

# el Periòdic News

INTERVIEW

## Rodolphe Bouin

CEO OF FUTUROSCOPE

«Futuroscope offers a diverse but always immersive experience, using cutting-edge technology»

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ESCALDES - ENGORDANY

Futuroscope was founded 37 years ago by a French politician from the Poitiers region who had the foresight to develop the leisure industry. This area was not a tourist destination, and he intended to create a center of attraction and employment opportunities for its inhabitants.

The foundation stone was laid in 1984, and after three years of operation, the park opened its doors to the public on May 31, 1987 with KineMAX, the largest flat screen in Europe.

Over the years, Futuroscope has grown with many innovative and unique attractions. It has featured Vienne Dynamique, the first dynamic movie theater in France, and the invention of night shows.

Since its creation in 1987, the Futuroscope has welcomed 60 million visitors.

A specialty of the park is the creation of immersive rides that often receive international awards for their quality:

2010: Arthur's 4D Adventure was recognized as the best attraction in the world by the TEA (Themed Entertainment Association);

2014: "Raving Rabbids Travel Machine" was recognized as the best dark ride in the world by the TEA;

2021: "La Clé des Songes" was recognized as the best creative multimedia show (Brass Ring Awards);

2022: "Tornado Hunters" was recognized as the best attraction in the world by the TEA.

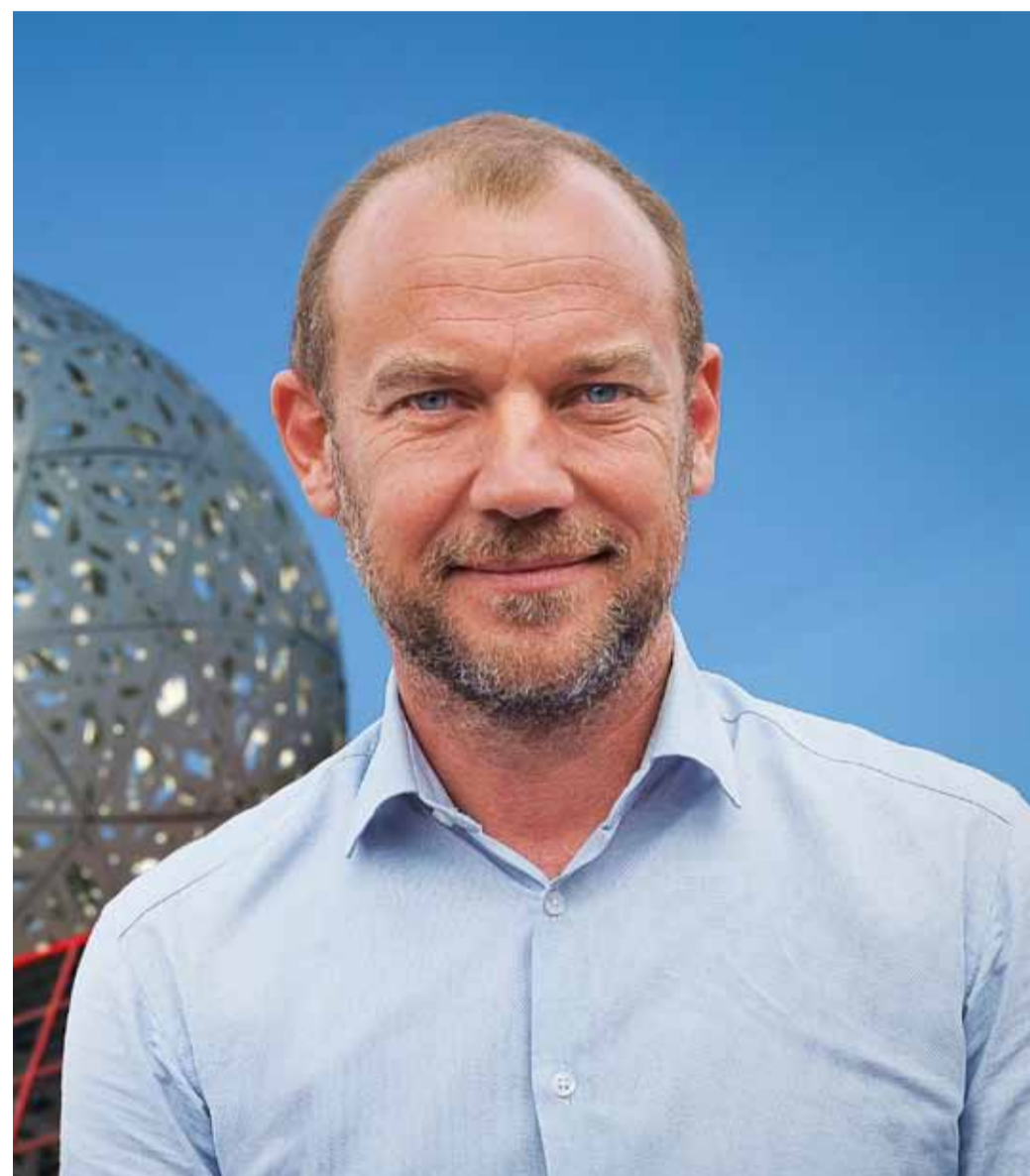
Since 2011, the largest shareholder of Futuroscope is Compagnie des Alpes, which owns the Astérix, Grévin, and Walibi parks.

