

## > Blue Lagoon: An Otherworldly Experience

## BLUE LAGOON ICELAND

Originally founded to unlock the extraordinary benefits of geothermal seawater, Blue Lagoon integrates science, sustainability, nature, and design – creating experiences that take the mind and body to new dimensions of wellbeing. In April of 2018, the company will open the Retreat at Blue Lagoon Iceland—a place in the mineral-rich waters and moss-covered lava fields where hospitality, rejuvenation, fine dining, and exploration will be the hallmarks of a unique journey.

### ORIGINS

Chosen in 2012 as one of National Geographic's 25 Wonders of the World, the Blue Lagoon is a place where the interplay of architecture, design, and geothermal seawater brings forth a world of wonder and wellness.

The water's unique powers were first discovered in the early 1980s when local residents began to bathe in the warm blue reservoir that had formed in the lava field beside the Svartsengi Resource Park – a geothermal power plant producing green energy. Engineers at the facility had expected the water to seep through the lava and return to the earth's volcanic aquifers. However, owing to the precipitation of silica in the fluid, proper drainage did not occur and a beautiful body of water took shape.

"Blue Lagoon is a place where the interplay of architecture, design, and geothermal seawater brings forth a world of wonder and wellness."

Some people came to the water for healing. Others for pleasure. But all who came, left with a profound sense of wonder.

The lagoon eventually became the focus of intense scientific study, giving birth in 1992

to Blue Lagoon Limited, a company dedicated to the research and development of the water's primary elements: silica, algae, and minerals.

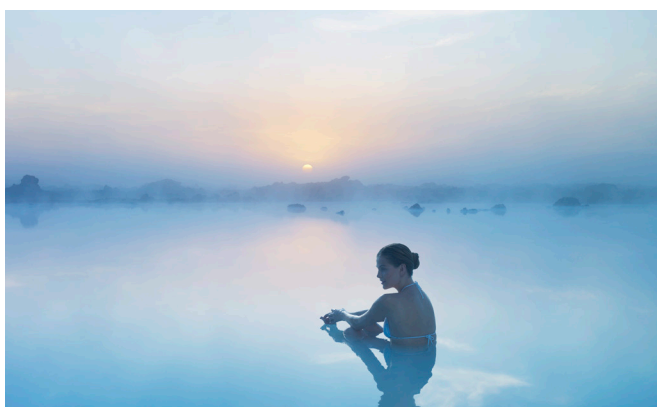
In 1995, with research confirming the healing properties of Blue Lagoon geothermal seawater, Blue Lagoon Ltd launched a renowned line of skin care products. This was followed in 1999 with the opening of the modern-day spa facility and, in 2005, a clinic hotel for the treatment of psoriasis.

Today, many decades after the first inquisitive souls began venturing into the water, the Blue Lagoon has blossomed from a humble curiosity into a wonder of the world. Indeed, the story of the Blue Lagoon continues to be written with every guest who enters the water.



Blue Lagoon: The Retreat





## SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIETAL UPLIFT

The dynamic, sustainable relationship between man and nature is the cornerstone of Blue Lagoon's philosophy. This relationship informs every aspect of the guest experience. From the healing water that fills the lagoon to the electricity that lights the complex, every coordinate of the visitor journey draws its power from the earth's geothermal resources. In short, wellness at Blue Lagoon is inseparable from the wellspring of renewable energy brought forth at the Svartsengi Resource Park.

Located on Iceland's Reykjanes Peninsula in the heart of the Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark, Blue Lagoon is surrounded by a vast array of volcanic phenomena: craters, fissures, mud pools, steam vents, hot springs, and moss-covered

lava flows. The company strives to preserve the sanctity of this precious environment and thus cultivates, in all its endeavours, a harmonic relationship with nature. Environmental impact is minimised while architecture is designed to merge with the land – integrating the forms, shapes, and materials of the terrain. This intrinsic respect for nature can also be seen in the walkways that have been built through the lava fields. These paths allow guests to wander through the centuries-old moss, experiencing its aesthetic vitality without damaging it.

Blue Lagoon's connection with nature is encapsulated by its motto: a society without waste. During the course of the company's evolution, the aspirations embedded in this phrase have spawned countless initiatives that

foster both societal wellbeing and environmental balance.

