

EnergyMetropolis



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THE WEST COAST

MOVE TO ESBJERG

How easy is it to move? We want to move you mentally and physically to the west of Denmark.

This is where Denmark's fifth-largest city is to be found, a bustling, international energy metropolis with lots of opportunities for work and career, not to mention sport and art at the highest level. The area as a whole is speckled with charming villages and small towns, nestled in spectacular scenery, especially Ribe, the aesthetic, historical and popular gem.

This magazine seeks to present some of the job and lifestyle opportunities that Esbjerg has to offer. Many of the stories will be told by people who already have moved here to live and work. You will meet entrepreneurs specialising in design, people who have moved here from abroad and the rest of Denmark

for exciting jobs, and we will tell you the story of a city that grew from nothing to become not just an offshore hub, but perhaps the biggest data hub in the Nordics in just a few years' time. There's lots of good advice and guides to Esbjerg's culinary highlights, plus the things to see and experience around the Wadden Sea.

I moved here myself from Frederiksberg. I was amazed at how much there is to do and see in the city and surrounding area. Not to mention the unique mentality found here, with energy and business as the key activities. It's fun to live a place where so much happens, and where people pull together when there's something to be done or created.

Enjoy your read!
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– Business Esbjerg creates growth and development in the municipality of Esbjerg, marketing the entire area as an attractive place to live, work, study, run a business or take a holiday. Our objective is to bolster Esbjerg's position as Denmark's 'Energy Metropolis' and third growth centre.



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A PERMANENT PIT STOP

When Henrik Otto Jensen left his job in London in the late eighties to work in Esbjerg, it was only meant to be temporary. Now the owner of businesses in Esbjerg and Copenhagen, he's still here, in a city he loves for its scenery and pioneering spirit.



When I enter Kaffesmeden, a coffee bar in the centre of Esbjerg, Henrik is already seated in a corner with a cappuccino. It may only be Wednesday, but this turns out to be his second visit there already this week.

"I like using the city's cafés, and often hold meetings there instead of at the office," explains this 54-year-old businessman. And there is no doubt that he holds a lot of meetings. Henrik is the owner of no less than five businesses in Esbjerg and Copenhagen.

To and from London

Born in Esbjerg, he moved at an early age to London to study. After working as a trainee at one of the UK's oldest shipping lines, he was appointed manager of a British shipping firm in his early twenties. A road accident tragically paralysed his father from the chest down, causing Henrik to return to Esbjerg for a while.

I helped attract Grimaldi Group to Esbjerg, making it into one of the biggest and longest-lasting shipping routes ever to use Esbjerg.

"At that time, my father owned and ran Niels Winther & Co., a shipping company, and I came home to try and revive the business after it had started to get into difficulties without him at the helm. Via contacts in London, I managed to win contracts with the bulk coal-carriers bringing coal to the Esbjerg power station. Things just progressed from there," he says by way of explaining the pit stop that ended up being permanent

when he bought the business from his father in 1994.

Importing 70,000 new cars every year

Only two years later, when he was 32, he happened to come into contact with the Italian Grimaldi Group shipping line. That turned out to be a major turning point in his career. Together, they set about importing cars to what is now Scandinavian Auto Logistics. Over 70,000 vehicles are now landed at the Port of Esbjerg, accounting for around 30% of Denmark's annual imports.

"I helped attract Grimaldi Group to Esbjerg, making it into one of the biggest and longest-lasting shipping routes ever to use Esbjerg. We started off importing Fiats in 1999, but nowadays handle a number of other makes," says Henrik. As a result of his close links with the Italian line, he has even been awarded one of Italy's highest honours, and is also the Vice Chairman of Denmark's shipbroker's trade association.

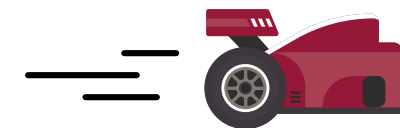
From forest to city

In the meantime, his father's former business, renamed Niels Winther Maritime, grew rapidly. When Henrik took it

over, there were only three employees, but now there are 45, working at offices in Esbjerg and Copenhagen.

"We have a lot of activities within the offshore wind turbine industry, and have of course grown in line with its own expansion on the global market. Most of our customers are located abroad for the same reason, requiring a lot of travel to build the business up. Nowadays, I leave most of that to others. I'm rarely away from home more than a couple of days every other week." 'Home' is only ten minutes' walk from the coffee bar we are in, located in the new Kareen neighbourhood.

"I used to be surrounded by forest and sea, but in early 2018 I decided to move into city and bought an apartment here. I love seeing how the city changes at close quarters, and things are moving fast at the moment. And being able to simply walk to work is of course



wonderful," he says, pointing out the nearby Street Food as one of his favourite venues for an easy evening meal.

Plenty of ambition

Cutting down on travel means Henrik has more time to pursue new ideas and initiatives.

"I recently helped start up Boost Esbjerg – a free incubator for entrepreneurs in their startup phase. Esbjerg has several shared office facilities, but we needed something for the new-starters who were not yet making money. They need help to

get through that critical early stage. The idea came from a trip to Silicon Valley in 2017." He felt immediately that a startup incubator of the kind he had seen there would be perfect in Esbjerg:

"There is a unique spirit in Esbjerg. While other cities may have long-established traditions created over the generations, this is a relatively young city. That's why it fosters so many entrepreneurs in many ways, people with plenty of ambition. This has been a great place for me to run and grow my business."

Space is good

Even though Henrik has visited lots of exciting places on business trips, he has

never been tempted to leave his home city again.

"Esbjerg has lots of space. Neither the roads, bike paths nor beach are ever crowded. I've visited lots of really exciting places around the world, but I could never be without what Esbjerg and its surroundings can give me, including sport on land and sea.

I love to get out on my mountain and racer bikes. In the summer, I sail competitively in Ho Bugt, along with 10-15 other boats. Oh, and I've just started to windsurf again. We have the perfect conditions here, with lots of open water, space ... and wind!" ■



A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

Esbjerg has always been a dynamic city, something that can really be seen in recent years. It has become the country's fifth-biggest city, but how will it develop over the next few years? Jesper Frost Rasmussen is the mayor, and gives us a few pointers.

W hat are the highlights of recent developments in Esbjerg?

We laid out a vision for more of a 'city-type environment' in Esbjerg back in 2015. That may sound like a bit of a fancy ambition on paper, but we have already achieved a number of the goals we set. There is more social and private housing in the city centre, and the pedestrian streets have undergone extensive renovation to link city and port together. The new bike- and footpath at Landgangen has created a natural link between the port and the city centre. The number of new, varied restaurants and cafés in the city is one of the results.

W hat are your visions for Esbjerg over the next few years?

Esbjerg is Denmark's youngest large city, and I would love to attract even more people to come and live here. I'd like to see more dramatic and attractive buildings to be able to offer better housing in the city centre. These are all things we already know can and will be achieved over the next few years. I am also looking forward immensely to seeing how the new Esbjerg Strand neighbourhood turns out. There will be new office buildings and a marina here, something Esbjerg's many nautical associations are eagerly awaiting. I hope that Esbjerg Strand will attract even more businesses and tourists to our city.

W hat do you think Esbjerg will look like by 2025?

I think that it will be a city comfortable with its role as a city in a state of dynamic change, as it always has been. We will have a city that will be even more certain of which direction it is going in, something its businesses and inhabitants will help decide. I'd like to see even more businesses that recognise the wide range of opportunities offered by the area, encouraging them to move here. And of course, I hope that we have a city that will have even more to offer in the way of the arts and culture within music, theatre and exhibitions, enriching the old and the young of the city with new experiences and impressions.



I hope that Esbjerg Strand will attract even more businesses and tourists to our city.

Jesper Frost Rasmussen (V), Mayor

THE GLOBETROTTER'S ROUTE TO

THE WEST COAST

Ieva and Christian Dragin-Jensen moved here in 2009 from Lithuania and Mexico to study at the University of Southern Denmark. Even though they both regarded their stay in Esbjerg as temporary, they now have a home and careers in the city, and enjoy a very high quality of life.

I'm due to meet Ieva and Christian on a quiet street in Sønderis, just north of Esbjerg one Saturday morning. As I turn the corner, I find them both in the car port – just getting out of the car. Their classic, dark-blue polo shirts and Ieva's pink golfing pants (and the clubs in the car boot) reveal that they have just come back from the golf course.

"We joined the golf club, and now play almost every weekend," explains 32-year-old Ieva, while I help carry their gear into the modern house.

Student job with responsibility

Ieva and Christian work as Strategic Sourcing Buyer for Semco Maritime and Cluster Manager for the Service Economist Course at Business Academy Southwest respectively, and moved to Esbjerg in the summer of 2009 to study at the University of Southern Denmark. They did not know each other at that time. Ieva took a master's degree in public health science and a business academy degree in international trade and marketing in her native Lithuania. Christian, whose parents come from Denmark and Portugal respectively, has lived in Dubai, Copenhagen, Japan, Singapore, France, Israel, Poland, Spain, Holland, Scotland and Mexico.

"Esbjerg is the smallest city I have ever lived in, but I chose it because it was the place where I could study for an MSc. along with being able to find a good student job with a bit of responsibility. I thought there would be a lot of competition for the really good student jobs in other cities," explained Christian, who first came to Esbjerg before starting his studies, having obtained a student job at Viking, the manufacturer of survival gear for shipping and offshore.

