

Consistently sustainable and aesthetic and comfortable to a maximum degree – HORTUS – a pioneering project

There are good reasons why the HORTUS office building in Allschwil near Basel has received numerous awards. Its energy concept comprising an extremely low carbon footprint, its innovative health-promoting aesthetic and its efficiency inspire enthusiasm. The monograph entitled *HORTUS. Offices for the future* (Christoph Merian Verlag) presents the genesis and use of the building. Additionally, the publication enlarges on current scientific insights, among them, "healing architecture", inspiring work environments, circular economy – keyword cradle-to-cradle – and building materials of the future. These aspects are illustrated by comparative international examples and lots of photographs. The illustrations enable readers to access the function and character of the HORTUS building and grasp these emotionally.

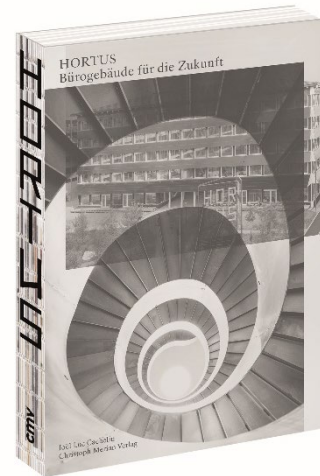
HORTUS is an acronym: House of Research, Technology, Utopia and Sustainability. The name of the building also alludes to the Latin term *hortus*, meaning garden, as a place of growth and recuperation. The Work Garden was developed by the contractor SENN, a real estate project developer in St. Gallen, together with architects Herzog & de Meuron and the civil engineering company ZPF (both based in Basel). It was opened in summer 2025 in the Switzerland *Innovation Park Basel Area Main Campus*.

How can a building comprising about 10 000 square metres of floor space for more than six hundred users become a source of energy, creativity and well-being in the world of work? Once completed, it was obvious that it could: it functions. For example, the building will provide more energy than it uses over its total life cycle. More wood than concrete, as well as clay and recycled paper, ensure that the total amount of embodied energy is kept to a minimum, while at the same time the energy produced by way of photovoltaics is maximized.

The aspiration behind the HORTUS building is to link technology and nature and to always conceive construction in combination with work, life and the logistics of people and things – including building materials. The book documents the successful implementation of this in an informative and inspiring way. Concept, design and printing of the two editions (one German, one English) adheres to the ecological level targeted. It goes without saying that HORTUS also discloses its carbon footprint.

About the author:

Joël Luc Cachelin (* 1981) is a futurologist and founder of *Wissensfabrik*. He advises and supports entrepreneurs on future issues, and focuses on innovation, sustainability and work environments.



Joël Luc Cachelin

HORTUS. Offices for the future

224 pages, 89 mainly colour illustrations, softcover, 17 x 23,5 cm, German/Englisch

© 2026 Christoph Merian Verlag

CHF 49.– / EUR 49.–

ISBN 978-3-03969-072-5

Printable files of the book cover and other illustrations are to be found in the Media Release relating to this publication under:

merianverlag.ch/presse

Should you have any questions please contact:

Andrea Bikle
Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
Christoph Merian Verlag
St. Alban-Vorstadt 12
4052 Basel
Schweiz
Tel. +41 61 226 33 50
a.bikle@merianverlag.ch

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