

2021

KUOPIO by NATURE

Erja Lyytinen – From
Kuopio with love

The city of
Music and Dance

Top 10 Architectural
Landmarks in Kuopio

KUOPIO

**“In Kuopio, it seems
as if everyone knows
a secret about life.”**

KUOPIO by NATURE

ANNUAL JOURNAL OF
THE CITY OF KUOPIO

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Kuopio as a Source of Inspiration



In Kuopio, we live by the water. Water is a source of strength in our leisure time and one of our competence priorities. Waterways connect us to seas across the globe via the Saimaa Canal. Our stunning lake views serve as a source of inspiration and excitement. Renowned Japanese artist Kaji Higashiyama travelled to the Nordic countries back in 1962, and it was especially the scenery in Puijo that enchanted the artist, inspiring one of the most valued works of art in Japan, Polar Summer Night (1963).

Kuopio is a city of many talents where cutting-edge expertise in industry and commerce, with its priorities and clusters, stems from the good cooperation between research, education, innovations and business activities. Campuses come together and merge in the district of Savilahti in Kuopio, which serves as a platform for future knowledge, learning and innovations. Savilahti Stage provides a venue for future dialogue that will become reality in Savilahti.

The Kuopio region is celebrating its year as the capital of food, the Euro-

pean Region of Gastronomy 2020–2021. Locally produced food, gastronomic experiences combined with local culture bring the most amazing taste sensations to the table. The province is a rich producer of food – our top chefs conjure up gastronomic excellence from locally sourced, clean ingredients. Nutritional science is one of the strong fields of expertise in our educational institutions.

The versatile Kuopio is also a city of music, educating professionals in music and providing extensive opportunities to enjoy music as a hobby. The good cooperation between our professional orchestra, professional theatre and educational institutions provides internship and employment opportunities not only for professionals, but also for students and international talent.

I wish you gratifying moments reading Kuopio by Nature!

Kirsi Soininen
Marketing Director, City of Kuopio

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of Residents is
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Beyond the Horizon

Kuopio is surrounded by Kallavesi, one of the largest lakes in Finland. No matter from which direction you approach the city, the scenery is breathtakingly beautiful. You only get one chance to make that ever-important first impression, and in this sense, Kuopio has a great natural advantage. You cannot help but arrive in a positive state of mind.

TEXT **TIMO MANSIKKA-AHO**
PHOTOS **WILLE MARKKANEN** AND **TIINA HARING**

Kuopio is a city by the lake, but that is only the start of it. When you board a ship at any of the various piers by Lake Kallavesi, the voyage can literally take you all the way to the other side of the world.

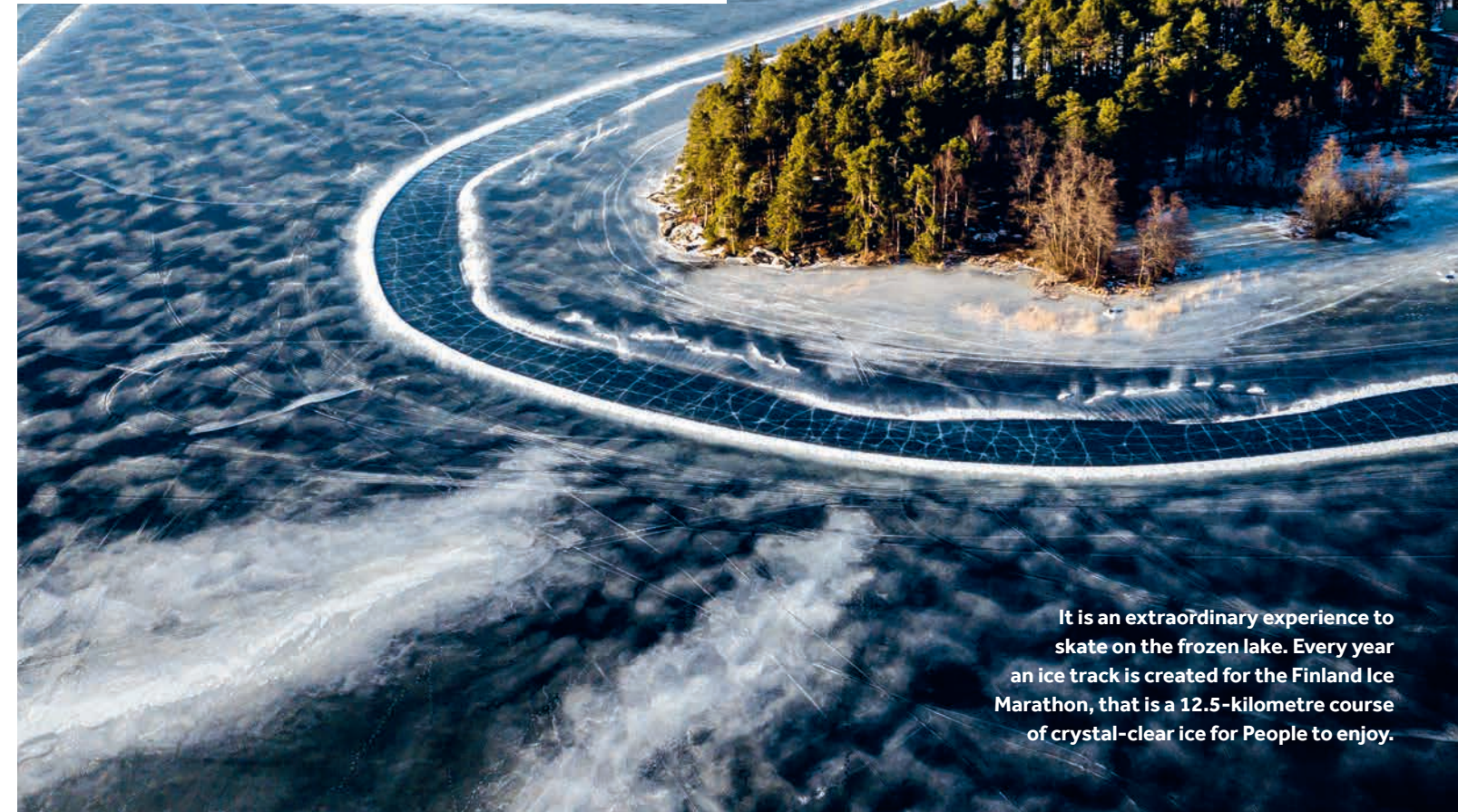
While the distance of the voyage knows no limits, neither does the range of opportunities there is to enjoy in and on the waters in Kuopio. The city is known for its boat manufacturing business that goes all the way back to the year 1970. While the large lake and beautiful landscapes have inspired fishers and water skiers alike, boating has become an integral element of quality time in Kuopio.

OUT OF THE BOAT, INTO THE CITY

It might come as a surprise to visitors that there is a new breakwater and a guest pier right next to the city centre; only a few minutes' walk from the pier and you find yourself in a buzzing downtown area with hotels, restaurants, cafés and shopping facilities conveniently close by. If walking is not your thing, you can opt for a city bike or a hop-on hop-off bus.

In addition to the heart of the city centre, the coastline also provides plenty of wonderful sceneries and great spots to have a picnic or simply take a look around and enjoy the views.

A fascinating moment in
the city harbour of Kuopio.



It is an extraordinary experience to skate on the frozen lake. Every year an ice track is created for the Finland Ice Marathon, that is a 12.5-kilometre course of crystal-clear ice for People to enjoy.

Kuopion Saana, a new holiday resort combines Finnish sauna experiences, restaurant services and a wide variety activities under one roof. »

There are several places nearby to enhance the experience with extra services. With so many great opportunities to have fun and enjoy yourself, why not stay a bit longer?

Play a game of volleyball, eat a nice dinner or relax in a sauna; at its best, the perfect cruise can be so much more than sitting on a boat.

Listen to **Jukka Savolainen**, CEO at Kuopion Saana, a new holiday resort that combines Finnish sauna experiences, restaurant services and a wide variety of events and activities under one roof. He will certainly convince you.

"We have our own pier for guest boats and the country's largest outdoor patio where everyone can relax and enjoy the nice views", says Savolainen. "Right next to us, there is a fuel station, equipped with a suction unloader and bilge pump. An all-inclusive service for boats and boaters alike."

"All cruises have been designed to offer a different selection of views"

MANY WAYS TO ENJOY THE WATER

Outside the city, surrounded by nature that seems almost untamed, you can experience a world that differs completely from the urban coastline – although there are several similarities. This is like another dimension of Kallavesi; far away from the buzz of the city, yet close by and convenient to reach.

So convenient that you do not even have to take a boat there yourself. Just hop on one of the numerous cruise ships near the city centre. Why drive, when you can sit on deck, relax – and perhaps enjoy a nice lunch on the way.

Cruise entrepreneurs such as **Noora Kivi** from Kuopion Roll Risteilyt gladly assists passengers.

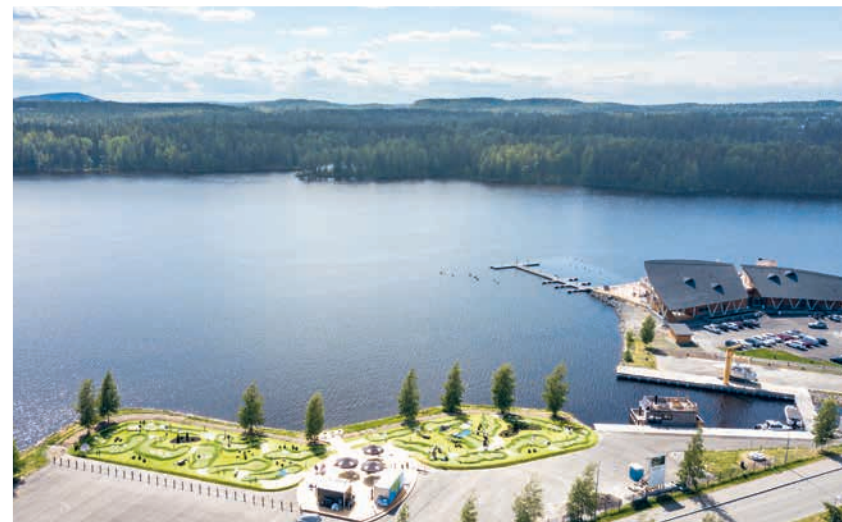
"All cruises have been designed to offer a different selection of views", Kivi says. "You can enjoy the urban scenery or admire the beautiful nature of the archipelago, including historical buildings."