"I don't mind admitting that my plan was simply to get my degree and a bit of experience on my CV before moving on. But then I met Ieva, and ended up feeling so at home here that we're still here

now, over nine years later." Christian gained a PhD in City Branding from the University of Southern Denmark.

Low housing prices and high quality of living

Esbjerg has expanded immensely in recent years, a process the couple have been able to follow closely since moving here in 2010.

"One of the first things I noticed when I moved here was that this was a city with ambition. It's been fun watching it grow and expand, especially the last couple of years, where a lot of student accommodation and the new harbour area at Esbjerg Strand have been built, bars, cafés and restaurants have opened and events have been staged," says Ieva.

Christian joins in to add that he finds it hard to imagine ever leaving the area again:

"Esbjerg may seem small at first glance, but when you get to know it, there's a lot going on. This is a big small city. I think we have a very high quality of life here. My brother lives in Copenhagen, and I often tease him about house prices. The bottom line is that we feel we have the opportunity to live a really good life here." ■

THINKING OF RELOCATING TO ESBJERG? GET LEVA AND CHRISTIAN'S BEST TIPS HERE!

"I recommend getting involved with some of the associations and clubs that can be found in the city. There's hardly a sport or hobby not represented here," says Ieva, who has tried her hand at football, but now sticks to tennis and golf.

"Esbjerg may seem small at first glance, but when you get to know it, there's a lot going on."

INTERIOR DESIGNER

After several years working in retail in Copenhagen, 40-year-old Michael Tangaa started his own business in 2014 in Esbjerg. In addition to his own shared office space, he also runs ROOM67, a company specialising in creative interior design for businesses.

Everything in Fabrikskompagniet, Michael's shared office space business in the centre of Esbjerg, is the result of his own creative ideas, from the golden-coloured lights, the steel-framed windows, home-made desks, the concrete coffee table, to the 'creepers' hanging down from the ceiling.

"I restored the building right from scratch except for the electricity and plumbing," says Michael, who started letting out office space there in the summer of 2016 and owns ROOM67, via which he creates and develops interior design concepts for businesses.

Back to the wind

40-year-old Michael Tangaa grew up in Esbjerg, but moved to Copenhagen in 2002 to start on a retail management training programme run by COOP, and took part in redevelopment of

SuperBrugsen. Meanwhile, he helped coordinate events for a leading brand of alcoholic drink and built a bar at Roskilde Festival. But there came a time when he simply missed the North Sea and the wind.

"I missed the wind on my face. In Copenhagen I never thought 'Wow, I've really had my fresh air today!' and that's why I moved back to Esbjerg in 2008. I love being able to see and feel the seasons, the wildness of nature, and fantastic growth of the city. These are all things I think are great about this place."

Combining hobby with work

A few years taking an education within banking and a job as Project Manager in a company selling photovoltaic panels followed. But in May 2013, he began to think of setting up his own business.

"I talked to a business mentor to find out what I needed to do. I've always loved interior design, and have made tables and other furniture myself. So we ended up by concluding that I ought to start a webshop selling my own designs along with selected products from Nordic designers. That led to a hand-picked network of suppliers, whom I continue to use to this day in ROOM67," explains Michael, who closed his webshop in November 2015 to concentrate 100% on interior design.

"I generally think that businesses tend to lack any link between their brand and interior design. Lots of them fail to think in terms of the industry they are

in and their culture, or stick to plain old black, white and red. My mission is to create an individual look, and to improve the image of the business," explains Michael, who describes his life now as 'a hobby with a built-in job' with reference to Malk de Koijn.

It doesn't just happen

Michael now lives in Esbjerg with his wife and two children, from where he has designed and fitted out offices, stores and other forms of commercial premises in Esbjerg, Kolding, Aarhus and Copenhagen in recent years. His business now makes sufficient profit to be able to pay him a wage. He has also employed a part-time designer, who takes care of some ROOM67's floor plans.

"I had to fight hard, but I now have an adequate customer base, even though there is always room for more. I love it," says Michael, who spends half of his week at the office and the other on customer visits.

"I get most of my customers via SEO, LinkedIn and networking. But I'm also an ice-cold canvasser one or two days a month, when I call prospects. You still have to break the door down – it doesn't just happen," as he says. ■

"I missed the wind on my face. In Copenhagen I never thought 'Wow, I've really had my fresh air today!' and that's why I moved back to Esbjerg in 2008

INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE SUCCESS WITH LOCAL ROOTS

An old friendship, a trip to South America and a number of old drawings helped found what is now Bruunmunch Furniture: An internationally-renowned furniture business, producing its wares in Denmark.

Childhood friends Henrik Bruun, 36, and Jacob Munch, 35, had always dreamed of starting their own business. Jacob is a qualified joiner, and when he travelled around South America for two years in the late 00s, he spent some of his evenings designing. His pastime led to the founding of Bruunmunch Furniture:

"I learned to draw simple plan elevation drawings when training to be a joiner, which I used to design a range of coffee tables. When I came home, I showed my designs to Henrik, who luckily was game for starting something together." The

company was registered in 2011, and now designs and manufactures dining tables, sofas and chairs in addition to the original coffee tables.

Danish-made at seven different factories

All Bruunmunch Furniture products are made in Denmark at no less than seven different factories specialising in steel, concrete, wood, chairs, sofas and shelves.

"We really had to 'learn by doing' along the way. That cost us a lot of money sometimes, but was also a really healthy process that gave us a lot of experience and a great understanding of how to run this type of business. I think we are now well in control of the various processes from idea, through design and material specification to prototype, modifications, production, sales and marketing," claims Jacob, resident in Hjørring, north of Esbjerg with his wife and four children.

Aiming for high turnover

The business now has dealers in almost 20 countries and has turned over a total of DKK 20 million. There is still no hiding the west Jutland roots of

the owners in their modest pride after winning the Gazelle Award in 2017, given to healthy, fast-growing businesses:

"It was wonderful to be acknowledged as an expanding business. But it's not really anything to get excited about, as for us the bottom line is most important." Jakob and Henrik are currently working towards an annual turnover of DKK 20 million by 2021, putting a range of initiatives into effect:

"We have drawn all our designs in 3D, so that architects can easily use our products when designing buildings such as hotels. We're working on a new product range aimed at the contract market, and developing our own webshop. We've also hired one of Denmark's leading PR bureaux to build more awareness on the Danish market. So far, we have earned most of our turnover outside Denmark," concludes Jacob. ■

JACOB MUNCH'S BEST ADVICE FOR ENTREPRENEURS

"It's a bit like roller skating. When you try them out for the first time, you won't be much good. But if you are persistent, you get better with practice, and the same applies

to starting a business. The most important thing is to be passionate about what you are doing, believe in yourself, and then opportunities pop up along the way," says Jacob.



FROM FISHING VILLAGE TO GLOBAL INTERNET HUB

A decision was taken in 1868 to build 250 metres of quays in an area now known as the Port of Esbjerg. Over 150 years and 12 km of quays later, the historic entrepreneurial spirit can still be felt, in what is now Denmark's offshore capital, and a global hub for data and internet connections.



Even on a foggy winter's day, the view from Esbjerg's East Dock over the city is impressive. Gigantic wind turbines are laid out along the quay ready to be shipped as a symbol of a green future, according to the former Port Director, whilst the power station chimney towers in the background, perhaps as a symbol of the past.

"This is the view that Esbjerg should be most proud of. It represents the green transition that the city has been a particular powerhouse for, creating growth, jobs and internationalisation right here. Just over 10 years ago, this was the seabed," says Ole Ingrisch, as he shows me around the dock area specifically built for the wind turbine industry, with a price tag of over DKK 1.5 billion in construction costs.

An accidental city

As you drive along the 12 km of quays that now comprise the Port of Esbjerg, it's hard to imagine that its creation was something of an accident.

Jørgen Dieckmann, head of the city archives, takes up the story of the building of a 250 metre-long quay, completed in 1874: "After the 1864 war, when Denmark lost Schleswig-Holstein, a new port had to be built on the west coast. Esbjerg was selected because the seabed quickly shelved downwards here, which was important at a time when construction machinery consisted of shovels, spades, wheelbarrows and horse-drawn carts. There was a village here at that time with just 23 inhabitants, and the building of the port meant the coming of the railway, able to transport livestock for export by sea. But the reformation of the farming industry in 1879 meant an additional boost for the new port, for imports as well as exports. Esbjerg became a major exporter of bacon, butter and eggs to Great Britain. Meanwhile, commercial fishing rose to prominence as an industry, and by 1901, there were over 13,000 people living in Esbjerg, which had become a real borough with inhabitants from the USA, Sweden, Norway and Germany."

Denmark's Chicago

Rapid expansion in the late 1800s and early 1900s gave Esbjerg the reputation of being Denmark's Chicago.

"Esbjerg became known as the city of opportunity: if you had a good idea, it could be realised here. Esbjerg was an alternative for some people to the long and risky journey over the Atlantic, whilst others ended up staying here on their way to America. When vast stocks of plaice were found to exist on Horns Reef, fishermen also moved to the area. That meant that Esbjerg had become one of the most important fishing ports in Europe by the 1960s," explains Morten Hahn-Pedersen, an author, researcher and former Director of the Fisheries and Maritime Museum, Esbjerg, concerning the next spurt in the growth of business and industry that heavily influenced the city:

"The city spread, and several of the small, outlying villages were absorbed, where housing areas, suburbs and industrial estates were also appearing.