To engender a healthier society, Blue Lagoon funds a broad spectrum of philanthropic causes in the areas of youth sports, the arts, health, and fitness – contributing to the wellbeing of the communities on the Reykjanes Peninsula.

Environmental balance is manifest in the closed eco-cycle from which most of Blue Lagoon's resources – geothermal seawater, electricity, heating, hot water – are derived. In the extraction and use of geothermal energy, nothing is wasted, while greenhouse gas emissions from the power plant are incorporated into the production of methane, a clean gas. More recently, scientists at Blue Lagoon's R&D centre have discovered ways





Founder and CEO: Grímur Sæmundsen

to cultivate algae with CO<sub>2</sub>—a significant step in the company's goal to eliminate its carbon footprint and generate a sustainable future.

In the arena of corporate social responsibility, the company places the wellbeing of its employees and guests at the centre of its operations. Enjoyment and relaxation are key, but safety is paramount. This truth reverberates through the company's four brand values, which were chosen by the staff: We respect; We care; We bring joy; and We create memories.

But these have become more than linguistic assertions. They are the guiding lights that animate Blue Lagoon's existence, inspiring the company and each of its employees to continually reach for higher ground.

#### THE RETREAT AT BLUE LAGOON ICELAND

Built into an 800-year-old lava flow, the Retreat at Blue Lagoon Iceland was conceived and created to expand the horizons of the Blue Lagoon experience. It encompasses a subterranean spa, a luxury hotel, a mineral-rich lagoon, and a restaurant that honours and reinvents Iceland's culinary traditions.

Covering more than 4,000 square metres and descending three metres into the lava, the Retreat Spa was designed to give guests the ability to commune with the natural wonders of geothermal seawater in a tranquil, luxurious environment.

The Retreat Lagoon is sourced from the same volcanic aquifer as the Blue Lagoon. With its lava walls, hidden corridors, waterfall, and terraced concourse, this mineral-rich expanse creates an elevated experience of the powers of the Blue Lagoon.

The Retreat Hotel encompasses 62 suites ranging in size from 40 to 220 square metres. Encircled by the otherworldly waters of the Retreat Lagoon, each space was conceived to erase the boundary between interior design and exterior enchantment, bringing guests into harmony with nature while catalysing a sense of wonder.

The Retreat's signature dining establishment, Moss Restaurant, occupies the highest point at Blue Lagoon, endowing guests with remarkable perspectives on the volcanic horizon. With a la carte and set menus that move effortlessly from the mountains, to the farmlands, to the rivers, to the oceans, each dish opens the door to the living heritage and diverse delights of Icelandic cuisine.

Aspiring to create transformative wellness experiences, the Retreat at Blue Lagoon Iceland represents a bold new milestone for a company that was born from a humble body of blue water on the Reykjanes Peninsula. ❖

#### FOUNDER AND CEO: GRÍMUR SÆMUNDSEN

Born in 1955, Grímur Sæmundsen is a doctor

of Medicine (MD) by education. As the founder and CEO of Blue Lagoon Iceland, he has led the company's growth and development since 1992, orchestrating its transformation from an entity focused on health and wellness into a dynamic enterprise that also encompasses travel, leisure, skin care, research & development, and sustainability.

#### BACKGROUND

Mr Sæmundsen earned his MD from the University of Iceland in 1981 and later received a degree in sports medicine from London Hospital College. In 1990, he left his medical practice, becoming both a pioneer and entrepreneur in Iceland's healthcare and pharmaceuticals industries. During the course of his career, Mr Sæmundsen has established multiple companies and spearheaded a host of innovative projects and initiatives in the public and private sectors. He has also been a leading figure in the Icelandic business community – particularly in the travel industry. His most notable endeavour is Iceland's renowned Blue Lagoon, a site that brings together all of his passions for health, nature, sustainability, and science.

#### THE RETREAT

With the opening of the Retreat in 2018, Mr Sæmundsen's original vision for the Blue Lagoon as a centre of sustainability, health, and wellbeing galvanised by the riches of geothermal seawater will take on an extraordinary new dimension. ❖