Kivi mentions that customers ask her, time and time again, where the lake actually ends. The size of Lake Kallavesi never ceases to amaze people, as does the number of islands and the breath-taking wonder in its totality.

In terms of the 2021 season, both Savolainen and Kivi are looking forward to additional services that will make boating and enjoying the water even more all-inclusive. As the city bikes are conveniently located right next to the piers and the hop-on hop-off buses will drive close by, getting from the boat to the city centre, the Market Square or

even the slopes of Puijo will be extremely effortless. And, with the new hop-on hop-off boats, the experience will be even more versatile; you can get on a boat at one pier and get off at another, and perhaps take a bus back to your boat. A great day in Kuopio is only a matter of imagination – and choice.

There are excellent options available even for longer cruises on the Kallavesi waterways. Take a trip a bit further through the archipelago, and the scenery begins to look like a national park – where, in a way, you have actually arrived. There are wonderful trips available to nearby islands and guest marinas, and you can visit several great towns by the lake, should you decide to cruise all the way to the southern parts of the country.



FEWER MISHAPS, MORE FUN

On the route from Kuopio to the other side of the world, there are plenty of local attractions for a boater to consider. The wide archipelago is exceptionally well suited for recreational purposes. With so much area to cover and so many activities and opportunities available, one cannot help but wonder about safety issues: how can the occasional boater ensure that, in the midst of all the fun, they can also arrive on the other side in one piece?

That is where organizations such as Kuopion Järvipelastajat (Kuopio Lake Rescue) come in.

"When it comes to taking care of your boat, educating yourself and remembering the principles are a good start," says **Jussi Tuovinen**, Chairman of the Board. "When it comes to boating, taking others into consideration is important as well."

Kuopio Lake Rescue is a 50-year-old organization that provides volunteer help for those stranded afloat due to engine breakdown, hitting a rock, running out of fuel or other such incident. Tuovinen mentions that as boating has gained popularity – largely due to the coronavirus – that means more work for the organization as well.

"Last year, we had a record number of missions, and we expect the same in 2021. As enthusiasm grows, people tend to forget to take care of basic preparations properly."

Tuovinen emphasizes that Lake Kallavesi is indeed a "divine" environment for boating, and he strongly recommends it. However, it is worth keeping in mind that the fewer unpleasant surprises there are, the greater the enjoyment will be.

For travellers and locals alike, the surrounding waters add substantial value to the way Kuopio is experienced. Just seeing the breathtakingly beautiful Lake Kallavesi is an unforgettable moment, but when it comes to seriously enhancing customer experience, there is definitely a lot more there than meets the eye. ●

The Many Faces of Water

Kuopio is known as the “Capital of Lakeland”, and anyone who has taken even a brief look around, immediately understands why. Besides providing exceptional opportunities to enjoy yourself and have a great time, water has a wide variety of other useful purposes for people and businesses. It enlivens the entire society, in more ways than one.

TEXT TIMO MANSIKKA-AHO
PHOTOS WILLE MARKKANEN AND HARJULA PRODUCTION



Kaii Higashiyama – Polar Summer Night, 1963, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (MOMAT)

AESTHETICS

The beauty of the city by the water has impressed people throughout the centuries. While the locals enjoy long walks along the shoreline and sitting by the pier looking at the horizon, artists from around the world have come here to immortalize these unique sights. One of the most popular ways to do this is to hike up the slopes of Puijo, then perhaps take the lift to the top of the tower – and take a look around. Amazing views open up in all directions, sparking your inspiration and tickling those creative bones like nothing else.

In 1962, **Kaii Higashiyama**, one of the most renowned post-war artists in Japan, took a four-month trip to the Nordic countries with his wife. They arrived in Kuopio by boat and were immediately captivated by the beauty of the landscape. Higashiyama filmed Lake Kallavesi out of the

old Puijo Tower for a few seconds and went back to Japan, bursting with creativity. A year later, the painting “Polar Summer Night” was completed. The connection with nature and the quality of life he experienced in Kuopio created a success story that still inspires people on the other side of the world today.

In December 2020, “Polar Summer Night” arrived at the source of its inspiration. It will be on display in the Puijo Tower for now.

CULTURE

An easy approach – and exit, for that matter – has been one of the driving forces that has had a strong effect on the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Kuopio. Steamboats carried passengers here from Central Europe already in the early days of international travel, and Kuopio was one of the first cities in Finland where new ideologies and ways of thinking would take root. The fact that you can travel by water from Kuopio all the way to Cape Town, if you wish, has been an enriching element to the cultural and ideological development of society as a whole.

ECONOMY

Below the surface are the fish, an integral source of livelihood in Kuopio, as well as one of the most essential ingredients of local cuisine. Vendace is the most legendary fish in the area and widely used in several famous dishes. You simply cannot leave town before tasting fried vendace with mashed potatoes, not to mention the

almightiest dish that is as quintessentially Kuopio as anything else: the traditional vendace and bacon pasty. If they made that anywhere else but Kuopio, it just would not be the real thing.

As in so many Finnish towns located by forests and waterways, the paper industry has been an important contributor to the economy of Kuopio. One of the best news – and greatest achievements in the field of sustainable development – has been the ability of the industry to develop ways to operate with minimal impact on the environment. Even though the

The harmonious relationship between water and the people of Kuopio is almost tangible.

production volumes have remained the same, statistics show that especially when it comes to emissions to water, the achievements have been nothing short of exceptional. The overall importance of water has been recognized, and corrective measures have been successfully taken.

The harmonious relationship between water and the people of Kuopio is almost tangible. While the opportunities are enjoyed to the max, a strong respect is inherent in everything that people do. Without water, the city would not be the same, so the best thing to do is to handle it with care. ●

Water Calms Down the Busy Worker

Having led Bella-Veneet from a garage to the top of the world Raimo Sonninen has many irons in the fire. His latest projects combine work, leisure and water.

TEXT MINNA AKIOLA | PHOTO QVIM ARKKITEHDIT OY



After selling his company Bella-Veneet Oy about a year ago, Raimo Sonninen has already had time to establish holiday resort Kuopion Saana with his partners and is now involved in setting up both an apartment hotel and a sport hall in Bellanranta. They will provide the perfect way to combine work and leisure right next to Lake Kallavesi.

Sonninen thinks that the general mode of work is changing. For example, people want conference rooms that create a positive vibe and calm them down. Many also want to balance their work with something that detaches them from work. The plan is to also include e.g. padel courts and climbing facilities in the sport hall.

"In the old days, work was all that mattered, but thanks to more leisure time, people yearn for more experiences and hobbies to try as well."

The hotel will have conference rooms overlooking the lake. Sonninen has noticed the calming effects of water also at home. He has always lived by the water – or at least has been able to see water from his windows. He finds water endlessly fascinating due to its ever-changing shapes, from calm surfaces to dark and stormy waters.

"In Saana, people prefer to withdraw by the lake to continue working after a lunch meeting. Some opt for a corner table next to a window, while others go out on the terrace. If you break your concentration to raise your head just a bit, you will find the water and nature right by your side, making you feel good."

Water as an element also gave the first boost to Sonninen's career in boatbuilding. When his father refused to buy him a boat, the 12-year-old Raimo made a canoe all by himself to be able to

go out on the water – and that is how his career as a boatbuilder started. He has wanted to pass on the good that he has received and invests the money he has made in the boat business in things that will bring joy to others as well.

Sonninen believes that boat travel brings families together and creates good memories of times spent together on the water.

"As the old saying goes, if you spend your leisure time out of the water, the amount of time you get doubles. Out on the lake, you can look

around and you do not have to tread along a narrow road, says Sonninen.

Saana also has a jetty where you can climb aboard an inland waterway vessel to visit various places or simply enjoy a scenic lake tour. ●

"If you spend your leisure time out of the water, the amount of time you get doubles."



Raimo Sonninen is developing Bellanranta district to become a center of wellbeing.
Photo: Bella Boats

A Matter of Taste

Although picking berries and mushrooms in the forest and preparing vendace and bacon pasty may seem like perfectly ordinary, everyday activities to Finns, they represent high-level exoticism and an endless source of amazement to many others.

TEXT TIMO MANSIKKA-AHO
PHOTOS EUROPEAN REGION OF GASTRONOMY KUOPIO AND
WILLE MARKKANEN



Finnish superfood from our common backyard – the forest.

The Kuopio region can provide truly fulfilling gastronomic experiences even for the most demanding taste buds. One of the great added benefits to this is that quite a few ingredients are available to everyone, free of charge, in nature all around us.

Among other public rights, known as “everyman’s rights” in Finland, everyone has the right to freely pick berries and mushrooms in the forest, as long as they do not cause unnecessary harm to nature or people living close by. Given the amount of delicacies simply waiting to be picked each year, you can count on getting a good crop as long as you have some idea of where to look.

