

THE EXPLORER SERIES

by *STARTUP
GUIDE*

01

YOUR GUIDE TO EXPLORING
THE STARTUP SCENE,
CITY HIGHLIGHTS AND
ENTREPRENEURIAL LIFE
IN COPENHAGEN

**INTERVIEWS
CITY HIGHLIGHTS
COWORKING
WEEKEND ADVENTURES
LOCAL PICKS
CAFES, BARS
AND RESTAURANTS
IMPACT PROJECTS
AND MORE...**



COPEN HAGEN

COPENHAGEN

The Explorer Series: Copenhagen

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[STARTUPS] P. 25-27, [INVESTORS] P. 34-35, [SPACES] P. 36-37,
[IMPACT SOLUTIONS] P. 62-65, [COFFEE SHOPS] P. 44-45, [RESTAURANTS] P. 54-55

PHOTOGRAPHY

Simon Skipper:
[PORTRAITS] Anne Marie Kindberg p. 18-23, Erdem Ovacik p. 28-33,
Kika Brockstedt p. 46-49, Simon Sylvest p. 70-75
[LOCALS TO KNOW] Mia Grosen p. 77
[SPACES] Talent Garden Rainmaking p. 37

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[PORTRAITS] Kasper Hulthin p. 38-43, Nima Sophia Tisdall p. 56-61
[WHERE TO EAT] Bottega Barlie, Dandelion Burger, Gaza Grill,
Granola, Lille Petra, Meyersi Tårnet p. 36-37
[COFFEE BREAK] Absalon, DemocraticCafe, NavnløsCoffee,
OriginalCoffee p. 44-45
[INVESTOR] Nordic Makers p. 35

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Lunar p. 20, Corti.ai p. 25, EcoTree p. 25, Female Invest p. 26,
Matter p. 26, Pleo p. 26, Podimo p. 27, Klickbait ApS [Reel] p. 27,
Seaborg p. 27, Too Good To Go p. 27, Jacob Niblett [2150] p. 34,
Antler p. 34, ByFounders p. 35, Lars Just [Dreamcraft] p. 35,
Heartcore Capital p. 35, PreSeedVentures p. 35,
Frederiksholms Kanal [BloxHub] p. 36,
Rasmus Slotø [Disie] p. 36, GreenCubator p. 37,
Zofia Ziakova & Honey Studio [Matrikel 1] p. 37,
Republikken p. 37, Soho APS [Soho Nomads & Noho] p. 37,
Alice bakery p. 44, Bevar's p. 45, The Coffee Collective p. 45,
Omada Wine Bar p. 54, Malthe Milthers [Grød] p. 55, Frederik
Heller [The Union Kitchen] p. 55, Press/CopenHill / Ehrhorn
Hummerston [CopenHill Urban Mountain] p. 64, Anette
Nørgaard p. 76, ©Davy Denke [Søren Stig] p. 76, Esben Gadsbøl
p. 77, Mia Grosen p. 77, Sam Eshrati [Sam Eshrati] p. 77, Brage
Borup [Stine Colding Alstrup] p. 77, Matrikel1 / Bobbie &
Beastie [Stine Frausing Kjærsgaard and Pia Ella Elmegård]
p. 77, Sebastian Stigsby [Zenia W. Francker] p. 77

Nick Karvounis COVER, Rolands Varsberg p. 4, Febiyan p. 6,
Svend Nielsen p. 8, Anastacia p. 11, Rafa Bonilla p. 11, Sergey
Omelchenko p. 13, Aurora Ferreira p. 16, Reiseuhu p. 24, Daniel
Hansen p. 64, Lindsay Martin p. 64, Francesco Gallarotti p. 65,
Marten Bjork p. 65 and Karlina Kluce p. 79 from unsplash

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Discover

COPENHAGEN

Welcome to Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, nestled in the heart of Scandinavia. With a history dating back to the Viking Age, the capital of Denmark boasts a compelling heritage that comes across in its colorful architecture and historical landmarks.

Notable figures like the famous fairytale writer Hans Christian Andersen and philosopher Søren Kierkegaard were born here, and both were inspired by the two islands that form the city, Zealand and Amager. With stunning waterfronts and picturesque views, Copenhagen focuses strongly on sustainability and green initiatives, whether that's focusing on bike lanes, exploring the local fauna and flora for sustainable dishes, or fostering innovative solutions like Too Good To Go, the anti-food-waste app. In fact, Copenhagen has become a hotbed of entrepreneurial activity in recent years, also as the home of Trustpilot, the customer review platform. By fostering a dynamic and supportive startup ecosystem, especially for small and medium businesses (which form 99% of companies in Denmark), Copenhagen has something extraordinary to offer for every entrepreneur.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

It's essential to understand the visa and work permit requirements to ensure a smooth and legal stay in Denmark. If you are a citizen of an EU/EEA country or Switzerland, you have the right to live and work in Denmark without a visa or work permit. For short visits and tourism purposes, citizens of many countries can enter Denmark visa-free for up to 90 days within a 180-day period. However, if you plan to stay longer or work in Copenhagen, you must apply for the appropriate visa and/or work permit. If you are a non-EU citizen and want to live and work in Denmark, you must work for a Danish company. It is illegal to work in Denmark without a work permit, even remotely.

Most work permits are employer-sponsored, meaning you'll need to secure a job offer from a Danish company before applying for the permit. Your potential employer will usually apply for the permit on your behalf. Unfortunately, Denmark does not have a digital nomad visa, only a Startup Visa that allows entrepreneurs to invest in the country if their business idea is approved.

INSURANCE AND TAXES

Denmark has a universal healthcare system, and to access medical services, you need to register with the Danish health authorities and obtain a health insurance card (*sundhedskort*). The health insurance card allows you to receive medical treatment and services from general practitioners, hospitals and specialists at little or no cost.

If you're a freelancer or self-employed individual working in Copenhagen for three consecutive months, or for 180 days within any twelve-month period, you will also have tax obligations. To get a tax number, you need to register with the Danish tax authorities (*Skattestyrelsen*). The CPR number is a unique identifier used for various administrative purposes, including taxation.

To obtain a CPR number and a tax number, visit the local International Citizen Service (ICS) center in Copenhagen or the area where you will be residing. You can also book your appointment online with the Copenhagen ICS. Along with completing the necessary paperwork, you'll need to provide the required documents, which may include your passport, work contract and proof of residence.

visit: ihcph.kk.dk

OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

Several banks in Denmark offer English-speaking services to cater to the international community. A few options include Lunar (lunar.app), a digital bank that provides services in English and is specifically designed for expats and young professionals (Lunar's English-speaking customer support makes it a popular choice for those who prefer a seamless banking experience);

and Nordea (nordea.com), one of the largest banks in Denmark, which offers comprehensive banking services in English. With branches across the country, Nordea is convenient for expats to access their services in person if needed.

To open a bank account in Denmark, you'll typically need a CPR number or a NemID (a digital signature used for identification purposes). Some banks may also ask for proof of residence, such as a rental agreement or utility bill.

visit: lunar.app

GETTING AROUND

Getting around in Copenhagen is a breeze thanks to its efficient local transport networks and cycling culture. Expect an extensive public transportation system, including buses, trains and the efficient S-train network, which connects the city center to the suburbs and neighboring towns. The Metro system, with its sleek and modern design, offers a quick and convenient way to navigate the city's core areas.



Cycling is the choice of most Danes.

For environmentally conscious and health-conscious individuals, cycling is the choice of most Danes. Copenhagen is renowned for its bike-friendly infrastructure, with dedicated bike lanes, traffic signals and bike parking facilities, making it safe and enjoyable to explore the city on two wheels. Embracing the cycling culture is not only a practical way to get around but also allows you to experience Copenhagen's beauty up close.

FINDING AN APARTMENT

Finding an apartment in Copenhagen can be difficult, but there are various options available to make the process easier. Try joining housing-related groups on Facebook such as "Leje i København - Rooms for Rent in Copenhagen" (facebook.com/groups/roomsrentcopenhagen). Popular rental portals where landlords and agents list properties available for rent in Copenhagen include Bolig Portal (boligportal.dk), Leje Bolig (en.lejebolig.dk) and Find Bolig (findboliger.dk). However, keep in mind that the competition can be fierce, and it might take time to find the right place.

Engaging a real estate agent can be beneficial, especially for those who prefer professional assistance and personalized service. This may involve additional fees or commissions, but real estate agents have access to a broader network of rental properties and will guide you through the rental process, negotiate on your behalf and handle the paperwork, making the experience less stressful.

LANGUAGE ESSENTIALS

Danish is the primary language spoken in Copenhagen and is widely used in all aspects of daily life, including business, education and social interactions. Most Danes are fluent in English and are happy to communicate in it, especially in

the city center and among younger generations, but learning some Danish greatly enhances your experience and speeds up your integration into the local community. Some reputable language schools in Copenhagen that offer Danish courses for foreigners include Studieskolen (studieskolen.dk) and Danksbureauet (danskbureauet.dk). Additionally, if you are living in Denmark and have a CPR (Danish ID number), you can apply for the local Danish language-education program (international.kk.dk). Embracing the language will not only enhance your daily interactions but also allow you to delve deeper into Danish culture and make your stay in Copenhagen even more rewarding.

Hi, i would like a coffee

Hej, jeg vil gerne have kaffe

Cheers!

Skål!



WHERE TO WORK

Coworking spaces and cafes have become increasingly popular in the city, catering to freelancers, digital nomads and startups. Spaces like SOHO (soho.dk) and the Camp (thecamp.io) provide modern facilities, a collaborative atmosphere and networking opportunities. Many coworking spaces offer flexible membership plans, allowing individuals to choose from daily, weekly or monthly options to suit their needs.

For a more laid-back and casual work setting, internet cafes are abundant in Copenhagen. Cafes such as Democratic Coffee (**Instagram: @democraticcoffeebar**), Paludan Bog & Cafe (**Instagram: @paludanbogcafe**) and the Living Room (thelivingroom.dk) all offer free Wi-Fi and a cozy ambiance, making them ideal



places to work, socialize and enjoy a cup of coffee. With a thriving entrepreneurial scene and a penchant for innovative workspaces, Copenhagen ensures that both locals and visitors can find their ideal work environment.

OFFICE SPACES TO CHECK OUT

Before choosing an office space, consider factors like location, amenities, community and pricing to ensure it aligns with your specific needs and work style. Many places offer trial days or tours, allowing you to experience the atmosphere firsthand before making a decision. Located in the heart of the city, Rainmaking Loft (rainmaking.io) offers a vibrant coworking space for startups and entrepreneurs, while Symbion (symbion.dk) is one of the largest innovation hubs in Scandinavia. Founded by entrepreneurs, Matrikel1, part of the Mesh Community, (meshcommunity.com), is a community-driven coworking space that fosters collaboration among its members, including startups and creative professionals. If you're a fan of the Vesterbro district, Republikken (republikken.net) offers a mix of private offices, coworking spaces and meeting rooms.

✴ See more on [page 36](#)

STARTING A COMPANY

Choose the legal structure of your company, such as a sole proprietorship, partnership, or limited liability company (ApS). The most common choice for startups is the ApS due to its limited liability and flexibility. To register your company, visit the Danish Business Authority (danishbusinessauthority.dk), fill out the necessary forms, provide the required documentation and pay the registration fee.

After registering your company, you'll receive a CVR number (Central Business Register number), which is your company's tax identification

number. You'll need this to conduct business and fulfill your tax obligations. Look for a reputable accountant or accounting firm experienced in handling business taxes and financial matters, as they can assist you with tax compliance, bookkeeping, payroll and financial reporting.

Familiarize yourself with local regulations and compliance requirements related to your industry. Certain industries may have specific licensing or permitting requirements. Also consider obtaining business insurance to protect your company from potential risks and liabilities.

WHERE TO GET BUSINESS SUPPORT

With an ecosystem that gets stronger by the day, there are plenty of options to find business support in the city. Copenhagen Business Hub (ehhs.dk) provides free guidance and support for entrepreneurs and businesses looking to start or expand in Copenhagen, and Iværksætterdanmark (ivdk.dk) offers workshops, courses and mentoring for startups and entrepreneurs, both providing valuable insights and resources to help businesses grow and succeed.

Other reliable resources include the Danish Chamber of Commerce (danskerhverv.dk), offering networking events, business development programs and advisory services to support companies in various sectors; and Invest in Denmark (investindk.com), a government agency providing free assistance to foreign companies looking to establish or expand their business in Denmark. ●

COPENHAGEN STARTER PACK

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is a city of canals, beautiful architecture and a culture rooted in Danish traditions.

It is home to significant landmarks, including the iconic Little Mermaid statue, inspired by the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale.

With a commitment to sustainability, Copenhagen prioritizes green spaces and extensive bicycle infrastructure. This is a city that seamlessly combines old-world charm with progressive values.



Add the **Assistens Cemetery** to your must-visit list. **Located in the Nørrebro district**, this park-like cemetery is the final resting place of fairytale writer **Hans Christian Andersen** and the philosopher **Søren Kierkegaard**.

BOOKS

Noma: Time and Place in Nordic Cuisine (2010), by **René Redzepi**, the renowned chef and co-owner of the world-famous Noma restaurant. A cookbook to read and get inspired by the remarkable level of craftsmanship level of the Danish chef.

Alphabet (1981), by **Inger Christensen (1935–2009)**, considered by many Danes to be the country's most prominent poet. This is a surprising poetry book about nuclear war and ecological devastation with its structure dictated by the Fibonacci sequence.

The Serbian Dane (1996) by **Leif Davidsen**, one of the most prominent crime and thriller writers in Denmark. A book about the complexities of Danish politics and what it means to be a first-generation Dane.

LOCAL LEGENDS

Bjarke Ingels: a prominent Danish architect known for his visionary designs with Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), an architecture firm involved in Copenhagen's futuristic waste-to-energy plant Amager Bakke (CopenHill).

René Redzepi: a significant part of Copenhagen's culinary reputation comes from his restaurant Noma and its groundbreaking approach to Nordic cuisine.



Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855): a Danish philosopher, poet and social critic whose writings explored the complexities of human existence.

MUST TRY

Smørrebrød: an open-faced sandwich consisting of a slice of rye bread (*rugbrød*) topped with various combinations of meat, fish, cheese and vegetables.

Æbleskiver: small, fluffy pancake balls often served with powdered sugar and jam.

Koldskål: a cold buttermilk-based soup with vanilla and lemon.

Frikadeller: Danish meatballs from ground pork, onions, eggs, flour and milk.



Smørrebrød, Denmark's most popular sandwich

PACK THIS

Reusable water bottle: With a focus on sustainability, skip on the single-use bottles and hydrate using the high-quality tap water available throughout the city.

MUST DO

Cycling is an integral part of Copenhagen: **up to 62% of the population use a bicycle** for their daily commute to work or school, and embracing its biking culture is a fun way to integrate. Rent your own for one day or extended periods using the Donkey Republic app.

HOURS TO KNOW

Copenhagen generally has convenient operating hours to accommodate residents and visitors, with most shops staying open until **6 PM on weekdays and 4 PM on the weekend**. Bear in mind that some shops, including supermarkets, will be closed on Sundays, and **standard office hours are 9 AM to 4 PM**.

APPS TO DOWNLOAD

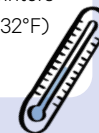
Dot: a public transportation app with real-time information about buses, trains and metro schedules.

Copenhagen Food: a comprehensive guide to the city's dining scene.

Too Good To Go: find surplus food at discounted prices, avoiding food waste.

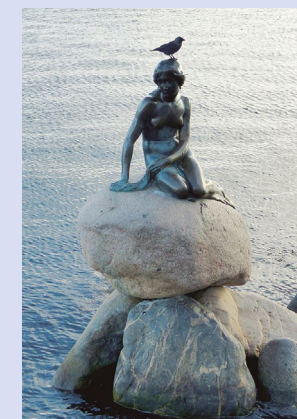
Be prepared for Denmark's climate!

Mild summers ranging from 15°C (59°F) to 22°C (71.6°F) and cold winters ranging from 0°C (32°F) to 4°C (39.2°F).



FUN FACT

Copenhagen is home to one of the **most famous statues in the world: The Little Mermaid**, a bronze statue by **Edvard Eriksen**. Unveiled in 1913, it depicts a mermaid becoming human, inspired by the homonymous fairytale by Danish author **Hans Christian Andersen**, written in 1837. It is said, however, that the statue on show is a replica, and the original is kept safe by the sculptor's heirs.



The Little Mermaid, by Edvard Eriksen

DIGITAL TALENT LANDSCAPE IN DENMARK

Visit the link for more information:



[digitalhubdenmark.dk/
tech-talent](https://digitalhubdenmark.dk/tech-talent)

Support to setup your business
in Copenhagen:



[copcap.com/
business-services](https://copcap.com/business-services)

In Partnership with:

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Denmark**

COPENHAGEN
CAPACITY

Denmark's digital talent landscape is an evolving force pivotal to the technological ecosystem's success. As of 2023, the digital talent pool in Denmark comprises two distinct categories: digital specialists (such as IT developers or UX specialists), accounting for 46%, and digital integrators (such as analysts and managers), making up the remaining 54%.

GROWING NUMBERS AND PROFILES

Over the past three years, the number of digital talents in Denmark has surged by an impressive 19%. Currently, there are 205,000 digital talents integrated into Denmark's labor market, signifying a 24% increase in digital specialists and a 15% rise in digital integrators since 2020. Notably, the IT developer profile takes the lead, constituting 31% of the talent pool.

Digital specialists make up 46% of the digital talent pool in Denmark, while digital integrators make up 54%.



Data Sources: Digital Hub Denmark



GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Despite remarkable growth, gender diversity remains a challenge. Women represent only 30% of the digital talent workforce. The gender gap is especially pronounced in specialist profiles, where only 23% are women, compared to 36% in integrator profiles. On the other hand, the digital designer profile boasts a healthier gender balance, with 53% being women.

30% of digital talent
in Denmark are women.



FOREIGN INFLUX AND TALENT MIGRATION

Foreign talents also contribute significantly to Denmark's digital landscape, constituting 14% of the talent pool in 2023, up from 12% in 2020. The digital designer, IT developer and digital engineer profiles exhibit the highest proportions of foreign talents.

LONGEVITY AND PARTNER DYNAMICS

Approximately 25% of foreign digital specialists arriving between 2010 and 2018 left Denmark within a year. However, the majority now stay for extended periods, with 54% of those arriving between 2016 and 2018 remaining for at least five years. Those with Danish partners tend to stay longer, with 85% remaining for five years or more, compared to 55% with foreign partners.

LABOR MARKET INTEGRATION

Partners with employment connections have a profound influence, with 80% of specialists with employed partners staying for at least five years. The retention rate drops significantly to 31% for those without partner employment. This pattern remains consistent even when considering foreign specialists with foreign partners, highlighting the importance of partner engagement in fostering talent longevity.

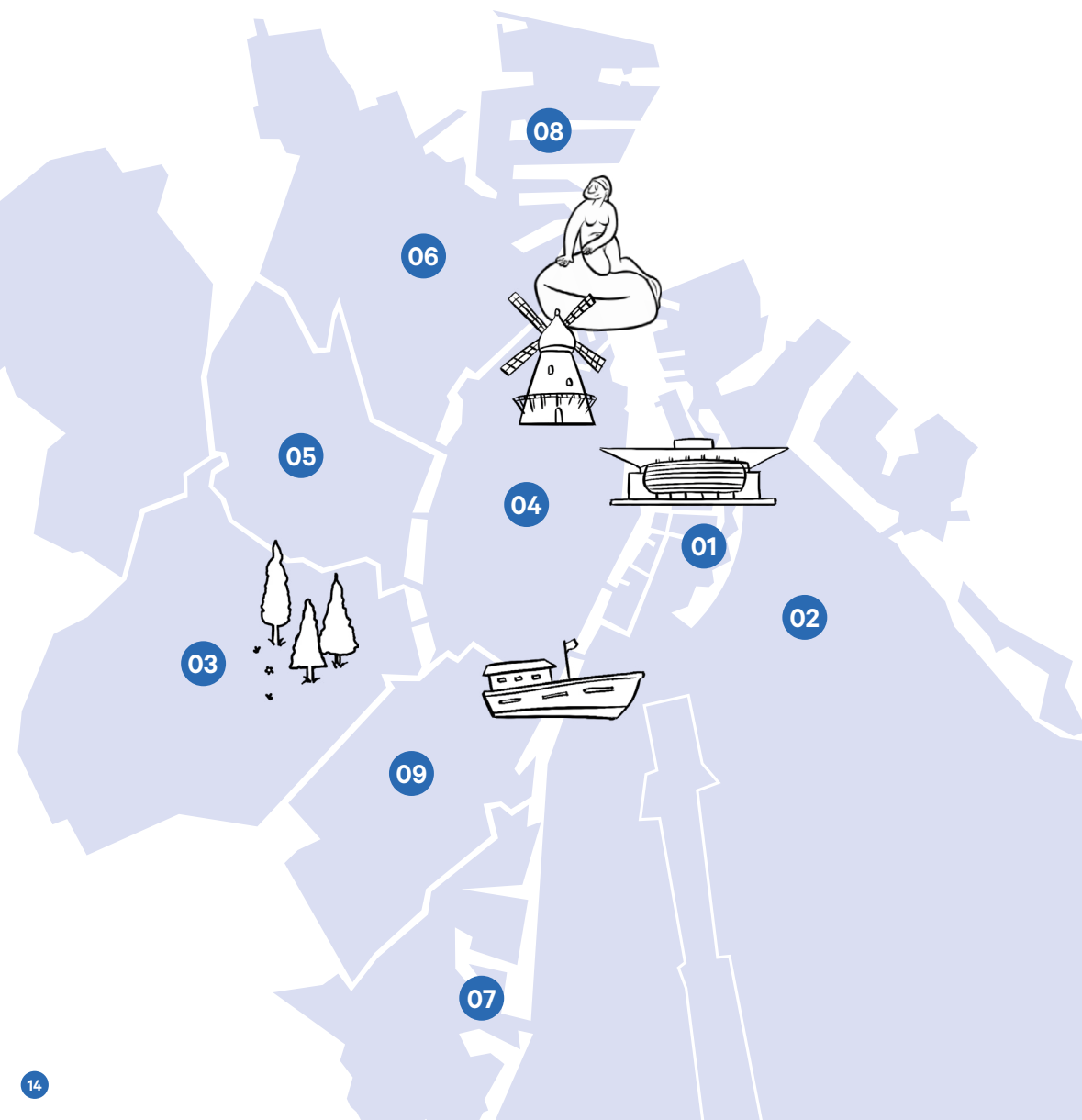
48% of IT developers
stay in Denmark for at least 5 years.



WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD



Get your directions here. Scan and explore the guide's map.



Copenhagen's diverse neighborhoods offer a captivating tapestry of history, modernity and culture.

From the charming canals of Nyhavn to the edgy streets of Nørrebro, Copenhagen showcases an array of neighborhoods that cater to every taste and interest, each complete with hidden gems, unique boutiques and cozy cafes – an abundance of delights waiting to be explored and be called home.

01 Christianshavn and 02 Amager

The island of Amager has plenty of incredible sights, including a fantastic recreational area located along the coastline of the island, the **Amager Beach Park (Amager Strandpark)**. This is also where you'll find the iconic **Church of Our Saviour**, one of Denmark's most famous churches, in the bohemian oasis of Christianshavn. Climb the four hundred steps to the top of the spire! The panorama offers sweeping views famous to both locals and tourists. Don't forget to explore **Christiania**, a former military barracks turned commune, which is known for its alternative lifestyle, including the "Pusher Street" market which hosts an open cannabis trade.

03 Frederiksberg

Frederiksberg exudes sophistication with its royal history and stunning parks. Enjoy high-end shopping at **Gammel Kongevej** and stroll through **Frederiksberg Gardens**, a sprawling and picturesque park that features lush greenery, serene lakes and scenic walking paths.

There, you'll also find **Frederiksberg Palace**, a magnificent eighteenth-century royal residence, though the interior is not open to the public. Don't forget to check out the **Copenhagen Zoo**, one of the oldest zoos in Europe, and spend a day observing fascinating wildlife.

04 Indre By (Inner City)

Indre By (or Inner City, in English) reflects the history of Denmark with its historical heritage and architecture. This is also where the famous Nyhavn is located, with picturesque canals and colorful buildings. One of the best ways to experience the beauty of Indre By is by taking a **boat tour along the canals**, allowing you to get a unique perspective of the area's iconic landmarks. It's an excellent spot for foodies who love waterfront dining (the perfect place to enjoy freshly caught seafood). For culture, immerse yourself in the maritime heritage at the nearby **National Museum**.

05 Nørrebro

Known for its bohemian flair, Nørrebro pulsates with creativity and multicultural vibes. Go for a peaceful stroll at the **Assistens Cemetery**, or go explore **Jægersborggade**, a trendy and hip street with an eclectic mix of shops, cafes and eateries. The street's artistic and bohemian vibe makes it a favorite among locals and visitors alike. Don't forget to check out some of the artistic street art that adorns the walls and soak up the creative energy of this neighborhood.

06 Østerbro

Østerbro boasts a family-friendly atmosphere with leafy streets and elegant townhouses. Visit the **Fælledparken**, one of

Copenhagen's largest and most popular parks, with playgrounds, sports facilities and picnic spots, making it a perfect destination for families. Design enthusiasts should not miss the **Design Museum Denmark** (formerly the Danish Museum of Art & Design), which houses an impressive collection of Danish and international design, spanning furniture, decorative arts, fashion and industrial design. It's a fascinating experience for both art connoisseurs and curious visitors.

07 Sydhavn and 08 Nordhavn

Sydhavn and Nordhavn are two neighboring districts (and harbors) in Copenhagen, each with its unique charm and attractions. Explore the canals and coastline with a kayak and take in the view. In Sydhavn, admire the transformation of former industrial areas of **Teglhølm** and **Slusehølm**. In Nordhavn, head to **Reffen**, Copenhagen's street food market, and savor the delicious and international cuisines served from food trucks and stalls.

09 Vesterbro

Entrepreneurs that also identify with the hipster energy will find a home in Vesterbro. Known for its hipster charm and cultural attractions, this is where you'll find the **Meatpacking District (Kødbyen)**, which is filled with converted warehouses, trendy bars and restaurants. Vesterbro also offers several oases to relax and unwind, such as the peaceful **Søndermarken park**, home to the iconic **Cisterns**, an underground art exhibition space. Alternatively, visit the charming **Engelshaveparken**, a tranquil spot perfect for picnics or leisurely walks.





**A CHANGE IN PACE:
FROM A CORPORATE TO A SCALEUP**

ANNE MARIE KINDBERG

Chief Revenue Officer
at Lunar

ABOUT LUNAR

Lunar is a Nordic digital banking fintech founded in Denmark in 2015. Through a mobile app, it offers accounts, cards, budgeting tools, savings options and even loans for personal and business accounts. In 2022, Lunar was awarded the best ecommerce app in Denmark (by the Danish Chamber of Commerce).

lunar.app

Anne Marie Kindberg's journey as Lunar's very first chief revenue officer started in February 2022, after three years as COO and CMO at Microsoft Denmark.

In previous interviews, she has stated how Lunar is one of the most exciting fintech companies in Europe, and her enthusiasm is shared by the ecosystem and users. Lunar's private and business digital banking services now count 700,000 users in Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

And as the users grow, so does the fintech's revenue: from 2021 to 2022, the net interest and fee income grew by 360% to 233.5 million krone (around \$34 million), the result of

significant investments in the company. Anne Marie has been part of leading Lunar towards a more commercial mindset with a clear path to profitability. One of the interesting new services in Lunar's portfolio is sales of access to its Nordic payment infrastructure, where Lunar's first partner is the Swedish fintech Trustly.