But Esbjerg remained a maritime and fishing port. The city only really began to change when oil exploration took off, with the opening of the huge oil fields in the 1980s, and massive expansion in the 1990s, followed by yet another wave when green offshore and offshore wind turbines started to appear in the 00s. The growing needs of the offshore industry for highly-educated personnel made it necessary to build a concert hall and other arts institutions. Over a period of about 20 years, Esbjerg was transformed from a fishing port to a fully-fledged city with all the amenities we have come to expect," concludes Morten.

From labourers to high-tech workforce

The results of progress can be seen all over the city, which only 150 years ago consisted of nothing more than two farms and a couple of cottages. The most remarkable transformation is on the waterfront.

"Esbjerg became Denmark's offshore hub for wind, oil and gas. We are not just the

leading port in Denmark for the installation of offshore wind farms with an export value of close to DKK 100 billion, we are also the world leader. A host of multinational corporations have been attracted here, radically increasing the level of activity," says Ole Ingrisch, who also refers to the change in the job market:

THE HAVFRUE PROJECT

'Havfrue' is a **7,000 km** long fibre cable between Esbjerg and New Jersey, linking the giant data centre hubs in the USA and Ireland with Scandinavia. It was laid by a consortium consisting of Google, Facebook, Aqua Comms and TE SubCom.



COWI'S REPORT

According to a report compiled by COWI for the Nordic Council of Ministers, investment in data centres in the Nordic countries will double between 2019-2024, to a projected annual amount invested in construction of between Eur 2 and 4.3 billion. The Nordic countries are attractive for five reasons: Abundant sustainable energy, consistency of supply, low energy prices, political stability and an attractive business climate.

ABOUT THE COBRA CABLE

The COBRA cable was the first to carry electricity between Denmark and Holland. The 300 km long subsea cable runs from Esbjerg to Eemshaven.

Jobs in the port primarily consisted of unskilled labour related to commercial fishing in the 1990s. There are now just under 200 businesses located in the port, many of them with highly-qualified workforces, including engineers, technicians and skilled workers."

Global internet hub

In parallel with Esbjerg's progress within offshore industries, the fifth-biggest city in Denmark has also become a Nordic hub for data traffic. The subsea COBRA cable links Esbjerg and Holland, while the Havfrue (mermaid) – a 7,000 km transatlantic fibre cable stretching between Esbjerg and New Jersey – has made global internet giants consider the city for investments.

"Apart from the physical port, we have also become an 'internet port', linking Esbjerg with the rest of the world. The interest shown by the big internet companies in investing billions here only serves to emphasise the city's role in the digital infrastructure. Esbjerg has really

made its mark on the digital map," claims Karsten Rieder, Head of Business at Business Esbjerg. He calls developments within digital communications in the area over the last few years Esbjerg's 'major new business opportunity'.

"IT companies are not the only ones who need good data links. Any business that needs to have data in the cloud, such as global corporations, web hosting providers and app developers, benefits from the close proximity of an internet hub able to ensure the best quality connections. That's why we expect a solid boost for local businesses and employment figures for many years to come," he explains.

An Esbjergers' DNA

"Despite consistent expansion and the many transformations Esbjerg has been through as a port and a city, Esbjergers have always had one thing in common," says Jørgen Dieckmann Rasmussen:

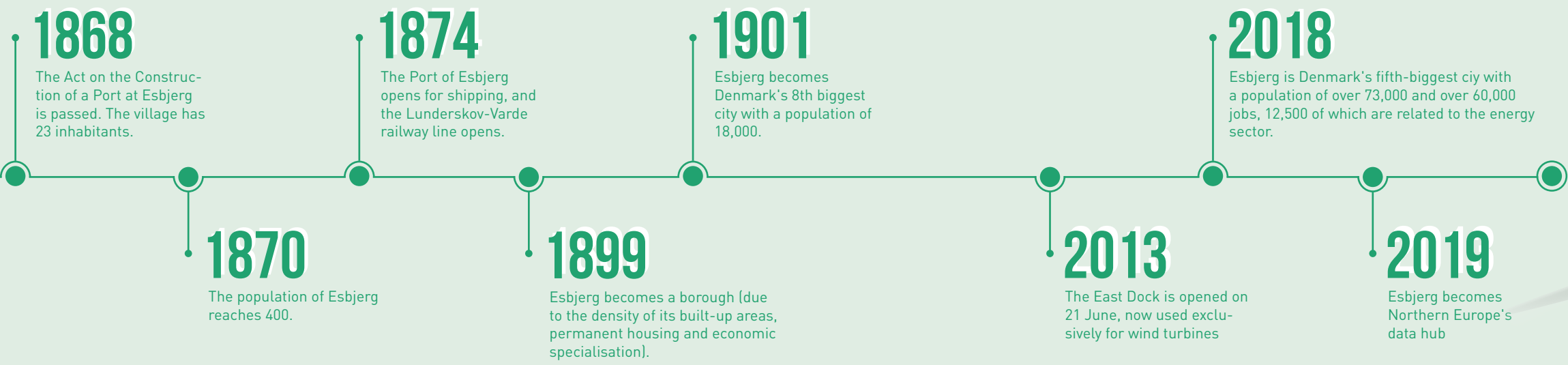
The DNA of Esbjergers. They've always been flexible, robust, stuck together and

maintained an open attitude towards the world at large. Ever since the port was built, the city has lived on its dealings with other countries, and that's still something that can be seen today." Jørgen himself relocated here from Copenhagen, and could not fail to notice that DNA.

"You can still feel the entrepreneurial and pioneer spirit of the people who came here 150 years ago. Esbjergers are willing to take risks, they are entrepreneurial, hard-working and yet modest. In fact, I believe that many of the things that made fishing a success here, such as their toughness and being able to work in all weathers, still play a role in the city's current success," believes Ole Ingris. His opinions are shared by Morten Hahn-Pedersen:

"Anything is possible in Esbjerg. The impossible is simply something that takes a bit longer," he states with a smile. ■

ESBJERG'S HISTORY IN BRIEF



2/3

rds of the world's wind turbines are shipped via the Port of Esbjerg

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

After five years living on the mainland, Søs and Johannes moved to Fanø to get closer to nature and a slower pace of life. Esbjerg is only twelve minutes away, giving them the best of both worlds.

As soon as I land on the island of Fanø – just twelve minutes after the ferry sailed from Esbjerg – I can feel the strength of the local spirit. The people embarking or disembarking smile to each other, exchanging a friendly word as they pass. The same applies to Søs Josefsen, my fellow passenger from Esbjerg. Within the few minutes it takes from the ferry port to her home, we meet a stream of people she knows.

"Hello Manfred," she waves to a passing man, who, she tells me, is one of the committee running the local cinema, before we turn right on the cobbled high street, and pass through her white-painted gate to the house where Søs lives with her husband Johannes Josefsen, their 3-year-old son Hjalte and their two cats.

A secure childhood

Søs is an Administration Assistant at Business Esbjerg, and grew up on Fanø. Nevertheless, it came as a bit of a shock

to Johannes when she began to talk about moving back there in late 2015, after they had spent five years restoring a house just outside Esbjerg.

"I missed the horizon. Johannes thought I'd gone crazy," she says with a smile when I ask her why she wanted to go back.

"There's a special feeling of closeness and helpfulness here. I had a very secure childhood, yet quickly learned to become independent, cycling to school and leisure pursuits. I'd like to be able to give the same to my son," she explains. Søs managed to persuade her better half that they ought to move over a period of two months.

An unparalleled social life

Initially, they reserved a site to build a house on the northern tip of the island. But they were then offered the chance to buy a totally-renovated two-storey house just a stone's throw from the high street and the ferry port, where we now

sit in the kitchen drinking coffee. They moved in March 2016.

"We are delighted with the house. We have never been so socially-involved as we have been since moving here. It's so much easier to get to know people, because it's a relatively small community. I mean, we were invited to come and eat with the other parents over at the school just after we moved in, for example. And there's actually a lot of life here, with cafés, concerts, talks and even stand-up comedy – the same things you find in much bigger cities. But you still don't need to walk for more than five minutes to find yourself in the woods or on the beach," enthuses Johannes, who was pleasantly surprised by the 'can-do' attitude of people on the island.

"If you've got a good idea, it's easy to realise it. Collective activities are big over here, with everything from handball and football, through winter bathing and gymnastics to unicycling, hockey, riding, sailing and music classes," he says.



DID YOU KNOW?

...that a place at kindergarten on Fanø only costs around DKK 1600 per month? That's half price compared to many large towns and cities.

...that the Fanø ferry sails 2-3 times an hour all day – from early morning until midnight.



"We still get up at 6 am, send Hjalte to kindergarten at 7 and then take the ferry to work at 7.30, the same time as we used to leave home when we lived on the mainland.



More time
Their way of life as a family on Fanø is very similar to that they had in Esbjerg.
"We still get up at 6 am, send Hjalte to kindergarten at 7 and then take the ferry to work at 7.30, the same time as we used to leave home when we lived on the mainland. There is a social aspect to taking the same ferry as almost half of the island to get to work. It's really nice," says Søs, who usually picks Hjalte up on her return at 3.30 pm, while Johannes often takes the ferry a couple of hours later after leaving his job as

easily get on my mountain bike and bike along the paths behind here, and in the summer we often bike out to the beach with our dinner. It only takes 8 minutes to get there," explains Johannes.
Woodland oasis
They also like to bike around the 15 km long island at the weekend, with one place in particular as their favourite.

