The new visitor area in the sintering plant, the "UNESCO VisitorCenter" offers, on approximately 1,400 m², a programmatic entry into the World Cultural Heritage Site at the Völklingen Ironworks. The UNESCO VisitorCenter provides information on the sustainability ideal of UNESCO, the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) and the cultural position of the Völklingen Ironworks as museum after the museum. The most spectacular exhibit of the "UNESCO VisitorCenter" is a huge interactive functional model explaining the technological system and the production processes of the Völklingen Ironworks.

Informations concerning the current exhibitions follow www.voelklinger-huette.org

UNESCO VisitorCenter

1 Sintering plant

The multi-media journey in time through the history of the Völklingen Ironworks has a poignant impact on all the visitor's senses. It is the starting-point on a 7,000 m circuit which leads to seven stations, passing through the world's largest sintering plant of its day with its enormous ventilators and sintering machines. In the sintering process, residues from iron production were recycled and ploughed back into the blast furnace system.

2 Ore shed

At one time, vast quantities of ore were stored in the ore shed. Today, its roof offers the visitor a panoramic view of Völklingen, the rail track system and the active Saarstahl steelworks. The panorama also takes in the blower shed and the sintering plant. Nowadays the ore shed, measuring 1,000 m², offers a place for exhibitions and cultural events.

3 Burden shed

In the burden shed, the "belly" of the ironworks, 12,000 tonnes of raw material were once stored. On the upper level, railway wagons brought in the raw materials; on the lower level, the monorail cars with which those raw materials were taken up to the blast furnaces were loaded. The burden shed, one of the first large reinforced concrete buildings of its kind, was built between 1911 and 1913, and is now a fascinating arena for exhibitions.

Circuit 2–3 hours (in winter a few parts of the area will be open)

Informations concerning the current exhibitions follow www.voelklinger-huette.org

4 Blast furnaces

The monorail cars ran along the top platform (27 m above ground level) and filled the six blast furnaces with raw materials. At 45 m, the viewing-platform offers the visitor a fascinating view out over the World Cultural Heritage Site and the industrial landscape along the Saar. The walkway then leads down to the tapping-level, where the molten pig iron was tapped from the blast furnace.

5 The paradise

In the furnaces of the coking plant, at a temperature of 1130° Celsius, coal was turned into coke for the blast furnaces. Working in dreadful heat and pungent smoke – working in hell. The first coke ovens were set to work in 1897, in 1986 there were more than 100. At this site today, industrial culture meets nature in a singular dialogue. The paradise in the coking plant is fascinating and unique in Europe.

6 Ferrodrom® and coal track

At the foot of the inclined ore lift is the entrance to the ScienceCenter Ferrodrom®. On the lower level of the burden shed, over 10,000 m² in area, the visitor is whisked away into the fascinating world of iron and steel. On the coal track visitors can experience a breathtaking panoramic view. It spreads from the blast furnaces with their inclined ore lift (unique worldwide) to the burden shed, the water tower and the craftsmen’s lane of the World Cultural Heritage Site at the Völklingen Ironworks. Today, professors and students of Hochschule für Bildende Künste Saar are working there.

7 Blower hall

In the blower hall you can feel the heartbeat of the ironworks. Huge blowers generated an enormous mass of compressed air for the blast furnaces. The machines themselves were driven by blast furnaces gas – an ingenious cycle of energy. The blowers are unique worldwide and a heritage of the machine age. Today the blower hall is a fascinating arena for exhibitions and events.
Six years later however, the works are closed and constructions of this size made from reinforced concrete and steel manufacture is pushed ahead. A furnace goes into operation. 1928 One of the most modern sintering plants in Europe is built in Völklingen – and one of the biggest at that time. The great majority were forced labour. 1944 At the Völklingen Ironworks and its auxiliary operations more than 12,000 and one of the biggest at that time. The great majority were forced labour. 1999 The Saarland establishes the new carrier organisation the Völklinger World Cultural Heritage Site. It is listed on the World Cultural Heritage Site List. The UNESCO VisitorCenter at the World Cultural Heritage Site at the Völklingen Ironworks provides information on UNESCO, on UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites, on the history of the Völklingen Ironworks and on the history of the sintering plant. The UNESCO VisitorCenter of the World Cultural Heritage Site at the Völklingen Ironworks is a VisitorCenter plus – as it is integrated into the authentic locus of the sintering plant at the World Cultural Heritage Site. The World Cultural Heritage Site at the Völklingen Ironworks visitors’ path begins at the UNESCO VisitorCenter.