But how did the chief revenue officer, who originally studied political science, end up in the Danish financial sector? It all started with her interest in creating valuable customer offerings and experiences. Over time, this was combined with a love for everything digital. Her curiosity led her career across industries, from telecommunications to banking and fintech, working in key positions for TDC, Nordea, Nets and Microsoft. No matter the challenge or the industry, a focus for Anne Marie has been to create stellar user propositions. And if public reviews are anything to go by, Lunar's score of 4.5 stars on Trustpilot is a strong indicator

that the users are happy with their product. How many of us would give 4.5 stars to a bank? Great user experience and impressive product design haven't always been the focus of the banking industry, but luckily, fintechs have arrived to disrupt the old-fashioned assumption that finances are nightmare-inducing.

"I've always been so lucky to feel that my current job was the best job in the world to have," Anne Marie says. After fifteen years in corporate environments, she fell in love with the challenge presented by Lunar's founder, Ken Villum Klausen. "I thought, he's a visionary. The disruption at Lunar has quality to it, and there's a strong wish to challenge the status quo. That was my first feeling, and I thought it was awesome."



"I only feel that I've gone wrong when I neglected my own values. The moments I'd go back to change are whenever I gave in or compromised my beliefs."

She notes that many corporations would like to have a challenger mindset, but it's difficult building such a mindset, and it's extremely difficult to maintain. At first glance, many might assume that the move from an established corporation like Microsoft to an up-and-coming fintech was risky. "But for me, it was an opportunity to join an organization with an entrepreneurial spirit, where I could have influence on the company's overall strategy and execution across borders. At Lunar, I was given the opportunity to become part of one of the most innovative companies in the Nordics, developing the financial solutions of the future."

However, the transition from corporate to scaleup presented itself with lots of learnings. "Corporate life is more steady, but it's still tough," she says. "You work hard, you have challenges. But in startups and scaleups, the pace of change is faster, which brings extra pressure to the challenges and opportunities. The higher the heights, the lower the lows. But I love it. Trying out the scaleup world was one of the best decisions I've ever made." Her new position at Lunar brings her not only happiness but a lot of learning as well. "I learn every day. There are always new challenges and new goals to achieve, right? New tasks I have to figure out how to do together with the team." Navigating in a company that has, as all others, been affected by the macro trends and crises in the industry has been her biggest learning so far.

Lunar is a fully regulated and licensed bank, and it goes without saying that the financial space is highly regulated. "It takes time and effort and resources to integrate into all the necessary public infrastructure," she says.

All the more impressive, then, is that Lunar is now live with banking services across the Nordics and soon opening for businesses in Sweden. Some of the services to customers are offered with partners; e.g., a brand-new loan solutions for businesses, which is done in partnership with Froda, a Swedish fintech in the financing industry, and Visa.

According to Anne Marie, the secret ingredient to startup and scaleup success is persistence, and not only because it builds a lovely story. "It's not about talent," she says. "You can have a great team and awesome ideas, but in the end, it's persistence that makes a difference. Many ideas with a lot of potential have died due to the lack of persistence. I believe in building greatness year after year."

Some of the values Anne Marie brings to the office every day is to give energy to others, to bring clarity on where she and the team is heading, and to act with integrity. She believes that a part of Lunar's success is that every hire is enthusiastic about the possibility to disrupt. Other reasons for Lunar's success are its amazing tech teams and a true, integrated customer obsession. "No digital challenger has succeeded with half-angry customers. My tip is to reward the colleagues who show the greatest customer empathy."

"No digital challenger has succeeded with half-angry customers. My tip is to reward the colleagues who show the greatest customer empathy."

ANNE'S CITY PICKS

Favorite place in Copenhagen for deep work or creative thinking: Walking by the sea. Luckily, all Lunar offices are by the sea.

First thing you need to do when you get to Copenhagen: Get a bike. True happiness in life: biking through Copenhagen on a warm summer evening.

One museum: There are so many great museums in Copenhagen. If only one, then [Nationalmuseet](https://natmuseumet.dk). Perfect with children.

MUSEUMS

Nationalmuseet (National Museum of Denmark)

Ny Vestergade 10
1471 Copenhagen K
natmus.dk



As the customer-satisfaction ratings of Lunar grow, so do the accolades that recognize the status quo challenge presented by the digital bank. Lunar is considered the most innovative bank in Denmark, based on consumer rankings collected by Aarhus Universitet and the Danish Innovation Index (DII), focusing on the consumers' perception of creativity, market disruptions and pioneering companies. Lunar is also the fourth-most-innovative brand across industries, featured alongside long-standing innovators like Lego, Naturli and Ikea.

Growing up in Aalborg in the North West of Denmark, there was nothing evident about moving to Copenhagen for Anne Marie, and she didn't really expect to work in some of the most famous corporations in the world, let alone in an innovation-led digital bank. "I moved to Copenhagen for my master's degree and stayed due to the job opportunities. I must say I feel privileged. I can bike home from work every day. Copenhagen is vibrant, buzzing with diverse culture, and there's nature and water close to you," she says. "It's modern and, at the same time, green. It's a capital city where you can raise your kids. You can be of any age group, and you'll still find something to do here." ●

FLASH Q&A

What's your favorite book?

1984 by George Orwell.

Favorite podcasts?

Pivot by Vox Media and Det Vi Taler Om by B.T.

What is your most used app?

Slack.



LUNAR TEAM CITY PICKS

TEAM LUNCH

Tivoli Food Hall

A vibrant food hall with a wide variety of food options, perfect for catering to different tastes within the team.

Bernstorffsgade 3, 1577 Copenhagen

Copenhagen Street Food on Papirøen

An iconic location with food trucks offering international cuisines, making it an exciting and diverse lunch spot.

Trangravsvej 14, 1436 Copenhagen K

FOOD

Torvehallerne

A popular food market with numerous stalls offering fresh produce, gourmet treats and international dishes.

Frederiksborggade 21, 1362 Copenhagen

AFTER-WORK

Yellow

One of the most cozy spots in Nørrebro. Here you can get a brilliant cocktail, sharable food and good vibes.

Kapelvej 1, 2200 Copenhagen

Kødbyen

(Meatpacking District)

Known for its hip and trendy bars, this area is popular among young professionals and entrepreneurs for after-work drinks.

HANGOUT

Mikkeller Bar

For craft-beer enthusiasts, Mikkeller Bar offers an extensive selection of unique and locally brewed beers.

mikkeller.com/locations

COFFEE SHOPS FOR MEETINGS

The Coffee Collective

Known for its high-quality coffee and cozy ambiance, this place is ideal for team meetings and discussions.

✱ See more on [page 45](#)

Atelier September

A trendy and minimalist café with delicious coffee and light bites, providing a calm atmosphere for focused conversations.

Strandvejen 134, 2900 Hellerup

CAFES

Sonny

Located in the city's heart, this coffee bar offers a great vibe and everything a coffee lover could wish for.

Rådhusstræde 5, 1466 Copenhagen K

WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

Exploring Refshaleøen

A relaxing and enjoyable way to spend a weekend is to walk around this creative and innovative part of Copenhagen, which offers picturesque views of the city.

Taking a cycling tour

Copenhagen is a bike-friendly city, and a team cycling tour can be a fun way to discover hidden gems and iconic landmarks together.

OUTDOORS

Visiting Tivoli Gardens

For a bit of leisure and entertainment, the team can visit the historic Tivoli Gardens, the second-oldest amusement park in the world.

Vesterbrogade 3, 1630 Copenhagen V

10 STARTUPS TO KNOW ABOUT



Corti

Corti is a clinically proven AI guide that augments, automates and analyzes virtual care and face-to-face patient engagements. It was trained on thousands of hours of real patient calls and consultations. Using proprietary speech recognition and natural-language processing, Corti listens alongside professionals and turns this learning into actionable insights and suggestions.

corti.ai



EcoTree

A sustainable forestry model allows anyone to own a tree. You can track the tree's progress and growth value. Visit the forest your trees grow in. Eventually, the trees will be cut down for sustainable forestry and 100% profit goes back to you.

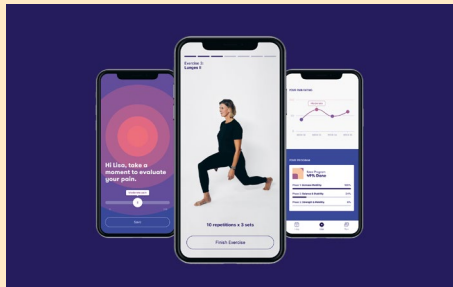
ecotree.green/da



Female Invest

On a mission to close the financial gender gap, Female Invest offers affordable financial education for women. A community-driven membership that unlocks financial learning from investments to personal budgeting and economy to mobilize women, marginalized voices and allies alike.

femaleinvest.com



Injurymap

A digital healthcare platform designed to help physiotherapists and patients create better treatment journeys and increase patient compliance. Their ultimate goal is to give everyone access to the best possible support during their rehabilitation process through technology and expert guidance.

injurymap.com



Podimo

Podimo is a house of stories that need to be heard. A personalized audio-entertainment subscription service that offers original and exclusive podcasts (ad-free) as well as an extensive collection of audiobooks and podcasts from all around the world via RSS feeds.

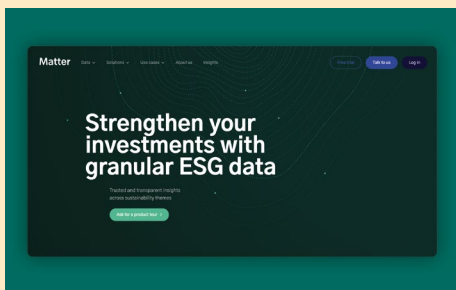
podimo.com



Reel

Through a proprietary tech platform, Reel enables companies to procure an ideal mix of electricity from new solar and wind parks. Additionally, renewable electricity is added to the grid, reducing the company's carbon footprint and allowing companies to make a real difference while buying electricity at a fixed low cost.

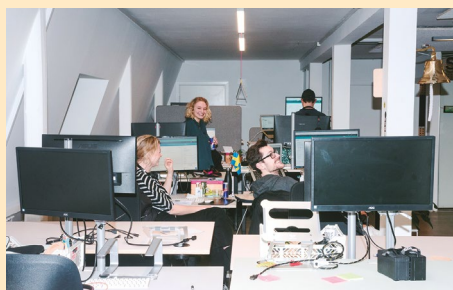
reel.energy



Matter

Matter's data and analytics solutions offer a flexible, transparent alternative to ESG ratings. By combining insights from company reports and subject matter experts, Matter provides a granular view on how companies perform on a range of sustainability themes, enabling you to invest smarter and easily translate the impact of investments to your stakeholders.

thisismatter.com



Pleo

A centralized business-spending solution for employees that keeps companies in full control of all spendings. With Pleo, employees capture receipts on the go using their phone, and the system automatically categorizes expenses based on previous behavior, eliminating the need to do manual expense reports.

pleo.io



Seaborg

Seaborg is developing a floating nuclear power plant concept that can be introduced at industrial scale. The Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) will be built using new technology that is significantly cheaper, inherently safe and much more scalable than building one power plant at a time. It is also capable of re-using spent nuclear fuel, allowing it to re-use some of the existing nuclear waste.

seaborg.com



Too Good To Go

A certified B Corp social impact company that connects users with partner stores to rescue unsold food and stop it from going to waste. App users can search for surprise bags from nearby restaurants and shops, reserve a bag, confirm purchase, and organize a pick-up time.

toogoodtogo.com



FOUNDING AN IMPACT COMPANY IN DENMARK

ERDEM OVACIK

Founder and Board Member
of Donkey Republic

ABOUT DONKEY REPUBLIC

Donkey Republic is a bike-sharing solution founded in Copenhagen in 2014. The company created a wireless lock and an innovative bike-sharing system that has helped people make more sustainable choices regarding micro-mobility.

donkey.bike

The world of venture capital and startups often gives the impression that the higher the funding round, the bigger the business.

Still, the experience of founder Erdem Ovacik shows that solutions with impact and accessibility in mind can deliver results just as impressive. The well-seasoned entrepreneur has founded two different startups. The first, WeDecide, was a platform that helped organizations engage their crowd, mostly public organizations such as municipalities, political parties and not-for-profits. Erdem is also the cofounder of Donkey Republic, along with Alexander Fredriksen, Rune Kokholm and Jens Frandsen.

Donkey Republic, founded in 2014, quickly became a case study for micro-mobility. Today, the startup counts over twenty thousand bikes in more than seventy cities worldwide. The global bike-sharing platform was the first of its kind, allowing riders to use an app to unlock and rent bikes 24/7. The idea came from Erdem's Spanish flatmate in 2012: he had set up six city bikes with code locks for friends to borrow when they visited Copenhagen. The entrepreneur saw an apparent demand for a rental bike service that could cater to tourists as well as locals. He investigated how to integrate the idea into a digital solution, started gathering his team, and created the digital platform for the bike-rental company now known as Donkey Republic.

Along with the cofounders, the first fleet had one hundred bikes. By the end of 2015, it had grown to five hundred. The success, Erdem believes, comes from a deep understanding of

Donkey Republic's users and what they need. For example, the startup offers a variety of rental options and memberships that allow users to easily keep their bikes for longer if they choose to, a handy option for frequent travelers or digital nomads. Another example is Donkey focusing on operations with virtual stations, a key feature that helps keep bikes organized while parked, and one cities appreciate. It took the company many years to earn the trust of cities, as their bike-sharing solution partners. "Today, we see ourselves as cities' partners in delivering bike sharing as public transport. This vision took a long journey to realise, and now we are in more than seventy cities with more than thirty thousand trips every day," he says. "Thanks to our strategy focused on rider needs on one hand and cities on the other, we compete very well with unicorn-like competitors such as Lime and Bolt. We're clearly the dominant service in Copenhagen."



