracy. Alternatively, it could store it in a locker, much like today's delivery boxes. Practically speaking, drones have a brighter future than flying cars. The technology is there; the real challenge will be in setting the right regulations.





10.

VACATIONS IN SPACE

Exclusive vacations on Earth are set to soar to millions of dollars, with trips to places like Antarctica or Mount Everest becoming increasingly expensive. In contrast, space travel is becoming more affordable. Today, you can take a balloon to the edge of space for about 175 thousand dollars, and a trip with Virgin Galactic's rocket costs around 450 thousand. And they'll continue to drop. While a trip to the ISS still costs is still exclusive to a chosen few, let's see where the prices fall in five years.

Hopefully, we'll start colonizing the Moon after 2030, but the first tourists probably won't go there until after 2050. We've already been to the Moon with much older technology than we have today, and it still remains a challenge. This shows that when humanity puts aside individual and national interests to work together, we have tremendous power. I believe the world has much to look forward to, and fantastic things await us.



6G

LOOMS ON THE HORIZON AS 5G CONTINUES TO ROLL OUT

THE TECH WORLD IS BUZZING WITH NEWS THAT THE CZECH REPUBLIC HAS SIGNED ONTO A GLOBAL DECLARATION ON 6G NETWORKS. THIS MIGHT PROMPT SOME HEAD-SCRATCHING—AREN'T WE STILL IN THE MIDST OF DEPLOYING 5G? HOW IS IT THAT TALKS OF 6G ARE ALREADY SURFACING, WHILE MANY OF US ARE STILL TETHERED TO 4G?

TEXT: DAREK ŠMÍD

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5

6

Truth be told, 6G is not yet upon us and it will be some years before it is. The first implementations of sixth-generation networks are projected for 2028, with broader deployment expected by 2030. This declaration, which has seen commitments from nations including the United States, Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Japan, South Korea, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, outlines key principles for 6G research and development. These principles focus on safeguarding personal data, ensuring reliability of suppliers, promoting sustainability, and maintaining affordability. Yet, it's important to recognize that the full potential of 5G has yet to be realized and its rollout is still in progress. Let's explore what we can anticipate from 5G before 6G takes center stage.

It's More Than Speed

5G boasts potential speeds of up to 20 Gbit/s and significantly reduced latency to just milliseconds. While these improvements promise a smoother streaming and browsing experience, the implications extend far beyond faster downloads. 5G is poised to revolutionize industries with its capabilities in supporting autonomous vehicles, enhancing virtual and augmented reality experiences used by gadgets such as Apple Vision Pro, and expanding the Internet of Things. It's not just about a better quality stream on Netflix—these advancements suggest a transformative shift in how we interact with technology daily.

6G PROMISES TRANSMISSION SPEEDS IN THE ORDER OF THOUSANDS OF GIGABYTES. THAT MEANS YOU COULD DOWNLOAD HUNDREDS OF HOURS OF HIGH-RES VIDEO IN JUST A SINGLE SECOND.

The Next Frontier

While 6G development is still in its infancy, the goals are set high, primarily by tech pioneers like the USA or China. The emerging consensus is that 6G will integrate deeply with artificial intelligence to facilitate even quicker and more reliable data processing, enhancing technologies that depend on real-time data transmission. This could mean significant advancements in fields like AI-driven healthcare, smart cities, and more complex automated systems that could transform everyday life.

Looking Forward

As 6G research progresses, the focus will likely shift towards harnessing millimeter waves and terahertz radiation, pushing the boundaries of speed while tackling the challenges of increased energy demands and heat dissipation in electronic circuits. The journey from 5G to 6G promises to be an exciting one, with each step forward in technology paving the way for new possibilities and innovations.

With the potential of 6G to act like a vast sensor that could detect the size, speed, and direction of moving objects, the applications of 5G, such as autonomous vehicles, drone control, or fully automated factories, will see their capabilities greatly expanded. The lower latency of 6G could drastically shorten the time it takes for devices to communicate, increasing the volume of data they can exchange. Imagine an autonomous vehicle needing to make a split-second decision; would you trust 4G, or would you rather rely on the capabilities of 6G?

To the Stars and Beyond

Despite the technological sector still grappling with the full capabilities of existing 5G, the push into the realm of 6G is being pursued by every major player in the industry. Apart from the US and China, nations such as Japan, South Korea, and the United Arab Emirates show a keen interest in 6G, with research institutions across the globe, including Abu Dhabi's Technology Innovation Institute and Belgium's IMEC, diving into development. Industry giants such as Apple, Huawei, Nokia, and Japan's Docomo are not lagging behind. The drive was notably sparked by the launch of China's Long March 6 rocket, which deployed thirteen satellites into orbit—one serving as a testbed for 6G technology, touted as the world's first 6G satellite.

