

Oryza

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The WATER issue

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MAKING A SEINE

Istanbul may already have Uber boats plying the Bosphorus, but Paris is set to have its very own futuristic “flying” river taxis as early as this summer. Known as SeaBubbles, the vessels will ferry up to five passengers at a time along the Seine at speeds of up to 30kph. One day, once the river’s navigation rules allow it, they may even be pilotless.

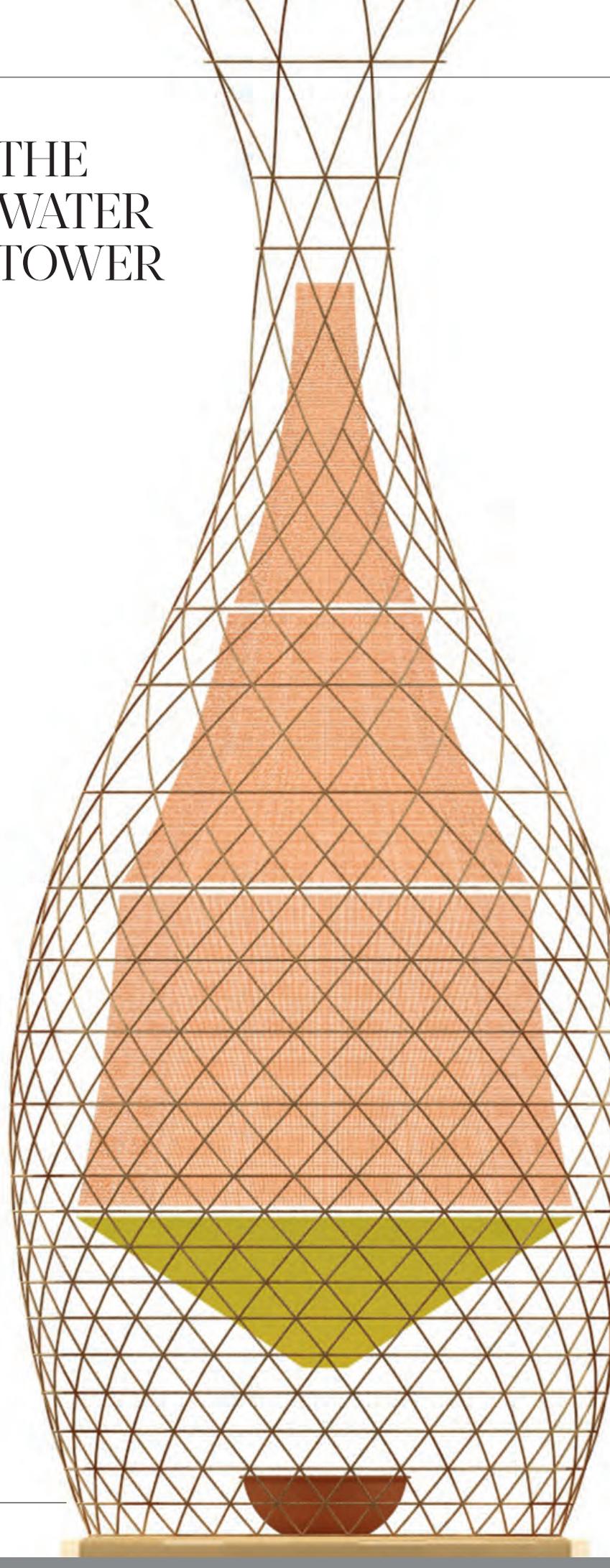
Designed by French sailor Alain Thébault and Swedish surfer Anders Bringdal, who had previously invented the Hydroptère levitating sailing boat, the SeaBubble is a response to the Paris mayor’s office’s concerns about the city’s pollution and traffic congestion. “You’ve got packed roads and empty waterways in a lot of cities – there’s an obvious opportunity,” Thébault has said in an interview. “We want to build water taxis.”