Erdem, who comes from a background in management consulting and has a degree in public policy from Berkeley University in the US, has worked in several prestigious companies, including the global management consulting firm McKinsey & Company. "At McKinsey, it was 'big money talks,'" he says. "Most of my colleagues were twenty years my senior, but I wasn't inspired at all. Most of the time, I felt like I was debating with partners over dinner. What we were doing was not improving society, and I felt a strong need to do something positive." Without finding professional fulfillment in large corporations, Erdem's need for a stronger sense of purpose and agility brought him closer to entrepreneurship.

Erdem is originally from Turkey, but the Nordics first caught his attention when he was studying in the US. While looking at case studies of Scandinavian welfare models, he longed to challenge, disrupt and solve governance problems, from decision-making to delivery and democracy. Motivated by impact solutions, he graduated from Berkeley University and made Copenhagen his new home. He has now been based there for over fifteen years. He recalls that upon arrival to the Danish capital, he was keen to work in public policy and often made it to the final rounds of interviews, but the language barrier was a significant obstacle despite his many qualifications and he was unable to land any jobs. He also found that, while most politicians claimed they wanted civilian input, they weren't actually listening to their citizens.

The solution to making the impact he wished for was to start his own company.

The legal parts of starting a business in Denmark were easy. The challenge came while navigating the Copenhagen entrepreneurship scene. "Meeting locals and making friends was hard," he says. "Danish isn't an easy language to learn, and initially, everyone would switch to

English when I tried speaking Danish. Most of my friends ended up being expats, and they were coming and going, so it was difficult to get into Danish society." "It took Erdem almost ten years to get comfortable with Danish and a few partners he has had that got him into contact with the workings of the Danish society. "I enjoy doing acro yoga and dancing lindy hop. Social activities, more than work, are great for making new friends here and they open seemingly closed circles of Danes."

Erdem also recommends that foreigners in Copenhagen foster friendships based on passions and hobbies instead of looking for workplace connections. "Many expats try to meet people at work, but mingling with colleagues is often not the Danish way to make friends," he says. Instead of hanging out with other expats that you work with, aim to learn Danish and fully integrate by taking risks and chasing activities you love with other enthusiasts.

"Remember that your needs change over time, so you must evaluate and adjust your needs and goals every so often."

Regarding professional relationships and personal development, on the other hand, Erdem highlights how coaching and mentoring have helped him improve his leadership and communication skills, not to mention helping him get better with boundaries and creating a sustainable and inclusive company culture. "I can recommend startups to focus rather early finding the right mix of independent advisors and board members, especially the chairperson, to guide you on how you want to set the culture and grow the company. They shouldn't just be

ERDEM'S CITY PICKS

Favorite place for deep thinking or reflecting:

I love the panoramic viewpoint when crossing the bike bridge in [Amager](#), behind the Aller Media building.

Go-to spot for eating out:

[Ramen To Biiru](#) is my go-to for a spicy dinner. Sidecar for a weekend brunch.

Favorite place for relaxing after work:

The Christiania sauna, followed by dinner at [Morgensteden](#) next door.

Favorite neighborhood to explore:

Nordvest. It has exciting streets like Rentemestervej, and it's also home to the [Flere Fugle](#) bakery.

Favorite place to go dancing:

[Autopoul](#). A hip bar to visit in the summertime, with a lovely wine garden and vibrant dancefloor.

FOOD

Ramen to Biiiru

Griffenfeldsgade 28, 2200 Copenhagen
ramentobiiru.dk

NIGHTLIFE

Autopoul

Hejrevej 31,
2400 Copenhagen
[Instagram: @autopoul](https://www.instagram.com/autopoul)



your investors but also independent advisors that understand your industry and dare to challenge you. Also, remember that your needs change over time, so you must evaluate and adjust your needs and goals every so often.”

He left the CEO position at Donkey Republic in September 2022, staying in the company as a board member. Looking back at nearly ten years of the startup, he wishes he had known how to keep his vision grounded and not get too far ahead of himself on the journey. “I often get super excited about my ideas, how the world could be,” he says. “I can be a bit too excited about how the world can be in the future... when the world is not demanding that future yet. There’s a difference between people having a problem you think you can solve versus people

having a problem and them being aware of it, which turns it into a demand that you can solve. If you offer a solution to a problem that people don’t recognize they have, then you have to do a lot of legwork and convincing.”

This lesson was learned as Erdem tried to get local Copenhagen riders to use Donkey Republic’s services. An app and an application for a monthly subscription seemed too much of a mindset change to access the bikes. Instead, the startup built its business model around tourist revenue, where there was a clear need and demand from its audience. Once the traction was there, Donkey Republic adapted its services to local riders, and the numbers mentioned above speak for themselves.

“I once stopped next to the mayor of Copenhagen, also on his bike. The city has a flat hierarchy, and knowing people are not hiding or pretending gives me peace of mind.”

In the end, Donkey Republic and Copenhagen were the perfect match. A lot has changed in the city since Erdem first arrived back in 2007. “It’s great to live in a well-functioning city with all the basics you need, like excellent mobility infrastructure, housing, health care and the other things you don’t need to worry about. Culture and nature are easily accessible too. It’s become a lot more international. I’ve seen that evolve from 2007 onwards; the culture is a lot more diverse and colorful.” The evolution of the ecosystem has impressed the entrepreneur too. “I have only started businesses in Copenhagen, but I worked in London in the UK, and in New York and Washington in the US, and of course, Istanbul in

Turkey. I frequently visited Paris and Barcelona for work. In Copenhagen, what I see is great talent attraction, especially from the European Union and Latin America. You get people with amazing skills, motivated to do their best work.”

“If you have a business that doesn’t require strong Danish skills, you can attract incredible international talent”

That international spark is what Erdem sees as the highlight of the ecosystem. “If you have a business that doesn’t require strong Danish skills, you can attract incredible international talent,” he says, noting that the impressive work-life balance also supports the ecosystem’s

talent attraction. There is also the increasingly reduced bureaucracy in terms of business opening and administrative tasks. “I can also confirm that, in terms of investments, the network is getting stronger and stronger.”

From creating one of the first mobility-focused solutions in the sharing economy, Erdem has constantly focused on impact solutions, including with his work as a board member within Cycling Industries Europe, facilitating and aligning priorities for the bike-sharing industry in Europe, and creating a strong voice towards government and other key stakeholders such as Google Maps. His successful work with Donkey Republic shows that startups and ecosystems can be profitable, yes, but they can also improve our cities’ governance problems, using data and markets as underutilized tools to develop democratic urban solutions further. It simply starts with a bike. ●

FLASH Q&A

What’s your favorite book?

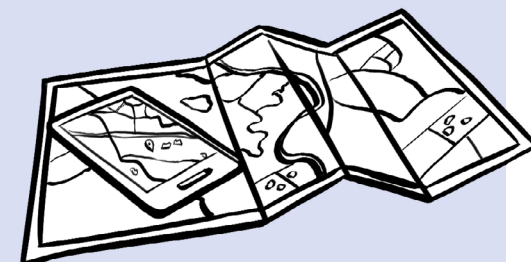
Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance
by Robert M. Pirsig.

A favorite podcast?

Making Sense by Sam Harris.

What’s your most used app?

Google Maps.



7 INVESTORS WORTH KNOWING

Get to know some of the most interesting investors in Copenhagen, from angel investors to venture capitalists. These are the major players supporting the growth and development of the startup scene in the city, and getting to know them is crucial for any entrepreneur looking to succeed in this ecosystem.



2150

For tech entrepreneurs who are reimagining and innovating the urban stack, 2150 is a venture capital investing in businesses that are changing how cities are designed, constructed and powered. Its goal is to ensure the world of 2150 is likable and livable.

2150.vc



Antler

Antler is an early-stage investor backing the world's most driven founders, from day zero to greatness. Antler helps entrepreneurs to build and scale their companies faster via a global community of cofounders, access to talent, expert advisors, expansion support and capital around the world.

antler.co



byFounders

byFounders backs globally ambitious and impact-aware founders. It is a community-powered venture capital firm with founder and investor partnership, wisdom-as-a-service, and impact solutions at its core. The tight-knit byFounders community will present you with operational expertise, network and guidance.

byfounders.vc



Dreamcraft

Dreamcraft is made up of hands-on venture engineers investing in tech-driven companies from pre-seed to Series A in the Nordics and Europe. "Dreamcraft" is vital for every successful business, because dreamers imagine a better tomorrow and crafters know how to build it.

dreamcraft.vc



Heartcore Capital

Heartcore Capital has been investing in technology, the most powerful driver for human happiness, since 2007. No matter the industry, if you are changing people's lives for the better, Heartcore will help you refine your purpose, build your vision and achieve your mission.

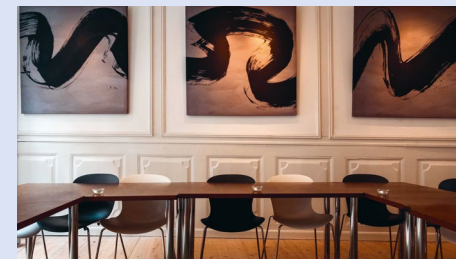
heartcore.com



PreSeed Ventures

A vision without a strategy is just a dream: this is PreSeed Ventures' philosophy on how to make things fast forward. PreSeed Ventures specializes in helping first-time CEOs and founders to strategize and benefit from their strengths and resources while revealing and overcoming their blind spots.

preseedventures.dk



Nordic Makers

Nordic Makers is a group of founders who were each missing the right investor when they founded their companies. They believe investors should bring angel style and founder-friendly terms, prefer quick conversations over long reports, and show leadership based on a peer kind of relationship.

nordicmakers.vc

7 SPACES TO CHECK OUT

Whether you're a freelancer looking for a casual and creative space to work or a startup in need of a more professional setting, there is a space in Copenhagen that will meet your needs. We carefully selected a few coworking spaces to add to your list for your next work trip to Copenhagen.



BLOXHUB

The Nordic innovation hub for sustainable urbanization offers this coworking space that allows access to the extensive professional networks and facilities. It also offers tailored partnership programs, matchmaking sessions with global delegations and partners, and workshops, all aiming at making our cities better.

bloxhub.org



DISIE

Known as the hub for entrepreneurs working with Sustainable Development Goals, DISIE (the Danish Institute for Sustainable Innovation and Entrepreneurship) offers affordable seats, mentorships and access to its community of impact entrepreneurs. Desi also hosts gatherings and larger events, facilitating new partnerships.

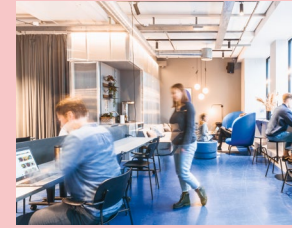
disie.dk



GreenCubator

Community, love and bravery are the values of GreenCubator. An innovative place that connects green entrepreneurs, startups and NGOs in a collaborative workspace, and supports a special synergy-effect for their network. Members benefit from regular social and professional events.

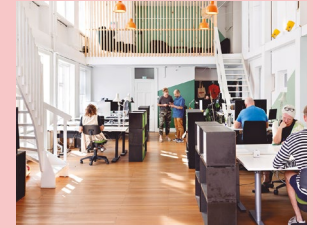
greencubator.dk



Matrikel1

Matrikel1 is an innovation hub and coworking space located on Højbro Plads, a central square in a historic area in the heart of Copenhagen. It also serves as the Danish headquarters for the international coworking community (Creators Community).

meshcommunity.com/hubs/matrikel1



Republikken

Republikken is coworking and much more in the heart of Copenhagen. It opened in 2005 as one of Copenhagen's first coworking spaces. Members can book meetings, rent a private office or celebrate an event, all within their vibrant community.

republiken.net



Soho Nomads and Noho

Soho Nomads offers carefully selected working lounges across the city, offering diversity in work locations for entrepreneurs. From hotel lobbies to restaurants, each location provides the infrastructure needed for a workspace, and offers new experiences, new settings and new communities.

sohonomads.dk/en



Talent Garden Rainmaking

At Talent Garden Rainmaking, you'll find more than three hundred digital and tech entrepreneurs coworking from open spaces and private offices. Situated in Holmen, a former naval area, Talent Garden Rainmaking provides learning and networking opportunities in the digital ecosystem.

talentgarden.org/en



NURTURING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN COPENHAGEN

KASPER HULTHIN

Cofounder at Future Five

ABOUT FUTURE FIVE

Future Five is a venture fund focused on investing in global ideas that aim to refresh the approach to climate, food and education. Founded by siblings Kasper and Morten Hulthin, Future Five wants to build products that provide real customer value, helping ideas grow to support the next generation.

future5.com

Kasper Hulthin comes from a long line of entrepreneurs making their mark on the Danish business landscape.

His great-grandfather invented a type of plough, which started a family business that his grandfather and father took over the next century. Inspired by the family's rich entrepreneurial history and the wish to improve the world for the generations to come, Kasper founded Future Five, a venture capital firm looking to develop pioneering ideas in the climate, food and educational sectors. That wasn't, however, his first entrepreneurial adventure.

Starting his entrepreneurial journey as a serial founder in Copenhagen, Kasper has been through a fascinating tale of ups and downs. After studying at Copenhagen Business School, he founded a company with a friend, which experienced both success and setbacks. However, the financial crash of 2008 dealt a blow to their company, prompting him to explore other opportunities. Fate led him to cross paths with the founders of Podio (Jon Froda, Anders Pollas and Andreas Haugstrup Pedersen) and he joined them in building the now-renowned collaboration platform back in 2009.

“I guess I just always wanted to start on my own.”

"I guess I just always wanted to start on my own," he says. As a student, he tried to decide what to do once university was over and asked different people for advice. "I kept asking, What should I do? And depending on who you ask, you get a different answer. At the end, I deleted all my emails about job offers and thought, Why am I not asking myself this question? And that was pretty simple."

"I've learned a lot, and you do get better along the way if you apply the learnings from your mistakes."