"The woodland playground on the way to Sønderho is a little oasis. It's hard to find, because it's hidden deep in the woods. There are huts, grills, shelters, swings and an activity course. We held Hjalte's birthday party out there one year, taking our own food for a picnic," says Søs, who also loves living with a view all the way to the horizon again:

"Going down the hill and watching the view of both sea and sky open up as far as the eye can see is simply the best feeling. That's the essence of Fanø for me."

A mental journey
Apart from visiting family, the only thing that attracts the family to the mainland in their leisure time is the indoor swimming pool.

"We take our 'Long John' bike and get on the ferry, and bike up to the swimming pool complex," says Johannes, who is not the least bothered about the ferry now being the family's primary form of transport.

"Something or other happens in your mind when you get on the ferry. You can almost see how people relax when taking it home from work. It only takes 12 minutes, but it does have some form of effect. In the summer, the trip is also a good opportunity to enjoy what's popularly known as a 'ferry beer' or ice cream with your mates.

Being dependent on a ferry will no doubt put some people off. But it sails 2 or 3 times an hour. If you can live with that, then, in our view, you get the best of both worlds." ■

IT Department Manager at Blue Water Shipping. The evenings are spent on leisure pursuits and dinner, although with one major difference to their past life:
"We have more time, because we can get to and from work so quickly, and when we come home, everything is on our doorstep. We used to have to always drive, necessitating having two cars. Nowadays, we cycle instead. I can

MINI-GUIDE TO FANØ

6 SIX THINGS TO DO AND SEE.



FAMOUS SALMON

Fanø Laks produces cold-smoked salmon using old-fashioned methods. All the salmon is sorted, sliced, trimmed and salted by hand. The slices are then hung in a cold place for 24 hours before being smoked using cool North Sea air in a special smoking chamber. The process takes 3½ days, and ensures the meat achieves the texture and quality that have made Fanø Laks famous throughout Europe.

fanoe-laks.com



HUMOROUS BEERS

Fanø Bryghus has been brewing tasty hop-based beers according to the American craft beer tradition since 2009, with a little added humour, creative names and specially-designed labels. The products are sold a number of places in Denmark, but taste best in the sunshine on the brewery's own terrace.

fanoebryghus.dk



LOCAL SPECIALITIES

Rudbecks is the place for the taste of the Wadden Sea and south-western Jutland. This combined delicatessen and café serves baguette sandwiches, tapas, burgers and other specialities, along with other delicacies such as cheeses, jams, salmon and ham to take home, all produced on the premises or locally.

rudbecks.dk



HOME-MADE QUALITY

Slagter Christiansen has been selling high-quality products since 1994, based on the best ingredients and traditional craftsmanship. He is best known for his 'Fanø Skinke', a ham regarded by foodies as the Danish answer to Spanish Jamón Ibérico.

fanoeslagteren.dk



KNITTING FESTIVAL

This major, international knitting festival is held on Fanø every year. During the event, the island buzzes with life as happy people invade to take part in the festival, and to experience something of the delights of Fanø itself. Up to 15,000 people attend the knitting festival.

strikkefestival.dk



MUSIC, FOOD AND PEOPLE

Fanø Vesterland is an event at which music, food and people achieve complete harmony. The food stalls feature local suppliers, organic food, high-quality and sustainability, whilst the stages play host to new and established entertainers.

fanoevesterland.dk

INTERNATIONAL UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION GAINS A Foothold

An international upper secondary course known under the initials of 'IB' has already fulfilled the success criteria defined for it when launched at Esbjerg Gymnasium (upper secondary school) in 2015. According to the school, its popularity is due to the expanding international environment in Esbjerg.

When 'IB', the international upper secondary education course, was launched at Esbjerg Gymnasium in 2015, 30 students enrolled for the 'Pre-IB' starter course. The number of students has grown since then year-on-year. Such consistent growth means that the success criteria defined prior to its launch have been fulfilled, meaning it is already fully financially sustainable.

"One of our goals was to get 35 students enrolled per year, and we have achieved

that. The way things are going, we expect to reach the final goal of 45-50 students within the next couple of years," says Marianne Helms, Vice Principle and IB Coordinator at Esbjerg Gymnasium.

An expanding international environment

Achieving such a solid foothold is due to the expanding international environment in Esbjerg according to Marianne.

"We first started to talk about IB in the early 00s, but thought at that time that it would not be financially viable. But as Esbjerg has gradually become an 'energy metropolis', attracting more and more foreign workers, the need for an international school system arose, capable of taking students all the way from international school to IB and onwards into English language university courses. Being able to send their children to an English-speaking school is a great comfort to foreign workers, and a school with an international system that will make it possible to continue their education in another country if necessary."

20 different nationalities

Marianne thinks the school has students with around 20 different nationalities,

Around 8%
of final year students
from Esbjerg Inter-
national School take
IB at Esbjerg
Gymnasium.



and many of them come from Esbjerg International School:

"Around a third of our students have foreign parents, and come from an international school system – either from Esbjerg or some other place in the world, with another third having at least one Danish parent, and thus first-hand knowledge of Denmark and Danish-speaking. The final third come from 'ordinary' Danish schools and family backgrounds.

Saving four hours of commuting

One of the students on Esbjerg Gymnasium's IB course is Asher David Japhta, who came from Esbjerg International School and is currently studying English, mathematics and physics at advanced level on IB2:

"I am delighted to have the opportunity to attend IB in Esbjerg. My older brother started on IB in 2015, but had to study in Kolding. He had some very long days because of nearly two hours commuting on public transport each way. I have more freedom and time to do my homework because I can attend IB in Esbjerg," explains Asher, who moved to Denmark with his family from South Africa in 2013. His father is an engineer working for Total in Esbjerg, and Asher plans to follow in his footsteps:

"I want to study to become an engineer when I am finished here. But I don't yet know whether I will study in Denmark or abroad," he says on his plans for the future. ■

Practical information on IB

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a two-year international upper secondary education that can be taken in over 100 countries.

IB at Esbjerg Gymnasium combines elements from the Danish and international educational structures, by basing the programme on lessons in classes, whilst maintaining focus on activities regardless of student age.

Esbjerg International School

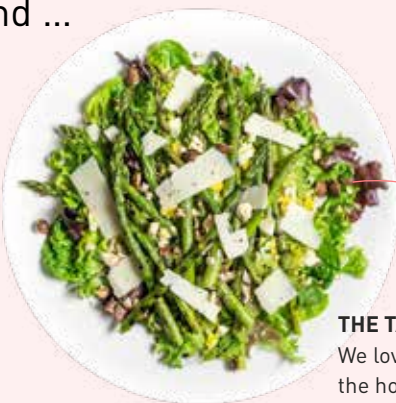
Many of the students on the IB programme in Esbjerg have previously attended Esbjerg International School, with just under 300 students from 6-16 years-old, making it a small school by international standards. The students represent 44 different nationalities, with around 55% being the children of expats, whilst the rest have at least one Danish parent, but have often lived part of their life abroad.

The school expects to be fully IB-certified within the near future, making it even easier for students to switch from one IB school to another elsewhere in the world, because the tutorial style, language used etc., will be the same. Similarly, the transition to the international upper secondary programme, IB, based on the same system, will be a natural step.



INSIDER TO GUIDE ESBJERG

Where can you find the juiciest burgers, the most beautiful view and the best place to spend a Friday evening (or Saturday morning)? We asked Esbjergers for their recommendations on the best places in city! Where can you find ...



THE TASTIEST LUNCH?

We love the Rankin Park café, the home of great-tasting organic food.

Maja Steendorph, 30, Doctor

THE BEST COFFEE?

I go to Portlands for the best in coffee or juice. Our office is next door, and we worked on the interior design of the café, and sort of belong there now. That's also where we drink gin and tonic on Fridays.

Henrik Bruun, 36, Furniture Designer

THE GREASIEST BURGER?

The greasier the burger, the better for me. Posthuset is my favourite venue at the moment.

Michael Tangaa, 40,
Interior Design Expert

THE CRISPEST PIZZA?

We love Mammass. And next door is the Italian dessert restaurant, Gelato di Natura. But if we want pizza takeaway, we go over to Hjertingvej.

There's a great place there in an old grill bar. It doesn't look like much from the outside, but they make delicious stone oven pizzas.

Christina Mischorr-Boch, 38,
Coordinator



THE BEST PLACE TO SPEND A FRIDAY EVENING?

If we're going out for a bottle of wine, we go to Portlands – and if we want cocktails, we go to Brass Monkey, the Copenhagen branch of which was voted the capital's best cocktail bar.

Christian Dragin-Jensen, 33,
Cluster Manager

THE BEST BEER?

Fanø has a great local brewery, Fanø Bryghus, where you can enjoy a special beer or take home.

Nema Rahin, 26, Innovation Manager

THE MOST EXCITING DELICATESSEN?

When we're going shopping for the weekend, we like to go over to Fanø to buy meat and delicacies at Slagter Christiansen.

Jacob Munch, 35, Furniture Designer

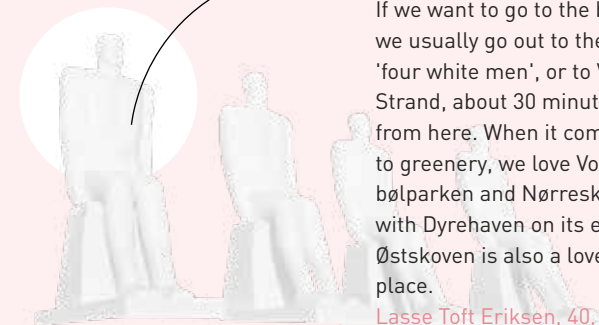


THE BEST PLACE TO MEET YOUR FRIENDS?