Made of fibreglass and high-density foam, the SeaBubbles are silent, solar powered and are designed to create no wake, thereby

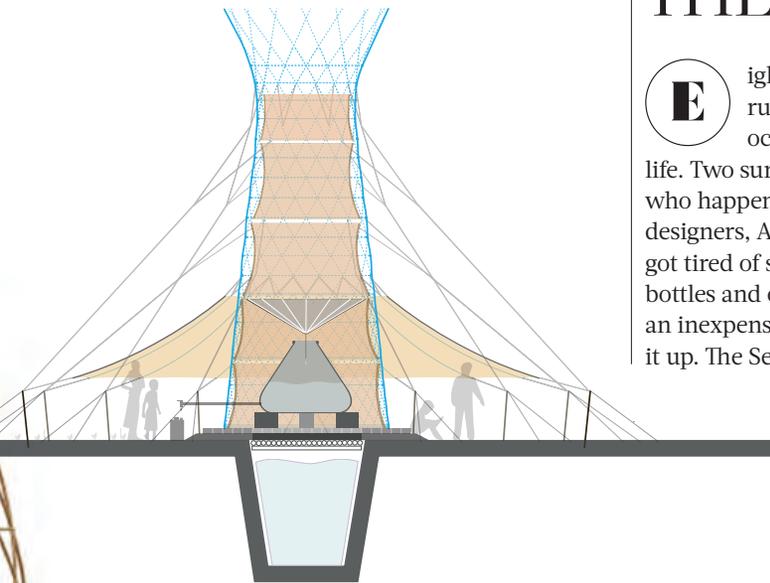
minimising erosion to the riverbank. As they work up speed, the SeaBubbles rise up to around 60cm above the water’s surface. Powered by two electrically driven propellers attached to their rear skirts, the SeaBubbles will recharge at docking stations that will double as charging points. Thébault also hopes to identify technology that will allow SeaBubbles to be summoned by an app on a smartphone. seabubbles.fr

“Paris is set to have its very own futuristic ‘flying’ river taxis as early as this summer”

THE WATER TOWER



Rarely are utilitarian objects beautiful, but in designing his Warka Water tower for harvesting water from moisture in the atmosphere, Italian architect Arturo Vittori has achieved both. Quick and cheap to assemble without power tools, the lightweight 12m bamboo tower supports a polyester mesh inside and was inspired by a visit to Ethiopia, where men and women walk for kilometres to collect water. Rain, fog and dew condenses against the mesh and trickles down a funnel into a reservoir at the base of the structure. The tower can harvest up to 100 litres of clean drinking water a day and a fabric canopy prevents the liquid from then evaporating. warkawater.org



THE SEABIN

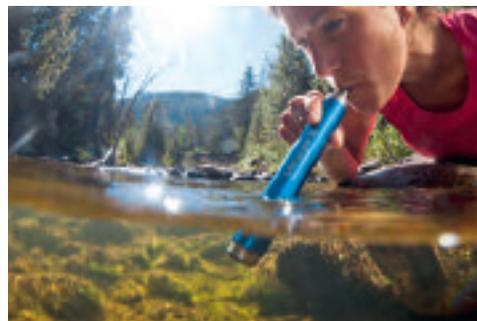
Eight million tonnes of plastic rubbish ends up in our seas and oceans, endangering birds and sea life. Two surfers from Western Australia, who happen also to be sailors and industrial designers, Andrew Turton and Pete Ceglinski got tired of sharing the sea with plastic bottles and other rubbish, and have designed an inexpensive and simple solution to clean it up. The Seabin is a floating rubbish

container that uses a water pump to suck paper, plastic, detergent and even oil into a natural-fibre basket, which can then be lifted out and emptied. It can be used in corners of ports where the tide deposits rubbish, and where “trash boats” cannot reach. Eventually, they want to manufacture the bins out of the plastic they have fished from the sea, but their dream is a world in which the invention is no longer needed. seabinproject.com



OOHO! THE EDIBLE WATER BLOB

An innovative – and edible – “water bubble” could well be the answer to mountains of unrecycled plastic bottles. Designed by London-based start-up Skipping Rocks Lab, Ooho! is made from a seaweed product and calcium chloride, set around ice. skippingrockslab.com



LIFESTRAW

Designed for purifying water in developing countries and during humanitarian emergencies, the LifeStraw is a 31cm by 3cm plastic tube, which renders water safe for drinking using fibre filters instead of chemicals. It is now increasingly becoming a consumer product. lifestraw.com



LIGHTSABER UMBRELLA

Exercise close combat with raindrops using this *Star Wars* lightsaber umbrella as you walk home on a rainy evening. The warm glow from the umbrella’s handle may not deflect blaster bolts, but it will make sure the force to battle wet weather is with you. You can even change the light colour.