As long as you possess a valid license, you can freely try your luck at fishing as well. Kuopio is famous especially for its vendace dishes, but there are also plenty of other fish in the lakes to catch.

FROM THE FOREST AND INTO YOUR MOUTH

The best berry picking and fishing experiences are so much more than just trying to get a big harvest or catch. Both the forests and the lakes serve as great retreats. You can simply look around and enjoy the view, relax and listen to the sounds of nature. If you happen to be able to bring a few berries or fish home – great! If not – perhaps it was just an excuse to be able to escape from the hustle of the city for a moment.

Besides, given that there is excellent, locally produced food easily available in Kuopio, what’s the point of trying to prepare it yourself anyway?

All you need to do is head out to the Market Square in the city centre and you will find several options to choose from – from the legendary

Everyone has the right to freely pick berries and mushrooms in the forest.



Eeva Mertanen is one of Kuopio's ERG ambassadors. Eeva's heart sings for good, clean food and local culture.

Top Chef Anssi Kantelinen knows the ingredients of the good life.



vendace and bacon pasty to vegetarian dishes and pies. Within a couple of blocks, there are several high-level restaurants that provide all sorts of tasty experiences, using many local ingredients.

Speaking of tasty experiences, local chefs and restaurant operators really know how to elevate food to the next level. While their skills and craftsmanship are complimented on a daily basis, they have been recognized on a national level as well. Perhaps the greatest achievement in this front was **Anssi Kantelinen's** Finnish Top Chef Award in 2015.

SPREADING THE WORD ACROSS EUROPE

While typical Finns like to keep their treasures to themselves, the outgoing citizens of Kuopio have felt that, among all the other great things the re-

gion has to offer, the local haute cuisine is worth sharing.

One thing led to another and eventually even the people at the European Region of Gastronomy Platform were impressed. In fact, they were so impressed that they awarded the Kuopio region the official ERG title for the years 2020–2021.

As a result, and in spite of the pandemic, there is a lot going on in and around Kuopio. The clean nature, light summer nights, high-quality ingredients and everyman's rights are elements that locals want to share with visitors. There are all kinds of food-themed events, farmers' markets, events combining food and culture, pop-up restaurants in extraordinary surroundings and excursions oozing with cultural heritage. Nominated ERG restaurants are placing a special emphasis on locally produced ingredients, using their expertise and craftsmanship to bring tradi-

tional cuisine to the table – more often than not with a modern twist.

As **Eeva Mertanen**, CEO at Ravintolamestarit and one of Kuopio's ERG ambassadors, says on the ERG website:

"Gastronomy is a holistic experience. It is delicious, clean food and tasty drinks combined with memorable moments with heartfelt presence. It's about culture, crafts, music, people and encounters. In Kuopio region we have something unique: clean waters, forests and air with the skills to use the rhythm of nature."

SETTING THE TABLE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

While the ERG title brings the international spotlight on the first-rate ingredients and state-of-the-art cooking skills in the region, it also opens up opportunities on a much wider scale. The region has succeeded in capturing international attention, at least during the title period, and there is huge potential there from an economic point of

view. While the travel industry is one of the most obvious lines of business to capitalize on the ongoing gastronomic hype, the doors are now open to anyone hoping to explore business opportunities and establish partner networks.

Food connects families and cultures and paves the way for businesses and even entire nations to prosper together. There is no underestimating the power of growth that the region's fertile soil holds. ●

**"Gastronomy is
a holistic
experience."**



The Nordic Diet is All-Round Good – Both for Your Body and the Food Industry

The Nordic diet, at its best, means eating local and supporting the Finnish food industry. Research also indicates that it may prevent diseases.

TEXT MINNA AKIOLA
PHOTO EUROPEAN REGION OF GASTRONOMY KUOPIO

The Institute of Public Health and Clinical Nutrition at the University of Eastern Finland (UEF) studies the significance of nutrition in the promotion of health and the treatment of diseases and the significance of food as an element of wellbeing.

Several years ago, the UEF was involved in a Nordic study, examining the healthy Nordic diet (HND). The study showed that the diet reduces low-grade inflammation in the body and improves blood sugar and fat metabolism.

“HND has also been shown to prevent certain diseases”, says Professor of Nutrition Therapy **Ursula Schwab** from the University of Eastern Finland.

The healthy Nordic diet can be compared to the Mediterranean diet. According to Schwab, the only dif-

ferences between the two diets are mainly related to food culture.

LOCALLY SOURCED INGREDIENTS

HND is based on ingredients that are easily available in the Nordic countries. For instance, wheat is typically used Mediterranean countries, but in the Nordics, it is balanced by barley, oat and rye. Here, the vegetables group is more varied, because root vegetables are consumed along with other vegetables.

“This is not a competition over which diet is better. For example, it makes sense to use olive oil in Italy and Greece, because it is a local product. Here, on the other hand, it is more natural to use rapeseed and colza oil, because they are derived

from plants that grow here”, says Schwab.

Schwab urges people to appreciate domestically sourced food. Domestic berries, for example, are often more nutritious than imported fruit and berries and have hardly any contaminants.

The healthy Nordic diet can be compared to the Mediterranean diet

“Domestic vegetables and berries are often better than foreign ones in terms of their nutritional content and they are always practically local, because Finland is such a small country.” ●

Nature & Travel

In Kuopio people get to live as they like – at their own pace, in the middle of nature and city, while always surrounded by human compassion.

THE **6TH**
BEST AIR QUALITY AMONG
EUROPEAN CITIES

AMONG THE TOP
6
TOURISM DESTINATION
IN FINLAND

OVERNIGHT STAYS IN
KUOPIO-TAHKO
300,000

SURROUNDED BY
100 LAKES
SHORELINE
6340 KM

100
DIFFERENT FIRE PITS,
GOAHTIS (FIN: KOTA)
FISHING LODGES AND
LEAN-TO SHELTERS
(FIN: LAAVU)

FINLAND'S BEST
DISC GOLF TRACK AT
PUIJO
600
KM OF SKI TRACKS

5 SPAS
31 BEACHES

TAHKO STEPS
1054
800M LONG

NATURE
CONSERVATION AREAS
2

THE **1ST**
EUROPEAN REGION
OF GASTRONOMY
CITY IN FINLAND

REVENUES FROM
TOURISM TO
NORTHERN SAVO
€ 500
MILLION

THE LARGEST NATIONAL
CITY PARK WITH
A SURFACE AREA OF
7,200
MILLION

The Table Has Been Set



There are altogether more than two dozen restaurants in the Kuopio region, holder of the European Region of Gastronomy (ERG) title. In addition, a wide variety of food and beverage producers as well as primary producers are involved, working together to bring the very best the region has to offer to the table.

TEXT **AULI TUOMI** | PHOTOS **EUROPEAN REGION OF GASTRONOMY KUOPIO**

The ERG title is based on requirements guided by IGCAT standards and regional criteria. It is a sign that the restaurant is a real gem of regional cuisine. ERG restaurants champion local, responsibly produced ingredients and serve them with genuine, native flair.

In addition, the restaurants are committed to developing the environmental, economic and social responsibility of their operations and supporting regional wellbeing by e.g. sourcing local ingredients whenever possible.

Restaurants in the Kuopio region with an ERG title include:

MUSTA LAMMAS (BLACK SHEEP)

The kitchen here is inspired by the various seasons of the culinary year, regional forests, fields and clear lakes. The rooftop garden as well as several local producers and pickers provide the best ingredients for the tastiest experiences.

The sturdy cellar vaults were built in 1862, originally for a local brewery, which soon began to make stronger spirits as well. In 1982, a sign with the word "Gourmet" was hoisted on top of the arch and Restaurant Black Sheep was born. Since then, the restaurant has continued to raise Finnish food and beverage culture to the next level.

PUIJON TORNIRAVINTOLA (TOWER RESTAURANT)

The surrounding nature and regional producers guarantee that the ingredients here are always fresh and delicious. It is the restaurant's firm objective to only source from producers who can be seen from the Puijo Tower – which is 75 metres high and surrounded by breath-taking views in every direction. The restaurant knows all its producers in person, and is also well-aware of the origins of its meat, vegetables and the gifts of nature. Nature is visible in the interior as well; you can even hear and smell it. The restaurant revolves around slowly so you get to admire full 360-degree views while enjoying a delicious meal.



TAHKO PANORAMA BAR

Welcome to the atmospheric, scenic restaurant on top of the Tahko slopes! Panorama is a dream venue for anyone who loves a good view; overlooking Lake Syväri, it provides unforgettable moments in every sense. You can enjoy delicious food and a captivating atmosphere in the main restaurant, the heated pavilion or the large sun deck – and, in the winter, there is even a 200-seater snow deck. There is a wide variety of menus available, and even a scenic sauna for those who want to scrub up before dinner! ●



Find more ERG-approved cafés, restaurants, wineries and breweries in Kuopio:

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| • Alahovi Winery | • King's Crown Music Restaurant | • Musta Lammas Fine Dining | • Saana Restaurant, Spa and Sauna |
| • Bierstube Pub | • Koivumäki Manor | • Pannuhuone Gust. Ranin Bar | • Sawohouse & Sabor House Kitchen & Bar |
| • Burger5 Restaurant | • Kummisetä Restaurant | • Panorama Bar Tahko | • Skilla Nordic Restaurant |
| • Café and Cake Shop Houkutut | • Kuopio Market Hall | • Panza Mexican Restaurant | • Urban Lunch and Fine Dining |
| • Café Kaneli | • Kuzina Wine & Daily | • Puijo Tower Restaurants and Cafe | • Viking Restaurant Harald |
| • Container Restaurant Morton | • Lignell & Piispanen | • Rauhalahhti Jätkänkämppä Lodge | • VS Ravintolat (restaurants) |
| • GastroBar B/P | • Liki Restaurant | • Roll Cruises | |
| • Iso-Kalla Brewery | • Lohimaa Fish and Travel | • RPS Brewing | |
| • Isä Camillo Mediterranean Restaurant | • Majatalo Osula Bed & Breakfast | | |

More information at:
www.tastesavo.fi

Kuopio – Enjoying the Riches of Everyday Life

The riches of everyday life in Kuopio can consist of a gentle steam in your very own yard sauna, a steaming cup of coffee on top of Puijo during a walk, a warm chat with a friend in Kantti, the home of facts and fantasies, or a scientific experiment that gets you bubbling with excitement at the Children's University.