WHILE 5G WILL
DRAMATICALLY
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AS AUTONOMOUS
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AND AUGMENTED
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DEVELOPMENT.

Navigating the Future

While much about 6G remains speculative, one of the few concrete details is its potential use of millimeter waves (30 – 300 GHz) and terahertz radiation (300 – 3000 GHz). However, with these new technological strides come formidable challenges, including managing high energy consumption and protecting against the high temperatures of electronic circuits. Speed and efficiency are paramount, but sustainability will be the key to 6G's success.

The background of the image features several modern glass pendant lights. These lights have a cylindrical, tiered design with a textured, possibly etched or frosted, glass surface. They are suspended by thin black cords. The background wall is covered in a pattern of hexagonal perforations, creating a honeycomb-like texture. The lighting is warm and focused on the glass fixtures.

GLASS TRANSFO



The Bamboo Forrest collection by Brokis draws inspiration from the vertical outlines that rise in the thickets of bamboo.

RMATIONS

GLASS IS OFTEN HERALDED AS ONE OF THE MOST SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS. IT'S INFINITELY RECYCLABLE AND VERSATILE, BUT THE FOLLOWING FOUR PROJECTS, TWO OF WHICH COME FROM CZECH DESIGNERS, TAKE SUSTAINABILITY IN GLASSMAKING EVEN FURTHER.

Text: PAVEL ZYCH Photos: COURTESY OF COMPANY ARCHIVES

For years, Czech company Brokis has been intertwined with the name of renowned designer Lucie Koldová, celebrated for iconic designs such as the Muffins and Balloons lamps. However, she isn't the only standout in the portfolio of this traditional Czech brand. In collaboration with Janštejn Glassworks, Brokis is also innovating a sustainable and visually unique material that offers a broad spectrum of design and architectural applications.

Salvaged Charm

The artisanship of Janštejn Glassworks in the Czech Highlands, which traces back to 1809, ranks it among the oldest glassworks in the Czech Republic. Today, approximately one-fifth of the glassworks' output is branded as Brokis.

The Brokisglass colored glass plates created through this partnership are crafted from colored shards that would typically be long-lasting waste. This effort began with the goal to reframe these shards from environmental burdens to transformative elements. The base material for Brokisglass consists of waste shards from overflows—commonly produced in Janštejn during the shaping of various lighting glass pieces. Essentially, they are the excess glass pieces trimmed from each blown item, making up about

a third of its volume. Typically destined for landfill, the material can now be sustainably and economically repurposed using a specially constructed furnace and a sorting system.

Shards for a Better Planet

After nearly three years of development, the conceptual design for a new furnace was launched and became operational in 2017. It now facilitates the efficient processing of up to ten tons of waste material weekly in a double-shift operation. Shards that would otherwise go to waste are sorted by color and type of glass, then crushed, cleaned, and melted.

The resulting plate is noted for its diverse coloration, organic texture, and artisanal craftsmanship. The color palette of Brokisglass is derived from the glassworks' production, offering fourteen variants in two finishes, ranging from lighter to darker hues. The dynamic play of light accentuates the various facets of the material.

Highlighting Sustainability

So far, Brokisglass has found applications in lighting fixtures and serves as a unique and elegant interior element capable of adeptly manipulating light, reflections, and color coordination. It can also be tailored through custom manufacturing.

For example, designer Roman Kvita used the material for lighting fixtures within the interior of the Palace Office administrative building in Hradec Králové, where Brokisglass plates serve as distinctive lampshades. Another use can be found in the south of Bohemia, where, at a dental clinic in České Budějovice, it co-creates a sculptural interior object, loosely reminiscent of a colorful play with glass blocks that appear in several color combinations as part of the lighting system.

THE DRIVE TO DEVELOP BROKISGLASS
STEMMED FROM A DESIRE TO
REFRAME THE VIEW OF THESE
SHARDS FROM HARMFUL WASTE
TO AGENTS OF LANDSCAPE
TRANSFORMATION.

A light fixture from Brokis made of glass plates, which are produced from shards that would otherwise end up in a landfill.





Iron Mountain gems by the artist Barbora Tydlitátová made from remnants of the local glassmaking industry.

Future Rocks

On the other side of the country, in the north of Czechia, glass artist and jeweler Barbora Tydlitátová takes a different, ingenious approach to working with glass waste. Venturing into the landscape around the Jizera river as a collector, she uncovers local deposits of remnants from glass production, which she calls 'Ironbrod gems,' named after the city of Železný Brod or Ironbrod in English.

