

**INNOVATIONS**  
Towards a global  
plastic waste solution

**CULTURE**  
Dalia Stasevska & Lauri Porra  
mix classical and heavy music

**TECHNOLOGY**  
World-leading biobank  
genetics project

**HAPPINESS**  
"The Finns are  
cool and friendly"

# THIS IS FINLAND

**Finns with  
a mission**

Finding solutions for the common good

2020–2021

ISSN 2343-2624



**SUOMI  
FINLAND**



## 2 | FEELING FINLAND

By Taru Virtanen  
Photo Samuli Skantsi

### RETHINKING SAUNA

Hidden beyond the building sites of the vast new urban district of Kalasatama lies Helsinki's best-known secret, Sompasauna. Three wood-heated, hand-constructed saunas occupy the end of a peninsula, with the city centre visible across the water. They're open around the clock every day of the year, free of charge.

Sompasauna welcomes young and old, Finns and foreigners alike to enjoy a sauna and a dip in the sea in pleasant and relaxing company. It is completely self-service.


"The secret of our popularity is the communal, open atmosphere," says Wilhelm Björkqvist, one of the active members. "Having a sauna is simple and easy, and so is chatting with new people. I reckon that this is the easiest place to get to know a Finn."

Finns are known for their love of the sauna – a hot, tranquil room where they relax and gather their thoughts. It is also a place for deep conversations and thinking big. Sauna can be seen as an innovative space where people can create something new. Many business ideas have started from the Sauna.

"At Sompasauna we're seeing a new wave of sauna culture," Björkqvist says. "You can have a serene cottage sauna but you can also enjoy a collective sauna experience in the middle of the city. Sauna can be a social Friday night hangout."

Whatever the sauna experience, the common denominator is that there is no hierarchy. Everyone is on the same level.

"I've taken a sauna with people here for years, and I still don't know what some of them do for a living. We discuss everything, just not work." ●

 [sompasauna.fi](http://sompasauna.fi)

HELSINKI HAS SEVERAL PUBLIC SAUNAS,  
EACH WITH ITS OWN UNIQUE PROFILE:

Allas Sea Pool [allasseapool.fi/en](http://allasseapool.fi/en)

Arla sauna [arlasauna.net](http://arlasauna.net)

Cultural Sauna [kulttuurisauna.fi](http://kulttuurisauna.fi)

Kotiharju sauna [kotiharjunsauna.fi](http://kotiharjunsauna.fi)

Löyly [loylyhelsinki.fi/en](http://loylyhelsinki.fi/en)

Sauna at Lonna island [lonna.fi/en/services/sauna](http://lonna.fi/en/services/sauna)

Sauna Hermann [saunahermanni.fi](http://saunahermanni.fi)

The New Sauna [uusisauna.fi](http://uusisauna.fi)









## PUSH THE FUTURE

I remember getting serious climate anxiety around 2018. All the news was alarming, it seemed that we were running out of time – and nobody cared. I was 15 years old, and I was wondering: Isn't this something that the grown-ups should handle? The problem was, they weren't.

I was inspired by **Greta Thunberg** and the Fridays for Future movement. After a while, I decided to do something, too. I participated in my first climate demonstration on Friday, 21 December, 2018.

It was bitterly cold on the steps of the Finnish Parliament, where a group of a dozen climate activists had gathered. The wind was blowing and there was barely any light when we started at 9 am. Still, I felt a rush of sorts; I was finally doing something, and there were other people there who felt like I did. I realized that this was how I wanted to make my voice heard.

Fast-forward four months and there was a much bigger event. The first global Climate Strike on 15 March 2019 took place, with thousands of young people participating in Helsinki. Similar events were held all around Finland that day.

I look back at that day now and think it was the best day of my life – so far, anyway. At first, there were a dozen of us kids on social media talking about organizing this thing and believing that we could get perhaps 500 people there. In the end, there were maybe 5,000 people.

That March day strengthened my belief that while inaction produces despair, action brings hope.

I feel that here in Finland we have a chance to take a leading role in the fight against climate change. The government has an ambitious agenda to make Finland carbon-neutral by 2035, and Finnish companies are coming up with low-carbon and no-carbon innovations.

I'm certain that their solutions, in clean tech for instance, can be used around the world. That's good for the planet – and it's good business, too. ●

**Atte Ahokas** born 2003

The writer is a climate activist and one of the pioneers of the Fridays for Future movement in Finland.

Photo: Vilja Herale

### About the Magazine

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FINLAND**



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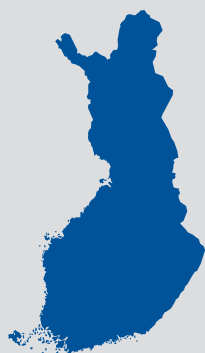
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## FACTS ABOUT FINLAND

**POPULATION:** 5.52 million

**TOTAL AREA:** 338,435 km²,

of which 10% is fresh water

**BIGGEST CITIES:** Helsinki (capital), Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Oulu and Turku

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES:** Finnish and Swedish

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent republic since 1917

**CURRENCY:** Euro

**JOINED THE EU:** 1995

**GDP PER CAPITA:** €42,504 (2018)

**TOP SECTORS FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT:**

Business services, ICT, healthcare and wellbeing, retail, cleantech

**TOP AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT:** Services, financial and business

services, trade and hotel, manufacturing, transport and communications



By Tim Bird  
Photos iStock, companies

# OVERCOMING PLASTIC WASTE

The world needs a wide range of innovative solutions if it is to rise to the challenge of reducing single-use plastic. Finland has numerous start-ups and companies working for this cause.

T

hanks in part to its education system and its curriculum, Finland as a nation is very aware of the challenges posed by plastic, and ahead of the game when it comes to devising solutions, says **Riitta Silvennoinen** of Sitra – the Finnish Innovation Fund. However, as things stand Finland recycles about 25% of its plastic waste, but is strongly committed to comply with EU Waste Directive objectives: 50% of plastic packaging recycled by 2025 and 55% by 2030.

“In Finland, as in the rest of the world, we need to separate two challenges related to plastic: trash, and climate change,” says Silvennoinen.

“They are often confused, which makes it even more difficult to decide what to do about plastic. The problem is not necessarily with plastic as a material in itself, but that it is not recycled sufficiently and properly, and that we are not getting value from it. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which supports innovations for the circular economy, has reported that we are losing 95% of plastic’s value because we are not recycling it but burning it or disposing of it in landfills.”

Finland is a high-performer in terms of innovations. Silvennoinen mentions energy company Fortum’s efficient mechanical recycling

plant, while Fenergy has developed a chemical recycling plant. In terms of products, Jospak won the WorldStar 2019 Gold Sustainability Award for its food packaging solution, combining recyclable plastic film with cardboard.

VTT, the Technical Research Centre of Finland, has carried out extensive research into chemical recycling. Sitra itself was involved in drawing up a Plastic Road Map in 2018, giving the issues a higher priority, covering every angle of plastic recycling and involving stakeholders in discussions about how to improve, collaborate in, finance and develop solutions. The Ministry of Environment is promoting voluntary Green Deal initiatives. One example could be encouraging cafés and restaurants to introduce incentives for using less plastic.

“We should be recycling and reusing plastic as much as we can. It can be recycled mechanically or chemically, returning it to its molecular level. Single-use plastic is a huge issue, but it is not simply a matter of replacing one material with another,” Silvennoinen concludes. ●

> **Plogging** (a combination of “pluck” and “jog,” as in plucking up rubbish while out for a jog). The plogging movement has spread all over the world including Finland.



"WE SHOULD BE  
RECYCLING AND  
REUSING PLASTIC AS  
MUCH AS WE CAN."