Street Food is great, because it has something for everyone. You can get all sorts of different foods but still eat together. For example, if someone wants Indian and others want traditional Danish food.

Astrid Mischorr-Boch, 14,
Student

NATURE AND SCENERY



THE BEST PLACE TO HAVE A PICNIC?

If we want to go to the beach, we usually go out to the 'four white men', or to Vejers Strand, about 30 minutes' drive from here. When it comes to greenery, we love Vognsbølparken and Nørreskoven, with Dyrehaven on its edge. Østskoven is also a lovely place.

Lasse Toft Eriksen, 40,
Organist

THE BEST SUNDAY OUTING?

If we don't go to Fanø or Blåvand, we go into Hjerting Strandpark or Marbæk. We have some of Denmark's most beautiful scenery around here.

Henrik Bruun, 36, Furniture Designer

BEST PARK IN CITY?

I strongly recommend IC Møllerparken, close to the library. A truly lovely place!

Astrid Mischorr-Boch, 14, Student

THE BEST PLACE TO GRILL?

In the summer, we often go to Vognsbølparken to play football and grill with friends.

Christian Dragin-Jensen, 33,
Cluster Manager

THE BEST WALK?

The scenery and the western wind are the things I really missed when living in Copenhagen. We often go to Marbæk Plantage, climb the 'yellow hill', go for a walk in the plantation or go down to the beach.

Michael Tangaa, 40,
Interior Design Expert

THE BEST PLAYGROUND?

We love taking the ferry to Fanø, where there is an excellent outdoor playground in the middle of the island.

Maja Steendorph, 30, Doctor



FOOD AND DRINK

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

THE BEST MUSIC VENUE?

We frequently go to Huset Esbjerg, where there are jam sessions every Tuesday. It's great to have a place where students can meet and play. We also often go to concerts at Tobakken and Konfus. Konfus is a bit underground, making it a great contrast to such places as the Musikhuset concert hall, where there is more focus on the big shows. And once in a while we go to X-perimentet, a kind of open stage.

Ellen Østervig Bathum, 23,
Music student and musician



THE MOST SOCIAL PLACE IN THE COUNTRY?

One of the best things about Esbjerg is all the sports clubs. Whether it's tennis, running, curling or water sports, it's easy to find others with the same interest. This is a very active city. I'm a member of the tennis and golf clubs myself.

Ieva Dragin-Jensen, 32,
Strategic Sourcing Buyer



THE BEST PLACE TO SPOIL YOURSELF?

When we have our parents here to babysit, we love to go to the spa at Hvidbjerg Strand in Blåvand. It's a really nice place, where you can indulge in such pleasures as sitting in a jacuzzi with a view over the North Sea.

Maja Steendorph, 30, Doctor

THE BEST IN THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENTS?

We've been in 'Den Lille Biograf' (the little cinema), which is part of the concert hall and shows lesser-known films a couple of times. We also love the Esbjerg Art Museum.

Trine Toft Eriksen, 41,
Music school teacher

THE LIVELIEST EVENTS FOR KIDS?

We go to the central library a lot, almost every week. When the kids were small, it was to use the playrooms, but now it's to hear lectures or just to sit and read. When the autumn programme comes from the library, I always take a look at what concerts and events are coming. Some of the things we've been to include a fantasy festival, lectures and children's concerts.

Christina Mischorr-Boch, 38,
Coordinator



Photo: Lars Gejl

EXPLORE THE WADDEN SEA

The Wadden Sea National Park was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2014, and is a wonderland of fun, fascinating and educational experiences for young and old alike.

Read more on the next page

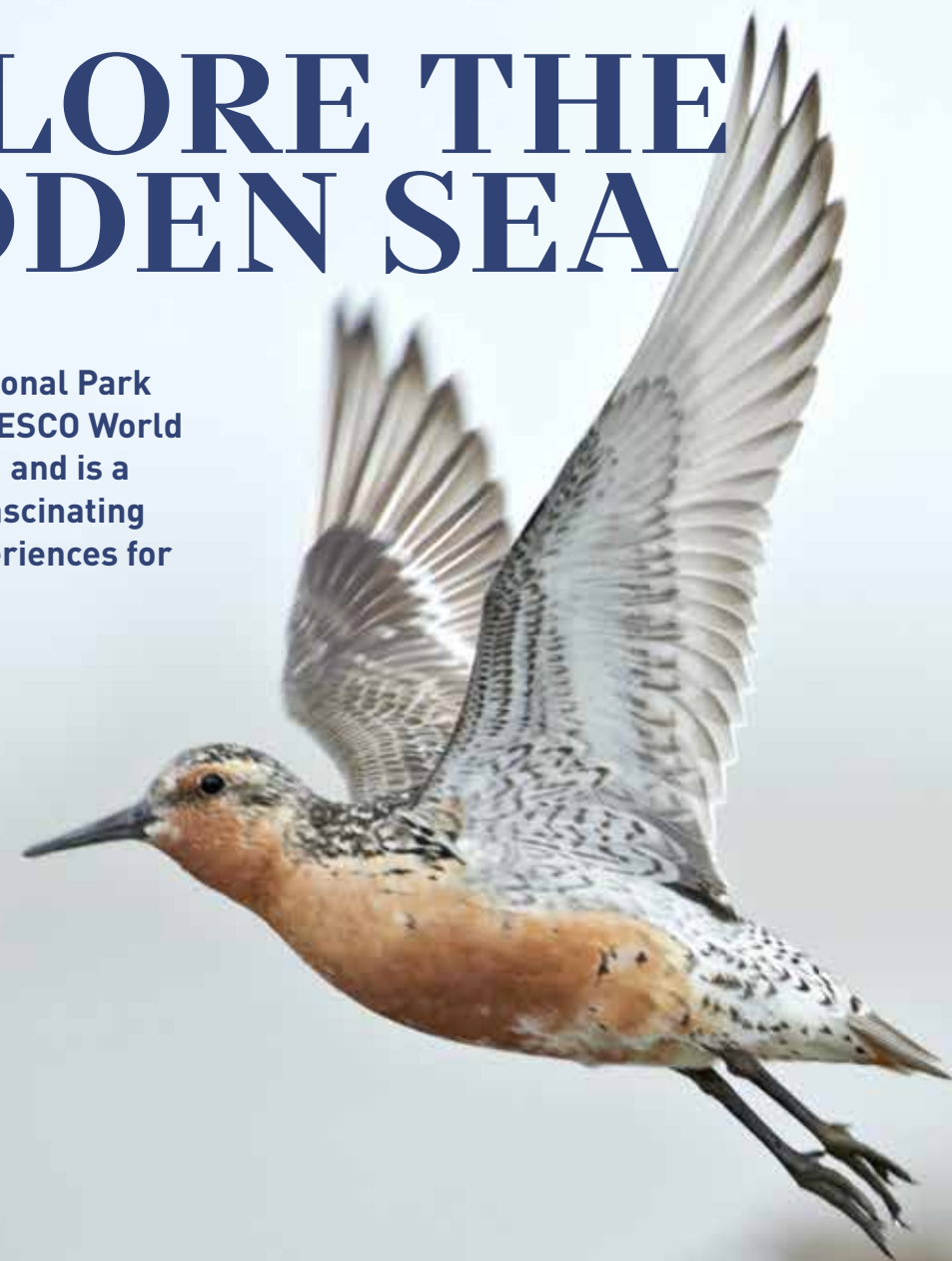


Photo: The Wadden Sea National Park



THE WADDEN SEA'S OWN DELICACY

At low tide in the Wadden Sea, you can gather fresh oysters, one of the world's best delicacies, and completely for free. One thing to remember is that you can gather oysters in all the months that have an R in their name. Taking a guide who knows the Wadden Sea and the best oyster banks is recommended. Your guide will also be able to give you tips and tricks on how to prepare your oysters for eating, either on the beach or at home. Apart from guided oyster gathering, there are a lot of other events in the autumn dedicated to the oyster, including Oyster Trophy Week and the Fanø Oyster Festival, both of which take place in week 42, featuring everything from pop-up restaurants, food trucks and a market, to champagne tasting and lectures on oysters and their erotic properties.

See more at vadehavsøsters.dk and nationalparkvadehavet.dk

Photo: Colin Seymour



THE INVISIBLE MUSEUM

The TIRPITZ bunker museum in Blåvand has transformed a historic German bunker from WWII into an innovative, architectural complex of concrete, steel and glass. The museum was designed by BIG, the Bjarne Ingels Group, to blend in with the surrounding dunes, which is why TIRPITZ is also called 'the invisible museum'. The four subterranean galleries present permanent and temporary exhibits on WWII and the history of the west coast, including a 4D presentation every two hours. The museum is also home to the biggest amber collection in Western Europe. A tunnel runs into the historic old bunker from the museum building, where shadow theatre techniques are used to portray what life would have been like there, as the bunker was never actually used.

The museum won the '2019 Institute Honor Awards for Architecture', one of the USA's major awards.