These are remnants of local glass production, traces of the traditional manufacture of glass beads and pearls. Such deposits appear on forest paths and have even become part of houses and sidewalks as the building materials are usually sourced locally. However, these original glass waste deposits are disappearing as traditional production wanes, either being collected or gradually sinking deeper into the subsoil, even though new ones sometimes appear, as the author maps.

From these foundlings of glass production, Tydlitátová creates artisanal objects which she calls Future Rocks. Using a special stabilization process, the newly created forms resemble a cross between synthetic meteorites and natural rocks.

From a material composition perspective, they can be considered conglomerates of natural and artificially produced minerals. Tydlitátová then returns the transformed raw elements in the form of synthetic gemstones back to the landscape, where she deposits them as a new layer of the future—the substrate of the Anthropocene, a message to future generations.

Her rocks, which have their own markings, traceable on the Instagram profile @strep., blend the history and future of the local landscape, which is indelibly marked by the glass industry.

BARBORA TYDLITÁTOVÁ,
A GLASS ARTIST
AND JEWELER,
EXPLORES THE JIZERA
RIVER AREA IN
THE CZECH REPUBLIC,
DISCOVERING
LOCAL DEPOSITS OF
GLASS PRODUCTION
REMNANTS DURING
HER TRAVELS THROUGH
THE COUNTRYSIDE
AND CITIES.

In the Heat of the Sun

German artist and researcher Markus Kayser showcases an unconventional approach to glass production that addresses ecological issues in his project. His interest lies in hybrid solutions combining energy from renewable sources with technologies that could signal necessary changes in production processes.

He stirred the design scene over a decade ago when he packed his first solar device into a suitcase and ventured into the Sahara desert. In the inhospitable yet sunny environment, he embarked on experiments with 3D printing and lasers.

The basic premise of his project was the ubiquitous presence of silica oxide, sand, and a stable, powerful supply of solar energy. If granular sand, a local resource, is heated to melting temperatures and then cooled, it undergoes a material transformation into a solid, glass-like substance. This principle can also be utilized in 3D printing technology.

With this setup and awareness, Kayser managed to produce items like a printed bowl in the desert on his Solar Sinter 3D printer, which, along with the simple laser Sun Cutter, also part of the experiment, drew energy from solar panels.



Objects by designer Markus Kayser made using solar energy and sand.



Vases by Benedikt Peirotén, who replaced traditional glass-making materials with ash from pizzerias and crushed shells.

From the Ashes

Another bold project in glass production was introduced by German designer Benedikt Peirotén through a series of vases titled From the Ashes. Although glass is considered a sustainable material, its production is highly energy-intensive and reliant on raw components. Peirotén decided to explore alternative raw substances for its production, responding to the growing scarcity of traditional resources such as sand, soda, and limestone as their quantities are dramatically decreasing due to climate change and unsustainable production methods.

His approach includes using waste products, such as wood ash from pizzerias and shells from seafood, which provide alternatives to soda and limestone. They are not only abundantly available and often end up in landfills, but they also contain a chemical composition capable of replacing traditional raw materials used in glassmaking.

In this way, Peirotén opens new possibilities for the glass industry, where waste can be transformed into valuable matter.

The production process for this new type of glass involves collecting and processing the raw alternatives, mixing them with sand, and melting them at high temperatures. The result is an innovative approach that not only retains all the properties of traditional glass but is also more environmentally friendly and supports an economy based on recycling and reuse.



Emma Watson in a campaign promoting Prada bags made from recycled nylon.

DE FE NE ON H S FA RE

I NEED TO KNOW THAT MY CLOTHING DOES NOT HARM OUR PRECIOUS PLANET OR ITS INHABITANTS," SAYS EMMA WATSON. THE BRITISH FILM STAR AND STYLE ICON HAS BECOME THE FACE OF SEVERAL FASHION INITIATIVES COMMITTED TO SUSTAINABILITY. THESE RANGE FROM ETHICALLY COMPENSATED COLLABORATIONS WITH ARTISANS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO SUPPORT FOR SECONDHAND PLATFORMS.

Text: PAVEL ZYCH Photo: COURTESY OF BRANDS

The fashion industry significantly impacts both environmental sustainability and the labor conditions affecting millions at risk of exploitation. However, an increasing number of luxury fashion brands are responding to this adverse situation by adopting more responsible practices. Haute couture examples particularly demonstrate how close monitoring of the entire production cycle, from initial design to final touches, including the sourcing of materials, is feasible. But what about mainstream fashion, the clothes readily available in stores?

Transparency Makes Perfect

Some brands create their own labeling systems to declare their social and environmental accountability. Others adhere to globally recognized certification standards such as Fairtrade and GOTS. Market insights are also provided by organizations like Fashion Revolution and its Fashion Transparency Index.