- RIITTA SILVENNOINEN

## PLASTIC WORLD

From the Arctic to the Antarctic and from the Pacific to the Atlantic, plastic waste is polluting the world's marine environment. In the Baltic Sea, on Finland's doorstep, about 70% of marine litter is plastic. Globally, up to 13 million tonnes enter the seas every year, leaking from landfills or deposited directly from ships or beaches.

Why does this matter? Apart from spoiling beautiful beaches and deterring tourists, plastic waste degrades slowly, contaminates the eco-system and degrades habitats. It also enters the food chain in the form of micro-plastic particles to toxic effect. In the Arctic Ocean, the occurrence of plastic is even higher than in open oceans, because the floating particles are bonded in sea ice. In addition, the production of plastic requires oil, contributing to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which in turn fuels global warming.





CASE

## SULAPAC AIMS FOR TOP BRAND PROFILE

**“Aesthetically pleasing Sulapac responds to global demand.”**

Biochemists **Laura Tirkkonen-Rajasalo** and **Suvi Haimi** founded Sulapac in response to a startling revelation: if the tide of plastic waste in the world’s oceans cannot be turned, there will be more plastic than fish in the sea by 2050.

“We wanted to use our biomaterial expertise and start solving the global plastic waste problem,” says Haimi. “We set out to develop a new material made of wood and natural binders to replace traditional plastics.”

Rather than producing it in granule form, they launched it as a finished product. The aesthetic appeal of the Sulapac jar, now part of the company’s Nordic Collection, drew the attention of established cosmetic and luxury brands. That appeal derives from the

strength, versatility and pleasing finish of the material, which is recyclable by industrial composting.

“Our products and material have gained a lot of recognition in terms of awards and media coverage, and we have been fortunate to collaborate with leading global brands such as Chanel and Stora Enso, which adds to our credibility,” says Haimi.

“Many Finnish companies are on the right track for sustainability, and there are true pioneers among them. We are proud to collaborate with some of the leading Finnish brands including Fazer, Berner, and Lumene to introduce new, sustainable solutions. Our vision is to make Sulapac the number one sustainable material that is a substitute for plastic.” ●

### RECYCLING PLASTIC

Most Finnish kitchens are equipped with bins for different wastes, including plastic packaging.

All household plastic waste collected throughout the country is delivered to Fortum’s recycling plant.

Plastic waste is turned into new raw material, Fortum CIRCO recycles (p. 11).

Finland will comply with  
EU Waste Directive objectives:  
50% of plastic packaging recycled  
by 2025 and 55% by 2030

**“MANY FINNISH  
COMPANIES ARE  
PIONEERS FOR  
SUSTAINABILITY.”**

- SUVI HAIMI





## CASE

# WOODLY BUILDS ON CARBON NEUTRAL VERSATILITY

**The wonders of Woodly join the fight on climate change.**

Here's a simple ecological paradox: food waste is a growing global problem. One solution is to prolong the shelf life of the food with packaging made from oil-derived plastics, but this generates more CO2 emissions. Motivated by this dilemma, Woodly was created in 2011 to develop carbon neutral, recyclable film packaging solutions, under the umbrella of Finnish solutions agency Seedi. The signing in 2019 of a strategic agreement with Wipak, one of the world's biggest flexible packaging companies, was a significant milestone in Woodly's progress.

"Woodly is a very versatile and unique wood-based, transparent packaging material which can be used in various applications, in products

or in packaging," says CEO **Jaakko Kaminen**.

The prime aim is carbon neutrality, and Woodly's recyclability is part of that, he says. Similar products are under development elsewhere, but Woodly's scalability and versatility for combatting climate change are key assets that can set it apart.

"We are confident that we can successfully enter the market," he says. "Our strategy is to communicate the material directly to the consumer. When the consumer recognises the Woodly brand, that will be the game changer." ●

**"WOODLY IS A UNIQUE WOOD-BASED, TRANSPARENT PACKAGING MATERIAL."**

- JAAKKO KAMINEN



## CASE

# DURAT'S SOLID SOLUTION FOR WASTE

**Durat's solid surface product is partly made from waste – and totally recyclable.**

The durability, strength and solidity of Durat set it apart from other plastic innovations.

"Durat was developed in the 1990s," says CEO **Heikki Karppinen**. "The founders developed the material from scratch and used waste materials from local suppliers."

He says it is the only solid surface product made with recycled plastic content.

"The waste material is post-industrial waste from local sources," he explains.

"We process the waste, granulate and mix it with the Durat material. Using waste material not only gives a new life to waste plastic but reduces

the need for virgin raw materials. We use about 30% of recycled content in the material and the product is itself 100% recyclable."

Custom tabletops and vanity units are the main finished products, which can be found in restaurants, retail spaces, hotels and public bathrooms.

"We also supply sheets and sinks to be fabricated locally. The interest for recycled content materials has gone up dramatically in the last two or three years. We believe that in the next ten years or so, the whole construction and design industry will transform to a circular economy model." ●

## "USING WASTE MATERIAL GIVES A NEW LIFE TO WASTE AND REDUCES THE NEED FOR VIRGIN RAW MATERIALS."

- HEIKKI KARPPINEN



### REUSING PLASTIC

Recycled plastic is used as raw material for many items:  
Carrier bags, household products like storage boxes, buckets, watering cans, flower pots, watering cans, sledges and cleaning brushes.





**DID YOU KNOW  
THAT PLASTIC CAN  
BE RECYCLED UP TO  
TEN TIMES?**



## ZENROBOTICS

Harnessing the power of artificial intelligence to improve the quality of waste sorting, Zenrobotics' robots are billed as being able to sort waste just as well as humans – only faster and more safely. Building on the scientific work of the neurorobotics research group at Finland's Aalto University, the company has revolutionized recycling processes that relied on inefficient manual labour.

Zenrobotics' robots have been delivered to waste management companies worldwide, from Australia to Japan and from Switzerland to the USA. Designed to lower costs, reduce manual labour, increase recycling efficiency and increase the purity of recycled materials, the solutions are claimed to redefine 'Next Generation Recycling'.

 [zenrobotics.com](https://zenrobotics.com)

## CIRCO

Fortum Waste Solutions is a Finnish trailblazer for sustainable circular economy innovations. The company's granulated recyclate product, CIRCO, has been developed to completely or partly replace 'virgin' plastic for a wide variety of purposes.

CIRCO's three different granule grades can be adapted and customized to different uses, for example robust and durable high-density polyethylene pipes and bottles, petrochemical containers and cleaning-media bottles. Low-density polyethylene product applications include flexible packaging, film and plastic bags, pots and brushes.

 [circoplastics.com](https://circoplastics.com)

## PAPTIC

With a whole string of sustainable industry awards to its credit, Paptic makes credible claims to be 'the best alternative for plastics in packaging'. It is a biobased, recyclable and renewable next generation packaging material made with wood fibre sourced from sustainably managed forests and produced by the Finnish start-up of the same name.

Products made of Paptic can and should be used more than once, and even more than ten times. The material is strong, easily foldable, resistant to ripping and can be made using existing paper converting lines, saving the cost of new infrastructure or machinery. Paptic can be used for carrier bags, envelopes and other one-time use applications; it has print quality on a par with regular paper, as well as the durability of non-wovens and the versatility of textiles.

 [paptic.com](https://paptic.com)

### REPLACING PLASTIC

Finnish innovations for replacing plastic in an eco-friendly way:

Biodegradable plastic solutions for medical and technical industries; cardboard trays for food packaging; toys made of bioplastic produced from sugar cane; lamps, packaging and hangers made of wood pulp; casts made of wood and biodegradable plastic; wash basins of wood composite consisting of wood chips.