TEXT MINNA AKIOLA | PHOTOS WILLE MARKKANEN





House of facts and fantasies KANTTI is a social innovation combining the common memory – Museum and open-to-all Library.



The natural curiosity of our children is the fuel in the Children's University – a interesting co-operation with the University of Eastern Finland.

In Kuopio, you can find out what it feels like to simply step outside the door after a day's work and go straight into leisure mode. You do not need to waste time sitting in traffic, but you can easily head out to exercise, go fishing, boating or hiking, or enjoy various sports and cultural activities. Everything is within reach, and the range of services is wide. Everyday life is truly rich!

Local sports and exercise venues are constantly developed and offer numerous activities. The lush park surrounding Valkeisenlampi Pond invites you to take a walk, and you can hop on an electric bike and whiz to Väinölänniemi in no time to play tennis. The environment is also safe for children to travel. Children, adolescents and pensioners in Kuopio can obtain a Wellness Pass, entitling them to various hobbies at a lower price.

HOUSING OPTIONS FOR EVERY LIFESTYLE AND SITUATION

Distances are short in Kuopio; it is possible to walk right across the grid plan area of the city

centre and all the services you need are within cycling distance. The short distances and various forms of housing cater to the entire human life-cycle: families with children may prefer to live in the peaceful countryside, while pensioners may yearn for the hustle and bustle of the city – or vice versa.

Father of four and Communications Manager at Savonia University of Applied Sciences **Petteri Alanko** considers this an asset. If children want to move from the countryside to the city to enjoy student life, they do not need to move to another locality entirely. They can live in the same area, although their form of housing may change.

"If you take a map and a compass and draw a circle with a diameter of 30 kilometres around Kuopio, you will see that there are plenty of options for both studying and housing in the area."

Alanko is pleased that Kuopio provides international education paths from day care all the way to higher education. His work has also shown that people want to come to the city to study, because the education is multidisciplinary.

KANTTI SERVES AS A PLATFORM FOR EXPERIENCES, ENCOUNTERS AND WONDERING

Joining the Kuopio Museum and the main library, Kantti, the home of facts and fantasies, will open in phases in 2021.

"Kantti allows you to see and experience – and perhaps even wonder at – your everyday life and surroundings. The riches of everyday life are displayed there in the riches of stories", says **Janne Hentunen**, Director of Wellbeing Promotion at the City of Kuopio.

Kantti aims to inspire discussion around current topics. It provides an inspiring, safe platform for understanding various themes and the opportunity to gain access to deeper knowledge.

"It can contribute to building trust in the future, as the changes taking place in the world can be better grasped using the knowledge available in Kantti", says Hentunen.

The environment is also safe for children to travel.

Kantti can also be described as a unique social innovation, a solution that aims to promote and generate wellbeing. The library and the two museums form a complex that provides opportunities to be creative and meet others, thereby also promoting wellbeing.

Hentunen says that the home of facts and fantasies will provide experiences through various exhibitions and events that foster new perspectives.

"In addition to permanent exhibitions, the museums will house temporary exhibitions, and the library allows users to delve deeper into the same themes through literature and various other content. The content forms an integral part of wonder and insight."

Kantti will be a meeting place like no other in the heart of the city, but Hentunen hopes that it will also find its way into the hearts of residents and visitors.

CHILDREN'S UNIVERSITY ENCOURAGES INVESTIGATION

Organized by the educational service provider SnellmanEDU, the Children's University does its part in supporting wellbeing services in Kuopio.

Activities were launched ten years ago and the focus is on providing science education for children by utilizing their natural enthusiasm and interest towards new things.

"Children are given activating experiences of different scientific disciplines. For example, they have made volcanoes and toothpaste for elephants in the chemistry lab", says Principal of SnellmanEDU **Soili Meklin**.

The experiences have given the children a thirst for knowledge. Indeed, the idea is that the

children would continue to be excited about science at home and experiment with things in their everyday life as well. Meklin believes that the daily life of families can be enriched by doing easy, safe scientific experiments at home.

The Children's University is partnered with the University of Eastern Finland. It has been easy to find scientists in different fields to take part, and they, too, enjoy talking to children about their field.

Activities are organized in the form of day camps in the summer and evening clubs during the school year. According to Meklin, there is no strict curriculum governing the activities, but the

instruction proceeds according to the children's questions and interests, although it is based on a teaching plan.

"This year, we introduced a new, virtual Children's University. It allows children to become absorbed in the world of science through an application."

Even if a child who takes part in the activities does not go on to study at university as an adult, Meklin hopes that the in-

quisitive approach to life would remain.

"We have received feedback from parents and grandparents as well saying that the Children's University also gives them a nice glimpse into the world of science", says Meklin. ●

**It has been easy
to find scientists in
different fields
to take part.**

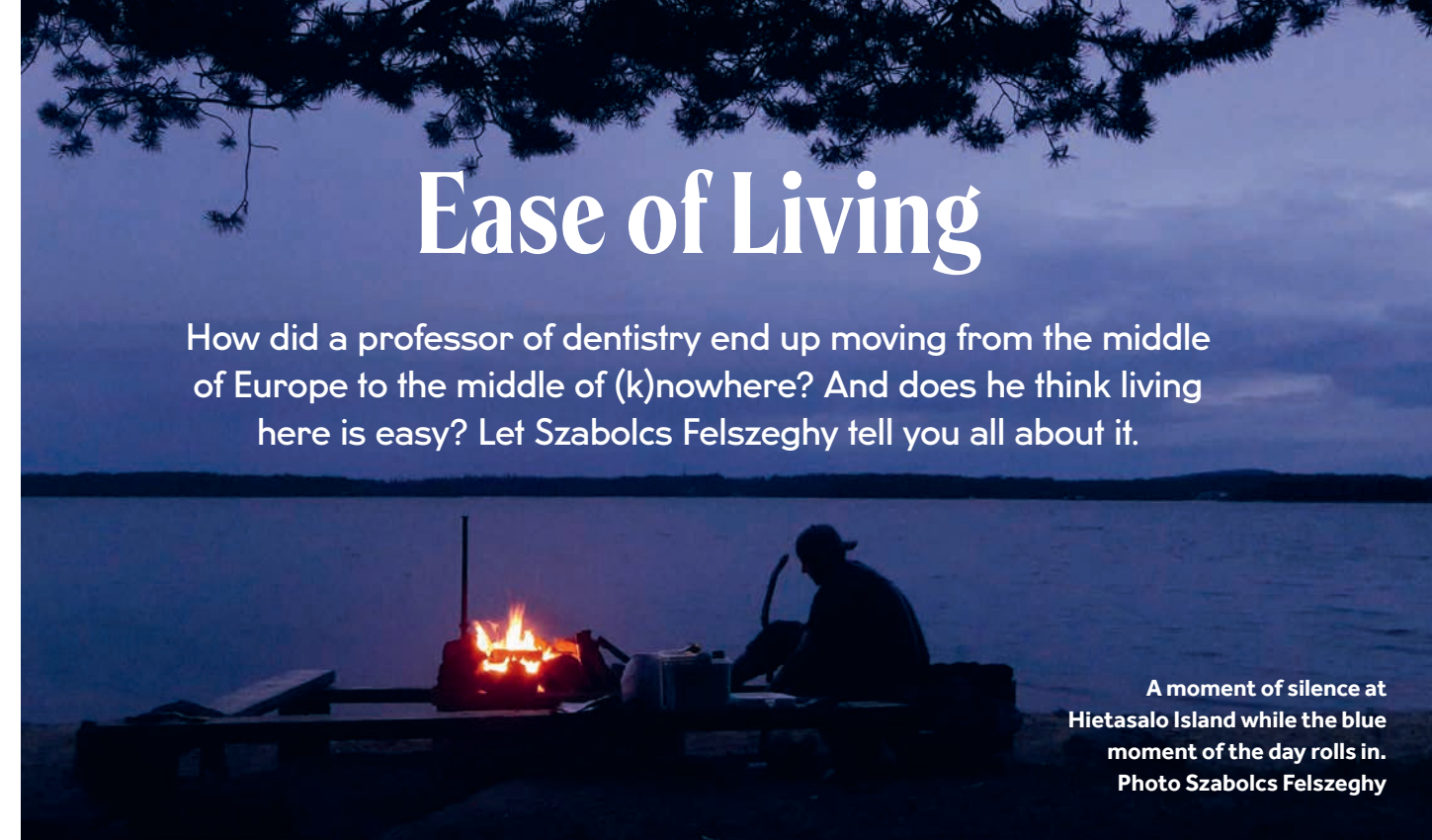
What makes Kuopio so unique?

