WHAT IS FINNISH LUXURY?
BUSINESS FINLAND
SUMMARY IN ENGLISH
OUR AIM IS TO OFFER INSIGHTS INTO FINNISH LUXURY TRAVEL, HOW IT APPEARS CURRENTLY, HOW IT IS PERCEIVED AND WHAT GUIDELINES CAN BE PUT IN PLACE.
### WE INTERVIEWED DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN TRAVEL SECTOR PROFESSIONALS WHO OPERATE WITH LUXURY TRAVELLERS

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Operators and Travel Sector Experts (Lapland (3), Lake-Finland (2), Coast (2))</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>UAE</th>
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<td>Finland</td>
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<td>2 interviewees luxury tour operators (London)</td>
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- We collected feedback from foreign interviewees also via our online-community, where they were able to evaluate picture material regarding Finnish luxury.
- In addition, we did groundwork by visiting luxury tour operator websites of the countries in question and found out about how Finland is shown as a travel destination.
WHAT IS LUXURY?
LUXURY CONCEPT AND THE NEEDS OF LUXURY TRAVELLERS
CLASSIC LUXURY IS EXPENSIVE AND SHOWY

HISTORICAL → ELITIST AND ARROGANT

HIGH QUALITY → VISIBLE

PERFECTIONIST

FORMAL → TRADITIONAL
TRADITIONAL LUXURY CAN ALSO BE SEEN IN TRAVEL

We had a client who was very adventurous. He travelled to Mongolia and they had a mobile camp, it was about 10 days horse safari...along the way for 10 days the team goes ahead to setup camp and the camp has the 5 star amenities, the 5 star luxury like a luxury bed and they bring their own chef and sourced a staff team from the Four Seasons.

(Interviewee, UAE)
RELAXED LUXURY IS MORE EXPERIENCE ORIENTED

EXPERIENCES & UNIQUENESS

AUTHENTICITY

RELAXED

FUNCTIONAL STYLE

HIDDEN WEALTH

QUALITY

HUMAN TO HUMAN SERVICE
LUXURY IS A BROAD AND DIVERSE THEME

There is no single clear concept of luxury and its content keeps changing.

Luxury can be experienced in many ways and expectations differ.

The service provider has to have a clear understanding what kind of luxury they offer and to whom they offer it to.
We had a family from the Middle-East, who had reserved a lakeside cottage. It was just a cottage and at that time our services weren’t that developed here. When they arrived, they asked where the jet skis and all the services were...when they didn’t see any yahts and we couldn’t provide those straight away, they left for a return journey to Helsinki and we booked them into Hotel Kämp.

(Interviewee, Lake-Finland)
LUXURY TRAVEL IS DEFINED BY SIX DIFFERENT NEEDS

- CARING
- PERSONAL SERVICE
- UNIQUE EXPERIENCES
- FLEXIBILITY
- SAFETY
- EXCLUSIVITY
WHAT SHOULD LUXURY TRAVEL OFFER?

- EVERYTHING IS PRE-PLANNED AND EFFORTLESS
- TAILOR-MADE SERVICE
- LOCAL AND AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES
- FLEXIBLE SERVICE THAT ADAPTS TO YOUR NEEDS
- UNDISTURBED AND SECURE ATMOSPHERE
- UNIQUE "JUST FOR YOU" EXPERIENCES
WHAT IS LUXURY?

Luxury is a loose and diverse topic—when using it, it’s important that its meaning is clearly explained and defined.

Luxury travellers share similar needs, even though in the end expectations of a service may be very different.

The core of Luxury travel is understanding individual customer needs and having the service offering tailor-made to meet their expectations.
”I don’t send anybody to Finland for their first trip to Europe. There is no VIP culture. You land and you find nothing is working in my favor. It will not be a positive experience. “ (interviewee India)

✓ Finland is not seen as a classic luxury destination and Finland has weak opportunities for competing in that sector.
✓ Finland best suits a more experienced traveller, who values experiences when choosing a destination
Don’t try to market Finland too much from a “classic luxury” point of view.
WHAT IS FINLAND LIKE?

COMMUNICATION & MARKETING
FINLAND’S IMAGE IS BASED ALMOST SOLELY AROUND WINTER
FINLAND’S SUMMERS ARE UNFAMILIAR

There is no awareness and I have not seen any USP (unique selling proposal) so far to go there in summer. In comparison I promote summers in Iceland, there is altogether a different perception there regarding summer. I don’t find that thing in Finland in summer.

(Interviewee, India)
FINLAND DOES NOT APPEAR COMPLETELY UNIQUE

SWEDEN

NORWAY

FINLAND
Currently Finland is **not a destination that is talked about on any level** good, bad or ugly, it is just not there yet... I would question how many Americans could find Finland on a map.

(Interviewee, USA)
THE IMPRESSION OF FINLAND IS STILL OFTEN UNCLEAR

Although Finland has a strong profile as a wintry nature destination, it lacks its own strong identity.