## 12 | MEET & GREET FINLAND

By Maria Öfverström

Photos Juuso Westerlund, Sauli Koski, Ismo Pekkarinen, Maarit Kytöharju, Norman Ojanen, Sakke Somerma, Jussi Hellsten, Tim Bird, Paavo Lehtonen, Esko Jämsä

# IT'S IN OUR NATURE

Wondering what to do in Finland? We asked some of the people we interviewed for this magazine to recommend their favourite places. If you can't come in person, check out the sights on Instagram.



### Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival and Sodankylä's Midnight Sun Film Festival:

**Dalia Stasevsk:** "Both show the essence of this country: good things and astonishing communities born in ascetic conditions. Top directors who usually don't tour turn up in Sodankylä, and fantastic performers from around the world converge on Kuhmo for a few weeks in summer. And plunge into the lake from time to time."

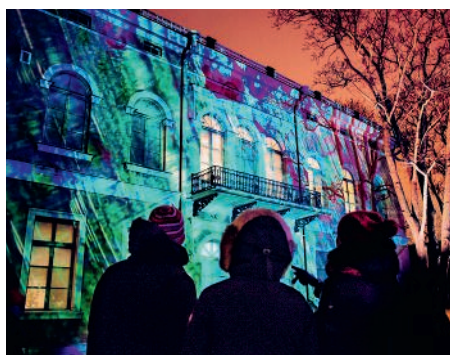
🌐 [kuhmofestival.fi/english](http://kuhmofestival.fi/english)  
#kuhmofestival, @kuhmofestival  
[msfilmfestival.fi/en](http://msfilmfestival.fi/en)  
#sodankyläfilmmifestivaalit,  
#sodankyläfilmmifestarit,  
@midnightsunfilmfestival, #midnightsunfestival



### The Tornio River

**Jasper Pääkkönen:** "Running through northern Finland and Sweden is one of the best salmon rivers in the world. At least 50,000 salmon return to it each year. It's a great chance to catch big Baltic Sea fish at a very low cost. People from 20 or more countries come here every year."

🌐 [aavasaksa.fi](http://aavasaksa.fi)  
#tornionjoki, #övertorneå, #torneälv, #ylitornio,  
#aavasaksa



### Opera House and Helsinki Music Centre

**Mark Daly:** "My family love music and so do I. I take my guests to the Opera House or the Helsinki Music Centre."

🌐 [oopperabaletti.fi/en/about-us](http://oopperabaletti.fi/en/about-us)  
@oopperabaletti, #ooppera  
[musiikkitalo.fi/en](http://musiikkitalo.fi/en)  
@musiikkitalo, #musiikkitalo,  
#helsinkimusiccentre



### Seurasaari Open-Air Museum:

**Lauri Porra:** "Close to the centre of Helsinki you can experience the simple life that people lived here before the age of aircraft and other modernities."

🌐 [kansallismuseo.fi/en/seurasaarenulkomuseo/frontpage](http://kansallismuseo.fi/en/seurasaarenulkomuseo/frontpage)  
@seurasaari, #seurasaari

### Lux Helsinki

**ThisisFINLAND staff:** "We know how to tackle darkness. The light art festival is the best way to start the year. The event presents a diverse range of light art in different forms along a new route each year stretching for more than a kilometre along the streets of the Finnish capital, Helsinki."

🌐 [luxhelsinki.fi/en/](http://luxhelsinki.fi/en/)  
#luxhelsinki, @luxhelsinki





### The wilderness of Lapland outside the peak winter season, such as autumn, when all the leaves turn red:

**Lauri Porra:** "The incredible beauty and calm of Lapland is really special for people who don't experience silence and peace in their normal lives. It immediately summons the inner music in any musician."

[lapland.fi/visit](https://lapland.fi/visit)  
#visitlapland, #lapland, #lappi, #laplandfinland, #ruska



### Helsinki's live music scene:

**Lauri Porra:** "G Livelab, run by the Musicians Union, has a diverse programme from classic to rock. And the successful Tavastia Club, with its long traditions, is one of the most important clubs in Europe. It's worth looking at both programmes whenever you're in Helsinki."

[glivelab.fi](https://glivelab.fi)  
@glivelabhelsinki



### Lake Inari

**Jasper Pääkkönen:** "The largest lake in Lapland, located in the very north, is wrapped in the magic of its surroundings, silent, pure and natural. In summer the sun never sets on it. In autumn its shores are red and brown. In winter the spellbinding Northern Lights dance across its skies."

[nationalparks.fi/inarijarvi](https://nationalparks.fi/inarijarvi)  
#inarijarvi, #lakeinari, #visitlapland



### Design Museum:

**Dalia Stasevska:** "More than anything I love Finnish design and architecture. It is my secret passion. You can never go wrong with it."

[designmuseum.fi/en](https://designmuseum.fi/en)  
@designmuseo\_fi, #designmuseo,  
#designmuseohelsinki



### The figures of Veijo Rönkkönen's 'self-made life' in Parikkala Sculpture Park:

**Dalia Stasevska:** "It's wonderful that an untrained folk artist could produce something so genuine, extraordinary and beautiful."

[patsaspuisto.net/english](https://patsaspuisto.net/english)  
#patsaspuistoparikkala, @parikkalanpatsaspuisto



### Suomenlinna

**Jasper Pääkkönen:** "A charming fortress on an island that is easy to reach from Helsinki. Great for a day trip. Grab a picnic basket and enjoy the summer."

[suomenlinna.fi/en](https://suomenlinna.fi/en)  
#suomenlinna @suomenlinnaofficial



By Terhi Rauhala  
Photo Vesa Tyni



# SUSTAINABLE EVERYDAY LIFE

The Finns understand the value of sustainability and it shows in their day-to-day lives. When cities make it easy to live an ecological lifestyle, people are usually keen to do it.



## GREEN IS AS GREEN DOES

Making ecologically sound choices is a no-brainer for this family of six.

"Hi!

... And bye!"

A tall young man walks into the family kitchen and walks straight out again. **Viljo Kivistö** (19) is heading for the gym with a rucksack on one shoulder. A few moments later his

brother **Touko** (17) does the same thing.

The cosy kitchen is the heart of everyday life for the Kivistö family. Mother **Terhi** (47), father **Markus** (53), four children and a cat lead a life that is fairly typical for families with children. The parents – historians and publishers – work busy days and are just as busy in their free time, keeping track of the kids and cooking and cleaning.

The kitchen is also the centre of many ecological decisions that the family makes every day, such as waste sorting.

"Recycling is made pretty easy here in the city," Markus says. They live in the southwestern Finnish city of Turku. Building owners are required by law to facilitate waste sorting. How much sorting depends on the number of apartments.

"In a kitchen cupboard, we've got separate bins for paper, carton, plastic, glass, metal, bio and mixed waste. We then empty them into larger containers just a few steps from our front door. People are so good at recycling that the outside bin for plastic often fills up quickly."

For the children, too, recycling is the obvious thing to do. Environmental education is an integral part of the

school curriculum. Ecological choices are taught from kindergarten onwards.

Some school canteens have also installed scales to measure the amount of food that is binned during lunch. It's an efficient way to make an important point.

"We hardly waste any food," says Terhi. "We plan our groceries carefully, and the kids know to take only as much food as they will eat. I'll have the remains of our dinner for lunch the following day."

Besides optimizing the amount of food they need, the Kivistös actively rescue food from going to waste.

"We use a waste food app that allows us to buy leftover food and groceries that are approaching their sell-by date from restaurants, bakeries and supermarkets. We pay half the price and reduce overall food wastage at the same time," Terhi explains.

The family tries to avoid excess consumption. Clothes and toys are bought from flea markets or recycled from siblings and cousins. When they buy something new, the parents invest in quality and durability.