At that time, his entrepreneurial journey was only starting. Now, fifteen years later, he says that his best decision was to start his first business, and the second best was to close it. The experience with his first startup taught him to align his business with emerging trends, and this proved crucial to the success of subsequent ventures. Additionally, he emphasizes the significance of getting the small things right in a business, even if they may seem tedious. "I've learned a lot, and you do get better along the way if you apply the learnings from your mistakes," he says. "But I'm still making mistakes. It's funny because the excitement of creating something never goes away."

Reflecting on his businesses, Kasper highlights the importance of timing: his first business closed its doors in 2008, mostly due to the financial crash, but also because it was an analog business at a time when the world was increasingly turning to digital solutions. Podio, however, was more aligned to the zeitgeist: it was one of the first collaboration platforms in the software as a service (SaaS) area. "Nowadays

we have Slack and Notion and whatever, but we built Podio before that, when people still had FTP drives and emails on servers," he says. "We had help because the 2010s were about Google, Facebook, the other movements that were going on. When we moved on to build Peakon, we also hit the timing quite well."

Peakon was founded in 2015 with Phil Chambers, Christian Holm and Daniel Rogers. The initial mission was to create a company they actually wanted to work for, and so the employee-engagement platform was born. "No one had touched HR for ten years. Then, suddenly, people realized that we needed to make HR more data-driven and in real-time," he says. "Obviously we weren't the only ones, but it drove the market forward. It gets a lot easier if you want to surf inwards, not outwards, right?" Peakon was acquired by Workday in March 2021, and he credits timing for part of its success.



"I wouldn't want to be the new people now," he says. Now that it's relatively easy to start a company, he sees small windows of opportunity to create winning business in selected industries, but the competition is tough. "Over time, of course, you get better at spotting these opportunities."

The other secret ingredient to building a successful business? Kasper is a strong believer in getting even the small things right. He recalls his previous experience in a furniture company: "People wanted to acquire it, but our partner jumped out of the deal at the last minute and wanted to take it all himself. It ended badly. It's not fun to talk to lawyers or do policies or whatever, but business is business, and you need to do the small things right, even the boring ones." No entrepreneur wants to fall into the spiral of thinking if only we had done this or that. His advice, he points out, comes from bitter experience: "I'm not trying to be smart for you. One of the reasons Peakon went well was because we did the small things right. There was no magic around it."

"If you have a big enough vision, you can attract the best people in the world. So it comes back to what you dare to believe in."

Looking at another Peakon example, entrepreneurs can find one of the final pieces to building a successful business: the critical role of people. He urges aspiring entrepreneurs to be ambitious when choosing their team, emphasizing the power of a shared vision to attract top talent. "I also ended up with businesses that didn't work out because we lacked the right people, which is, obviously, the biggest cliché of all," he says.

KASPER'S CITY PICKS

Where to go when you need to do some creative thinking:

The Frederiksberg and Søndermarken Gardens are amazing. It takes about an hour to walk the entire length.

Favorite coffee shop:

My favorite little joint is a place called Cadence.

Favorite weekend activity:

A trip to Louisiana if the weather is nice, combined with sitting outside with friends and a drink.

One thing you need to get when you arrive in Denmark:

A CPR number (Danish ID number). The most significant invention ever.

One thing to watch out for:

Bikes as you step out of the taxi.

CAFES

Cadence

Ny Carlsberg Vej 40,
1799 Copenhagen
cadencecph.dk



“But if you have a big enough vision, you can attract the best people in the world. So it comes back to what you dare to believe in.” And those believers don’t necessarily need to be the young and eager enthusiasts of startups and new work. “Maybe it’s just because I’m getting older, but I think there’s something to be said about experience. People matter, but be really ambitious with your team.” Hiring new team members for their potential might be good, but experience should be louder.

Throughout our talk, it became evident why Copenhagen holds a special place in the heart of our serial founder: all of his businesses started in the Danish capital. The city’s unique combination of a high quality of life, a flat and direct working culture, and efficient digital infrastructure creates a nurturing environment for startups. “I don’t think you find anywhere easier

in terms of digitalization. Copenhagen is very efficient, with a low transaction cost, and it’s a nice place to be. One of the amazing reasons why we stayed here is that Denmark is quite unique in terms of developers: high-skilled and with high loyalty compared to other places at more reasonable costs. Not to mention that our school system teaches people to think critically and be creative. It’s kind of how the system works.”

“I don’t think you find anywhere easier in terms of digitalization. Copenhagen is very efficient, with a low transaction cost, and it’s a nice place to be.”

For young entrepreneurs looking to start their journey, Kasper’s advice is simple: enjoy the journey. It has taken the founder ten years to understand the meaning of that sentence, and he is quick to admit that he rarely listens to his own advice. “I do think I can enjoy the journey a bit better now,” he says, noting that success lies not only in the destination but also in embracing the challenges and joys along the way. “I don’t want to sound old, but I’ve been doing this for fifteen years. There’s definitely been a mental shift. In the beginning, it is just you, and you fight with your nails and teeth. You work all day, all night. I don’t see that happening anymore.” There’s effort in building a business, yes, but it doesn’t need to be one hundred hours a week. There might be sacrifices along the way, but there’s also a middle ground. “You can work hard and still enjoy it, even if that balance is hard to find.”

“You can work hard and still enjoy it, even if that balance is hard to find.”

With Copenhagen’s thriving ecosystem and an unwavering entrepreneurial spirit, the city continues to foster the growth of innovative startups, ensuring a bright future for generations of entrepreneurs to come. With a big mind and an enjoyable journey, Copenhagen can hold a lot of opportunities, not only for Kasper but other entrepreneurs as well. “We’ve never been a Danish business, neither Podio nor Peakon. For growth startups, Denmark is an amazing place to build from, but your vision needs to be global. That’s not a problem. You can easily connect to the rest of the world from here.” ●

FLASH Q&A

At what age did you start your first company?

Twenty-five.

What are your top work essentials?

The usuals: laptop and phone.

What are your most used apps?

The best thing is the regular phone, old school.

Greatest skill as an entrepreneur?

I’m a people person, and I like to see people in organizations grow.



COFFEE BREAK

Once in Copenhagen, you will find out that coffee, sourdough bread and Danish pastries are a big part of Danish social life and culture. To experience the real hygge, you need to taste the moment. Copenhagen's cafes come in all shapes and sizes but each has its own unique atmosphere.



Absalon

Imagine an extension of your living room filled with new and old friends, yoga, coffee, food and games. In 2014, the former church was bought by Lennart Lajboschitz, who then used locals' input and turned it into a social hub.

Sønder Blvd. 73,
1720 Copenhagen V
absaloncph.dk



Alice Bakery

Alice bakery is a hidden gem that lies on the border of Amager and Christianshavn and offers coffee, cakes, and ice cream. Its fusion of industrial and cozy interior design with ambient music in the background creates a good basis for a focus time.

Markmandsgade 1,
2300 Copenhagen S
alicecph.dk



Bevar's

Located in the lively Nørrebro, Bevar's is a down-to-earth cafe that specializes in freshly baked bread and traditional smørrebrød (open-faced sandwiches). In the evenings, if you are lucky, you will listen to live jazz while grabbing a bite of rustic food.

Ravnsborggade 10B,
2200 Copenhagen N
bevars.dk



Democratic Cafe

The Democratic Cafe is located in the heart of Copenhagen, in one of the most democratic places you will find: the library. Democratic Cafe attracts students, business people, and anyone who wants a great cup of coffee accompanied by fresh homemade pastries.

Krystalgade 15,
1172 Copenhagen K
Instagram: [@democraticcoffeebar](https://www.instagram.com/democraticcoffeebar)



Navnløs Coffee Bar

Navnløs (Noname), a low-key cafe and bar in one, is located on a lively Istedgade. The high-quality coffee and homemade food makes it a great spot to fuel your work spirit, and it's perfect for after-work drinks too.

Enghave Pl. 6, 1670 Copenhagen V
[facebook.com/profile.php?id=100054541745759](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100054541745759)



Original Coffee

Original Coffee, furnished and decorated with a minimalist style where varnished pine and untreated iron contrasts the charcoal colored walls, creates a cozy and welcoming atmosphere. It was awarded Best Coffee four years in a row by *Berlingske* AOK.

4. floor Illum, Østergade 52,
1001 Copenhagen K
originalcoffee.dk



The Coffee Collective

A micro-roastery, coffee shops and a coffee school: the Coffee Collective shares exceptional coffee experiences while bringing financial sustainability to coffee farmers from transparent trade. Choose any location in the city, and you'll find an inviting vibe with smiling baristas.

Godthåbsvej 34B,
2000 Frederiksberg, Copenhagen
coffeecollective.dk

SEVERAL
LOCATIONS



SUSTAINABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

KIKA BROCKSTEDT

Cofounder and CEO
at Revalu

ABOUT REVALU

Revalu is a material-data platform that assesses the impact across the design phase of buildings. Acting within the construction industry, the startup aims to accelerate the green transition by providing architects and manufacturers with tools and data that enable efficient alternatives to reduce their environmental footprint.

revalu.io

The isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic and other tragic news of freak weather have triggered climate anxiety in many of us. But how many walked out of it as an entrepreneur?

After years of working in strategy and brand positioning, Berlin-born, Copenhagen-based Kika Brockstedt wanted to understand how she could actively contribute to the climate challenges ahead of us. One thing quickly became clear: sustainability is complex, and that complexity was the biggest driver for

Kika's entrepreneurial journey. "It became obvious that there are many statements and strategies concerning what we would like to achieve in 2050," she says. "My feeling was that we needed to do something today."

This is why she started Revalu, a startup focused on making climate targets more achievable for companies and individuals in the construction industry in 2021. With a comprehensive material database, the startup provides building owners, architects and manufacturers with tangible data that allows them to make greener choices, which impact the footprint of buildings and make climate targets more achievable. According to C40 Cities, a global network of nearly one hundred mayors of the world's leading cities, buildings are responsible for an average of 60% of the emissions of a city. In the

European Union, the European Commission states that buildings are responsible for about 40% of the EU's energy consumption and 36% of greenhouse gas emissions from energy. Moving into green building solutions is an essential part of climate action.



Before founding Revalu, Kika had been working on a few housing projects and innovation concepts, but she was not an expert in the construction sector. "I practically stumbled upon it," she says. "I kept reading statements that something like 75% of buildings we need have not been built yet or that 85% of buildings in Europe have to be renovated in the next twenty years. That's a huge amount of material, of resources we don't really have or will run out of." That became her challenge: to think about what is inside our buildings, what materials are being used, where

they come from and how we get them. "And carbon is only one of the things we should focus on. There are so many other factors we should also be starting to measure: biodiversity and toxicity, for example." With Revalu, she is trying to cover as many sustainable aspects as possible. "Transparency is the first step, so we focus on material data to enable people to see the impact of a material, and therefore make more conscious decisions. To me, transparency is the first step to tackling sustainability and climate challenges."

Despite an effective business model and impressive idea, there were still struggles. "Early struggles and lessons learned came hand in hand," she says, mentioning that a considerable part of entrepreneurship was luck: meeting the right people at the right time. "Don't ever be afraid or hesitate to reach out to people that inspire you. The number of people I've contacted on LinkedIn and just offered to go for a coffee or a walk.... I was surprised at how many people were willing to help. I got answers I had never expected to receive. Maybe that's saying something about the climate-action community; it's a specific group of people who care about the topic and always love to meet others who do too. People are generally very open to meeting and talking and helping."

Personal connections are equally important within the company, and building the right team will impact the success of a startup directly. "There are days when you love what you do and there are days when you absolutely hate it. Make sure that you are surrounded by good people, and that you have a good team. These will be your pillars of support," she says.

"Don't ever be afraid or hesitate to reach out to people that inspire you."

Additionally, she recommends that young entrepreneurs do their research, not only in terms of what the problem is, but who they're solving the problem for. She believes it is crucial to stay in touch with the people you're trying to help. "People sometimes stick to assumptions, so consistent research and questioning is essential," she says.

"You need an inner drive: something that keeps you going when things get difficult. People will tell you you're not going to make it. Entrepreneurship takes a lot of energy."

Her passion for sustainability and entrepreneurship also led her to an industry-leader position at Hyper Island, a digital creative-business school founded in Sweden. There, she was a co-facilitator of the Sustainable Models for Business Development Upskill program in 2021, helping other entrepreneurs tackle the complexity of sustainability. "People like to put sustainability into boxes, but it's not that clean-cut," she says. "The challenge is, we have to rethink our systems. Many people seek an easy recipe, simply replacing one thing with another, plastic with paper, fossil-fuel cars with electric vehicles. That's a great first step; we do need that awareness. But it doesn't solve the bigger picture." How, then, is it possible to ensure that people are on the same page regarding sustainability? "There's a certain expectation to provide a formula to sustainability. That's not how it works. There's a lot of rethinking to be done, and every product, every industry, needs their own process. We need many hybrid solutions. In the building industry, we can't build every house out of wood; we don't have enough trees."

KIKA'S CITY PICKS

Favorite place to go for creative thinking:

When the sun is out, I go down to my favorite swimming spot to read, write and swim. That's where I find peace.

One thing you need to get when you arrive in Denmark:

A bike.

Favorite weekend activity:

Either a long walk (doesn't matter where) or cooking and eating with friends.

Favorite coffee shop:

Depanneur. Best bagels in town, plus it was founded by friends so there is always good people around.

FOOD

Depanneur

Rantzausgade 36,
2200 Copenhagen
depanneur.dk

“It’s crucial to have days when I completely switch off and read a novel or do something that takes me away from the topic. Otherwise it really consumes you.”

On top of the innate complexity of sustainability, there’s also the overwhelming feeling that climate anxiety can induce. “For me, that feeling changes on a daily basis. Because I work with sustainability, it’s the only thing I read about, so it’s crucial to have days when I completely switch off and read a novel or do something that takes me away from the topic. Otherwise, it really consumes you,” she says. “It’s not helpful to be so future-focused that you feel guilty all the time. You need to enjoy the things that you’re surrounded with today and the good changes that are happening now. If not, you’re stuck in threats and doomsday messages.” We can be pessimistic or optimistic about the climate, but either extreme can equally lead to inaction. “I guess there is a sweet spot: you have to be driven by fear yet be hopeful at the same time. Otherwise, it’s easy to become cynical. We have to start somewhere, and it has to happen step by step.”