See more at tirpitz.dk

Photo: Adam Mørk



THROUGH THE EYES OF MIGRATORY BIRDS

Just outside Ribe is the Vadehavscentret, a centre dedicated to the Wadden Sea and its thousands of migratory birds. The centre reopened in 2017 after a major renovation and extension, making the thatched building twice as big. The range of interactive exhibits look at the Wadden Sea through the eyes of migratory birds, and there is a lot to learn about its landscape and fauna. One example is an installation in which visitors can become part of the massive swarms of migratory birds, and experience the feeling of flying over the Wadden Sea. There are also creative workshops, for experimenting with wing span and flight range, building sand dykes, learning about bird anatomy and food chains, or experimenting with water and salt content.

See more at vadehavscentret.dk

Photo: Vadehavscentret

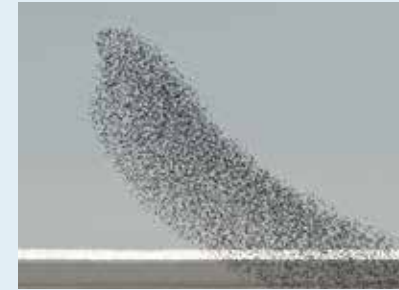


THE WADDEN SEA AFTER DARK

Around three times a year, there is the chance to experience life in the Wadden Sea after dark, when the centre arranges guided tours across the sea bed in the middle of the night. The guide takes you at a leisurely pace along the 6-7 km route from Mandø to the mainland dressed in wellington boots, and holds frequent pauses. Many of the birds here can easily navigate in the dark, and do not go to sleep when the sun goes down as we imagine. You can be lucky enough on one of the walks to pass thousands of geese grazing on the salt meadows, or experience the phenomenon of phosphorescence, which turns the water and jellyfish almost fluorescent. The guide navigates using GP, and only uses a torch when necessary. After the 3-4 hour walk, the centre serves a portion of hot soup before the participants depart for their beds in the early hours of the morning.

See more at vadehavscentret.dk

Photo: Lars Gejl



DANCING NATURAL PHENOMENON

Twice a year, the amazing sight of murmuration can be seen every evening, when massive swarms of starlings take to the wing near Ribe, Denmark's oldest town, searching for a roosting site for the night. Ribe is one of the few places in Scandinavia where such a huge flock of dancing migratory birds can be seen. They gather in the marshes during the autumn to fatten up on the way to their winter home, and are back again in the spring on their return journey. Back in the 1970s, the phenomenon was given the Danish name of 'sort sol', which means 'black sun', because it can actually eclipse the sun itself. The best times of year to see murmuration are from late March to early April, and September/October. Finding a local guide who knows the habits of the swarm is recommended. The show usually lasts for 1½-2 hours from when the first starlings take to the wing, until the sun goes down. Apart from starlings, there are many other species of migratory birds here in the autumn, such as the Arctic Goose, renowned for their sky dancing, referred to as 'grå sol' (grey sun).

See more at naturstyrelsen.dk

Photo: Thomas Skjold



WIND-BLOWN FESTIVALS

The breezy western wind has made the broad beaches along the Wadden Sea a favourite destination for kite enthusiasts of all ages. A sky full of colourful kites is a sight that can often be seen on days with good winds. Some of the world's best kite flyers can be seen in action here every year in July and September. Thousands of kite flyers gather on Fanø and Rømø when these two islands play host to their own respective kite festivals, some of the biggest in Europe. The fantastic kites come in all shapes and sizes to compete on being the most beautiful and best. The festival programmes also feature a wide range of other activities for spectators.

See more at visitfanoe.dk and romo.dk



THE TINDER FAMILY

Thanks to a combination of the online dating site Tinder and a series of coincidences, Maja Steendorph from Odense and Nema Rahin from Aarhus found each other and their way to Esbjerg, where they are now married, working and living.

Their newly-built, sand-coloured house is just a 25 minute bike ride north of Esbjerg, and 30-year-old Maja welcomes me at the door. 26-year-old Nema sits in their high-ceilinged living room on a foam rubber play mat, with their 11 month-old son, Nohr. Back in 2015, they were both students in Odense and Aarhus respectively, and had no knowledge of each other's existence. They now have a house, wedding rings and full-time jobs – and have become parents.

"When I started on my Basic Clinical Training programme, I could choose from a range of hospitals to study at. I chose the South West Jutland Hospital, because they had a good reputation for training and education. I also needed to

be close to the sea – something I'd been missing," explains Maja, who grew up on the island of Langeland before studying medicine in Odense.

Consequently, she moved to Esbjerg in the summer of 2015. In September of the same year, she extended her Tinder dating radius to the maximum, and found Nema, who was living in Aarhus at the time:

"I had just returned from a three-month trip to Asia after getting my degree, and was looking for a job. Only four months (and a number of train journeys) later, I decided to move down to Maja in Esbjerg," says Nema, a qualified diploma engineer in Healthcare Technology.

Help from the 'Newcomer Service'
With help from Esbjerg Municipality's 'Newcomer Service', Nema was able to find temporary work as Project Manager at the Esbjerg Health Centre even before moving to the area. When the contract expired, he decided to attend the Esbjerg career fair, where he got talking to someone from Vestfrost Solutions. He's now employed as Innovation Manager in the company's biomedical segment, making refrigerator and freezer cabinets for the healthcare sector.

"When I compare my situation with that of my friends, I get the impression that

I have more responsibility here than I would have working in, say, Aarhus or Copenhagen," he states.

About the same time that Nema started work, Maja began her second onboarding process in occupational medicine. Before she started maternity leave in September 2017, they managed to get married on the beach at Blåvand with close relatives as witnesses, and buy the house they moved into in May 2018 all within the space of a week, and only 6 months later, Nohr arrived – the point at which they also invited Energy Metropolis for coffee, crispbread and dates.

Freedom with responsibility
Maja is now back at work at the hospital, which has around 33,000 admissions and 390,000 outpatients per year, and is one of the biggest employers in Esbjerg.

"We are well-staffed here, and it's a good place to work: There is always a specialist available when you need help. If I compare notes with my former student colleagues working elsewhere, we have more time and capacity at this hospital for me to acquire the competences I am most interested in. I don't have to spend eight hours a day updating patient notes. I am also allowed enormous freedom with responsibility. It's a really great place to work," she says.



It's a Match!

Maja and Nema have liked each other.



ICE ARENA WITH INTERNATIONAL FORMAT

A new, ultra-modern ice arena in Esbjerg will set the stage for top class ice hockey in the future. The new arena is epoch-making for the sport, which in many ways is synonymous with Esbjerg.



ICE HOCKEY

Esbjerg Energy is a professional Danish ice hockey team in the Metal league. Home games are played at Granly Hockey Arena, which was originally built in 1976, the third-biggest in Denmark, with a capacity of 4,378. Esbjerg Energy has won the Danish championship 7 times, and was the first to win the championship in Jutland.

At the Blue Water Dokken sports hall complex in Esbjerg there is a little club house. Behind the half-open windows I can hear loud, laughing male voices. I find they belong to a group of fit young men, dressed in tracksuits and flip-flops as they come out of the door. "They are all members of the Esbjerg Energy ice hockey team, on their way to their daily training," explains Peder S. Krosgaard, the Chief executive of Esbjerg Energy, who welcomes me at the players' home ground just a stone's throw from the club house. Renovation and expansion work has transformed the old skating rink into an ultra-modern ice arena with international format.

"We have a total of 2,568 seats and standing room for 1,810. We built a new, transparent lounge with seating

for 450 dining guests and direct access to the VIP stand. What we now have are the latest facilities with the potential to attract international ice hockey matches," says Peder, pointing towards the stands and catering outlets from our vantage point in the lounge:

"The crowd can buy their food and drinks here, avoiding them having to leave the building at all.

A sport that belongs to Esbjerg

Even though the ice arena alongside the Blue Water Dock is new, the city's ice hockey tradition goes back a long way. Esbjerg's first ice hockey club was founded in 1964.

"Ice hockey has always played an important role in Esbjerg, and has

become part of the city's identity in many ways. Esbjerg has been involved ever since ice hockey first came to Denmark, and many of the top players – including Kjeld Bjerrum, a member of the Danish Ice Hockey Union's Hall of Fame – came from here. You could almost say that ice hockey is a sport that belongs to Esbjerg. Of course, things have gone up and down a bit over the years, that's how it goes with sport, but Esbjerg has been one of the most consistently-successful clubs in Denmark," relates Peder, with a look towards the championship signs above the stands in the hall.

A step towards Germany

Just as the ice hockey team are an important part of Esbjerg, Esbjerg is also an important part of the team. Many of

Esbjerg Energy's players are local lads who started in the clubs as juniors.

"Since the club in its present form was founded in 2013, almost half of our players every year have been home-grown. We believe that our most important task is to ensure that Esbjergers want to continue playing ice hockey, so that we can continue nurturing our own young talents. The number varies from year to year of course, and we therefore have to attract other good players here to play. We benefit in that respect from the 'Esbjerg scheme' that makes it possible to combine sport at top level with taking an education in Esbjerg," explains Peder before going on to talk about foreign stars on the team:

"We are known for preferring North American players. That's because of the

style of play the coach has chosen. And even though Denmark is not the most lucrative place in the world to play ice hockey, we have built a reputation here for being able to develop players who progress to the major leagues. Many players in the first and second German leagues have often played in Esbjerg, for example. And the players know that if they can't get to play in Germany, many of them are happy to play in Esbjerg for a few years."

Epoch-making arena

Peder believes the new arena will be a major attraction, helping ensure the future of ice hockey in Esbjerg.

