

Kemi SnowCastle 2010

The SnowCastle of Kemi will be built, once again, this winter the fifteenth time in a row right in the centre of the City of Kemi. The first SnowCastle, built in 1996, was a gift from the UNICEF and the City of Kemi to all the children in the whole world. The idea for building the SnowCastle in Kemi arose from the fact that even though snow is a very common aspect for us Finns, for the majority of the children in the world it is still quite a strange or even an unknown element, and yet, utterly interesting: how snow looks like, how it feels and how it tastes like, are factors to fascinate the young and old alike. The first SnowCastle of 1996 with its 1100 metre long walls made the Guinness Record Book as the world's first SnowCastle with long walls.

From the first year onwards we have built a restaurant, a chapel and an estrade within the snowy walls. When constructing the third SnowCastle the constructors took the challenge of experimenting in building two-story snow-structures – and they succeeded! The following year the builders ventured into ever greater achievements: the SnowCastle of 1999 consisted of three stories and the structures arose to the height of 14, 5 metres. In the same year of 1999 visitors had a chance to stay overnight in the SnowCastle: the very first SnowHotel was constructed within the walls of the SnowCastle.

Every January, from these already historic years onwards, we construct a SnowHotel, a SnowRestaurant, a SnowChapel and the Children's World within white snowy walls. The SnowCastle is open every year from the end of January to the beginning days of April. At the Inner Port, the part of the City of Kemi where the SnowCastle is located during the winter, there are lovely cafes, bars and cosy restaurants as well as the lushly green Meripuisto-park right by the lightly salted waters of the Gulf of Bothnia for visitors to enjoy in the summertime.

Building of the SnowCastle

In December, as soon as the weather is appropriate, the making of the snow and the constructing of the SnowCastle begins. For constructing the SnowCastle we use piped snow, this being stronger in its consistence than natural snow and also lasting better the varying winter-weather-conditions than snow falling from the heavens. When making the snow the temperature has to be at least – 7 degrees Celsius and it takes four to five weeks every year to build the SnowCastle.

This winter we started the making of the snow and the construction of the SnowCastle 2010 on the 15th of December 2009. The opening night we will celebrate on the 30th of January 2010 and from then onwards the SnowCastle will be open daily all the way until the 5th of April.

For the building of the SnowCastle 2010 we need 21 000 m³ of snow, this corresponding to the amount of 2 100 lorry-truck-loads. The SnowCastle area will be 4 900 m², corresponding the area of about one and a half football-fields. We will construct half a kilometre of snowy walls to surround the Castle. All of the covered areas, the

Restaurant, the Hotel and the Chapel in the SnowCastle yard will consist of 1 050 m². For constructing the ice-tables in the SnowRestaurant and sculpting the art-work in the SnowCastle area we will need close to 300 m³ of ice, which we will lift from the Gulf of Bothnia right next to the area of the SnowCastle.

For constructing the SnowCastle we use various kinds of mould-techniques: vaulted-roof-moulds, excess-pressure-moulds and arched-moulds. The technique of using vaulted-roof-moulds in the construction is an ancient and well-known method dating to the times of Antic. When we have produced enough snow with the snow-pipes, the snow will then be centrifuged (blown forcefully) unto the moulds. After the snow has hardened which in ideal conditions happens within a few hours – the moulds will then be pulled away. Thus there are no support systems in any of the constructions of the SnowCastle – everything is made of pure snow! The temperature in all of the covered areas of the SnowCastle remains always about - 5 degrees Celsius regardless of how cold it gets outside, this being for the fact that snow contains the capacity of isolation.

Planning Committee

The planning committee of the SnowCastle consists of local talent. Architect Mr Rauno Ruonansuu from Kemi is the designer of the SnowCastle. The local firm IP-Heikkilä Oy is in charge of the construction of the Castle. The firm T:mi Jorma Kauppinen designs the lighting and electricity and T. Viitala Ky the execution of electrical facilities for all areas in the Castle. All the aforementioned local talent has worked previously for the Castle and is the best on their respective field. Along the years the technique of constructing the Castle has improved and the building process has become faster. For the SnowCastle 2009 we experimented with wireless electricity and the pioneering results were successful.