Kuopio stands out with its festive events, amazing food and unique nature. But take a look at these slightly different facts:

- Kuopio is surrounded by **over 100 lakes**.
- Kuopio has a **shoreline** of 6340 km.
- Is said to be **ten minutes walk** from the doorstep of any home in Kuopio to the outdoor sport facilities.
- **Nightless nights** – in summer, the sun sets below the horizon only for a short time in the Kuopio region.
- **The frozen lakes** in wintertime are used for example, cross-country skiing, ice skating and ice fishing.
- **Ice swimming** refreshes the body and the mind.
- The jovial **Savo dialect** is ever-flowing in Kuopio.
- The locals have named Kuopio's marketplace as **the Centre of the Universe**, or "Mualiman napa".
- The **Wife Carrying World Championship Contest** is hosted annually in Sonkajärvi, 1.5 hour's drive from Kuopio.
- **Top events** such as Kuopio Dance festival, Ironman, KuopioRock, Kuopio Comedy festival, Finland Ice Marathon, ANTI Contemporary Art festival, Food and Wine festivals and many more!
- ...and also let's not forget about Kuopio's heartily **people** and inspirational and surprising **encounters**.

Ease of Living

How did a professor of dentistry end up moving from the middle of Europe to the middle of (k)nowhere? And does he think living here is easy? Let Szabolcs Felszeghy tell you all about it.



A moment of silence at Hietasalo Island while the blue moment of the day rolls in. Photo Szabolcs Felszeghy

Szabolcs Felszeghy moved with his family from Hungary to Kuopio a few years ago. He works at the University of Eastern Finland and writes a blog about his thoughts of Finland and Finnishness through the eyes of an immigrant.

in love with Kuopio, its nature and Finland in general. And now, our third baby girl is born a real Savonian.

DO YOU THINK LIVING IN KUOPIO IS EASY?

Generally, YES, it is, but you need to be punctual. Being on time is not only typically Savonian, but is expected of everyone. Being on time is their way of telling you they value you.

**"We were falling
ever more in love
with Kuopio."**

Besides that, I think we also have a great choice of entertainment, good food, music, sports and culture. Kuopio has a lot of surrounding nature and we all know Mother Nature does not charge an entrance fee... This is

what makes life so easy here, and the local government has made it even easier to enjoy nature in Kuopio by developing cycling and cross-country routes, opening new public beaches for free and many other measures.

Although we are in the middle of (k)nowhere with less than 200 000 inhabitants, Kuopio is an extremely beautiful city embedded in nature and is starting to become more and more multicultural too. ●



Blog:
<https://blogs.uef.fi/on-the-move/2020/07/10/finnish-summers-short-but-full-of-joy-of-life/>

Not Just Another Ballgame

Whoever it was that invented the myth of unsociable Finns apparently never attended a ballgame in Kuopio. Truth be said, the people in this neck of the woods tend to be easier to approach than in most parts of the country, but when it comes to rooting for your favourite soccer, American football, baseball (the Finnish version), volleyball, basketball or even ice hockey team, there is every reason to expect things to get downright wild.



Photo: Janne Pirinen



The national success and great experiences are extremely important, both for the players and for the children and the city itself. Photo: Jari Turunen

TEXT TIMO MANSIKKA-AHO
PHOTOS JANNE PIRINEN AND JARI TURUNEN

Fan support and team success go hand in hand. This has been demonstrated in Kuopio throughout the decades.

Back in the 1970s KuPS, Kuopio's biggest soccer team, were among the three best teams in the country, four years in a row. In the unforgettable season of 1982, there were altogether three teams from Kuopio playing on the highest national level – and, during the last four seasons, KuPS have won medals again.

"The national success and great experiences are extremely important, both for the players and for the children and the city itself", says **Ari Lahti**, the owner of KuPS. "They are a living proof of the fact that the European stadiums are not that far from reach, even from Kuopio."

Indeed, KuPS was on the verge of making it all the way to the Europa League in the autumn

of 2020, playing extremely well in the qualifying rounds but losing the crucial game. Several individual players that began their careers at KuPS are now playing for bigger European teams, having also reached the Finnish national team.

Lahti says that soccer can make the entire city of Kuopio throb with energy, and the man himself is a living proof of this. Enthusiasm underlines his every word.

PLENTY TO CHOOSE FROM

Versatility is one of Kuopio's great riches. When it comes to cuisine, culture, activities – or sports teams, there is plenty to choose from.

Pekka Utriainen, head coach of the American football team Steelers, sees this as a great opportunity, both for the fans and the players.

"We have established a solid position in Kuopio", Utriainen states. "While we are not the biggest sport, our objective is to be the most attractive one."

There is a universal team spirit hanging over the city.

Indeed, the Steelers have been attractive. In 2020, the team went all the way to win the Finnish Championship. It goes without saying that this ignited both the fans and those interested in playing.

Such moments of victory also work wonders on a larger scale. Ari Lahti points out that when

it comes to issues such as health, social wellbeing and the economy, the entire society benefits. To be more precise, by well over ten million euros every year.

Pekka Utriainen compliments the communal spirit of Kuopio when it comes to sports. There is a universal team spirit hanging over the city, inviting everyone to come along and have a good time with their favourite sports teams.

Go to a game and see for yourself. There will be plenty of roars and laughter, plenty of jumping up and down, plenty of screaming.

All those sedate Finns having the time of their lives.

There may be a ballgame going on, but in Kuopio, it is never *just* a ballgame. ●

From Kuopio with Love

Last autumn I headed off to my city of birth,
Kuopio, to visit a friend.

TEXT ERJA LYYTINEN | PHOTOS SANNA PIETIKÄINEN



At nightfall, we came up with the idea of a late autumn mushroom hunt. My friend assured me that she knew a great, secret spot of yellowfoot chanterelles in the shelter of the forest. We came to a marked path and after some time, we turned off it and into the forest. Walking briskly and confidently, my friend really seemed to know where we were going. I stumbled along, trying to follow my friend in the dark as spruce branches tore at my clothes. I was just about to give up when we arrived at the foot of a slope rising ahead. My friend used a mobile phone to light up the forest floor. And there, in the dark, hidden from sight, sat a bunch of enormous yellowfoot chanterelles just waiting for us. We started picking them with childlike enthusiasm, thanks to our everyman's rights.

**The dark forest.
Silence. Humidity
hugging us.**

The dark forest. Silence. Humidity hugging us. A spider's web on a lingonberry stem. What an incredible experience! There I was, crouched down, smelling yellowfoot mushrooms in the forests of my home, wondering what it was that kept me in the throbbing life of the congested capital region – the answer, of course, was my music production company, gigs and other band activities. In short, my work, which normally whisks me around the world, from England to Spain or Romania to play blues rock as a Savo-born woman to people who thirst for music.



One of the world's best blues guitarist Erja Lyytinen and her band at the roof top of Kuopio. The unique live stream concert was held in June 2020.

"The centre of the universe" is located in Savo, but I've come across a number of similar centres all across the globe over the years. I discover something new and interesting in almost every place I go. Whether it be a small village festival in the Urals where blues music sounds in the market square, or driving on a bumpy road for hours to reach a warm-hearted city somewhere in Poland, where craftsmanship flourishes in the hands of ceramic and jewellery artists and drawers. Or a skyscraper-dotted metropolis in Canada, a blues festival in the middle of the Swiss Alps, playing in the heat of India while suffering from gastritis, or the rugged Svalbard islands in the icy Arctic Ocean. The fact that I come from Savo and approach new discoveries with jovial, childlike wonder has often spared me from disappointments and taught me

**More than 30 000
Finns work in
the music industry.**

that you can find something good in everything.

I have strong roots in Savo, but over the decades, I've found several "homes" where I return to time and again. My roots stretch far and wide, and their foundation rests firmly on the rocks of Jynkänvuori in Kuopio, where I used to run around as a young girl... once almost running into a 300-kilo elk. Different locations, different sides to draw from. All influential places in their own way. There is uniqueness to be found everywhere, if you only give it a chance. That's why I sometimes collect stones on my journeys, because if I can't take the world-famous Rockies with me in one piece, perhaps I can at least keep a tiny bit of them.

When I signed a record deal with a German record company in the mid-2000s, the head of the company joked that they discovered their new

protégé in the middle of a Finnish spruce forest. We've certainly seen a steady flow of Finnish musicians going abroad in the last couple of decades. More than 30 000 Finns work in the music industry, which is a large number in such a small country. I'm one of those who also work as an entrepreneur while giving work to a whole group of other freelancers. I get to work in my dream job, which makes me truly happy. The Kuopio of my childhood was quite withdrawn, and an international career seemed like a distant dream at the time. In the last decade, my city of birth has reached a new high and is now able to compete even with bigger cities by offering an extensive range of opportunities to live, enjoy hobbies and find employment, while revelling in nature at the same time.

But one thing is certain. The mushrooms you pick yourself always taste better than store-bought, pre-packaged and cleaned mushrooms. Regardless of whether you picked the mush-

rooms in your home country or abroad. A personal experience and doing things yourself give it all a special meaning. My friend and I picked so many yellowfoot chanterelles that there were plenty to share with my friends and relatives. And after a day spent outdoors, there's nothing better than the delicious smell of mushrooms sizzling in butter in a pan, accompanied by a blues record rasping in a vinyl record player, where the swooping notes of the vocalist occasionally sound like lazy Savo dialect. ●

Erja Lyytinen

Musician, Managing Director at Bluesland Productions

"Phenomenon of the Year 2020"

honorary certificate

#2 Ranking on "10 World's Best Guitarist Now"

(Total Guitar)



City of Music and Dance

Kuopio residents love dance and music. Over the years, their strong will and persistent cooperation have given rise to the city's very own professional orchestra, the unique Kuopio Music Centre, the Dance Festival, the Senior High of Music and Dance and even a unit of the Sibelius Academy. The music education provided in Kuopio bears fruit in concert halls across the globe as well as in numerous number one spots in album charts. Recent decades have also brought plenty of international talent to the city.