"We started playing outdoors before an inflatable 'bubble' roof was put over the ice. In the mid-70s, we built the arena

that was used right up until 2018. So the new arena represents a new epoch. We now have the facilities that match those the handball and football players in Esbjerg have. We can present ice hockey at the very highest level we can manage in Denmark, right here in Esbjerg," declares Peder, who has a clear vision for the club:

"Our objective is to continue being the leading club in Denmark – in terms of sport and bottom line! ■

MAD ABOUT SPORT?



FOOTBALL Superliga team Esbjerg fB has its home ground at the Blue Water Arena, with room for 17,000 spectators. The club has been in the top flight of Danish football since the 1950s, except for a few short periods.

HANDBALL There are lots of great opportunities to see top-level sport in Esbjerg. Team Esbjerg's ladies' team plays in the country's top league. Blue Water Dokken is the home ground, with capacity of around 2,500.

The local men's handball team, Ribe-Esbjerg HH (REHH) also plays in the top men's league. Half of their home games are played in Blue Water Dokken, and the other half in the Centex IT Arena in Ribe.



VESTKYSTLØBET One of many fun runs held in the area. Over 6,000 runners take part every year, including families, workmates and friends on routes varying from from a kid's run of 910 metres up to 9.2 km.



MOUNTAIN BIKING The landscape around Esbjerg is perfect for mountain biking, and the active outdoor lifestyle. Mountain bike trails have been created in Marbæk plantation, close to Esbjerg, and in many other city's in the area.



A LIFE WITH MUSIC

Music is a big part of life for the Mischorr-Boch family. Especially for the two girls, Astrid and Ella, who are in a special arts talent class and therefore play and sing at school and in their own time.

In the classic red brick house with white-painted window frames – just a short bike ride north of Esbjerg – the family of five are gathered in the lounge. A huge black piano fills one end wall, and looks very well used. But on this particular Wednesday afternoon, it's not piano music that fills the room, but the gentle snoring of Nemo, the 10-year-old family dog, lying under the dining table.

Apart from Nemo and their cat Skævben, Christina (38) and Anders Mischorr-Boch (39) live in this delightful house backing onto the woods with their children Astrid, 14, Ella, 12, and Arthur 6. Despite a packed calendar, they've managed to all be in one place for a couple of hours before Astrid has to go to play with the Esbjerg Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Obsessed with wind instruments

Astrid and Ella have been playing music for almost as long as they can remember. Their mother took them to a musical playgroup at Esbjerg Kulturskole when they were only a couple of years old. Astrid discovered a love of wind instruments at the tender age of 8 during a school concert.

"Someone was playing a slide trombone, but that was far too big for me to start on. So I had to find an alternative," she recalls, with her mother adding:

"One day, Astrid came home and said: 'I've got it! I want to play the oboe!' We didn't know what that was and had to look it up on YouTube," smiles Christina.

"She started to practice with a plastic straw, which sounds a bit weird. So we had to lock the dog out in the garden, and were getting a bit worried about damaging Arthur's hearing, even though he wasn't even born at the time."

Not long afterwards, little sister Ella took up the flute. Since then, both girls have played and sung at a number of concerts together and individually. They have both sung with the Danish National Academy of Music's choir school and girls' choir, but stopped to concentrate

on their instruments, and to have time to play football (Ella) and with the youth symphony orchestra (Astrid). During the weekends, Astrid can also be found singing in the local church choir.

Meanwhile, Arthur started at musical preschool, where he has fallen in love with the drums, oboe, saxophone and trumpet – to date.

Music at school and home

Thanks to their musical talents, enrolling the sisters in the Urbanskolen arts talent class was an obvious choice, a special class for schoolchildren in grades 7 to 9. The teachers incorporate the artistic skills of the pupils within music, art, ballet or theatre with their normal lessons, plus the standard four hours of arts subjects each week.

Astrid and Ella both attend music lessons three afternoons a week after school. Apart from solo tuition, they have theory, listening and group playing sessions, because they are enrolled on the special arts talent course. They also have to plot in time for concerts and rehearsals. However, neither of them feel as if they don't get to see enough of their friends.

"Most of our friends also attend Kulturskolen, so we are always together, for instance, when I go to orchestra" says Astrid.

Self-confidence and being together

Even though the girls clearly have music in their veins, their parents think there's something else that makes Kulturskolen so good.

"You meet all types there, and it's a great start to life for the kids, not having to be 'mainstream' to be considered OK. Music also gives them lots of self-confidence. And it's great to see them so absorbed in something at a time when everything goes so fast," believes Anders.

Danish National Academy of Music or schoolteacher?

When you ask these young musicians about their future, the eldest is the quickest to respond:



ABOUT THE ARTS TALENT CLASS

Urbanskolen in Esbjerg was the first in the country to set up a talent class in 2016, in consultation with Esbjerg Kulturskole and the Danish Arts Foundation. The arts talent classes are a municipal initiative for 7th, 8th and 9th grade pupils to give them the chance to study ballet, art, music or theatre as part of their secondary education. There are no requirements for their academic level, but a high degree of motivation is expected.

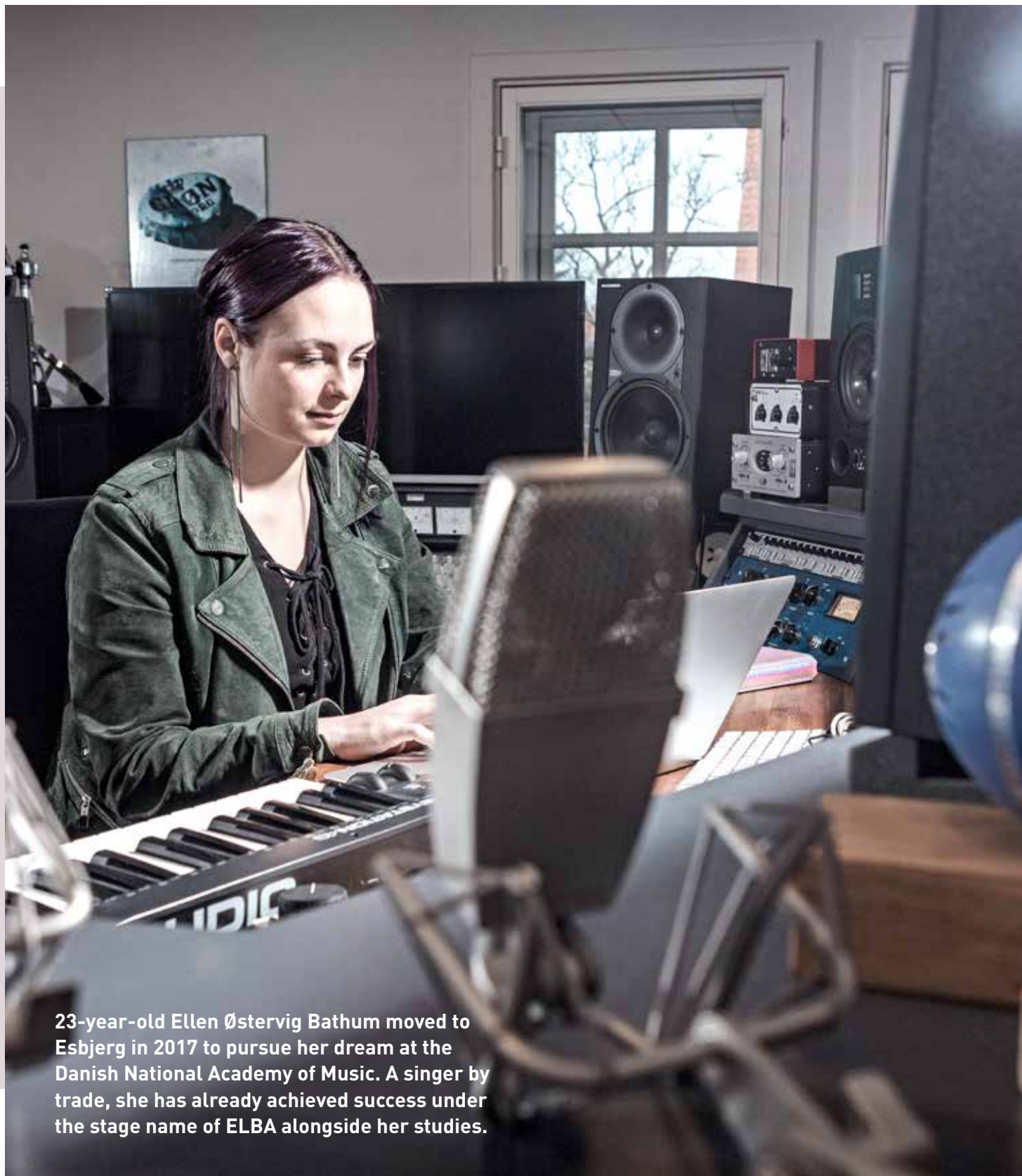
ABOUT ESBJERG KULTURSKOLE

Esbjerg Kulturskole teaches music, art, theatre and ballet to children and adolescents, and is very popular: Esbjerg has the highest number of arts school pupils per head of population.

"I want to go to Orkesterefterskolen, a sort of musical finishing school, followed by Esbjerg Gymnasium, and then I think I'd like to go to the Academy for a musical foundation course that allows you to really get into music. It's a springboard for getting into the Academy itself. And the ultimate would be if I could play the oboe in a real symphony orchestra and travel abroad and play," enthuses Astrid.

