



PRESS RELEASE

BENE is an official partner of the EXPO 2020 Austria Pavilion in Dubai

Vienna / Waidhofen an der Ybbs, 19 August 2021 – Just two months to go until EXPO 2020 starts: the first World Expo to be hosted by an Arab country. It will run from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 in Dubai under the theme “Connecting Minds, Creating the Future”. Austria will be one of the 190 countries represented there and has chosen as its slogan “Austria makes sense”; the themes of sustainability and innovative strength will take centre stage. querkraft architects is the firm responsible for the design of the Austria Pavilion, which blends ancient Arabic wind towers with contemporary climate control technology, laying down a marker against climate-damaging profligacy. The iLab introduces future-oriented Austrian solutions, one central example being: PIXEL by Bene – the flexible module for inspiration.

Connecting Minds, Creating the Future

Under the theme of “Connecting Minds, Creating the Future”, EXPO 2020 will be held from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 in Dubai, and will focus on key questions surrounding the vision, ideas and technologies of the future in an increasingly interconnected world. Not only is EXPO 2020 – which has kept its original name, despite being postponed to 2021 – the first World Exposition ever held in an Arab country. With 190 participating countries and millions of visitors from all over the world, it will be the largest event that has so far ever taken place in the region. There are three architectural and thematic districts: “Opportunity”, “Mobility” and “Sustainability”. Austria has opted for the theme of “Opportunity”.

Austria makes sense – the Austria Pavilion

The EXPO site covers 440 hectares and is situated in southwest Dubai, centred around the Al Wasl Dome and surrounded by over 100 unique national pavilions, one of which is the Austria Pavilion. The Austria Pavilion emphasises the creative use of digitalisation, presenting Austrian innovations in the form of an exhibition in the interior of the pavilion, curated by *Ars Electronica Solutions* and *büro wien*. The graphic design has been developed by the design studio *Bleed*.

“Under its slogan ‘Austria makes sense’, the Austria Pavilion uses smart, sustainable architecture and innovative projects and products to present Austria’s innovative strength and commercial competence. At the same time, the pavilion is a place of reflection, where visitors can gain awareness of themselves and their environment,” says EXPO Commissioner General Beatrix Karl.

Architectural landmark by querkraft architects

The Austria Pavilion consists of 38 intersecting cones, enabling intelligent climate engineering without the use of conventional air conditioning technology. The employment of local construction materials and the eventual after-use of the pavilion demonstrate a sustainable attitude to our throwaway society. The haptic structure of the clay plaster in the interior conveys natural comfort. The truncated cones are cut to various heights, each with a light opening of a different size. This creates an ambience of light and shadow that invites the visitor to linger and to take time out from the hustle and bustle of the EXPO.

INSPIRING OFFICES. SINCE 1790.

BENE GMBH, SCHWARZWIESENSTRASSE 3, A-3340 WAIDHOFEN / YBBS
TELEPHONE +43-7442-500-0, FAX +43-7442-500-3380
EMAIL PRESS@BENE.COM, WWW.BENE.COM



"The Austria Pavilion shows what is possible when traditional and modern construction techniques are combined: a pleasant indoor environment, free from pollutants, but with superbly atmospheric lighting, and spectacular and multifaceted spatial sequences," explains Project Manager Clemens Russ.

"Constructed from just eight different types of prefabricated elements, at the end of the 182-day EXPO the pavilion will be taken apart and the sections will be reassembled elsewhere in the region. Each individual part can be used for a separate project with different requirements. The EXPO 2020 Austria Pavilion will continue to exist in another place and with another purpose," clarifies Gerd Erhartt, CEO of querkraft architects.

Innovative exhibition architecture with PIXEL by Bene

Not only is the Austria Pavilion, in terms of its architecture and the materials used, a showpiece of Austrian innovative strength, its interior gives space to every aspect of Austrian research, development and creativity. The exhibition takes visitors on a journey through Austria's innovative potential – engaging all their senses with support from Austrian high-tech solutions. The iLab occupies its own dedicated area, where future-oriented products, solutions and services are presented, all of them "made in Austria". The iLab is a place of inspiration, information and interaction, and is intended to be used for workshops, presentations and other event formats.

The 53 innovations chosen to reflect the Austrian inventive genius are illustrated in the Innovation Towers, both digitally in videos and physically by means of exhibits. These show how the ingenuity of business enterprises, creative entrepreneurs and scientists all contribute to shaping the future in positive, sustainable ways, in line with the EXPO theme "Connecting Minds – Creating the Future". At the same time, they also demonstrate the versatility of the Austrian corporate landscape: the range covers traditional businesses, start-ups and SMEs, all the way through to research institutions.

The distinctive towers are made using PIXEL by Bene. Each Innovation Tower consists of numerous individual PIXELs: when assembled the towers are 3.6 metres high. Wherever inspiring surroundings are called for, PIXEL by Bene is the answer. The sustainable wooden box is the versatile building block that facilitates a new type of space design. PIXEL's natural, untreated surfaces are eye-catching, without diverting peoples' attention from what's important. Flexibility, openness and inspiration take centre stage – that's how PIXEL makes space for great ideas.

"As the official partner of the EXPO 2020 Austria Pavilion we are happy to have the opportunity to present one of our innovative solutions: PIXEL by Bene. The EXPO is an important source of inspiration for new business opportunities. Bene has been operating in Dubai for over 20 years. The Arab market is one of our core markets, in which the high quality of our products, the standard of our designs and our innovative strength are the keys to our success. At the EXPO we have a further opportunity to highlight key future-oriented themes such as sustainability and GreenTech," says Michael Fried, Executive Board Member for Sales, Marketing and Innovation at Bene.

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About Bene

The international office expert is a specialist in the design and furnishing of office and working environments. Bene defines the office as a living space, and its concepts, products and services turn this philosophy into a reality. The Bene Group is a globally active company with its head office and production facilities in Waidhofen an der Ybbs, Austria. Development, design, and production, along with consulting and sales, are thereby united under one Austrian roof. As a significant market player in Europe, Bene stands for innovative concepts, inspiring offices, and high-quality design, and develops and produces customised solutions for all company sizes – from one-person companies to SMEs and global corporations. www.bene.com

Austria at the World Exposition

The Austria Pavilion at EXPO 2020 in Dubai – which has kept its original name, despite being postponed to 2021 – emphasises the creative use of digitalisation, presenting Austrian innovations in the exhibition in the interior of the pavilion, curated by Ars Electronica Solutions and büro wien. The Austrian contribution has been financed with funds from the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs and the Austrian Chamber of Commerce. www.expoaustria.at

Contact for Bene

Belinda Ableitinger
BENE GmbH, Neutorgasse 4-8, 1010 Vienna
Mobile: +43-676-8151-1252
E-mail: belinda.ableitinger@bene.com
<http://bene.com>