TEXT ELINA KALLASAARI
PHOTOS KUOPIO MUSIC CENTRE, WILLE MARKKANEN,
PETRA TIIHONEN AND LUKKAROINEN ARCHITECTS



Atso Almila thinks that the concert hall is a unique place to work and the work community shares a wonderful spirit of solidarity.

"The orchestra has evolved in interesting ways", says **Atso Almila**, 2nd conductor of the Kuopio Symphony Orchestra. He has followed the music scene in Kuopio already since the 1970s and as a resident of the city since 1996.

"The orchestra has grown younger and, today, it is one of the most international orchestras in Finland. Many professional musicians prefer to stay in Kuopio, because the orchestra is well-managed, the concert hall is a unique place to work and the work community shares a wonderful spirit of solidarity", says Almila.

Concertmaster of the Kuopio Symphony Orchestra **Lila Watanabe** also enjoys the international community she works in.

"Combining different cultural backgrounds in making music together is something very important and fulfilling, and I think the audience can feel that coming from the stage when we play", says Watanabe.

KUOPIO MUSIC CENTRE – THE GEM OF KUOPIONLAHTI

One of the most prominent outcomes of the local cultural ambitions is the Kuopio Music Centre, built in 1985. The building serves as the home of the Symphony Orchestra, a stage for Finland's top entertainers from music to dance and stand up and a campus for three different music schools. The atmosphere in the building is cosy, resembling a living room.

Kuopio Music Centre is particularly famous for its large concert hall with state-of-the-art acoustics. Many international musicians have recorded music there. Atso Almila especially recalls the comment made by American master violinist **Ruggiero Ricci**.

"Ricci, who has 76 years old at the time, visited the Kuopio Music Centre in 1994 and wrote in the



Music can also be studied in Lumit, Kuopio's Senior High School of Arts, which is being rebuilt at the moment. Photo: Lukkaroinen Architects and VSU Maisema-arkkitehdit

Photo: Petra Tiihonen



guestbook: 'This is absolutely one of the best if not the best hall I have ever played in', says Almila.

LIFELONG MUSIC EDUCATION

Operating mainly in the Music Centre, the Kuopio Conservatory is the biggest music and dance school in Finland. It is possible to study music from early childhood all the way to the highest vocational degrees under one roof. As an adult, you can continue the hobby in the ranks of the senior orchestra Senka at the Open Conservatory. Music can also be studied in the music classes of comprehensive schools or Lumit, Kuopio Senior High School of Arts.

Many international musicians have recorded music there.

The schools work in exceptionally close cooperation not only with each other, but also with the Symphony Orchestra and the City Theatre.

"Productions with professionals are awesome experiences for students. They can participate in real working life projects during their studies and get a taste of professional working methods and schedules", says Head of Culture **Sari Morkkila-Karttunen** from the Savonia University of Applied Sciences.

"Kuopio has a long history of cooperation. The partners trust each other and take responsibility for their share of the project. They do not throw in the towel immediately if something does not succeed, but the projects are all about learning and enjoying things together", Morkkila-Karttunen continues.

Music education in Kuopio has served as a springboard for the career of many musicians and frontline artists from **Paula Vesala** to **Marco Hietala** and from **Soile Isokoski** to **Erja Lyytinen**.

LOVE STORY OF MARIA AND TONY TO BE STAGED IN KUOPIO

One of the outcomes of cross-institutional collaboration is the West Side Story musical, produced by the Conservatory, the Symphony Orchestra, the Music Centre and the Savonia University of Applied Sciences. The full-length symphony version will premiere in May 2021.

"I wanted the collaborative project to be a piece that would also be a challenge to a professional orchestra", says conductor of the production **Rauno Tikkanen**, Senior Lecturer of Orchestra and Chamber Music at Savonia University of Applied Sciences.

West Side Story musical is an inspiring example of cross-institutional collaboration of local music schools with young talents and the excellent Kuopio Symphony Orchestra.

"We have all treaded our own paths, inspired by the example of others. It is important for professionals to serve as role models for younger generations. Our collaboration also gives the citizens of Kuopio a chance to see brilliant performances, such as West Side Story just the way composer **Bernstein** meant it", Tikkanen continues.

More of Kuopio's historical cultural ambition should be seen in January 2022 when an opera about **Minna Canth** will have its premiere on the stage of the Music Centre. ●

Virtuoso Violinist Lila Watanabe:

“The Audience is
the Best Part of My Job”

Lila Watanabe is a violinist born in Japan who has played in the United States and around the world for a long time before moving from Chicago to Kuopio in 2016. She is the Concertmaster of the Kuopio Symphony Orchestra.

TEXT ELINA KALLASAARI
PHOTO KUOPIO MUSIC CENTRE



Watanabe is delighted by the versatile settings that Kuopio provides for cultural events, from various concert halls to Peräniemen Kasino surrounded by nature and the open-air stages in the harbour and the market square. She has also noticed that the city provides a wide range of opportunities to study music.

“Everybody seems to be playing an instrument in this town. The patience and perseverance learned while practicing provide a solid foundation for life”, says the violinist.

Watanabe compares the work of an orchestral musician to archaeology, where the long history of music is recreated piece by piece and made visible to the audience.

“What I love the most about my job is that I get to provide many kinds of music and entertainment to the people of Kuopio and beyond. It gives me the greatest joy to meet people on

**“Everybody seems to
be playing an instrument
in this town.”**

the street or in the public sauna, and they tell me how they have enjoyed the concerts.”

There are some things that Watanabe would like to bring to Kuopio from the rest of the world.

“Classical music and orchestras have incredible fan audiences in Japan, similar to pop and rock artists. The enthusiasm of the fans is almost unreal. It would be fun to see more wild fans here as well.”

However, concerts are not necessarily only for classical music lovers.

“It can be interesting for the audience to just sit back and watch professional musicians in action or meditate while listening to the music. I would like everyone to try it at least once to see what an orchestral concert is like.” ●



Culture Shock – and How Good It Feels

Ever since the days of Minna Canth, the city’s renowned writer and social influencer in the late 1800s, Kuopio has recognized the versatile positive effects that cultural experiences can enable. The selection of cultural venues and events is wide; the more conventional museums, theatres, movies and music festivals are joined by quite exceptional and creative cultural services.

TEXT TIMO MANSIKKA-AHO
PHOTO KUOPIO COMEDY FESTIVAL, WILLE MARKKANEN

There is the ANTI Contemporary Art Festival, Dance Theatre Minimi and its street performances, and plenty of others that show that culture is, at its best, a thing that lives and develops with the audience.

All it takes is a little thinking outside the box, and new levels of enjoyment are suddenly within reach. For example, have you ever considered attending a stand-up show in the middle of the forest?

That is what comedian **Teemu Vesterinen** arranged, based on the

idea of **Juha Jylhäsalmi**, Director of Kuopio Comedy Festival. He cycled

**It turned out
to be an eye-opening
experience for everyone.**

through local forests, found the perfect location – and set up a show that became an instant success.

“There was a certain charm of novelty that both the audience and I experienced”, Vesterinen recalls. “The script was rough, the setup bare; it turned out to be an eye-opening experience for everyone.”

Vesterinen says that the muscle of comedy is, in many ways, no different from other muscles: it has to be trained using a versatile routine, with various kinds of stimuli. The versatile offering of the cultural scene in Kuopio provides a suitable session for every taste. ●

Top 10 Architectural Landmarks in Kuopio

Different periods can be seen in the cityscape of Kuopio. In addition to blocks of wooden houses, the grid plan area of the city centre features Neoclassical, Renaissance Revival, Art Nouveau and Modern styles of architecture.

TEXT RIITTA JUSSILA

PHOTOS VICENTE SERRA, TIINA HARING, WILLE MARKKANEN AND SOILE NEVALAINEN



1. Standing next to the Centre of the Universe – the Kuopio market square – the **Town Hall** was built in 1882–1885 according to the design of architect **F. A. Sjöström**. Over the years, the building has been modified according to its purpose of use.

“The facades of the building have been preserved extremely well in their original or resembling their original state. The main indoor spaces represent some of the finest examples of Renaissance Revival design in Kuopio, following their restoration, which began in the 1970s,” says architect **Hannu Puurunen** whose architectural firm has written a report on the architectural history of the Town Hall.

Over the course of its history, the building has been used for many purposes. In addition to administration, the building has housed e.g. the city administrative court, a restaurant, a police station, a prison and a public library.

Tulliportinkatu 31.
kuopio.fi/kuopion-kaupungintalo



2. The Kuopio City Theatre is housed in the **theatre building**, completed in 1963 according to the design of architects **Stenros** and **Luukkonen**. The theatre building was renovated in 2012–2014, and an extension was built on the side

of the building and the old stage tower was raised. The tower in its night lighting has become a Kuopio landmark.

Niiralankatu 2.
kuopionkaupunginteatteri.fi



3. Located near the shores of Kuopionlahti Bay, **Kuopio Music Centre** is home of the Kuopio Symphony Orchestra and the heart of musical life in the province. The design by architects **Esa Malmivaara** and **Raimo Savolainen** won an invitational architectural competition. The building was opened in 1985.

Many big names have performed in the Music Centre, because its acoustics are among the best in Europe.

Kuopionlahdenkatu 2.
kuopionmusiikkikeskus.fi

4. The Kuopio Provincial Government Building, or the **Governor's House**, was built next to Piispanpuisto Park in 1883. The building represents Renaissance Revival architecture and it was designed by architect **Konstantin Kiseleff**. Today, it is used by the Regional State Administrative Agency of Eastern Finland.