Last year's index highlighted significant progress among luxury brands, with names like Gucci, Armani, Jil Sander, Miu Miu, and Prada making notable strides. In contrast, many fast-fashion producers dropped significantly, some by dozens of positions. "After years of the luxury sector dragging its heels on transparency, the top five movers were all luxury names," reports Fashion Revolution.

LAST YEAR'S INDEX
HIGHLIGHTED
SIGNIFICANT
PROGRESS AMONG
LUXURY BRANDS,
WITH NAMES LIKE
GUCCI, ARMANI,
JIL SANDER, MIU MIU,
AND PRADA MAKING
NOTABLE STRIDES.



In 2017, the British luxury house Burberry incinerated stocks from their collections. Now, it operates with a zero-waste strategy as part of the ReBurberry program.

This spring, the luxury brand Loro Piana was accused of exploiting indigenous populations in Peru.



The Price of Ethics

But does supporting luxury brands today also mean a more ethical way of shopping? The online app and database Good On You, which also rates fashion brands, poses a provocative question: do the high prices of designer products imply that their production is ethically acceptable? Good On You suggests the answer is not straightforward, as many designer products continue to employ practices that damage our planet and its people. The luxury fashion sector still has much to catch up on, though there are already significant examples of good practices today.

Step by Step

In 2015, the United Nations introduced a vision for a better world with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encompassing seventeen broad goals, some of which are directly relevant to the fashion industry. Based on these, various fashion houses have formulated their own corporate social responsibility and sustainability strategies. Key targets for 2023 include environmental care, worker protection, the payment of a minimum guaranteed wage, and long-term investments that support local communities.

Thinking long-term benefits not just communities involved in production but also consumers, especially as Generation Z, those currently around twenty years old, is expected to drive economic growth and luxury goods consumption over the next decade.

The Swap to Sustainability

Sustainability resonates with Generation Z, who prefer eco-friendly approaches over accumulating new items. They favor climate-friendly strategies and are keen on purchasing long-lasting goods and secondhand items. This consumer behavior has boosted demand for pre-owned luxury fashion, making a Chanel bag from a secondhand source highly sought after.

Several brands have responded to this trend by facilitating swap and purchase of high-quality secondhand products within their infrastructure and campaigns. For instance, after the 2017 controversy where Burberry was found to have burned a large amount of unsold stock to protect its brand value, it publicly committed to a zero-waste policy and now collaborates with the British Fashion Council to donate fabrics to aspiring designers through its ReBurberry program.

Sustainable with Premium Qualities

The fashion industry is also earning sustainability points through its choice of materials. These materials are sourced from certified organically grown inputs, are biodegradable, highly recyclable, or made from so-called waste materials, such as fishing nets recovered from the oceans. Progressive outdoor clothing company Patagonia and brands like Stella McCartney and Prada are leading this sustainable trend, merging modernity with tradition.

IN 2010, PRADA
LAUNCHED THE 'MADE
IN...' PROJECT, WHICH
HIGHLIGHTED MASTERFUL
ARTISANAL WORK FROM
SCOTLAND, PERU, JAPAN,
AND INDIA, BRINGING
TRADITIONAL BRITISH
WOOL, JAPANESE
DENIM CRAFTSMANSHIP,
ANCIENT INDIAN
EMBROIDERY.



Gucci has been releasing a special collection made from recycled materials for several years.

Like Father, Like Daughter

Another example comes from Stella McCartney, daughter of the famed environmentalist and Beatles member Paul McCartney. She is a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative and the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, setting high ecological and ethical standards in the luxury fashion industry since 2001. Today, her company strives to use materials that have a lower environmental impact, including recycled polyester and organically grown cotton, and has established a strategy to reduce waste throughout its supply chain.

McCartney also embraces a code that reflects the limits of minimum wage and employs the principles of a circular economy to extend the lifespan of products through initiatives like the Clevercare campaign. “We are committed to contributing to a better and more equitable world, as envisioned by the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals,” states the company.

Handcrafted Heritage

When Prada’s founder Mario Prada was traveling the world in the early twentieth century searching for exotic materials and skilled craftsmen, sustainability was not on his agenda. However, his appreciation for quality and uniqueness continues to guide Prada. Today, the company collaborates with numerous artisans who employ traditional handcrafting techniques, materials, and production methods that are typical of their local regions and communities.

In 2010, Prada launched the 'Made in...' project, which highlighted masterful artisanal work from Scotland, Peru, Japan, and India, bringing traditional British wool, Japanese denim craftsmanship, ancient Indian embroidery, and Peruvian knitwear from alpaca wool to the global stage. These collections, especially the Made in Peru knitwear, relied on unique materials like Andean alpaca wool—which is as light as a feather yet offers exceptional warmth—transformed into luxury items by local craftspeople at the source.