Every year the SnowCastle is designed in a different manner and according to a different theme. The theme for this year is “National Romanticism”. The theme is prominent especially in the ice- and snow-sculpting pieces and the well-experienced firm Frostiart Oy from the previous year is once again in charge of the design and execution of the ice- and snow-artwork in the SnowCastle. The Frostiart Oy, in addition for its work for the SnowCastle, designs and constructs ice-saunas, ice-bars as well as various kinds of snow- and ice-events around Europe throughout the year.

The students of the Art Department of Lapland will design the Honeymoon Suite as well as the two group-rooms in the SnowHotel. In the hallway of the Hotel you will see the photo exhibition *Ice in Ice* of the local talent Seppo Rintala.

International Lapponia Jewelry in the SnowCastle!

The Lapponia Jewelry has, during its almost 50-year existence, been the foremost international jewelry business in Finland. The 1960's established pioneering jewelry company is preparing for its 50th anniversary celebration in 2010, among others, by arranging various jewelry exhibitions around the world in addition to its exhibition in the SnowCastle 2010 and by showing its 50th year celebratory jewelry in these exhibitions.

Lapponia was born in Finland in 1960. Björn Weckström designed the first collection for Lapponia and ever since his sculptural style has been prominent in the Lapponia Jewelry

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design. Mr. Weckström says he got his inspiration for his designs from the shapes and dimly shimmering surfaces of the Lappish gold-finds. In the SnowCastle jewelry exhibition visitors will be able to see the most beloved pieces of Lapponia classics, some last year's favorite collections as well as a few limited, rare collections from previous years.

The "Lapponia Vintage Collection" in the Ice Gallery exhibits 13 different pieces of jewelry which the seven artists within the company have selected as the most memorable for them from the former collections over the years. All the jewelry reflects the typical Lapponia philosophy in their design and only one piece of each will be prepared. Later, after the celebratory year in 2011, these pieces will be on sale.

Snowy services at the SnowCastle

In the SnowHotel we will have 18 double rooms, two group-rooms for five persons as well as a suite for Honeymoon couples as well as other visitors desiring to sleep in the suite. All and all we can accommodate 48 guests in the Hotel. Before entering the room for sleeping, the SnowHotel guests can spend the evening in the cosy and warm CastleLounge relaxing and enjoying refreshments at the Café-Bar. The atmosphere in the SnowHotel room is arctic and ascetic. When preparing to go to sleep, our guests will be well instructed about sleeping in the SnowHotel and each will be given a sleeping-bag designed for arctic conditions. On the bed, underneath the sleeping-bag, is a warm lambskin. The next morning Continental breakfast will be served in the CastleLounge, and after that, transportation will be provided to a nearby Hotel for sauna and/or shower.

The SnowRestaurant serves in four different cabinets with altogether 170 seats. The tables in the SnowRestaurant are made of ice, but seats are made of wood and have a warm reindeer- or lambskin covering. Our guests in the SnowRestaurant can enjoy a three-course dinner made of local produce (reservations must be made in advance) as well as refreshments or hot and cold drinks and beverages. Some evenings we may arrange musical performances or disco-dancing in the SnowRestaurant.

The quiet atmosphere in the SnowChapel offers peaceful moments for even the most stressed-out visitor. Many couples from around the world have their wedding-ceremony in the SnowChapel. In addition to weddings we also arrange christenings to newborns at the snowy altar in co-operation with the Church of Kemi. On Sundays the SnowChapel offers a Sunday Service, attended also by locals from the City of Kemi and open for all visitors in the Castle.

Lastly: of course there will be plenty to do for children in the SnowCastle! Especially during the week-ends there will be performances by clowns, magicians and musicians known for all the children throughout Finland and perhaps even elsewhere. In the SnowCastle area there will be a long snow-tube-slide on which any a child, or any a person with the playful mind, can experience the thrill of snow and ice, and the excitement of sliding fast!

More information: Castle Manager Mrs Marika Tomminen, tel. +358-16-258 878 or +358-45-635 5853, marika@snowcastle.net

Image bank: www.snowcastle.net