We talk to Rodolphe Bouin, CEO of Futuroscope.

—Who is the founder and owner of Futuroscope?

—René Monory is the founder of Futuroscope. He was a French politician who was also President of the Vienne Departmental Council and Minister of National Education.

The Vienne Département con-



FUTUROSCOPE

tinues to own the land, but since 2011 has handed over management of the company to Compagnie des Alpes, which holds around 80% of the park's capital. Other shareholders include the Vienne Département with 18.5% and several other shareholders holding 1.5%.

—How much money has been invested in this project? How profitable are such commercial projects?

—A major development plan worth 300 million euros has been approved by shareholders, with 200 million euros allotted for the creation of new attractions and 100 million euros intended for the construction of two hotels and new Aquascope water park.

In July 2024, a second water park called Aquascope, was opened. This is a unique and innovative indoor water park combining

water and technology.

Our full name is Futuroscope Xperiences. This colourful name encapsulates the entire resort because the hallmark of everything we do is to offer unique experiences.

—What makes Futuroscope unique compared to other theme parks in France and Europe?

—Unlike traditional parks that focus solely on rides and thrills, Futuroscope offers a diverse but always immersive experience, using cutting-edge technology – such as giant screens, motion simulators and robotic arms – to tell untold stories. Attractions such as L'Extraordinaire Voyage and Tornado Hunters are great examples of this approach.

Futuroscope aims to stimulate the curiosity of its visitors and offer them not only entertainment



but also information. Futuroscope is visited by 150,000 school children each year.

The park's avant-garde architecture also enhances the futuristic atmosphere that sets it apart. Futuroscope is the unique combination of innovation, education, and entertainment combined with sensory experiences and themed gastronomy.

**—Who is your project currently competing with? Is the competition strong or is there still room for new parks in France?**

—France is unique in that it offers a wide range of theme parks. Futuroscope is positioned as a national destination, just like Disneyland Paris, Parc Astérix, and Puy du Fou. We believe there is still plenty of room for new parks in France.

**—What age group is Futuroscope intended for?**

—Futuroscope is clearly positioned as a family park. We have always designed our rides to be accessible to as many people as possible, and most of them are accessible from 1.05m tall, accessible to children around 5 years old. We have also designed a range of rides specifically for children in the Futuropolis area, a 3-hectare area where almost half of the rides and games are accessible to children from 0.90 m tall when accompanied by an adult.

Similarly, we've reimagined the offer at Aquascope: there's a Sensations area for older children and la faille de Kraki area with lots of games, even for babies.

Children under the age of 5 get free admission.

**—How many attractions do you have in total? Which ones are the most interesting from your point of view?**

—Futuroscope is home to 40 different rides and shows.

My favourite attraction is always the one I'm currently working on. For example, in April 2025, we will be offering a water ride that allows you to go on an adventure through the Bermuda Triangle by boat. But for now, I'm a fan of the whole Abyss of Light area we've created at Aquascope. It's really amazing and at the same time so calming that you can leave the real world behind. I enjoy visiting several times for the relaxing hot water.

But the favourite attraction of Futuroscope visitors is L'Extraordinaire Voyage, because the sensations you get on it are quite different from those you get on a merry-go-round or roller coaster.

**—Do you work with schools in France, Spain, and Andorra? What educational programmes do you offer?**

—Many Spanish schools come to us with students who are 12 years

and older.

In 2023, the park welcomed more than 11,000 schoolchildren from the Iberian peninsula. As for French schools, Futuroscope receives around 150,000 schoolchildren per year, half of them staying for 2 days.

Educational topics include: Earth, View from Above and The mysteries of the Image (to allow students to discover and understand new technological devices), as well as Becoming a Responsible Citizen that encourages the young generation to permanent-

ly adopt an attitude of curiosity that will make them curious about the world.

**—Is it possible to open another Futuroscope, or will your project be unique?**

—We have no plans to replicate the Futuroscope model abroad. Our philosophy is still to create employment in the region.

Our development plan has created 100 jobs at Aquascope, 60 of which have been trained specifically to monitor swimming pools. ●

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