From Earnings to Education

Prada has committed to addressing key contemporary issues through educational campaigns targeted at middle schools, focusing on the pollution of marine environments by plastics. In January 2023, in collaboration with UNESCO, Prada launched an initiative in Venice aimed at educating children about the oceans and their central role in sustainable development. Since then, Prada has dedicated one percent of the sales from its Prada Re-Nylon collection to support the Sea Beyond project, a collaboration with UNESCO. This collection features econyl, a regenerative and recyclable nylon yarn made from plastics collected from landfills and oceans, showcasing how luxury brands can contribute to environmental sustainability.



A look from the controversial Dior collection featuring designs copied from Romanian traditional costumes.



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Illuminating the Dark Corners

Transparent communication about supply chains, production processes, labor conditions, and regular audits of environmental and social impacts plays a crucial role in the further development of the high fashion sector. This was highlighted by a controversy that hit Dior a few years ago.

In its Pre-Fall 2017 collection, the brand failed to adequately acknowledge its designs were heavily inspired by the folk costumes and embroidery of a Romanian community in the northeast of the country. The scandal was amplified by social media and the Bihor Couture campaign, which spotlighted the need to combat predatory cultural appropriation and plagiarism.

A Storm of Controversy

Lately, the Italian brand Loro Piana, renowned for its high-quality wool and textiles, has been navigating troubled waters. The brand is under scrutiny for its irresponsible handling of human labor, specifically regarding the conditions under which it purchases wool from Peruvian workers. These workers provide the raw material for the company's sweaters, and recent reports from Bloomberg Businessweek have shed light on how this trade is adversely affecting the living conditions of Peru's poorest residents, who share their land with the vicuña sheep. American Congressman Robert Garcia has criticized this practice as exploitative, benefiting only one side, and Bloomberg noted that the price the Lucanas village receives for raw vicuña wool has dropped by 36% over the past decade. LVMH has formally disputed these accusations as of March, but has yet to respond further to the scandal.

RAYO

du Soleil

PHOTOGRAPHER: LUKÁŠ DVOŘÁK STYLING: NIKOL PAVLÍČKOVÁ MUA: MARTINA ROUTKOVÁ MODEL: ANDREA M.



ONIS

Dress, Mirko Horká | \$479





Silk dress, Designers Remix | Price on Zalando.com



Dress, Salvatore Ferragamo | \$2299



Dress, Martin Kohout | Price on request





Silk dress, Designers Remix; Satin blazer, Yourturn | Prices on Zalando.com



Dress, Dolce & Gabbana | \$2529



EXPLORING

**A JOURNEY THROUGH ITS
SEVEN WONDERS**

A full-page background image of a lush, mountainous landscape in Colombia. The scene is shrouded in a light mist or fog, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere. In the foreground, there are dense, dark green trees and foliage. In the mid-ground, a steep, forested hillside rises, dotted with several tall, slender palm trees. The background shows more distant, hazy mountain peaks. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of green and blue, with the white text providing a sharp contrast.

COLOMBIA

WHEN CONVERSATION TURNS TO COLOMBIA, IMAGES OF NARCOS AND THE TUMULTUOUS 1980S INITIALLY COME TO MIND. YET, TODAY'S COLOMBIA PAINTS A DIFFERENT PICTURE: A LANDSCAPE WHERE THE TOWERING ANDES PLANT THEIR ROOTS INTO THE SOUTH AMERICAN SOIL, THE PACIFIC OCEAN CARESSES THE CARIBBEAN SEA, AND THE AIR IS RICH WITH THE AROMA OF THE FINEST COFFEE. THIS IS THE STAGE WHERE MAGICAL REALISM COMES ALIVE. WITH THE COUNTRY REDEFINED, WHERE DO YOU BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY?

TEXT: HELENA SONNTAGOVÁ PHOTO: ARCHIVE

San Andrés and Providencia

Colombia is more than its history of mountain conflicts and colonial streets. At its heart lies the undiluted Caribbean essence, best experienced in the San Andrés and Providencia archipelago. Positioned nearly 800 kilometers from the mainland, this smallest of Colombian departments serves as the perfect retreat from the continental clamor. Here, pristine beaches fringed by extinct volcanoes give way to a spectacular seven-colored lagoon, a stunning natural mosaic crafted from varying hues of seabed sand, ranging from gilded tones to the purest whites. Along the coastline, an expansive coral reef ecosystem thrives, providing a sanctuary for diverse marine life and earning the area UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status in 2000.