Hallituskatu 12–14.
senaatti.fi/arvokiinteisto/kuopion-laaninhallitus/



5. **Kuopio Lyceum High School** is also located next to the market square in the heart of the city. Among others, author **Juhani Aho** and president **Martti Ahtisaari** have studied at the Lyceum. **J. V. Snellman**, who promoted the status of the Finnish language, was once the principal of the school. Designed by **C. L. Engel**, the building was completed in 1826.

Puijonkatu 18.
kuopion-lyseo.onedu.fi



5.

7. Located on the premises of the Puijo Hospital, **Kaari Hospital** represents a modern style where public art and architecture are inseparably fused together. Artist **Jaana Partanen** and architect **Heikki Lamusuo** have designed the public spaces inside and outside the building and the facade artwork named Evolution.

The designers want to create buildings that promote health. They wanted Kaari Hospital to be a hospital for the future where comfort and functionality go hand in hand.



7.

"The name of the hospital, meaning 'curve' in Finnish, comes from its curved shape, but also refers to the human life cycle, sometimes depicted as a curve. The spaces have been designed using the same idiom that can be found in humans – curved and soft," say Partanen and Lamusuo.

The glass artwork Evolution con-

tinues the organic idiom, as it features coloured enlargements of microscope images taken from inside the human body. In addition, the artwork has been designed so that natural light can flood in.

Puijonlaaksontie 2.
pa-la.fi/projektit/kaarisairaala

6. Kuopio **Market Hall** takes you back to the atmosphere of olden times. The Hall represents the Art Nouveau style – the towers at the ends, the vaulted entrances and the multiple animal figures are characteristic of this style. The building was designed by **Johan Victor Strömberg** and completed in 1902. The Kuopio Market Hall was named the most beautiful market hall in Finland in 2020.

Kauppakatu 45.
kuopionkauppahalli.fi



6.

8. Representing the Neoclassical style, the Kuopio **Cathedral** stands on Vahtivuori hill. For generations, it has been a place where Kuopio residents go to find peace and quiet. Construction of the stone church began in 1806 according to the design of **Pehr Wilhelm Palmroth**, but the church was not completed until 1815.

Vuorikatu 17.
kuopionseurakunnat.fi



8.

9. Home of fact and fantasies **Kantti** is a complex consisting of the Kuopio Museum, representing the style of Romantic Nationalism, the main library, completed in 1967, and an extension between the two that was completed in autumn 2020.

"Kantti is a brand-new cultural service complex and meeting place, the living room of our citizens. The café in the extension serves everyone," says City Architect **Liisa Kaksonen**.

Completed in 1907, the museum was in need of a renovation and an extension, and plans were made to join it to the City Library

at the same time. An architectural design competition was organized to complete the project, and the winning firm was Arkkitehdit Davidsson Tarkela Oy.

"The extension is an independent architectural element. The glass entrance floor and the part of the building floating above it, which is clad with perforated, 3D metal plates and will house temporary exhibitions, will become part of the temporal layers of the block," says Kaksonen.

Museokatu 1.
kuopio.fi/-/home-of-facts-and-fantasies-there-is-no-can-t-in-kantti



9.



10.

10. August 2020 marked the opening of the new **Kuntalaakso Swimming Pool**, the second-largest public swimming pool in Finland. It was built next to the renovated home arena of hockey team KalPa, known as Niiralan Monttu. The modern swimming pool is the handiwork of architect office arkMILL.

Hannes Kolehmainen katu 4.
liikkuvakuopio.fi/en

Taking Responsibility

In Tahko, you can truly connect with nature, in more ways than one. The beautiful, versatile landscapes with lakes and forests everywhere create an inviting setting that you want to dive into and explore. A hike along the numerous trails or a swim after enjoying the sauna is enough to convince even the most sceptical visitors of nature's ability to provide unforgettable experiences.



TEXT TIMO MANSIKKA-AHO
PHOTOS KUOPIO-TAHKO MARKETING AND WILLE MARKKANEN



Tahko has the longest outdoor stairs (1054 steps) in Finland and therefore has become famous landmark.

At the same time, there are concerns about nature's ability to survive, to maintain its uncanny beauty and to stay healthy for the next generation and beyond.

Spending quality time in Tahko is easy. But when it comes to long-term sustainability, both planning and concrete measures are required. It all starts with taking responsibility.

This concerns both individuals and organizations, and there are several economic and sociocultural factors to be considered. You may not see the finish line yet, but if you lack the determination to get started, you will never reach it.

PATH TO SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The first step was taken in February 2020 when Tahko joined the Sustainable Travel Finland programme.

More than half of the businesses operating in Tahko have already joined the programme.

Organized by Visit Finland, the programme provides companies in the

travel industry a toolkit for making sustainable choices and taking action in situations that they face on a daily basis.

"As the hiking areas and other outdoor activities have been developed to attract more visitors, the companies in Tahko have started thinking about ways to further improve responsibility", says **Anna Hämäläinen**, Manager at Break Sokos Hotel Tahko. "Responsibility is highly valued in the area, and we want to put more effort into it."

Hämäläinen adds that Sustainable Travel Finland is an efficient way to achieve tangible results from a sus-



tainable point of view. While sustainability is something that more and more visitors expect, the first priority is preserving the beauty of nature.

On the other hand, Sustainable Travel Finland provides a development path that sets fairly uncompromising requirements to the various ways the participating companies deal with sustainability issues.

More than half of the businesses operating in Tahko have already joined the programme. Following the national guidelines set by Visit Finland, they have designed the principles that form the criteria for sustainable travel in the area. These principles concern issues such as communication, public transporta-

tion, recycling, energy and water consumption, accessibility, employment, cooperation, local procurement, local culture, safety and year-round operations. Every participating company is committed to these principles.

SUSTAINABILITY IS A NEVER-ENDING QUEST

The development path includes seven stages, and at the end the participating companies will be awarded the Sustainable Travel Finland label, a symbol showing that they respect and treasure the Finnish nature, its inhabitants and culture. The companies hope to obtain the label by the year 2024.

While the label is a sign of commitment and having done certain things right, efforts to improve sustainability will not end there. The main driver for Tahko, as well as the participating companies, goes well beyond the official recognition, all the way to a deep appreciation of the area itself – its beauty and all the opportunities it can provide to residents and visitors. That in itself is a value worth fighting for.

Above all, the label is a sign of the responsibility these companies have taken to preserve all the riches Tahko has to offer. For as long as is humanly possible, and even beyond that.

The journey has only just begun. ●

Everyday life & studies

Kuopio is a genuinely international city and provides unique opportunities for living, studies and business alike.



THE HAPPIEST RESIDENTS
AMONG THE LARGEST
CITIES IN FINLAND

APPROXIMATELY

3,200

FOREIGN NATIONALS
LIVING IN KUOPIO

76%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE
ARE SATISFIED WITH
THEIR LIVES

AROUND

112

DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES
LIVING IN KUOPIO

TOP

3

MIGRATORY
MUNICIPALITY
IN FINLAND

STUDENTS

25,000

FOREIGN STUDENTS

1,000

77%

OF THE
POPULATION LIVES IN
THE URBAN AREAS

32%

HAVE A DEGREE FROM
A HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTE

A UNIVERSITY CITY
AMONG THE TOP

300

IN SEVERAL
INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS

23%

IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

76%

FROM SECONDARY
EDUCATION

THE MUNICIPALITY
WITH THE MOST SUMMER
HOUSES IN FINLAND

10,800

A 10-MINUTE

WALK FROM ONE'S
FRONT DOOR TO THE
NEAREST OUTDOOR
SPORTS FACILITY



Savilahti Stage for Future Talk

What happens when science and research, competence and curiosity, youth and experience, locality and globality come together? The result is something entirely unique and open-minded. This will be made possible in the future by the Savilahti Stage.

TEXT MINNA AKIOLA
PHOTOS ARKKITEHTIPALVELU,
SAVO VOCATIONAL SCHOOL AND VICENTE SERRA



Savilahti provides a platform for growth, development, experimentation and inspiring living by a beautiful lake, at the heart of the city.
Photo: Arkkitehtipalvelu

Savilahti, one of the regional top-priority projects of Kuopio, is much more than the buildings constructed on the shores of Savilahti Bay. It is a huge network of significant competencies, also on a global level. The aim now is to make these competencies available to everyone and spark discussion around them.

"We need interaction and encounters to discuss meaningful issues. Dialogue is what makes things develop, come together, take shape and start to turn into actions," says **Kirsi Soininen**, Marketing Director of the City of Kuopio.

The dialogue will be set on the Savilahti Stage, which will be both a virtual and a physical venue.

According to Project Manager **Antti Niskanen**, the Stage perfectly embodies the vision of Savilahti in terms of communality. Savilahti is an area whose story is written by its residents together with various operators. The development of Savilahti not only about new buildings, but also about providing opportunities for what will take place in Savilahti.

"The aim is to build Savilahti into an interesting, functional district, but the idea is to also bring all sorts of life and content within its walls and along its streets. The Savilahti Stage sits well with this thought," says Niskanen, summing up the concept.

Digital services now enable online encounters, meetings and interaction with the surrounding world, which is why the Savilahti Stage will start off as a virtual venue. In the future, it may well have a physical equivalent in Savilahti, which will serve as a platform for speeches, culture and various events.

SAVILAHTI SPIRIT

Savilahti is characterized by a special Savilahti spirit, meaning openness and interaction that is

typical of the community. The aim of the Stage is to facilitate dialogue in this culture of caring and communality and to share the competencies of the community for everyone to use. The key is to harness all competencies for the greater common good.

According to Soininen, it is important to start addressing meaningful issues, such as responsibility. The plans are to have the Stage adopt the "open stage" principle, where any topics can be freely brought up in addition to mod-

The Stage takes its cue from SuomiAreena in Pori and Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park, London.

erated discussions. The Stage takes its cue from SuomiAreena in Pori and Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park, London. They, too, serve as platforms for dialogue that gives voice to multiple perspectives.