What is no longer usable finds its way to collection sites for textiles, electronics, and so on.

"The things we no longer need can become useful for others," Terhi says. ●

**Terhi and Markus, and children Toivo (11) and Petra (6) go most places on foot. "We love to live in the city, with everything close by," Terhi says. "We have a car, but mainly use it to carry heavy equipment or books from our publishing house."**







### FINNS RECYCLE THEIR BOTTLES

In Finland, an impressive 95% of cans, 90% of PET plastic bottles and 88% of glass bottles are recovered. Returning bottles and cans is engrained in every Finn, encouraged by a nationwide deposit-refund system. With reverse vending machines in filling stations and even the smallest supermarkets, it is also very easy.

The beverage industry is an integral part of the cycle. Becoming a member of an approved deposit-refund scheme gives manufacturers and importers exemption from the beverage packaging tax of €0.51 per litre.



By Marina Ahlberg  
Photo Kreetta Järvenpää





# KNOWLEDGE SHARED IS KNOWLEDGE DOUBLED

How one woman's idea was upcycled into a community information centre.



**Anne Evilä** (39) used to be a scout so she knows that there's an answer for every problem. Three years back the question that filled her mind was how to build a spirit of community and commitment

to sustainability among the people of Kerava, her hometown of 36,000.

"As an individual, you want to act in an ecological way but it's not always easy," she says. "You need information and you need to make comparisons. In an already busy life this is tricky."

"That's when I came up with the idea of establishing a single place in the town where all the necessary information would be available. It wouldn't be a recycling centre, but a place where ideas are shared, and where things could be upcycled before they were discarded."

As a former councillor Evilä knew how town decisions are made. She has studied environmental technology and sustainable development, holds a degree in hospitality management and has also taken courses in business development and community education.

"In Finland, if you can make a good argument for a project, the authorities will give you the opportunity to try it out, and see what comes of it. I drafted a project plan for the leaders of Kerava and they liked it." She also obtained support from Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund.

Using her network of contacts, she put together a good team. An old country house, owned by Kerava but standing empty, was repurposed for the centre, which they named Jalotus.

"In talks with Kerava, we decided what services could be transferred to Jalotus. At present our activities consist of repairs, lending, exchange of goods and ways of improving self-sufficiency. We are also reviving the master-apprentice tradition."

Evilä believes that small things can make a difference to climate change but even more can

be achieved with major choices about how we live and travel. She has reorganised her own lifestyle to improve sustainability.

"Why would I need enormous amounts of personal space? I live together with more than just core family members. Under the same roof, but with their own rooms, are me and my two children **Hemmo** (5) and **Menni** (7), my mother **Marja-Liisa** (73) and a subtenant **Mira** (33).

**"AS AN INDIVIDUAL, YOU WANT TO ACT IN AN ECOLOGICAL WAY BUT IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY."**

"I have plenty of space in the yard, so I've let my friends come and grow things there. This has taught me about plants at the same time."

The family don't have a car and they use bicycles to get around. They try to buy only what they need and what will last. They rarely eat red meat. Evilä says she is currently reorganising her wardrobe:

"What I wear all the time, underwear and tops, is long-lasting and ecologically produced. When I need clothes for special occasions I hire them."

Her children have always had a close relationship with nature. Sheep, chickens and rabbits are familiar sights from the yard at Jalotus. Recycling and composting are a natural part of their everyday lives.

"A few years ago I was looking after my father, who was terminally ill," says Evilä. "It gave me time to think over what is important to me. I want to live with the people who are dear to me and I want to be able to tell my children that I have played my part in curbing climate change." ●

Anne Evilä (centre) distributes information about sustainable living in her home town. She has reorganised her own lifestyle to be sustainable, sharing her home with her mother Marja-Liisa, her children Hemmo and Menni and her subtenant Mira.



By Minna Takkunen  
Photo Roope Permanto



JASPER PÄÄKKÖNEN,  
BORN 1980

- Finnish actor, fly fisher environmentalist and entrepreneur
- Roles: Da 5 Bloods (upcoming), BlackKkKlansman (2018), Vikings (Netflix series, 2016–2018)



# RAISING AWARENESS

Fisherman, businessman, actor: In these three roles Jasper Pääkkönen combines his passions and missions.



innish actor **Jasper Pääkkönen** shot to Hollywood fame in 2018. Interestingly, his breakthrough role was the white supremacist character of Felix Kendrickson in **Spike Lee's** Oscar-winning

BlacKkKlansman. Next, Pääkkönen appears in Spike Lee's Vietnam-based Da 5 Bloods. Pääkkönen muses that Lee, whose films have always been popular in Finland, has an approach to justice and equality that resonates with Finnish values.

Acting entered his life when he was 18.

Pääkkönen's career started in a popular TV series, bringing him national fame.

From the beginning, he has utilized publicity to raise awareness on his huge passion – migratory fish. Landing international roles has brought him even more solid media attention helping him with the nature conservation work. In addition to his acting career, he has been working full time for years for healthier waters.

Pääkkönen was only two years old when he got his first fishing rod. What was it that made the little boy so enthusiastic about fishing?

"It must be a primal hunter-gatherer instinct," he says.

Watching the fly line curve through the air mesmerized the young boy. Apart from aesthetics and the emotional highs and lows, fly-fishing is about spending time in nature, emptying your mind, hanging out with friends and happily letting the rest of the world vanish for a while.

"A day out fly fishing can be perfect even if you don't catch anything."

As an example, he mentions a recent day spent fishing up North, made unforgettable by a very

muscular salmon. For a while it was his biggest catch ever. Then it got away.

"At that very moment, it felt like the biggest loss of my life," he laughs.

"Only time will tell if it's going to be a trauma or a positive experience."

He compares the incident to winning a gold medal in the Olympics, to something you've been building your whole life towards – only to lose it in a blink of an eye.

"Fly-fishing is sometimes also about experiencing extreme emotions."

The salmon was landed but wrestled to freedom before he could take its measurements or a proper photo.

"It probably weighed something between 17 and 20 kilos (38–45lbs)."

## RIVERS ARE GETTING RESTORED

While Pääkkönen admits to indulging his passion for fishing, it has also opened his eyes to endangered fish species and the poor state of rivers.

"All over the world, hydropower has destroyed rivers and their surroundings."

Migratory fish are amongst the greatest sufferers. "Fish have a low status in the scale of nature conservation, perhaps because they aren't cute and cuddly," says Pääkkönen, his gaze and voice getting more intense. Thanks to him and other relentless campaigners around the world, signs of positive change are on the horizon.

"I want my children and grandchildren to be able to enjoy clean nature and healthy rivers and fisheries." >



Recently he played a crucial role in the decision to remove the three dams from the River Hiitolanjoki in South Karelia, Finland.

"I believe this decision will lead to a chain reaction in Finland. Restoring rivers by removing dams is already an international movement."

#### **INTEGRITY, HONESTY, SAFETY**

Spending time outside Finland has made Pääkkönen appreciate some of the features of his national culture even more than before.

"On many scales, Finland tops the world," he says. "Our remote location hasn't stopped us doing right. In addition to the fresh air, clean water and vast areas of wild nature, literacy is high and we take care of those who are less fortunate. That's how it should be everywhere, but there are very few places where it actually is."

As well as social welfare, Pääkkönen is proud of the integrity and honesty of the nation. People keep their promises. "Actions speak louder than words" is a principle deeply ingrained in the Finnish soil.

"My American agent says visiting Finland calibrates his moral compass every time."

The same agent was amazed to see a baby sleeping outside in winter.

"It was a cold, snowy day and he couldn't get his head around how letting a baby sleep outside like that was possible. It's a Finnish tradition. Babies sleep really well outside in cool, crisp air, snuggled up in warm clothes in their strollers," Pääkkönen says with a smile. It was just another case of fresh air and safety beautifully combined together.