2

Bogotá

Bogotá, the pulsating heart of Colombia, is a metropolis steeped in excitement. The cityscape is punctuated with a tapestry of small food stalls, an electrifying nightlife, and an endless calendar of festivals and celebrations that encapsulate the quintessential South American spirit. The accommodation is of international standards, with gems like the Four Seasons Casa Medina, a stunning 1946 edifice decorated with intricately carved wood and cozy firelit nooks. Venture into the historic district of La Candelaria to wander through a labyrinth of narrow lanes, surrounded by the vibrant hues of Spanish colonial facades, and overshadowed by the imposing Capilla del Sagrario cathedral. For those seeking a true high-altitude adventure, a short excursion to the peak of Cerro de Monserrate, standing at 3152 meters, provides breathtaking panoramic views of Bogotá's diverse urban fabric set against the backdrop of the wild jungle, a contrast found nowhere else in the world.





3

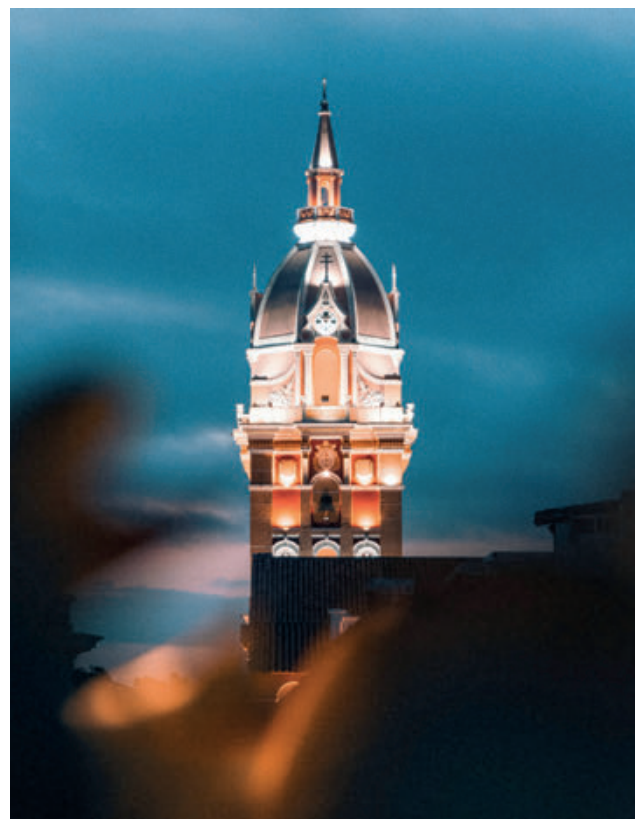
Tayrona National Park

For those seeking serenity far from the the urban dazzle, Colombia's national parks offer sublime retreats. Tayrona National Park, nestled in the northern reaches of Colombia within the Magdalena department, spans 225 square kilometers of breathtaking natural beauty. As one of the country's most picturesque national parks, Tayrona showcases the ecological variety of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta range, with landscapes transitioning from arid lowlands to lush elevations of up to 900 meters. Verdant rainforests, mysterious swamps, pristine beaches, and tranquil lagoons are all sequestered in deep bays under towering coconut palms—a true haven for nature lovers.

4

Cartagena

Cartagena de Indias, or just Cartagena, thrived as one of Latin America's most important ports during the Spanish era. Its strategic importance, coupled with frequent pirate raids, necessitated the creation of one of the most formidable fortification systems in the region. Many of the historical buildings remain impeccably preserved, earning the city center and its fortifications a place on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1984. Strolling through Cartagena's vibrant streets, the air is perfumed with the sweet aroma of ripe mangoes, freshly pressed by local vendors. As night falls, head to El Barón, a bar celebrated for its mixology, and savor their signature Gin Basil Smash, followed by an exploration of exotic Caribbean tiki cocktails. This city is not just a window into the past, but a lively celebration of the present.



5

Ciudad Perdida

Less renowned than Machu Picchu and consequently less crowded, the remnants of Colombia's Lost City, or Ciudad Perdida, lie hidden deep within the dense forests on the slopes of the sacred Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. This expedition to the thousand-year-old ruins is a challenging adventure not suited for the faint-hearted—the round trip spans 52 kilometers and must be undertaken with a native licensed guide. The reward for this arduous journey is the tranquility provided by the sparse number of travelers you'll encounter on a trek that spans several days.



6

Eje Cafetero

No journey through Colombia would be complete without indulging in its world-renowned coffee. Celebrated globally, Colombian Arabica is held in the highest regard by coffee aficionados, who treasure its rich and nuanced flavors. Nestled between Medellín and Cali lies the Coffee Triangle, or Eje Cafetero, a region so crucial to coffee culture that it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2011. Here, visitors are treated to more than just exceptional brews—local farmers are always up for a short (or) long chat, towns are adorned with colorful architecture, and lush valleys invite you to enjoy the shade of the world's tallest palm trees. This region offers a unique glimpse into the heart of Colombia's coffee heritage, where every cup tells a story of tradition and passion.