ACADEMY STUDENT

WITH A METEORIC CAREER CAREER



23-year-old Ellen Østervig Bathum moved to Esbjerg in 2017 to pursue her dream at the Danish National Academy of Music. A singer by trade, she has already achieved success under the stage name of ELBA alongside her studies.

23 -year-old Ellen Østervig Bathum's purple-dyed hair and dark green suede jacket make a colourful splash against the black pianos, dark board and classic wooden furniture in the classroom of the Danish National Academy of Music where Energy Metropolis meets her. Ellen – or ELBA to use her stage name – spends a lot of her time here.

Embracing the process

The charismatic Ellen grew up in Thisted with her parents and two younger brothers. Her father was a bank manager, her mother a nurse, and the family had no musical traditions. Nevertheless, music was what quickly began to interest Ellen.

"No one in my family sings or plays an instrument, but I've always loved to sing. When I was six and began to take music lessons at school, I started piano lessons. When I was twelve, I also started singing lessons." She took the first steps towards a musical career when only in 8th grade:

"I was offered the chance of practical experience at the Academy in Copenhagen. I realised there that I could make music into a professional career."

Music in focus

After upper secondary school in Thisted, Ellen started on MGK (a musical foundation course) in Holstebro – a course that is a precursor to the Danish National Academy of Music.

"I was at Holstebro for two years, before moving to Copenhagen to explore the music scene over there. The following year I applied to the Academy in Copenhagen, Aarhus and Esbjerg. And I ended up here, moving to Esbjerg in 2017 without knowing a soul.

I'd never even been here before. But I was not afraid to move. I've always believed that music is my focus. I had to pursue it, no matter what and I'm glad I did. I love the scenery around here in particular. I often take the ferry to Fanø

just to go for a walk there, for instance. It's my escape, where I don't have to think about anything at all other than my songs."

Space and the means to realise her dreams

Even though coming to Esbjerg was a coincidence, Ellen is delighted to be amongst the 260 students at the Danish National Academy of Music, with its premises in Odense and Esbjerg, employing around 100 tutors.

"Studying in Esbjerg is simply fantastic, because they really have time and space for you here. We receive highly competent tuition and are given all the means and time we need to realise our own dreams as practising musicians, or to bring other musical projects to fruition," says Ellen.

"We get around twelve hours of tuition a week, meaning quite a liberal regime. But I still spend a lot of my time on music. When I get up in the mornings, I practice for about two hours. Then I may write for an hour or so, before going to lessons. That's the way most weekdays are spent."

Not all fun and games

Ellen spends a lot of her weekends either writing songs or playing concerts. She released her first studio single in November 2018. But even though Ellen's childhood dream is well on the way to fulfilment, her life is not all fun and games. Which brings us to her best advice for other young hopefuls:

"If it's something you really want, go for it. You can always take a qualification in something else later if it becomes necessary. But you have to remember that there is a big difference in being interested in music, and having such a burning passion that you want to make it into your career. When it becomes work, it's not always enjoyable every day. You have to always bear that in mind," she concludes. ■

"I work twice as many hours a week, but then this is a thousand times more enjoyable."

SUSTAINABILITY ON THE MENU

Inspired by 13 years spent in London, Ea Gram-Rankin has created Rankin Park, an urban oasis furnished exclusively with second-hand furniture and with organic food and minimum waste on the menu.

When I come in through the door and see the dark wooden furniture, towering cacti and raw, brick walls, I feel as if I'm in a coffee bar in London or Berlin. The happy 'Hello, make yourself at home' from the blonde-haired woman behind the bar with its mint green tiles brings me back to Denmark. In fact, Skolegade 43 in Esbjerg, where Rankin Park opened its doors in 2017.

Today's menu is written on a blackboard by the bar, which also features colourful Moroccan bowls in a glass display case containing four different salads, a tart and a small selection of cakes. To the left of the bar is a sofa group with unmatched, green velour sofas. Behind that is an old wall clock made of teak.

"A guest gave us that. He found it in his loft," says 35-year-old Ea, the blonde behind the bar. She's the brains behind and owner of Rankin Park.

The story behind each item of furniture continues as she shows me around: The tables are from the city's old badminton hall. The partition walls were built using re-cycled bricks and windows by a local bricklayer. The crystal chandelier in the entrance was found in a barn. The milk jugs are from a local ceramics artist. There is nothing in the room that has been randomly selected.

"It was important to me to find all the things I wanted and suppliers as local as possible," explains Ea.

To and from London

Ea was born in Esbjerg, but moved to London after her upper secondary education, where she met her South African husband. Ea left her job as Sales Manager in the technology industry and they moved to Esbjerg in 2014.

"After our son arrived in 2013, everything seemed to be about visiting family and travelling between London, Esbjerg and Cape Town – which we found impossible to fit in with our working lives. So we agreed to move. We thought about the values we wanted to give our children, and chose Esbjerg

rather than South Africa." Ea was still on maternity leave when the family moved.

From dream to reality

After maternity leave, Ea found a job in Esbjerg, but never felt fully satisfied with it. A couple of years later, she was on maternity leave again with her daughter Mila, and began to think about opening her own café, an idea that had been quietly growing over the last 10 years.

"We love going out to eat, and have always said that 'my café will be like this or that'. During a holiday in Greece in 2016, we took a notebook along to write down all the pros and cons of realising my café dream once and for all. But the more we talked about it, the stronger our concept became, and we decided to contact an estate agent when we got home.

I knew immediately when I saw Skolegade 43 that this was it. Although it looked a whole lot different than it does now.

The walls were painted purple, the floor was blue and there was no kitchen or toilets, just one big room. So we started right from scratch with fire insulation and an extraction system etc." says Ea as she shows me around the courtyard at the back, where there is a sandpit for kids in addition to the wooden tables and chairs.

Children and prams are welcome in Rankin Park, which also has a kiddies' corner with painting books and DVDs. In fact, it was her son Mason who provided the inspiration for the menu in many ways.

"Mason suffers badly from allergies, making it hard for us to eat out sometimes. That's why it was important



for me to be able to serve tasty food for allergy-sufferers or who needed to stick to a certain diet. We focus heavily on nutrition and quality, rather than quantity, buying as many organic ingredients as possible from local suppliers, and focusing on minimising food waste.

More than a salad bar

Even though vegetables take centre place on the menu, Rankin Park is much more than a salad bar: Ea and the staff also serve brunch, coffee, wine and cocktails, all under the banner of 'quality rather than quantity'

"Our organic coffee is bought from someone who roasts the beans right

here in Esbjerg, and our small selection of wines is from South African vineyards we have personally visited. If you don't want a bottle, most can be ordered by the glass, and you are welcome to taste before ordering." Ea believes that her primary mission is to give her customers the best possible service, even though the atmosphere is right down to earth.

"They have to feel at least as comfortable here as they do at home, and eat better. It's also important to me to create an atmosphere that allows interaction and communication between our guests. That's not something we really encourage in Denmark and something I miss about London," she explains. ■

"Our organic coffee is bought from someone who roasts the beans right here in Esbjerg, and our small selection of wines is from South African vineyards we have personally visited.



THE ART HISTORIAN'S DREAM JOB

Every year, Esbjerg Municipality bids 5,000 new residents welcome from Denmark and the rest of the world. Art historian and museum curator Josephine Nielsen-Bergqvist moved to Ribe from Copenhagen in 2015, making her one of them.

It was an exhibition at Den Hirschsprungske Samling in Copenhagen in 2009 that opened Josephine's eyes to Ribe. The exhibition consisted of works on loan from the art museum in Denmark's oldest town.

"It was a collection I wanted to work with. And because there was nothing tying me to Copenhagen, I decided to send in a speculative application to the museum," says 31-year-old Josephine, who grew up in Ringsted and graduated from Copenhagens University in 2014.

Even though she knew nothing of either the town or the area, Josephine did not hesitate to leave her apartment in Amager, Copenhagen, to move to Ribe when the museum offered her a job in the spring of 2015.

Plenty of time for TV series?

"I expected that I would have plenty of time to watch TV series and write blogs in my spare time when I moved to west Jutland. But it didn't take long before I was joining clubs and associations in

Ribe. For example, I've always played the saxophone, and started off by contacting the town's big band, and now find myself occupied with hobbies and events at least three weekday evenings a week.

Apart from playing in Big Band Ribe, I started archery at the Viking Centre, and sit on the Resident's Association's governing committee. At the weekends, I often attend one of the performing arts events in the town." The diversity of what's on offer here has surprised this ex-Copenhagener:

In many ways, Ribe is a strange place, because even though it is small and is in west Jutland, it's a lot more than a provincial town. It's full of passionate individuals who make things happen. There is a lot more here to get involved with if you're interested," she concludes. ■



A blue-tinted background image showing three people in a professional setting. A man on the left is smiling, a woman in the center is looking down, and a woman on the right is smiling and looking towards the center. They are all dressed in business attire.

ESBJERG MEANS BUSINESS

KNOWLEDGE – LIFE – CAREER

Business Esbjerg provides the best possible conditions for running a business, living, studying, holidaying and holding meetings in the municipalities of Esbjerg and Fanø. Along with local businesses, we seek to inspire new development and growth to the benefit of business, industry and the public. We aim to create value every single day. And not just for business and industry, but also for tourists, workers and students.

If you are curious about the opportunities we can offer you, contact us, we are here to help.

www.businessesbjerg.com