Finland does not stand out as a unique country like Iceland, but appears very similar to Sweden and Norway – and to some degree Central-Europe.
FOREIGN TOUR OPERATORS EVALUATED AND COMMENTED ON PICTURES ALSO ON THE ONLINE-COMMUNITY
WHAT WORKS IN PICTURES AND WHAT DOES NOT

**DO THIS**

- Create atmosphere, communicate experience
- Make the experience in the picture easy to identify with, e.g. a social context
- Make sure, the picture has globally recognizable elements
- Pay attention to details

**AVOID**

- Don’t make a picture too generic
- Avoid factual pictures, that lack feeling and atmosphere
- Remember, that picture has to communicate the luxury elements, such as uniqueness, privacy and wellbeing
WHAT DOES FINLAND LOOK LIKE?

Finland is defined primarily by **winter, nature, Europeanness, adventure and experience themes**. The role of luxury falls more into background.

Although Finland has a clear profile, its **ability to differentiate itself from e.g. Sweden or Norway is weak** and requires deep knowledge of the countries.

The image and knowledge of Finland is still **blurred** and is based mainly around winter and Lapland.

**Try and create recognizable and unique elements for Finland** and repeat them in communication – invest in deepening the awareness.
”You should concentrate on the luxury of experience, authenticity of what you are offering rather than luxurious hotels, concentrate on what Finland has to offer“ (Interviewee USA)

✓ Luxury segment needs quality in every sector, but a competitive edge can only be built around strong and distinguished factors
✓ The core of communication should stay sharp and it should differentiate Finland from other Nordic countries
Sharpen core communication and establish recognizability
WHAT IS OF INTEREST IN FINLAND?

WEAKNESSES & STRENGTHS
CHALLENGES OF FINLAND AS A LUXURY TRAVEL DESTINATION

- Lacks service know-how
- Limited offering
- Cost and pricing
FINLAND HAS AN EQUALITARIAN AND INDIVIDUALISTIC CULTURE

”There is no VIP culture in Finland. It is all equalitarian society. You are not better than the next person, no matter who is rich and who is poor. Our customers don’t understand this. They think that if they throw money around, they can get anything.”

(Interviewee, India)
LACK OF SERVICE KNOW-HOW
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
LIMITED EXPERIENCE
LACK OF TRAINING
LIMITED OFFERING
COST AND PRICING
“Snowmobiling itself is not necessarily a luxury activity, but say you add something to it like when we were doing that break and there was a hut there and if there had been that opportunity to go inside the hut and maybe have a cup of coffee, have a traditional cake or something and hear a story about something that happened there like by a Saami and this way you take it to the next level.”

(Interviewee, USA)
LACK OF SERVICE KNOW-HOW
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
LIMITED EXPERIENCE
LACK OF TRAINING
LIMITED OFFERING
NUMBER OF OPERATORS
LACK OF NETWORKS
COST AND PRICING
“One of the biggest obstacles is going to be the cost as Finland is so much more expensive than the rest of Europe. The sense of value doesn’t match what they are paying. Price might be the same as a central Paris hotel room, the experience they are going to get, one versus the other is quite drastically different. Expectation does not match the experience.”

(Interviewee, USA)
LACK OF SERVICE KNOW-HOW
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
LIMITED EXPERIENCE
LACK OF TRAINING

LIMITED OFFERING
NUMBER OF OPERATORS
LACK OF NETWORKS

COST AND PRICING
PRICE-QUALITY RATIO
TRANSPARENCY
Growth would require more know-how, co-operation, training and service providers.
”People want to do things that are a little bit different and Finland offers that. There is a genuineness about the country. Finland offers that unique & genuine experience, something magical.\“

(Interviewee UK)
THE COMPETITIVE EDGE OF FINLAND IS SUMMARISED IN TWO THEMES

SAFE & EXOTIC
- Seen as an exotic part of Europe
- Feels like adventure but also safe
- Unique themes e.g. Santa Claus

AUTHENTICITY
- Genuine and honest people
- Untouched and wild nature
- Clean, peaceful and close to nature
”Having been to Scandinavia I did not find the warmth and friendliness or anything but in Finland I found everybody was very warm and welcoming. I never thought that would be the case. “ (Interviewee UAE)

✓ Dare to be genuine and distinctive in luxury travel
✓ Strengthen Finnish service culture, which can at its best be genuine, compassionate and equal.
✓ Watch out for losing authenticity with increase in travel volume
WHAT IS OF INTEREST IN FINLAND?

The differentiating core of the Finnish luxury segment is ability offer authentic and exotic experiences in a safe environment.

The greatest weaknesses in the luxury segment are limited know-how and offering, which can easily lead in inconsistent service quality.

The luxury travel market is also very competitive and the price-quality ratio and lack in pricing transparency are raised.
Authentic but safe experience should be the core of the communication
WHAT TO DO IN PRACTICE?

1. CONTINUE TO CREATE BETTER AND DEEPER AWARENESS ABOUT FINNISH OFFERING
2. CLARIFY THE COMPETITIVE EDGE AND BE MORE CONSISTENT IN COMMUNICATION
3. HELP BUSINESSES TO CREATE MORE DIRECT CONTACTS TO MEDIA AND TOUR OPERATORS
4. PROVIDE MARKETING SUPPORT
WHAT TO DO IN PRACTICE?

6. PROMOTE SUMMERTIME TRAVEL

7. SHARE KNOW-HOW AND CREATE CO-OPERATION

8. OFFER LUXURY CONSULTATION AND GUIDANCE

9. PROVIDE A OFFICIAL LIST OF LUXURY DESTINATIONS AND OFFERING

10. PROVIDE CULTURAL TRAINING FOR BUSINESSES AND OPERATORS