EVERY AUGUST, MEDELLÍN
HOSTS THE FERIA DE LAS
FLORES, A FESTIVAL WHERE
THE STREETS BURST INTO
VIBRANT FLORAL DISPLAYS.
THIS YEAR, THE EVENT
WILL TAKE PLACE FROM
AUGUST 9 TO 12.

Medellín

Once notorious as a center for narco trafficking, Medellín is now one of the safest cities in South America. Following the death of Pablo Escobar, Colombia's second-largest city has transformed dramatically. Investments in infrastructure, public transportation, and cultural initiatives have made it a key destination for international traders. The upscale district of Poblado boasts excellent restaurants and bars, offering top-notch gastronomy and serving as the prime location for hotel accommodations in Medellín. A stylish option is the boutique hotel Zarzo with its renowned restaurant Cocina 33 by chef Manuel Mendoza. For those seeking culinary innovation, the restaurant Carmen offers top-notch cuisine using quality ingredients from across Colombia. Another visit-worthy spot is El Cielo, which specializes in fine dining and molecular gastronomy, creating unique sensory experiences.



LIVE SUSTAINABLY

22 Tips for Sustainable Living

WE OFTEN BUY, USE, AND DISPOSE OF MORE THAN WE NEED.
HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR LIFESTYLES MORE SUSTAINABLE?
HERE ARE 22 PRACTICAL TIPS TO NOT ONLY IMPROVE YOUR
OWN LIFE BUT ALSO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT.

Text: SIMONA PETROVÁ

1. Ditch the short drives

Nearly 95% of global transportation still depends on fossil fuels. Opting for public or shared transportation, or even better, walking or biking, can reduce emissions and cut down on air pollution.

meat

2. Cut down on

ADDING VEGETARIAN OR VEGAN MEALS TO YOUR DIET OCCASIONALLY ISN'T JUST GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH, IT ALSO HELPS THE PLANET BY REDUCING DEFORESTATION, PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY, AND LOWERING CO₂ EMISSIONS.

3. LIGHT UP ECO-FRIENDLY

Swapping out traditional bulbs for LEDs can reduce energy use by 80 to 90% and they last much longer too.

4. SHOP WITH A LIST

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), about a third of all food produced globally is wasted each year. Bringing a shopping list can help you buy only what you need and avoid impulse purchases.

5. SHARE MORE

You don't need to own everything you use. Borrow essentials from friends and family and offer yours in return.

REDUCING SHOWER TIME CAN SAVE WATER AND SEVERAL HUNDREDS DOLLARS ANNUALLY ON WATER HEATING. CONSIDER THIS BEFORE FILLING UP A BATHTUB, WHICH CONSUMES THE MOST WATER AND ENERGY.

6. SHORTEN YOUR SHOWERS

7. COLD WASH TO SAVE

USING COLD WATER INSTEAD OF HOT CAN HALVE YOUR ENERGY CONSUMPTION FOR LAUNDRY. USE IT FOR CLOTHES WITHOUT VISIBLE STAINS; THEY'LL CLEAN JUST AS WELL.

8. PACKAGING MATTERS

Most packaging isn't recyclable. Consider both the origin of the food and the packaging it comes in. If there's an option with less packaging, take it.

BUY LOCAL

Reduce transport and storage costs by shopping locally. This applies not just to food but also to clothing and cosmetics.

9.

10. CHOOSE QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

The fast fashion industry is responsible for up to 10% of global CO₂ emissions and often employs unethical labor practices. Avoid fast fashion chains and support brands with transparent supply chains and respect for human rights. The Good On You app can help you.



Leftovers can be delicious

Leftovers can be turned into delicious meals. Try a French quiche to use up veggies or an Italian Panzanella salad for stale bread. There are plenty of recipes for leftovers, and you can find cookbooks dedicated to this topic.

12. SMART HEATING AND COOLING

HEATING AND COOLING BUILDINGS MAKE UP ABOUT A THIRD OF GLOBAL ENERGY USE, ACCORDING TO THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA). LAYER UP BEFORE TURNING UP THE HEAT IN WINTER, AND DRAW THE BLINDS DURING PEAK HEAT IN SUMMER TO REDUCE AIR CONDITIONING USE AT NIGHT.

Something as simple as carrying a reusable bag can make a big difference. Reusable bags can replace hundreds of disposable ones each year.

13. BRING YOUR OWN BAGS

14. DECLUTTER WISELY

HAVE EXCESS CARDBOARD BOXES? CHECK YOUR LOCAL GUIDE TO SEE WHO MIGHT BENEFIT FROM YOUR WASTE. THIS WAY, YOU CAN GET RID OF PACKAGING AND OTHER MATERIALS AND HELP SOMEONE WHO MAY HAVE A USE FOR THEM.