#### **SWEATING IT ALL OUT IN THE SAUNA**

Another field he says Finland should be pioneering is nature travel. Now working on a premium resort to be built in Lapland, he is keen to invest in sustainable architecture. Warm, inviting – and good for the environment.

Founder and owner of Löyly, an ecologically built and run seaside sauna in Helsinki, Pääkkönen thinks entrepreneurs should do more for the environment than simply what is required



**"ON MANY SCALES,  
FINLAND TOPS THE WORLD."**

**- JASPER PÄÄKKÖNEN**

by law. And indeed, carbon-neutral economy is high on the agenda of many companies.

"I think it's our duty to act as responsibly as we can. The combination of a sauna and a restaurant alone wouldn't have earned Löyly a ranking on TIME magazine's 100 Greatest Places list."

When he is in Finland, sauna is part of the daily schedule: "For us Finns, sauna isn't really a luxury, but a unique, normal part of our daily lives. We have a special emotional connection to it. Sauna helps to sweat out all the worldly worries and stress. You haven't really visited Finland if you haven't enjoyed a sauna." And a traditional wood-burning one, at that. ●



## PROFESSOR KIRSTI LONKA

Faculty of Educational Sciences,  
University of Helsinki, has trained  
teachers in educational psychology  
since 2005. She is the author of  
"Phenomenal learning from Finland"  
(2018), coming out in Chinese and  
Korean in 2020.



# HOW TO MAINTAIN WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION



inland is a rare country in the sense that the profession of teacher is highly appreciated and sought after;

it is difficult to get into teacher education programmes that are at the level of Master degree. There is great worldwide interest in the latest developments in Finnish schools. Finland's PISA results are not the only topic of interest. The country also does well in various rankings of happiness, life satisfaction and work life balance.

Finnish schools have many unusual features. We get good results with less resources than many other countries. We also apply the principle of inclusive classrooms and non-streaming until the age of 15 (no private schools and no tuition fees). Non-academic subjects like music, the arts, and sports are a part of the school curriculum. Our short school days and long holidays are also a topic of interest:

how can we come up with excellent results without putting unreasonable pressure on pupils? The children start school at the age of seven. Prior to that, the main way of learning is free play under the guidance of pedagogically trained adults. The Finnish philosophy is not based on "output thinking" or standardised testing, and there are no high-stake examinations before the age of 18. We respect our well-educated and autonomous teachers, and no school inspections take place.

There are many challenges for education on the path towards globalisation, digitalisation and automatization. Schools around the world need to be reformed, because these challenges are globally shared. In Finland too, we will have to constantly update our precious schooling system. This calls for intensive reforms in teacher education and schools. We revise the national school curriculum every tenth year.

The latest reform, begun in 2016, covers preschool and comprehensive schools and is proceeding towards high schools. It emphasizes 21st Century competences and interdisciplinary projects, often in the form of phenomenon-based learning (students study a topic or concept in a holistic approach instead of in a subject-based approach) to promote creativity and thinking skills. We are not giving up subject-matter teaching, but instead, putting the knowledge into an increasingly meaningful context to ensure that all citizens will have the skills they need in the future.

All this calls for new ways of supporting teachers' life-long professional development and pedagogical innovations in teacher training. Finland is launching many new education export projects to develop and promote the joy of effective learning for all. ●



Text and photos by Juha-Pekka Honkanen, Päivi Leinonen and Matleena Ylikoski

# HAPPY PEOPLE

In international surveys of happiness, Finland consistently ranks as one of the top countries\*. We are always curious to know what others think of us, so we asked visitors if they had figured out the secret to our happiness.



**DOMINIK PIEPER, GERMANY**  
**ROMAIN CADIER, FRANCE**

"We came for exchange studies for four months and after only a few days it already seems that the renowned Finnish education system is very good."



**VALERIA WEIHMULLER**  
**NEW ZEALAND**

"I have met Finnish people through my work and travels. I think they are warm and genuine and I feel welcome here. I think that the more relaxed you are, the more connected you are to yourself and when that happens, the more you can connect with people around you."



**THE WANG FAMILY**  
**CHINA**

"People appear to be happy and enjoy life. The Finns are cool and friendly."



**VOLKER, KIRA AND NORA LEBENS**  
**GERMANY**

"It's hard to tell if people are happier in Finland than in other countries. But I'm sure that all the daylight in the summer gives people strength."

\*Finland ranks among top three in the world over several indicators, e.g. best governance, political and civil freedom, education, global prosperity, social justice, fairest country for children, best country to be a mother.





### EDUARDO FUENTES ZABALO SPAIN

"It seems to me that in Spain many people get their happiness from material things. But for me – it made me so happy to visit Finnish national parks. There was forest everywhere!"



### SANDRA DEVESA, SPAIN YI-WEI WANG, TAIWAN

Yi-Wei: "Nature is everywhere and you can breathe without worrying about pollution. This makes for a high quality of life. People also seem to have more free time than in Taiwan."

Sandra: "In Spain we talk loudly and laugh more but does it make us happier? There are different ways to share your life with your loved ones."

### KRISTOF FENYVESI HUNGARY

"I've lived in Jyväskylä and worked at the university for more than ten years. In Finland I've found lots of things that I like and share; humanity, modesty, safety, trust and respect for others and nature. These values are projected by social institutions like day-care and schools. It makes me very happy to live and raise my children here."



### CHRISTIAN KÖHL GERMANY

"We have been touring Lapland for three weeks and everyone we met has been very friendly but a bit quiet. It isn't a bad thing not to talk all the time, though. But Finland the happiest country in the world? I'm surprised!"



By Sami Anteroine

Photo Samuli Skantsi, iStock

# CRACK THE CODE

Genetics researcher Mark Daly wants to stop cancer in its tracks, and says the best place to do it is Helsinki.

Mark Daly believes that the Finnish research ecosystem for health sciences is simply unmatched in the world.





Professor Mark Daly believes Finnish health technology is well positioned to make its mark in international markets. The Director of the Institute for Molecular Medicine Finland (FIMM) sees the big picture.

"Finland has a strong history in technology development and investment," he says. "What's more, you already have the right legal structure. This is often a prerequisite for scientific breakthroughs in our field."

Daly knows a thing or ten about the frontiers of scientific research and innovation. During his 20-year career he has made major contributions to human genetics and genomics. A couple years ago, after long and productive periods at Harvard Medical School, and most recently at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, he decided to head north and push the boundaries of genetic research. He arrived at FIMM in February 2018.

But what on earth can the University of Helsinki offer that MIT and Harvard can't?

"When you look at things such as technology, resources and brain power, you can't beat the Boston area," he says. "But there is a research ecosystem here in Finland that simply does not exist in the US."

#### THE NORTH REMEMBERS

Daly marvels at Finland's comprehensive national healthcare system, which not only collects information on patients and archives the data, but also exists in a legal framework that allows the data to be utilized in research. "Outside of the Nordic countries, this just can't be done," he says.

The strength of Finland's biobank legislation is its empowering, innovation-positive framework that, at the same time, contains multiple protective mechanisms to make sure everything is done in an ethically and legally correct way. It is safe for biobank customers to deal with the Finns. People who provide samples have their rights and self-determination respected.

Daly describes the Finns as pro-science, with enough trust in the authorities to make all this a reality. He also praises legislators for passing laws that are forward-looking. Finnish biobank laws are very progressive and support the scientific cause, he says.

The recently initiated FinnGen research project rises from that ecosystem. FinnGen integrates genomic and medical registry information on 500,000 individuals in all – meaning about 10% of the Finnish population. Daly calls FinnGen one of the foremost biobank genetics projects in the world.