And Copenhagen is a good place to kickstart the sustainability discussion. After living in Berlin, Zurich, Moscow, London and Stockholm, Kika was lured to Copenhagen by friends who already lived there, and fell in love with the city. “I moved around a lot trying to find a place that I fit in, where I could have a good quality of life,” she says. “In Denmark and other Scandinavian countries, you have immense social safety, which is a privilege. People here are much more aware of climate change and

the urgency to transition because they have the time and the money to focus on that.” For an entrepreneur working on the sustainability topic, it’s an incredible advantage to be surrounded by people who are already aligned with your mission and don’t need much convincing.

In comparison to other cities where Kika lived, Copenhagen is relatively small. But that doesn’t mean it’s not progressive. “In London, for example, there’s a certain hierarchy, and people from different statuses don’t really mix,” she says. “To a certain degree, that also happens here, but on a smaller scale. People are more approachable, and because it’s a smaller community, common connections happen more often. Maybe that’s more noticeable to me because I’m a foreigner, an outsider. It took me some work to get into the circle. But once you’re in it, it’s super accessible.”



As a tip for other foreign entrepreneurs arriving in Copenhagen, Kika suggests joining coworking spaces, networking events and other associations. Revalu, for example, is part of Blogxhub, the Nordic hub for sustainable urbanization, and PropTech Denmark, a nonprofit organization that accelerates and nurtures innovation and technological development in the real estate area. This way, entrepreneurs can easily meet people and get invited to events, expanding their social circle with like-minded people.

“People are more approachable, and because it’s a smaller community, common connections happen more often.”

And when it comes to learning Danish, Kika admits that her skills in the language haven’t evolved much in the last three years. “When I started working here, six years ago, everything was in English,” she says, noting that even the process of opening a company was simple. “You go to the International House, a one-stop office for registration services, events and career programs – you just go and set everything up. They have lawyers and other people to provide support and assistance. That is also a big part of why I kind of understand Danish. I can read it, but I think I would offend people if I start speaking it.”

So don’t let the language intimidate you and don’t let pessimism keep you from climate action. If Kika’s entrepreneurial journey shows us anything, it is that Copenhagen’s ecosystem is open and ready to challenge the status quo. ●

FLASH Q&A

Favorite books?

Man’s Searching for Meaning by Viktor Frankl and *The Art of Loving* by Erich Fromm.

Favorite podcast?

I love *Where Should We Begin?* with Esther Perel.

At what age did you found your company?

Twenty-eight.

What’s the most valuable piece of advice you’ve been given?

Don’t fall in love with your idea; fall in love with the problem.

What’s your greatest skill?

Listening.



NETWORKING IN COPENHAGEN

Dive deeper into Copenhagen's vibrant startup scene by attending these meetups and events that foster innovation and collaboration. Explore the unique blend of tech, sustainability and design that makes the Danish capital appealing to entrepreneurs who celebrate tech's societal impact worldwide.

MEET UP

MONTHLY

Copenhagen Junto

This social meetup for entrepreneurs happens every third Thursday of the month at 7 PM. Discuss business goals and travel plans over drinks and snacks with like-minded entrepreneurs and founders.



eventbrite.dk/e/copenhagen-junto-social-meetup-for-entrepreneurs-tickets-502545024697

EVENT

TRIENNIAL

CPH Townhall

With three events every year, the Copenhagen edition of Townhall gathers founders, operators and investors for an evening of good drinks, people and energy. A juicy program designed to extract valuable learnings from Denmark's most exciting companies.



cphtownhall.splashthat.com

EVENT

DTU Startup Day

Meet and connect with the next generation of tech entrepreneurs. In the exhibition and on the stage, get to know sixty pre-seed and early-stage knowledge-based startups showcasing their prototypes, technologies and business ideas.



skylab.dtu.dk

MEET UP

Talent Garden

A coworking space hosting a network of over 4,500 entrepreneurs. Become a member to meet like-minded people over coffee or attend one of the many events and courses available.



talentgarden.org/en/coworking/denmark/copenhagen

CONFERENCE

Green Impact Week

A conference with keynote speeches, panel discussions, workshops, roundtables and networking opportunities designed to help entrepreneurs connect with fellow professionals and stay up to date on the latest industry trends.



greenimpactweek.com

EVENT

ANNUAL

TechBBQ

This annual event started in 2013 as a BBQ for tech enthusiasts and entrepreneurs. Today, it promotes content, networking and hygge to support and strengthen the Nordic startup community, bringing together talent, capital and knowledge.



techbbq.dk

WHERE TO EAT



AFTER-WORK



Bottega Barlie

Whether you swing by for a morning coffee and some fresh croissants or for an afterwork drink and some tapas, Bottega Barlie is an all-day favorite, located in the heart of Copenhagen.

Price Level: €

Fredericiagade 78,
1310 Copenhagen
barlie.dk/en



Omada Wine Bar

A tasting room to enjoy a glass and some tapas. There is also a shop that offers natural wine, cider and other mixed fermentations, local farmers' cheeses, charcuterie, sourdough bread, oils and spices.

Price Level: €

Øster Farimagsgade 26,
2100 Copenhagen Ø
omada.wine

QUICK LUNCH



Dandelion Burger

Dandelion Burger has won over its customers by offering a single delicious burger, which can be ordered in either a meat or vegan version. The newspaper *Berlingske* called the Dandelion burger "better than Noma's burger" for its juiciness. The secret of the taste may be in the half-an-hour's massage of the meat with marrow.

Price Level: €

Nytorv 3, 1450 Copenhagen K
dandelionburger.com

BUSINESS LUNCH



Gaza Grill

Gaza Grill is an organic (90–100% of the ingredients are organic) Middle Eastern restaurant. It offers tasty food at affordable prices and supports charities and local projects in Palestine.

Price Level: €€

Fælledvej 22C, 2200 Copenhagen N
Flæsketorvet 39, 1711 Copenhagen V
gazagrill.dk



Granola

A French bistro located on Værnedamsvej, a street known by locals as Copenhagen's Paris. Enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner looking at an old coffee mill and colorful enamel signs while listening to music from the fifties and sixties.

Price Level: €

Værnedamsvej 5,
1819 Frederiksberg C
granola.dk



Grød

Danish breakfast includes simple oatmeal porridge or *grød* made with various toppings, homemade or made at Grød - a chain of porridge bars. Start your day with a sweet breakfast alone or with a colleague, or grab a quick lunch by choosing one of the salty porridge dishes.

Price Level: €

Jægersborggade 50 kl. tv.,
2200 Copenhagen N
groed.com



Lille Petra

Heading to Lille Petra cafe, you enter through a historical gate that reveals a cozy courtyard covered in plants, fruits and vegetables. Breakfast, brunch or lunch in a timeless interior design encourages a homey feeling where you can invite a client or a colleague.

Price Level: €€

Kronprinsessegade 4,
1306 Copenhagen K
andtradition.com/lille-petra



Meyers i Tårnet

Meyers i Tårnet is a restaurant in the heart of the Danish democracy, the tower of historical Christiansborg, the Danish Parliament. If you decide to come for lunch or dinner, you will enjoy your meal inspired by the Nordic Kitchen and the seasonal ingredients, overlooking the many towers of Copenhagen.

Price Level: €€€

Christiansborg Slotsplads,
1218 Copenhagen K
meyers.dk/restauranter/meyers-i-taarnet



The Union Kitchen

Part restaurant, part bar, part cafe, the Union Kitchen is a casual neighborhood eatery with an international atmosphere. Whether you want an early-morning espresso, a lazy lunch, an afternoon cocktail or a relaxed dinner experience, all are available here.

Price Level: €€€€

Store strandstræde 21,
1255 Copenhagen K
theunionkitchen.dk



EARLY ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SELF-CARE

NIMA TISDALL

CEO of Nordic Makers &
Cofounder of Blue Lobster

ABOUT BLUE LOBSTER

Blue Lobster is a digital marketplace offering sustainable, low-impact and ethically sourced seafood directly from fishermen. Nordic Makers, established by a team of seasoned and successful entrepreneurs, is a proactive seed-stage investor deeply involved in partnering with companies, providing hands-on guidance and support on their next level of growth.

bluelobster.app

Nima Tisdall might be young (she was featured on the Forbes 30 Under 30 list in 2021), but her CV is of a well-seasoned entrepreneur.

Along with Christine Hebert, she founded Blue Lobster in 2019, a digital marketplace that allows restaurants to source sustainable seafood directly from fishermen, making the process more sustainable and transparent. With a passion for impact innovation, advancing research commercialization, and forging strong connections among the Nordic startup hubs, she's also the CEO of Nordic Makers, a seed-stage venture capital investor fostering startup-ecosystem growth in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland.

Her accolades don't stop with these two jobs, however. She was recognized as one of the one hundred most influential women in Denmark by *Berlingske*, a Danish national daily newspaper. Nima is also actively involved in several influential boards within the innovation and startup realms, including positions at With Purpose, a startup school fostering female entrepreneurs, and the Green Development and Demonstration Program (GUDP), a substantial annual fund supporting green technology in agriculture and fisheries. She is also a Young Transatlantic Innovation Leaders Initiative (YTILI) alumni, an initiative by the US State Department that fosters connections between startup ecosystems in Europe and the US. To complete her impressive experience, Nima is also a Europe Leader at the Obama Foundation, a nonprofit organization on a mission to inspire, empower and connect people to change their world, and a member of the World Economic Forum.



Her success doesn't mean her entrepreneurial journey at Blue Lobster didn't have any obstacles. "There were two main challenges," she says. "The pandemic was one. Since most of Blue Lobster's clients were in the restaurant industry, it was a challenging phase. And on top of that, we're talking about an industry that's quite old school, quite traditional. There was a lot of resistance from people who didn't want the market to change." The pushback came from the fishing and the wholesale industry, who felt threatened by the independence and empowerment that Blue Lobster offered fishermen.

In terms of the ecosystem, Nima says that Copenhagen offered the startup a great base to develop from. "I was impressed with the support you get at early stage. When we were just getting started, but we were super happy: we have a robust ecosystem in Denmark.

There's a lot of soft funding that's applicable if you have a green startup like we do. And I have to be honest, I felt like the ecosystem was incredibly welcoming. People were happy to help and shared the opportunities."

When she went to the US, the ecosystem was different, with private investors taking over the early-stage setting. "But in Denmark, that's carried by some public-sector soft-funding opportunities, at least within the green startup space. Getting started was not, in my opinion, very difficult." At the time, it was possible to start companies with just one kroner in the bank. Unfortunately, the program is no longer in place.

"There are lots of small networks like pitch nights or Friday bar hangouts. Figure out where things are happening and mingle!"

And what about having a non-EU cofounder? "Christine is American, and we had to undergo a lengthy visa application process. We got it in the end, and we know people have struggled more than we did. It's an additional stress factor. The Danish system is not welcoming to non-EU citizens, which was a challenge. I do see a lot of non-Nordic entrepreneurs, though." Nima believes that people who emigrate are incredibly entrepreneurial and that the courage of daring to move to a new country creates a strong base for entrepreneurship, but there are some cultural challenges they might encounter in the Nordic ecosystem. "Not speaking the language can be difficult, but it doesn't have to be limiting," she says. "I think the social aspect can be more challenging, as Nordic countries are very kind but not necessarily friendly.

Brace yourself for some bluntness." She also suggests looking for some social support outside of work life. "There are lots of small networks like pitch nights or Friday bar hangouts. Figure out where things are happening and mingle!"

Blue Lobster's more significant challenges came after the early stage, when they were ready to grow. "Broadly speaking, the Danish ecosystem seems to lack some ambition. We don't necessarily think international from the beginning; we don't focus on scaling the company to be global quickly. We had to go abroad for later fundraising rounds because of that. By not focusing on global growth, we can sometimes reinforce a conservative business-building mindset."

"Speak to people smarter than you and get the customer side right and get the sales right from an early stage. We're in the business of business."

"Europe doesn't have a huge consumer market like the US," she says. "We have to realize and figure that out, if we're going to build companies in Europe that will be as big as the ones coming out in China and the US. Then we need to understand that our market is significantly smaller, at least nationally." By thinking of going international earlier in a startup's growth, it's possible to keep up with the growing pace of these huge markets.

That desire to change the ambition and business mindset within the Nordic countries helped Nima to focus on her second job at Nordic Makers. (She's still involved with Blue Lobster, within the advisory board.) "My motivation for joining

NIMA'S CITY PICKS

Favorite place for a business meeting / on-the-go lunch:

Il Buco for meetings and Mums for on the go.

Favorite weekend activity:

Trying to enjoy Copenhagen as if I wasn't from here.

One thing you need to get when you arrive in Denmark:

Bakery stuff. I love *romkugler*.

Favorite coffee shop:

Sidecar for brunch at weekends.

Museum recommendations:

The David Collection and Friday Bars at **Statens Museum for Kunst (SMK)**.

FOOD

Il Buco

Njalsgade 19C, 2300 Copenhagen
ilbuco.dk

MUSEUMS

Statens Museum for Kunst: SMK

Sølvgade 48-50, 1307 Copenhagen K
smk.dk

Nordic Makers was primarily personal. I had given Blue Lobster all I could, from a personal perspective, and was interested in exploring the ecosystem in-depth.” Nima is an entrepreneur who enjoys wearing many hats and is happy juggling many projects at once. “The idea of being able to work with many startups through investment was just really exciting to me.”



That’s also the reason behind her work with so many other institutions supporting founders and entrepreneurs in Europe and the US. “At least in Denmark, we have a very open ecosystem and people are happy to give advice. Sometimes, you can get the answers to your questions just by asking someone who is an expert in a particular field.” Through her work with Nordic Makers, With Purpose, and as part of the Obama Foundation, she can thoroughly support entrepreneurs across different development stages. “People fear going out and talking about their idea because they fear it will get stolen. And that rarely happens because

people don’t have the energy to go out and execute your idea,” she says. “For entrepreneurs, the most important thing is to get started. Just get into it. Many people get stuck in the planning phase for too long. They’re planning and planning and planning..., but you’re only learning about your business once you’ve started executing.”