The History of Völklinger Ironworks

The coking plant was one of the heaviest workplaces of all at the Völklinger Ironworks and was dominated by heat, dust and fire. Today, visitors to the Völklingen Ironworks can discover an extraordinary garden that invites one to linger a while with nature and invent “industry culture” anew. “Paradise” at the World Cultural Heritage Site at the Völklingen Ironworks is the adventure world. Both children and adults can learn about iron and steel production and the development of iron and steel technology. More than 100 experimental stations, everyday objects of the ironworkers, historical reports and films provide a lively impression of everyday working life. The UNESCO VisitorCenter at the World Cultural Heritage Site at the Völklingen Ironworks is a site of industrial production, of work and everyday culture, and of the World Cultural Heritage Site, of humanity. In so doing, UNESCO recognised industry culture as an outstanding achievement of humanity and placed it under special protection. Authenticity and sustainability are vital goals for UNESCO. Sustainability can only be achieved when the World Cultural Sites are made fit for the present. The visitor can see ironore, slag and sinter in raw form and experience the smell of raw iron and tar at the olfactory station. Multimedia installations spectacularly stage the four elements essential to iron production: fire, water, earth and air. One of the highlights is the fire and wind tornado. At the ironworks laboratory the physical laws governing iron and steel can be discovered in a playful way. The Völklinger Ironworks’ transport system was a pioneering tour-de-force of engineering. The experiment station at the ScienceCenter Ferrodrom® illustrates their use. Right next to the Ferrodrom® one can see the original inclined ore elevator – only one of its kind in the world. The ScienceCenter Ferrodrom® offers playful access to industrial processes and phenomena of the natural sciences determined by the decades of iron production labour at the Völklingen Ironworks.

The UNESCO VisitorCenter

In 1994 the Völklingen Ironworks were the first monument from the heyday of industrialisation in the world to be classified by UNESCO as World Cultural Heritage Site. It was an important step for the Völklingen Ironworks – as well as a huge step for UNESCO too: until that moment industrial monuments were not yet awarded the status of World Heritage Site. The city centres were awarded UNESCO World Heritage Status. Now a site of industrial production, of work and everyday culture, was ranked at the ranks of a site of World Heritage Status of humanity. In so doing, UNESCO recognised industry culture as an outstanding achievement of humanity and placed it under special protection. Authenticity and sustainability are vital goals for UNESCO. Sustainability can only be achieved when the World Cultural Sites are made fit for the present. The visitor can see ironore, slag and sinter in raw form and experience the smell of raw iron and tar at the olfactory station. Multimedia installations spectacularly stage the four elements essential to iron production: fire, water, earth and air. One of the highlights is the fire and wind tornado. At the ironworks laboratory the physical laws governing iron and steel can be discovered in a playful way. The Völklinger Ironworks transport system was a pioneering tour de force of engineering. The experiment station at the ScienceCenter Ferrodrom® illustrates their use. Right next to the Ferrodrom® one can see the original inclined ore elevator – only one of its kind in the world. The ScienceCenter Ferrodrom® offers playful access to industrial processes and phenomena of the natural sciences determined by the decades of iron production labour at the Völklingen Ironworks.

Children's and young people's book Ferrodrom® 46 pages, 9.95 €.

The ScienceCenter Ferrodrom®