"A project such as FinnGen is only possible in very few places," he says.

Daly is also impressed by the government's decision to establish a full-blown genome centre to boost the development of personalized medicine and public health.

"Finland is ideally set up to launch a genome centre and to be at the forefront of defining responsible and impactful

clinical use of genome information." This means that Finnish research can really make a difference – around the world.

#### TREASURES OF THE DEEP

When you start data mining in the genomic vaults – using AI tools, for instance – there's no telling what solutions you may uncover. "There are tremendous opportunities to boost national healthcare, starting with better means to predict disease," says Daly.

He perceives a variety of ways in which partnership with the Finnish population can advance research and industry in a world-leading way. By the same token, Finnish people will be the first to receive the medical benefits of genome information in clinical settings. This knowledge will then cascade into other countries, too.

Daly envisions FIMM as the "pre-eminent institution in human genetics in Europe", spurred on by the partnership between the University of Helsinki and Broad Institute, as well as the Nordic EMBL (European Molecular Biology Laboratory) Partnership in Molecular Medicine.

"Working through these partnerships, there will be an outstanding opportunity for FIMM, and research throughout Finland, in the coming years," Daly says. FIMM is poised to make a big splash in the scientific world, being powered by – in part – its multi-cultural research teams which combine expertise from various parts of the planet.

#### SUPERSTAR POWER

For the Finnish genetics field, having Daly on board is equivalent to a Helsinki basketball team adding **LeBron James** to their roster. Daly has, for instance, made seminal discoveries in understanding the structure of the human genome and developing software tools to analyze the impact of genetic variations on various diseases. He's also the most cited scientist in Finland, with over 130,000 citations under his belt.

## "FINNISH BIOBANK LAWS ARE VERY PROGRESSIVE AND SUPPORT THE SCIENTIFIC CAUSE."

To Daly's mind, people should not suffer needlessly when there are cures and better treatments just around the corner.

"We can take the first steps towards a longer, healthier life right here in Helsinki," he says. And while science is not a 100-metre dash, some results should be visible in just a few years.

"By the mid-2020's, we will have concrete solutions allowing us to catch disease and intervene early." ●





## FOUR FOR THE FUTURE

### ICARE

Icare has invented a new, easy patient-friendly method of measuring intraocular pressure. This technology is based on the rebound measuring principle, in which a very lightweight probe is used to make a momentary contact with the cornea. The Icare rebound tonometer is a major medical breakthrough that has obtained worldwide official clearances (CE, US FDA, CFDA) and tens of thousands of satisfied users in more than 75 countries.

Icare Finland Ltd is a part of Finland's Revenio Group, a listed company, and received the National Internationalization Award in 2018.

 [icaretonometer.com](http://icaretonometer.com)

### NEURO EVENT LABS

Founded in 2015, Neuro Event Labs is on a mission to help epilepsy patients and their doctors with technology. The company's innovative solution utilizes the latest computer vision and machine-learning technologies, combining them to solve real problems in epilepsy.

Neuro Event Labs' product, Nelli, helps doctors to better diagnose and monitor patients, especially in home environments as part of the patient's normal life. AI-powered, objective automatic epilepsy monitoring enables in-home observations with few constraints, making it possible to tailor personalized treatment for each patient.

 [neuroeventlabs.com](http://neuroeventlabs.com)

### BLUEPRINT GENETICS

Founded in 2012, Blueprint Genetics is a genetic testing company based in Helsinki, Seattle and Dubai. It has a customer base spanning over 70 countries. It provides world-class genetic diagnostics and clinical interpretation for rare inherited diseases in 14 medical specialties.

Blueprint Genetics performs high-quality genetics testing for a global clinical community. The company brings together a state-of-the-art laboratory process, the latest sequencing technology, AI-powered data-crunching tools and a holistic customer experience approach in an ambitious effort to "change the mainstream healthcare of tomorrow".

 [blueprintgenetics.com](http://blueprintgenetics.com)

### EVONDOS

Founded in 2007, Evondos utilizes robots to guide clients in correct medication. The service ensures a high standard of medical adherences by guiding homecare clients in always taking the prescribed dose of the correct medicine at the right time. The service uses mechanical dose distribution sachets provided by a pharmacy, reading the time for administering medication from the sachet's text field.

Evondos has its own production plant (in the southern Finnish town of Salo) for manufacturing medicine-dispensing robots. The company is an industry pioneer in home-based robotics and automated medicine dispensing. So far, the Evondos service has assisted in correctly dispensing over 2 million doses of medicine.

 [evondos.com](http://evondos.com)



# GOING DEEP, AIMING HIGH

**Rooted in world-class science, Finnish health tech companies seek new horizons.**



Health technology continues to be one of the most rapidly growing industries in Finland. It is also one of the country's fastest growing high-tech export sectors. In 2018, the value of health technology product exports exceeded 2.3 billion euros. The trade surplus was more than a billion euros. The sector's exports were 3.4% higher than in the previous year.

Managing Director **Saara Hassinen** from Healthtech Finland says that expertise in the field is anchored in hard science.

"We've had a lot of spin-off companies emerging from university campuses," she says. "Also, health tech companies have always been able to grow and adapt with the times, constantly looking for new opportunities."

Artificial intelligence is one tool that companies have been quick to deploy. "It's no coincidence that GE decided to launch its international AI centre here." Other hot technologies include the Internet of Things (IoT), ambitious automation and robotics.

## GROWING GAINS

This forward-looking mindset has resulted in several export success stories. In the

past 20 years, Finnish health-tech exports have increased five-fold, creating a 12-billion-euro trade surplus. The sector is also a major employer, with over 13,000 people working in health tech in Finland.

"We have some big companies that are already out there in the world, but what we need to do now is to encourage the smaller players to pursue more active exporting."

Hassinen points to several areas of strength, ranging from various forms of measuring and imaging to data mining. By international standards, local health tech companies engage in extensive research and development in order to keep their cutting edge sharp.

## SECRETS OF THE GENOME

She is excited about the emerging National Genome Centre, expected to be operational in the early 2020s. The centre can provide data on people's genetic makeup, helping us to make better personalized choices, to screen for likely diseases, to specify diagnostics, and to choose the best and most effective treatments.

"We have put a lot of effort into the national genome strategy and it's starting to pay off," she says.

The genome centre is planned to serve as a one-stop service point for

healthcare operators, research institutes and companies in all matters related to genomics. It will steer the development of a national genomic database and support the efficient use of the database in patient treatment and scientific research.

## OPEN ACCESS FOR RESEARCHERS

Hassinen is pleased with a new law that consolidates regulations on how health and social data can be used (Act on the Secondary Use of Health and Social Data, 2019). This is intended to facilitate effective, safe processing and access to personal social and health data for steering, supervision, research, statistics and development in the health and social sector.

A second objective is to guarantee an individual's legitimate expectations as well as their rights and freedoms when personal data is processed.

"Internationally speaking, this is a unique law that allows companies to use health data for R&D and innovation purposes," says Hassinen. "When you look at the current field of health tech, this law makes so many things possible."