Her other tips include talking to people who complement your skills and who know about topics that you might lack knowledge in. “The quicker you can find out what your weak points are, the faster you’ll go out and fill those gaps as quickly as possible.” And if you are not sure how to fill them, ask someone as soon as possible. “Surround yourself with people who can help you, and don’t be scared of asking questions and sharing your ideas with people who know more than you. I know these things are obvious, but I see a lot of entrepreneurs shying away from this.” But in the business of building businesses, it’s about getting things done and keeping your purpose close to your heart. “I love building companies that have a bigger purpose than just profit, but having said that, every startup does need to earn money. In the impact area, I see people getting stuck between a charity and a business. At the end of the day, you need a core business model that actually works.” If entrepreneurs make sure they’re building something their customers want, adding value throughout the experience, Nima strongly believes that they can go far from the beginning.

“There’s a high level of trust in Denmark,” she says. In fact, it’s one of her favorite things about working in the Nordic area. “People generally have good intentions and also assume other people have good intentions.” The result? Transparent, frank conversations she enjoys being part of. “The trusting culture is a highlight for me.” Copenhagen is a city that really wants entrepreneurs, which will guarantee that there are a lot of cheerleaders throughout the journey.

However, being a passionate entrepreneur is not an excuse to let go of your own well being. “The biggest lesson I take with me is to ensure that I really take care of myself,” she says. “There was a time when I thought if I worked really hard all the time, that would be good for the company.” She no longer believes that self-sacrifice is good for the business. She now focuses on being well rested in order to do her best work, as it gives her the brainspace to be creative and think about her projects with some distance. “Self care has become a lot more important. Especially as a first time founder, it was difficult to realize that in the beginning. I just couldn’t see it. I loved working, I loved my job, and I didn’t really want to spend much time doing anything else. But a good work-life balance, at the end of the day, is the best thing for the company. You will lose that balance at some points, and that’s OK too.”

“The biggest lesson I take with me is to ensure that I really take care of myself.”

Nima is currently writing a book about founders and mental health, interviewing around forty entrepreneurs from Copenhagen about their trajectories. “We really glorify entrepreneurs. We haven’t accepted that failure is going to be a large part of success,” she says, and that can create a frightening environment for first-time founders and put pressure on the ecosystem in general. “In Denmark, we need to work on accepting that people are going to lose money in the pursuit of making money.” ●

FLASH Q&A

Biggest entrepreneurial lesson?

To ensure that I really take care of myself outside of work.

Favorite books?

Anything by Malcolm Gladwell.

Favorite podcast?

Tiden.

What are your most-used apps?

Airtable and Google Suite.

What’s the most valuable piece of advice you’ve been given?

Remember that how you spend your days is how you spend your life.

What’s your greatest skill?

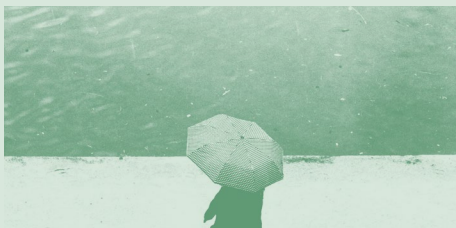
Creativity.



URBAN IMPACT SOLUTIONS

As the challenges of climate change and urbanization rise, Copenhagen emerges as a trailblazer when it comes to envisioning and implementing solutions with a commitment to sustainable living and to creating a resilient urban landscape. Find out more about the transformative projects redefining the intersection of environment, technology and urban life in the Danish capital.





WATER MANAGEMENT

CLIMATE ADAPTATION

300 Cloudburst Projects

Faced with high stormwater volumes and the risk of stronger and more frequent downpours, Copenhagen prepared a Cloudburst Management Plan in 2012. This is the city's Climate Adaptation Plan, focusing on solutions that combine large-scale, blue-green infrastructure projects that manage stormwater at the surface with underground drainage tunnels where needed. The green infrastructure, parks and natural areas absorb rainwater for storage and managed seepage, while water-transporting boulevards funnel excess water away from inundated areas. The 300 Cloudburst Projects combine green surfaces with sewer-based solutions that will retain and drain water and protect the entire city against a one-hundred-year rainfall.

Project by: **The Copenhagen city Council**

stateofgreen.com/en/news/the-cloudburst-that-changed-copenhagen-and-urban-water-management

SMART CITY

Copenhagen Connecting

The Copenhagen Connecting project uses data to establish integrated and intelligent solutions to form a first-of-kind urban digital infrastructure. A 'smart city' is a concept that hopes to create a greener city, a higher quality of life for its citizens and a better business climate. Intelligent use of wireless data from cell phones,

GPS devices in buses and sensors in sewers and garbage cans will assist Copenhagen in achieving its objectives of reducing congestion, air pollution and CO2 emissions. Copenhagen has already invested €34 million in new street lights and more than €13 million in new traffic lights and intelligent traffic management.

Original concept and idea by: **Søren Kvist**

Involved: **DTU, ITU, KU, University of Aalborg, Alexandra Institute, Gartner, Ramböll, Kraks City Research, Federation of Danish Industries, Copenhagen Capacity, Copenhagen City Council**

copenhagenconnecting.com

WASTE MANAGEMENT

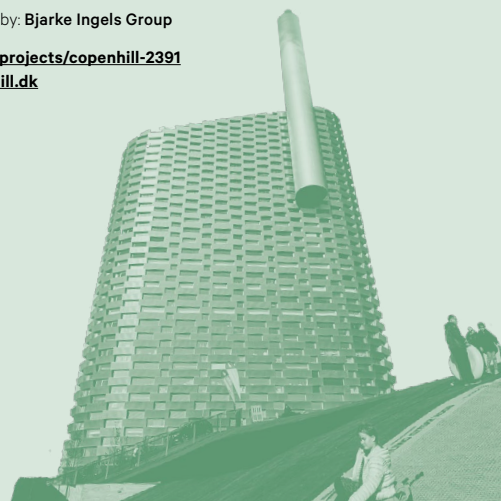
RENEWABLE SOURCES

CopenHill Urban Mountain

CopenHill or Urban Mountain is a great example of hedonistic sustainability and, as such, proof that architecture can work in favor of the environment. It is a powerplant that turns waste into energy, generating up to 57 MW of electricity and 190 MW of heat for tens of thousands of homes and businesses. As a bonus, the Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) turned the project into an environmental education center and urban recreation center with a ski slope, hiking trail and rock-climbing wall. The main goal of the project is to transform Copenhagen into the world's first carbon-neutral city by 2025.

Project by: **Bjarke Ingels Group**

big.dk/projects/copenhill-2391
copenhill.dk



URBAN MOBILITY

Green Mobility

Sustainable transport is a big part of carbon neutrality and an ambitious goal for Denmark's capital. It is no secret that bicycles are a popular alternative for economic mobility and positively impact both collective and individual welfare. Now, all public buses and ferries are also powered by electricity. Additionally, the project Metro Ring introduced two new metro lines and connected the city in a more accessible, easier and faster way. Such initiatives are well aligned with the target of 75% of all trips to be on foot, by bike or via public transport, pushing Copenhagen even closer to its desired freedom from cars.

Project by: **The Technical and Environmental Department Copenhagen**

international.kk.dk

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

GREEN BUILDINGS

Green Roofs Initiative

Since 2010, the City of Copenhagen has made it mandatory to implement green roofs in all new local building plans. So-called green roofing showcases a sustainable climate-adapted urban design. Structuring the city with green roofs provides a unique chance to transform thousands of traditional roof surfaces into green life-giving oases. The roofs support biodiversity by creating habitats for animals and plants. They

also cool down the city by sustainably absorbing larger quantities of rainwater, helping to curb temperature rise. Strolling through Copenhagen, you will encounter green roofs of all scales, from cycle shelters, schools and mixed-use buildings to landscapes above underground garages.

Project by: **The Technical and Environmental Department Copenhagen**

stateofgreen.com/en/news/green-roofing-copenhagen



WASTE MANAGEMENT

Nedgravet Miljøstation Project

In 2013, the Miljøpunkt Nørrebro Foundation in collaboration with the Copenhagen municipality built a permanent underground waste-container system with a pavement interface. The buried containers brought several benefits, such as creating more space in the yards and removing odors as well as easier and cheaper access for the waste collectors, making the price for the residents fall from 1,200 kr–4,400 kr (\$171–\$627) to 600 kr–700 kr (\$85–\$100) per year. Furthermore, the pilot project has improved citizens' behavior, as they have started sorting more and better. The innovative waste solution means more efficient utilization of the waste as a resource and positively impacts the environment.

Project by: **Miljøpunkt Nørrebro Foundation**

miljoe-noerrebro.dk

EXPLORING COPENHAGEN

ON A SUNNY WEEKEND

Pack your sunglasses, slather on some sunscreen, and get ready for a sunny weekend escapade, because the outdoors are mandatory.



FOOD

Kayak Bar

Kayak Bar offers a unique kayaking experience through Copenhagen's canals and harbors while contributing to the environment (they invite everyone to pick up litter as you go). Unforgettable kayaking, soul-stirring music, and an eco-conscious journey that leaves a positive impact on Copenhagen's beloved harbor.

Børskaj 12
1221 Copenhagen K
kayakbar.dk

FOOD

La Banchina

This charming fourteen-seat walk-in restaurant and wine bar has a unique twist: an on-site sauna! Indulge in delightful breakfast options and a daily selection of mouthwatering dishes all week. Simply follow their motto, "dip, eat, repeat," for a perfect blend of organic and sustainable seafood, and relaxation.

Refshalevej 141
1432 Copenhagen
labanchina.dk

FOOD

Reffen - Copenhagen Street Food

Reffen is an organic street food market and urban hub with over fifty food stalls, bars and workshops. Following "Reduce and Reuse" programs, all stalls use compostable food service, prioritize organic and local ingredients, and minimize food waste. The 6,000 m² area provides a scenic view to enjoy delicious food and drinks.

Refshalevej 167
1432 Copenhagen
reffen.dk

LANDMARKS

Tivoli Gardens

The enchanting Tivoli Gardens, the world's second-oldest amusement park, has captivated visitors since 1843. Step into a world of incredible wonders and thrilling adventures, promising an unforgettable experience. Must-sees include the Villa Vendetta haunted house and the Demon, a rollercoaster with three loops. The fantastic gardens offer a place to relax between rides.

Vesterbrogade 3
1630 Copenhagen V
tivoli.dk

OUTDOORS

Frederiksberg Gardens

Frederiksberg Gardens is a captivating greenspace spanning sixty-four hectares alongside Søndermarken. Designed in romantic English style and formerly owned by King Frederik VI, this garden offers a peaceful escape with picturesque lawns, beautiful flowers, elegant bridges and historical monuments.

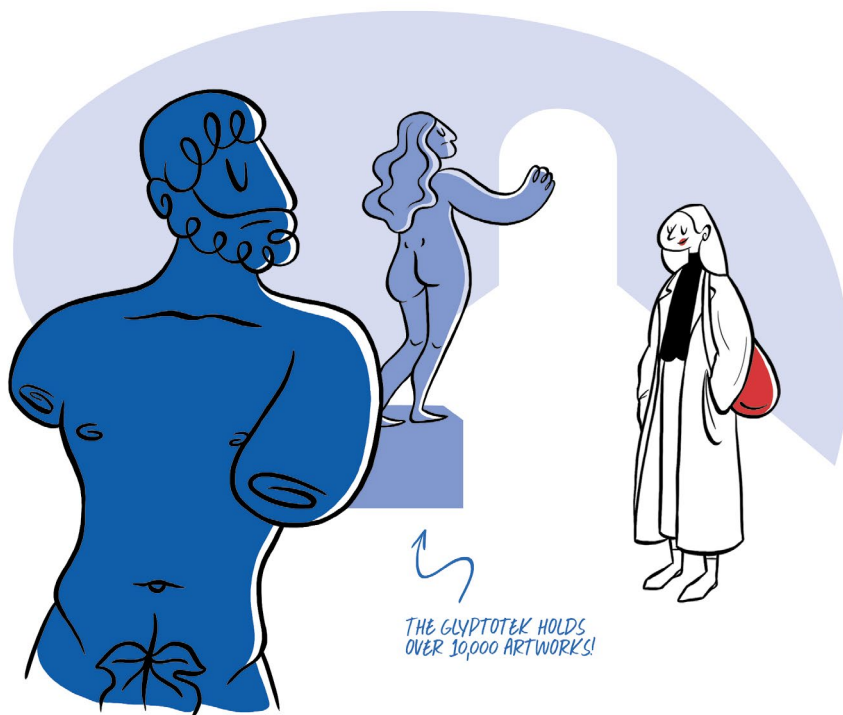
Frederiksberg Runddel
2000 Frederiksberg
visitcopenhagen.com

OUTDOORS

GoBoat

Be the captain of your own ecofriendly adventure and cruise Copenhagen's canals with GoBoat (no certification or sailing experience is needed). Each boat accommodates eight people with a picnic table, allowing you to savor good food and wine as the city drifts by. The electric engine ensures a sustainable ride, leaving the harbor untouched.

Islands Brygge 10
2300 Copenhagen S
goboat.dk



EXPLORING COPENHAGEN

ON A RAINY WEEKEND

Copenhagen buzzes even when the temperatures drop and the drizzle keeps falling. Grab your raincoat for these rainy weekend recommendations.

EVENTS

Absalon

Join the vibrant Vesterbro community at Absalon, a former church turned welcoming community space. Aiming to be a home away from home, it offers breakfast, afternoon hangouts, evening bars and communal dinners for up to 180 people. It's also where locals and guests go to enjoy activities like bingo, table tennis, movies and concerts.