15. ONE GLASS RULE

KEEP ONE GLASS FOR DRINKING WATER AT HOME. YOU WON'T NEED TO WASH IT FREQUENTLY, SAVING NUMEROUS WASH CYCLES EACH YEAR.

16. Go rechargeable

Using disposable batteries? Switch to rechargeable ones to save money and reduce waste. Dispose of old batteries properly in designated recycling bins.

17. CARRY A CUP

THE LINERS
IN DISPOSABLE
COFFEE CUPS
MAKE THEM
NON-RECYCLABLE.
BRING A REUSABLE
COFFEE CUP OR
ENJOY YOUR
BEVERAGE ON-SITE
TO AVOID WASTE.

18. REQUEST LESS LAUNDRY AT HOTELS

**On vacation, ask hotel
staff to skip daily
laundering of towels
and linens to reduce
water and energy use.**

19. UNPLUG TO SAVE

Did you know that plugged-in electronics can account for up to 10% of your electricity bill, even in standby mode? Unplug seldom-used devices to save energy.

20. LEARN TO SAY **NO**

REFUSE COMPANY SWAG, PROMOTIONAL ITEMS, AND UNWANTED GIFTS THAT WOULD END UP IN THE TRASH.

21. Think **before** you buy

CONSIDER HOW OFTEN YOU'LL REALLY USE SOMETHING BEFORE BUYING IT. CALCULATE THE COST PER USE TO SEE IF IT'S TRULY WORTH IT.

22.

Seal and save

Up to 40% of heating energy can escape through gaps in windows, doors, and floors. Investing in insulation, triple-glazed windows, and draft-proofing measures can prevent heat loss and save energy.

Milestone from Athens



We're excited to share a significant win for SOLEK in Greece! We've successfully secured an 18MW/36MWh battery energy storage project in Greece's national auction, marking our first venture into the Greek market. This achievement underlines our growing influence in the global renewable energy sector and is supported by the EU's Modernization Fund. We are proud to contribute to Greece's initiative to enhance grid stability and transition to renewable energy sources.



Grand Prize

We are proud to announce that SOLEK HOLDING SE has earned the 2023 Solar Deal of the Year award for Latin America from Proximo Infra! This recognition highlights our innovative financing strategies, including a key partnership with BlackRock, and the tireless work of our team. The Leyda project, our largest to date, marks a significant advancement in our sustainable mission.



NEXT BIG THING



We're thrilled to update you on the Leyda photovoltaic power plant, our most ambitious project yet, located near Santiago, Chile. Covering an area equivalent to 150 football fields, the plant has a capacity of 95.2 MWp and plays a crucial role in Chile's decarbonization efforts. Annually, it's set to generate 185 GWh—enough to power about 23,000 households and reduce carbon emissions by 71,000 tons. The significance of Leyda was further highlighted by visits from key dignitaries, including Czech Minister of Industry and Trade, Jozef Síkela.



Trendsetters in Solar Energy

Our team made waves at the Energyyear conference in Spain, diving into the latest in solar, storage, and hydrogen technologies. The event highlighted upcoming regulatory changes that could transform battery revenue streams and capacity auctions, potentially boosting the stability and profitability of renewable energy investments. With our keen focus on Spain's evolving market, SOLEK is primed to lead in innovation and regulatory advances. We're excited about the prospects these changes herald, as we continue to push for sustainable energy solutions and a greener future.

SPRING CHEERS

At SOLEK, our recent spring breakfast wasn't just about enjoying good food and laughs—it was a time to celebrate our team's latest successes. We gathered to share stories and give a shout-out to the standout contributions behind each achievement. It's clear that our team is our biggest strength, and these moments together remind us of just that. Each year, this breakfast not only fills us up but also inspires us to keep pushing for more, knowing our hard work doesn't go unnoticed.





Our latest All Hands Meeting was a standout event, drawing SOLEK team members from the Czech Republic, Chile, and beyond. It was a celebration of our recent achievements and a forum to discuss future projects. The dedication and ideas shared by everyone were truly inspiring, so we want to thank to all of you who participated—your hard work is what propels us forward. We look forward to our continued journey together, reaching new heights as one, global team.

JOINING FORCES

WOMEN TAKE THE LEAD

This International Women's Day, SOLEK celebrated the remarkable women in our community whose dedication and creativity are fundamental to our success. Our event was a heartfelt appreciation, complete with special gifts to acknowledge their vital contributions. While it might sound repetitive, we cannot express enough thanks to the women at SOLEK who inspire us daily. Together, we strive to foster a more inclusive and welcoming workplace.



SUN THING

CONCEPT AND PRODUCTION

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