**"WE HAVE PUT A LOT OF EFFORT INTO THE NATIONAL GENOME STRATEGY AND IT'S STARTING TO PAY OFF."**

– SAARA HASSINEN





# KEEP IT SHORT

By Päivi Brink

Photo Lehtikuva



## FLEXITIME FORERUNNER

Finland leads the world in flexible work. Thanks to the new Working Hours Act 2020, the majority of full-time employees have the right to decide when and where they work for at least half of their working hours. For ten years, more than 90% of Finnish companies have offered flexitime arrangements – more than anywhere else in the world. Flexitime and remote working have many benefits: it is easier to combine work and family life, there is less work-related traffic and most people are more productive. ●

 [tem.fi/en](https://tem.fi/en)

Photo JMM Arkitehdit



Photo Ismo Peckarinen / Lehtikuva



## WILD AND FREE TRAVEL DESTINATION

Travel to Finland is growing at an annual rate of about 10%. The attractions are peace and quiet, unspoiled nature, safety, purity and authenticity. Finland is an excellent wildlife travel destination with diverse landscapes. More than 73% of its surface area is covered by forests and there are 187,888 lakes. The 40 national parks are open to everyone all year round. No wonder the country was recently selected by the Global Wildlife Travel Index as the best wildlife destination in the world. ●

 [visitfinland.com](https://visitfinland.com)

## HAPPINESS IS CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE.

## SYMBIOSIS AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI



Finland's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai is called Symbiosis. Its main theme is happiness, or more precisely: Future Happiness: Symbiosis of pure nature and technology. A sense of connection to nature, a circular economy and innovation are the main solutions for future happiness, says Finland, which was famously chosen as the happiest nation in the world twice in a row. There are 192 country pavilions at the World Expo, which aims to create collaborations and innovations. Happiness is confidence in the future. Expo 2020 Dubai: from 20 October 2020 to 10 April 2021. ●

 [expo2020dubai.com/en](https://expo2020dubai.com/en)



Photo Flow Festival / Petri Anttila



## FLOW: A CARBON-NEUTRAL CITY FESTIVAL

The annual Flow Festival is a fantastic, innovative music and arts festival in Helsinki. It is also one of the world's first carbon-neutral festivals and has an extensive sustainability programme. To minimise carbon dioxide emissions Flow uses green electricity and recycles and reuses all waste. About 80% of festival visitors say they've noticed the responsibility programme. Have fun and preserve our planet! ●

[flowfestival.com/en](https://flowfestival.com/en)

## EXPERIENCE THE FIRST HELSINKI BIENNIAL

The international Helsinki Biennial will be held in the unique surroundings of Vallisaari Island just off Helsinki. The event will present about 30 topical artists, whose artworks will engage in a dialogue with the island. Vallisaari was only recently opened to the public for recreational use. The sustainable biennial is produced by Helsinki Art Museum and is free to attend. Helsinki Biennial, Vallisaari from 12 June to 27 September 2020. ●

[helsinkibiennaali.fi/en](https://helsinkibiennaali.fi/en)



Photo Matti Pyykkö



Photo Jussi Hellsten



## OODI: THE BEST NEW PUBLIC LIBRARY IN THE WORLD

Helsinki's new Central Library Oodi was built to celebrate the centenary of Finland's independence, and its name translates as Ode. With some 17,000 square metres of floor space, it is a lively meeting place and an energetic living room for the book-loving nation. Side by side with traditional library services are a movie theatre and a playground. Oodi was voted the best new public library in the world in 2019 by the Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. ●

[oodihelsinki.fi/en](https://oodihelsinki.fi/en)



By Jussi-Pekka Aukia  
Photos Jarmo Katila

DALIA STASEVSKA,  
BORN 1984

- Finnish conductor
- Currently principal guest conductor with the BBC Symphony Orchestra





# A COUNTRY OF CRAZY IDEAS

Finnish musicians Dalia Stasevska and Lauri Porra are a couple who enjoy breaking musical boundaries.

**D**alia Stasevska is an accomplished conductor whose career is climbing to new heights. **Lauri Porra** is a bassist who has toured the world as a member of the power metal band Stratovarius and other assemblages. He's also a composer who flexibly combines the stylistic devices of the classical symphony orchestra with other musical styles. He is equally at home with jazz, film and concert music.

Stasevska is the first musical professional of her family. Porra is a fourth-generation musician.

"I admire Finland's enthusiasm for wacky ideas," he says. "It expresses itself in original artistic concepts and provides the world with entirely new genre combinations, whether it's an opera singer in a heavy band or a cellist playing heavy music."

"Finns are always inventing something strange, a crazy twist that is really exciting," Stasevska adds. >

Dalia Stasevska continues in the tradition of top Finnish conductors such as Paavo Berglund, Leif Segerstam, Osmo Vänskä, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Hannu Lintu, Susanna Mälkki, Sakari Oramo, Mikko Franck, Pietari Inkinen, Santtu-Matias Rouvali and Klaus Mäkelä.



## STRONG MUSICAL ROOTS

Stasevska arrived in Finland as a five-year-old. Her family roots are in Ukraine and Lithuania. She began as a violinist but during her studies at the Sibelius Academy she changed to the viola and finally ended up as a conductor.

"My grandfather was a famous sculptor in Ukraine and my parents are visual artists but the family appreciates other cultural disciplines," she says. "Father even studied piano alongside the visual arts. It was perfectly logical for them to put a violin in my hand and say this will be your profession.

"They were spot on. I loved playing from the very first moment. It was a new world for me, of which my parents knew nothing."

Stasevska studied conducting under two legendary Finnish conductors **Jorma Panula** and **Leif Segerstam**. She graduated with the highest distinction from the Sibelius Academy in 2012.

She has been busy conducting in the Nordic countries and elsewhere in Europe. At the start of 2019 she became principal guest conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, one of the world's most prestigious.

Porra's mother is a retired oboist, his father an amateur jazz musician. His grandfather was a conductor. His grandmother's father was the famous Finnish composer **Jean Sibelius**, perhaps the most significant symphonist of the 20th century.

"For me it was constructive to be born into a family in the orbit of a major composer," says Porra. "Above all, it meant growing up in an environment that revered art and music, and where people understood that music can be a profession. I set off to seek my identity through instruments and different genres. Eventually I found my own place in it."

Over the past ten years he has composed more for the traditional orchestra. He has written music for eight films and countless TV series. On his album *Entropia*, issued in 2018, the symphony orchestra soloists are Porra himself, on the electric bass, and the Finnish rapper **Paperi-T**.

The major event of autumn 2019 was the first public performance of *Flyover Symphony*, composed for symphony orchestra and Porra's *Flyover* band.

"I'm disciplined in my approach to work and most of my composition follows the principle of learning by earning," he says.

"Fortunately I've had good colleagues around me to explain how to do the things I want to do.

"Of course at home we have a constant dialogue going on. We listen to the music that one or the other of us finds interesting and then we talk about it."

## GENRE BORDERS ARE POINTLESS

Porra has nothing against modern concert music derived from theoretical origins. At the same time, he thinks it is refreshing that there are also works that draw on everything else that has happened in music over the last century.

"They are really not mutually exclusive. It's fantastic to live at a time when you can dream up wonderful things that someone will agree to play and others will be interested to come and hear."

Stasevska also rejects the need to categorise herself as a maker of 'serious' classical music only.

"I want to make interesting music and projects," she says. "I want to broaden the boundaries of good music. Film music can coexist with symphonies and so can game music or folk music. And there's no need for confrontation with artists who specifically want to conduct, say, Brahms or Bruckner. That is fantastic music, too.

"Art is an enormous playground containing a vast amount of talent. Why restrict yourself? The main thing is that there are interesting productions, ideas and people with whom we can try to create common narratives and experiences." ●

## A NATION OF MUSIC SCHOOLS

Finland has almost a hundred colleges of music, a network that provides 60 000 students – from pre-school to young adults – with the opportunity for normative musical education under trained instructors. Their goal is to facilitate lifelong musical recreation but a few percent of students apply each year for professional studies. Music colleges are generally maintained by municipalities or associations with local and central government support. Their work is complemented at various levels by private and public educational institutions.

Musical professionals are educated at a comprehensive network of conservatories. The highest level is provided by the renowned Sibelius Academy, established in 1882 and now part of the University of Arts Helsinki.