Sønder Boulevard 73
1720 Copenhagen V
absaloncph.dk

LANDMARKS

Den Blå Planet - National Aquarium Denmark

The National Aquarium Denmark, Den Blå Planet, is Northern Europe's largest and most modern aquarium. In a mesmerizing journey under the sea, encounter thousands of fascinating creatures in forty-eight aquariums filled with seven million liters of water. A day of fun and learning for all ages.

Jacob Fortlingsvej 1
2770 Kastrup
denblaaplanet.dk

LANDMARKS

The Danish Parliament Tower

Embark on a thrilling ascent to the top of Copenhagen at the Christiansborg Palace Tower. The View, its renowned viewing platform, awaits forty-four meters above the ground, offering breathtaking panoramas of the city. Prepare to be captivated by the fantastic vistas that paint Copenhagen in all its glory.

Christiansborg Palace
1240 Copenhagen K
thedanishparliament.dk

MUSEUMS

Glyptotek

The Glyptoteket art museum houses the private art collection of Carl Jacobsen (1842–1914), the son of the founder of the Carlsberg Breweries and owner of classic works by Monet, Pissarro, Renoir and Cézanne, as well as all the bronze sculptures of Degas.

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek
Dantes Plads 7
1556 Copenhagen
glyptoteket.com

MUSEUMS

Louisiana

Modern and contemporary art finds a home in the Louisiana Collection, which houses over four thousand works spanning from 1945 to the present, focusing on painting and sculpture. Founded by Knud W. Jensen, Louisiana aims to provide Danes with a dedicated space for modern art, filling a void in the Danish museum scene.

GI Strandvej 13
3050 Humlebæk
louisiana.dk

SPORTS

Copenhagen Boulders

Copenhagen Boulders is the largest climbing hall in the city. Climb varied artificial routes, set by Denmark's best routesetter team on walls with different slopes and shapes. With weekly replacements of boulder problems, the challenges are always fresh. After your bouldering session, enjoy coffee, tea and snacks at the organic café.

Bådehavnsgræde 38, port 1
2450 Copenhagen
boulders.dk



DEFYING THE STATUS QUO

SIMON SYLVEST

Partner at Founders

ABOUT FOUNDERS

Founders is an early-stage company builder founded in 2012. Pre-angel, pre-seed and pre-accelerator, Founders invests in and builds companies from scratch and scales them as independent companies when they gain traction. It is always looking for opportunities within its two areas of expertise: fintech and health tech.

founders.as

Simon Sylvest is a highly active investor and entrepreneur with a tireless spirit.

Whether it comes to fighting obesity, improving fertility treatment or finding a way to kill the pain of doing expenses, Simon is always on the lookout for opportunities to improve the way people work, live and thrive. Constantly keen to challenge the status quo and disrupt industries, he has an impressive history of investing in and helping build startups. Together with the Founders team, his track record includes companies such as Pleo, a spending solution to digitalize expense tracking, Son of a Tailor, a made-to-order, custom-fitted T-shirt brand, and LifeX, a hospitality startup that offers coliving and private apartments for expats,

to name a few. During the pandemic, rather than remaining idle, Simon and his colleagues invested in and helped found six companies within a year, two more than they had hoped for pre-lockdown.

Originally from Frederikssund, Denmark, Simon didn't jump into entrepreneurship immediately, even though he admits to wanting to be one since he was five. Before settling in Copenhagen, he spent two years in the UK and Canada, exploring and dreaming of skiing adventures. In the Danish capital, he studied at Copenhagen Business School (CBS), where he earned a BA in International Business and Politics and a MA in Applied Economics and Finance, and started working as a consultant. That quickly ignited an entrepreneurial calling and highlighted Simon's passion for making decisions and being at the forefront of operations. "To be at the frontier of whatever I do and not have to go through different layers of communication was what drove me to build my own company and be involved

with building companies,” he says. During his first year of his MA, he started a company called Talent Force along with three of his friends. The startup focused on developing case competitions for corporations, and it had customers from day one. “That was my first experience building a company, and we ran Talent Force for one and a half years until we finished our degrees.” After that, the team was ready to move on to more significant projects and closed it down quietly.

“We discover who we are under pressure. Timing is everything, and as long as you keep it together, persevere, test your market and adjust accordingly, traction will find you.”

From there, Simon quickly ventured deeper into the tech space, meeting his future partners at Founders, Ulrik Trolle, Stefano Zorzi, Sebastian Stockmarr, Peter Heering, and Joshua Karjala-Svendsen. “We didn’t know exactly what we were doing back then, but we were intrigued by the idea of building a company that was able to be involved in building, starting up and investing in businesses, and taking them from an idea on a piece of paper into being a real company,” he says. They came up with the idea of a “startup studio” and started Founders in August 2012.

Founders’ success has been increasing exponentially, and it has helped several startups to level up from dream to reality. Kontist, for example, started in March as an exploration project around financial security for freelancers and the self-employed, following the future of work trends and the rise in the gig economy. It gained forty thousand freelance banking

customers and became the number one B2B neo bank in Germany in 2020. The series of startups created within the studio have since allowed Simon and his partners to buy back their shares from their investors, making Founders a fully partner-owned company. That makes Founders very different to conventional venture capital companies, since the partners are investing their own money into the businesses.

Eleven years of running Founders has given Simon and his partners a strong level of pattern recognition, one of the main contributing factors to their success. “We are looking at different opportunities in terms of startups, but when we look back at what we’ve learned in the past years, I see that we’re doing it with the same patterns – doubling down on that, actually. We’ve collected a lot of experiences, and we have some pattern recognition we can start to apply again and again,” he says. “We’ll continue to do the same things we’ve been doing so far. Our challenge is to figure out how to scale that.”



Regarding the most significant lessons he’s learned through the years, Simon emphasizes that creating the right team from the beginning is essential, but he also highlights the need for self-awareness and personal development in order to make better business decisions. “I tend to be optimistic and visionary, focusing on what the next great company would look like,” he says. “But that only works if you can take a step back, reverse engineer the process and focus on shorter periods instead. What happens in the next week? What about in the next month?” Simon also highlights that ideas are great, but customers are even better. “Get one customer, then two, then five, then ten. As you get traction, it will be easier to close the gap and reach the original vision. The path to building a sustainable business is simply to get new customers every day, as early on as possible,” he says. “And one step at a time, finding people that want to pay for your services.” This is something he and his team at Founders still remind each other of every day. “It’s easy to get caught up in whatever large vision we have for the future. Taking small steps and finding paying customers were a clear learning point.” Simon is against the idea of “just do it.” Yes, he says, there are examples of entrepreneurs who become successful in industries they have no experience in, “but why not look for problems and opportunities where you already have some unique insights and an understanding of the customer and the infrastructure, and build that unique offering there? Today, the competition is fierce and the big opportunities are often hidden, so always ask yourself where you have an insight that few others do, and start there.”

“I tend to be optimistic and visionary, focusing on what the next great company would look like.”

SIMON’S CITY PICKS

Favorite coffee shop:

I love the café [Les Amis](#) in Christianshavn. I think it only fits up to ten people or so, but it’s really nice.

Favorite place for a stroll or deep reflection:

The outer parts of [Holmen](#). I also love walking around the brown-brick part of the [Meatpacking District](#).

Favorite place in Copenhagen for deep thinking:

The library in the [Black Diamond](#).

CAFES

Les Amis

Sankt Annæ Gade 3A,
1416 Copenhagen
[lesamis.dk](#)

LANDMARKS

The Black Diamond

Royal Danish Library
Søren Kierkegaards Plads 1,
1221 Copenhagen K



Over ten years of entrepreneurship and startup building has presented Simon with his fair share of challenges. Attracting talent to Copenhagen, for example, a city known for its high taxes and high cost of living, is not always easy. And when they do find talent wishing to move to the Danish capital, it's crucial to ensure a smooth landing. "New talent coming from abroad are leaping into a new job and an entirely new country. That's quite a process," he says. As startups might not have the same resources as corporates, it requires even more planning and consideration during the onboarding process – especially if the goal is not only to attract talent, but retain it as well.

With the classic problem-solving mindset of an entrepreneur, Simon and his partners realized that there was a significant business opportunity in that problem, which led them to investing in and help build Life X. The startup provides

furnished coliving and private apartments for expats in eight different cities. Initially, the partners would rent their own apartments for new employees as they arrived in Copenhagen. The short-term deal lasted from three to six months, and was an opportunity to introduce the new hires to a wider community, allowing them to connect to other Danes until they got to know the city. "This, in turn, became our company," he says.

After successful exits and growth stories, Simon also learned valuable funding lessons. "Raising money from venture capitalists is a very different game than running your company," he says. Understanding the VC mindset and the business model is highly advantageous. "VCs analyze how valuable your company will become. If you understand that perspective, you can develop your sales and pitching narrative to fit that mindset," he says.

This might not necessarily reflect what running the startup will look like day to day, but Simon highlights that these are two separate things.

Additionally, he advises entrepreneurs and founders to stay persistent. "You may have to speak to one hundred investors before you find the right fit to fund you," he says. "You have to fall in love with selling. If you want your company to go from pre-seed to being profitable, you probably have to go through one or two big funding rounds. Develop your business model and have something tried and tested to show the VCs." Premature rejections can often be avoided by being well-prepared.

"You may have to speak to one hundred investors before you find the right fit to fund you"

Fond of the Danish capital, Simon doesn't mean to leave anytime soon. "For a capital city, it's still very easy to bike or walk around. You don't have to spend time on public transport or driving," he says. "I also love being close to the water, jumping in during the summer." But Copenhagen can offer a lot more than great quality of life and easy access to nature. "There's a growing international community that I really enjoy, especially within the past five years. Due to my work, I get to know so many foreigners, and I love learning more about their perspectives on life, and how they live." ●

FLASH Q&A

What's your favorite book?

Post Office by Charles Bukowski.

Favorite podcast?

4. *Division*, by DR P1 (in Danish).

What's your favorite app?

Evernote.



LOCALS TO KNOW

Every city has their local ecosystem heroes: the networkers, the visionaries, the voices that bring change and connection. Copenhagen is no different. The city might be small, but many entrepreneurs are expanding the ecosystem and pushing it forward. Meet them here.



Anette Nørgaard

RELATIONSHIP DIRECTOR | [VISMA DINERO](#)

Many years of experience in IT have made Anette a visionary and an expert in the Microsoft tech stack, sharing its programming possibilities across the Danish ecosystem. She's an active advisor, mentor and board member, passionate about networking and helping SMBs grow.

LINKEDIN
[in/anorgaard42](#)



Søren Stig

COFOUNDER AND IMPACT INVESTOR | [HOME.EARTH, LIFELINE ROBOTICS & NIIN](#)

As cofounder of Home.Earth, Lifeline Robotics and Nordic Impact Investing Network (NIIN), Søren has been a driving force in building out the Nordic impact investing and impact startup community over the last fifteen years.

LINKEDIN
[linkedin.com/in/sorenstig](#)



Esben Gadsbøl

CHAIRMAN | [DANISH TECH STARTUPS](#)

This serial entrepreneur and investor cofounded WhiteAway in 2003 and has since founded another startup, Tech BBQ. Passionate about developing the Nordic startup ecosystem, Esben is also a chairman at Danish Tech Startups and a partner at Nordic Makers.

LINKEDIN
[in/esbengadsboell](#)



Stine Colding Alstrup

COFOUNDER | [INTENTIONAL APS & FOUND DIVERSE](#)

Passionate about diversity, Stine's work at Intentional ApS and Found Diverse focuses on bringing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) to the Danish ecosystem. She cocreated the award-winning accelerator program LEAP FORWARD and the investor initiative, The Diversity Commitment.

LINKEDIN
[in/stine-colding-alstrup-06904b33](#)



Mia Grosen

FOUNDER & DIRECTOR | [CANUTE](#)

As the CEO of Canute, Mia has helped more than four hundred Nordic founders grow their businesses to new international markets. Her knowledge of the Nordic startup ecosystem can help you connect to other founders, corporations, organisations and investors.

LINKEDIN
[in/miagrosen](#)



Stine Frausing Kjærsgaard & Pia Ella Elmegård

FOUNDERS | [BOBBIE & BEASTIE](#)

As founders of Bobbie & Beastie, Stine and Pia are building go-to-market tactics with rapid experimentation. They are passionate about the Danish ecosystem, optimising customer journeys, and identifying and building Go-to-Market programs that help growth companies scale.

LINKEDIN
[in/skjaersgaard](#)
[in/piaelmegard](#)



Sam Eshrati

COO & CEO | [TECHBBO](#)

This operations specialist has a sharp eye for details and can develop processes. He is passionate about connecting people, building communities and promoting entrepreneurship. Sam's broad leadership experience has also earned him a seat at the invite-only Forbes Business Council.

LINKEDIN
[in/sameshrati](#)



Zenia W. Francker

INVESTOR LEAD | [FOUND DIVERSE](#)
CONSULTANT | [FRANCKER CONSULT](#)

Zenia has a passion for connecting people. For more than ten years she has built businesses connecting startups, corporates and investors. Zenia is a key driver of the Danish and Nordic startup ecosystem and involved in a variety of community initiatives like The Diversity Commitment for VCs, #NordicMade, and Danish Tech Startup Association.

LINKEDIN
[in/zeniawfrancker](#)

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more information:



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Luna has also recently partnered with Visa and credit experts Froda to offer business loans up to 1,000,000 kroner, with rapid next-day payouts upon approval. So whether you're expanding, starting up or steering your venture solo, Lunar Business provides a user-friendly app tailored for Danish entrepreneurs.

Now, let's delve into your financial strategy as you step into Copenhagen's vibrant core. Lunar is your ally, committed to simplifying your financial management. Picture effortlessly managing your money on the move, whether tracking your expenses or sending invoices.

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Event partner

TECHBBQ

Welcome to Copenhagen!

The capital of Denmark has become a hotbed of entrepreneurial activity, home to innovative startups such as Too Good To Go and Corti, with a supportive and bureaucracy-free startup ecosystem. With its strong focus on sustainability, the city is perfect for green solutions (and cycling enthusiasts).

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