LAURI PORRA,  
BORN 1977

- Finnish composer and musician, bassist with the renowned power metal band Stratovarius
- Great-grandson of Jean Sibelius who is the most respected and best known Finnish composer of all time



Lauri Porra's most recent major composition is the Entropia concerto for orchestra and electric bass (2018). The composition brings together two foreign elements, a symphony orchestra and a bass guitar.



By Päivi Leinonen

# WOOD WORKS

Light, strong, warm and environmentally friendly, wood is making a comeback in construction.

Photo Marc Goodwin

OF FINLAND'S  
SURFACE AREA,  
78% IS MANAGED  
FOREST LAND.

## A LANDMARK WITH CONTRAST

**Suvela Chapel, Espoo**  
**Designed by OOPEAA**  
**Completed in 2016**

The sculpted silhouette of Suvela Chapel is a new landmark in its district, presenting an intriguing face from each new vantage point. The copper facade contrasts strongly with the wooden surfaces within. Its inner courtyard is intimate and inviting.

Wood has always been used to build individual homes in Finland. In recent years its use in multi-storey and public buildings has also increased, thanks to the development of versatile, cost-effective timber and board elements. Consumers also appreciate wood as a traditional and ecological material that gives rooms a warm atmosphere.





## THE VIEW

### **Café Nokkala Lighthouse, Espoo**

**Designed by Tapartia**

**Completed in 2016**

Café Nokkala Lighthouse presents modern wood construction in maritime surroundings. The popular café offers tasty treats and unobstructed sea views. The frame of the building employs non-settling logs, which facilitate large panoramic windows with modern, light joints.

Photo Honkarakenne



Photo Loma Graphics Oy



## INSPIRATION FROM THE FOREST

### **Sibelius Hall, Lahti**

**Designed by Hannu Tikka and Kimmo Lintula**

**Completed in 2000**

The impressive wooden concert and congress centre is located on the lake waterfront. This was the biggest public wooden building created in Finland for more than 100 years. According to the architects, the shape was chiefly inspired by the forests of Finland.

## SPACE FOR PLAY

### **Omenapuisto day-care centre, Helsinki**

**Designed by Häkli Architects**

**Completed in 2013**

There is a playfulness about the details of this creche, both inside and out. Natural slopes are utilised for slides and climbing areas. The wooden cladding has been left in its natural state so it will turn grey in the course of time, except for the white painted patterns. The paved internal courtyard opening onto the foyer has a ceiling with a large circular opening.



Photo Jussi Tiainen



Photo Wellu Härmäläinen

## A MODERN WOODEN TOWN

### **Linnanfältti district, Turku**

**Designed by Schauman Architects**

**Completed in 2019**

Construction of this new low-rise district of wooden buildings began in 2016. Several firms of architects were involved. Its modern design contrasts with the ancient castle of Turku, from which the area takes its name. Wooden room elements give multidimensionality to the facade at 8 Fleminginkatu Street.



## THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL FILLING STATION

**Niemenharju Rest Area, Pihtipudas**  
**Designed by Studio Puisto Architects,**  
**Completed in 2016**

The rest area at Niemenharju is located on the E75 highway at a beautiful spot next to a large pond and a ridge. The main structure is comprised of 24 treelike columns supporting a huge canopy that curves upwards towards the road. The buildings here include a restaurant, a convenience store, sleeping areas and even a sauna.

The filling station was ranked the world's most beautiful by the London-based architecture website DesignCurial.



Photo Marc Goodwin

Photo Mikko Auerniitty



## OPEN STRUCTURE

**Vihantasalmi Bridge, Mäntyharju**  
**Designed by Rantakokko & Co Oy**  
**Completed in 1999**

The bridge crossing the Vihantasalmi Straits on highway no. 5 replaced an old run-down steel bridge. The design successfully combines clean structural lines and practicality, but at the same time is respectful of the traditions of wood construction.

## A QUIET SPOT IN THE MIDST OF CITY

**Chapel of Silence, Kamppi, Helsinki**  
**Designed by K2S Architects**  
**Completed in 2012**

The Chapel of Silence is located in Kamppi in the heart of the city. It provides a quiet space in the midst of urban hustle and bustle. The warmth of the enclosing wood is a strong element in the tranquillity of the bowl-shaped building.



Photo Katri Saarela





## PICTURESQUE STREETS

### Old Rauma

The town of Rauma in Western Finland was founded in 1442, making it the third oldest in the country. Old Rauma is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the largest unified wooden town in the Nordic countries. Approximately 700 people live in the 70-acre area, which contains 600 buildings.

## BELOVED CHURCH

**Petäjävesi Old Church, Petäjävesi**  
**Designed by church builder Jaakko**  
**Klemetinpoika Leppänen**  
**Completed in 1765**

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Old Church at Petäjävesi, Central Finland, was built by land-owning peasants from 1763 to 1765 and displays their masterful carving skills. It is beloved by the residents of Petäjävesi, and thousands of enchanted tourists visit it every year.



Photo Petäjävesi Old Church



By Maria Öfverström  
Photos The manufacturers

# RECYCLED, PRACTICAL AND BEAUTIFUL

People who care about their carbon footprint also check the source of what they buy, and opt for the ecological alternative.

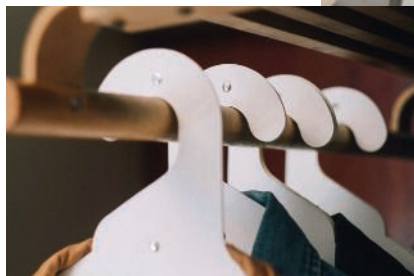




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### 01. MYSSYFARM'S WOOL HATS

"Every Myssy is knitted by a real Myssy Grandma in Pöytyä. We get our unique hand-dyed yarn from our own herd of Finnsheep."

[myssyfarmi.fi](http://myssyfarmi.fi)

### 02. SUKARWOOD HANGERS

"100% recyclable and reusable hangers are eco-friendly alternatives to products based on fossil fuel, and combine wood fibres with design."

[sukarwood.fi/en](http://sukarwood.fi/en)

### 03. ORTHEX

"Flower pots, laundry baskets, buckets and bins are made from post-consumer plastic waste."

[orthexgroup.com](http://orthexgroup.com)

### 04. ASMI MÄN BÄKKI

"ASMI's Man Bag is made of drive belts and bicycle inner tubes, so it laughs at wet and stormy weather."

[asmi.fi](http://asmi.fi)

### 05. HOME BAGS

"The felt material is 100% PET plastic bottles recycled mechanically."

[vilikkala.fi](http://vilikkala.fi)

### 06. OHTO NORDIC HOME, KAITA HANGING SIDE TABLE

"The hanging side table made of Finnish certified birch plywood is designed and manufactured in Finland. The surface of this product is treated with products that are environmentally friendly and ecological."

[ohtonordichome.com](http://ohtonordichome.com)

### 07. KIKS LEAN JACKET

"Streamlined hooded jacket made of weatherproof army surplus wool. All the leftover materials are sourced from Finnish companies and individuals; some of them are originally made in Finland and some overseas."

[kiks.fi](http://kiks.fi)

### 08. VIAKO

"By using Viako, you perform an eco-friendly action twice: buying a recycled item that can be returned after use."

[viako.fi](http://viako.fi)





More things  
you should and  
shouldn't know:  
 [finland.fi](https://finland.fi)

## WHY NOT MIX NEEDLEWORK WITH HEAVY METAL MUSIC?

Finland is full of interesting things to see and surprising events to experience.  
What better example than the Heavy Metal Knitting World Championships  
in the eastern town of Joensuu?

 [heavymetalknitting.fi](https://heavymetalknitting.fi)