"Dialogue should not only appear to be inclusive, but be genuinely open. It needs to adopt an ethical code based on the freedom of speech and equality. The dialogue must follow ethical and responsible guidelines," says Soininen.

In a creative, open atmosphere, every encounter is an opportunity. The dialogue and events of the Stage will bring the entire spectrum of life to light.

"The idea of the Stage is a perfect expression of the Savilahti spirit: it develops activities in the area and provides opportunities for diverse encounters," says Niskanen.

SAVILAHTI STAGE IS GLOCAL

Savilahti is a significant accumulation of intellectual capital and curiosity: students, researchers, entrepreneurs, innovators and scientists. When they are brought together, something unique is created – they enable dialogue, which gives rise to the birth and development of innovations.

The aim is to also facilitate international dialogue and cooperation through the Savilahti Stage. Although things take place in Savilahti, with the parties that are present there, the Stage is also connected to all corners of the globe.

The scientific community of Savilahti has a network of connections with hundreds of cities worldwide. On the other hand, it is extremely local for all those who study and work here. It is both local and global, i.e. glocal, to use a modern term.

Savilahti Stage is committed to continuous, open interaction both with the community in Savilahti and with its local and global network. Soininen envisions that anyone can feel like they



The Savilahti district is growing rapidly during present decade. Three levels of education are located in the same campus area - Savo vocational college, Savonia University of Applied Sciences and University of Eastern Finland. Photo: Savo Vocational College

can participate in the dialogue that takes place in Savilahti.

"For instance, our international networks can provide a speaker for a particular topic or someone can follow the discussion and comment on it from the other side of the world."

The discussions and events will be streamed live and also published as podcasts. Soininen hopes that the discussions will be so meaningful that people want to share them.

LIKE AN INVITING CAMPFIRE

The Concept of Light adopted in Savilahti is an overarching idea of light everywhere in the district. Light can be seen in the names, art, design and lighting in the area as well as in how natural light is used. Light is also manifest in the Savilahti Stage as both the light of intelligence and the physical glow of the arena. Soininen compares the Stage to a campfire that invites people to gather around and share stories.



The story of Savilahti is being created by regional actors and residents together. In a creative open atmosphere, every encounter carries the potential of a new opportunity. Photo: Vicente Serra

"Savilahti is not only an open community to the world, but also an open community within the city. It resembles a meeting place, similar to a campfire."

Live events on the Stage can include panel discussions on various topics, events organized by students and culture and art. The aim is to organize the first Savilahti Stage on the Day of Light, 3 February 2021. The theme of the event will be Future Communities, Spirit and Their Relevance.

Later in the spring, the idea is to inspire discussion about meaningful work in the future and, in the autumn, discuss where professionals of the future would like to meet each other and work. In the autumn, the aim is to also talk about Savilahti

as a sustainable city from an ecological, economic and social point of view.

Soininen also hopes that the opening ceremony of the academic term could be organized on the Stage. Savilahti offers significant opportunities for the students of the three campuses located there. The students can cooperate with the businesses in the area or work for them already during their studies. For the students there, the path from education to employment may be shorter than usual.

Savilahti has an abundance of positive curiosity and a fresh way of doing things, combined with rock solid expertise and research. Nothing but good things can come from this mix. We want to share this goodness with others on the Savilahti Stage. ●

It is both local and global, i.e. glocal, to use a modern term.



Kuopio is a Smart City

– Here, competencies are combined to form extensive profiles

The atmosphere in the ecosystems of the Kuopio region is positive and development-oriented. The region is just the right size and has the optimum number of operators to make joint debate easy.

TEXT MINNA AKIOLA
PHOTOS WILLE MARKKANEN

New innovations are often born in small companies. According to **Arto Holopainen**, Chief Innovation Officer at the City of Kuopio, companies poised to enter the global market still need to coordinate several scientific and technical fields of competence – and this is where various ecosystems come into play.

“More and more companies are banding together to compile a supply with greater potential to succeed than what a small company could produce on its own.”

MEMBERS OF KUOPIOHEALTH ARE GROWING AND DEVELOPING

The KuopioHealth ecosystem is committed to promoting competence, research and business in the health and wellness sector. Its chief goal is

the growth and development of its members to create more jobs in the region.

CEO of KuopioHealth **Aki Gröhn** believes that ecosystems help boost cooperation between companies and improve business opportunities.

“Research collaboration gives rise to new products, and companies can start their journey towards internationalization.”

Business development is also facilitated by digital solutions developed at the University of

Eastern Finland (UEF) and Savonia University of Applied Sciences (Savonia UAS), among others. These include data pools and artificial intelligence solutions.

According to the approach going by the name of Kuopio Living Lab, Kuopio as a city also forms a kind of ecosystem or development platform. For instance, all the sports and exercise venues in the

city can be harnessed to serve the needs of health-promoting research.

KUOPIO WATER CLUSTER SEEKS INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY

Coordinated by Savonia UAS, the Kuopio Water Cluster is unique in Finland. According to Research Manager **Eero Antikainen** from Savonia UAS, it is unlikely that you will find an equally versatile cluster of water competence anywhere else.

The strength of the Kuopio Water Cluster lies in its extensive competence profile. The Cluster is made up of six organizations, each a leading name in Finland in its area of expertise. Kuopio Water Cluster harnesses this water competence to support

the product development of companies.

“Water-related challenges are highly multidisciplinary. We need a wide range of experts to come up with solutions if we are to overcome these challenges. For instance, water challenges in the mining industry require an understanding of what the bedrock of the mine is like and how detrimental elements are discharged from it”, says Antikainen.

The Kuopio Water Cluster is pursuing a prominent role and visibility also on the EU level among others operating in the water services sector. It is the first Finnish cluster in the water sector to receive official cluster status at the EU level. This status significantly improves the possibilities to e.g. receive funding in certain funding programmes.

ENERGY CLUSTER NORTH SAVO COVERS THE ENTIRE FIELD OF THE ENERGY SECTOR

One of the newest ecosystems in the Kuopio region is Energy Cluster North Savo, coordinated by the Energy Technology Unit of the Savonia University of Applied Sciences in Varkaus.

“The goal of the Energy Cluster is to secure the operating conditions of mechanical engineering and energy technology in the region”, says **Markku Huhtinen**, Manager of Education at Savonia UAS.

The cluster covers the entire field of the energy sector from basic research to commercialization. Of its key members, UEF conducts basic research and Savonia UAS applied re-

search. Savonia UAS also builds and pilots prototypes. Navitas Business Services provides commercialization services to member companies.

“Energy companies, research institutions and device manufacturers work in good cooperation in the Energy Cluster. As a result of their activities, new innovations created by device manufacturers find their way to customers, and devices can be tested in authentic environments”, says Huhtinen.

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF ECOSYSTEMS IN KUOPIO

There is an ecosystem agreement under discussion in Finland, which will determine the fields in which each university city will take a leading national role. During the discussions, technology for health and wellbeing and water competence have been proposed as the focus areas of Kuopio. The KuopioHealth ecosystem would take the lead in the health sector and the Kuopio Water Cluster in the water services sector.

Ecosystems are seen to have immense potential in the future, which is why Kuopio wants to invest in them. In fact, the city aims to be a trendsetter, not just an adapter to the changes happening around it. ●

LINKS:

kuopiohealth.fi
kuopiowatercluster.com
energyclusternorthsavo.fi
kuopiolivinglab.fi

Work Globally, Enjoy Life Locally

As digitalization makes it possible to work and enjoy hobbies remotely, it is a pleasure to live in a city where the quality of life is as good as it should be. The freedom to live how you choose, close to nature, while enjoying a lively urban culture, attracts incredible talent to Kuopio from different fields.

TEXT **AULI TUOMI**
PHOTO **VICENTE SERRA**



Good esports opportunities attract new residents to Kuopio from near and far.

working. We can focus on what is important at work, instead of worrying about everyday concerns, such as commuting in traffic”, says Senior Advisor at Myontec **Pekka Tolvanen**.

TAKING ESPORTS SERIOUSLY WITHOUT BEING SERIOUS

Digitalization has not only removed obstacles at work, but also in hobbies. Sawo Esports is a new esports club that guides professional players and creates opportunities for young people to play games as a hobby. Launching junior activities has been important.

Good esports opportunities bring new residents to Kuopio from near and far.

“Fast internet connections at a competitive price are crucially important to esports players. They are a factor to consider when choosing the place to live”, says one of the organizers behind Sawo Esports **Iiro Naamanka**.

Physical location is both relevant and irrelevant in esports.

“A normal working day is a remote day in esports, but a team with big ambitions will certainly benefit if they can play in the same place for some time”, says General Manager **Arttu Hämäläinen**.

Esports clubs have not previously had a strong regional identity, but things may change in the future. Perhaps Sawo Esports will be a force that unites people from Savo, creating a new local culture. ●

FUTURE OFFICE WORK IS HYBRID

Many were used to working remotely already before the COVID-19 crisis of 2020. Office work has been in transition for a long time, but COVID-19 further accelerated the shift to digital technologies. The exceptional times have taught companies to utilize digital tools more effectively than before.

“I doubt there is any going back to working only from the office. It is more likely that people will work under a hybrid model, flexibly utilizing office premises, remote options and shared work environments”, says **Silja Huhtiniemi**, Chief Business Officer for Development and Communication at KPY Novapolis, which provides modern working day experiences.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE CREATES A SENSE OF MEANING

Facilities need to be adaptable to give people a genuine choice of when to toil away at the office and when to work remotely. Among others, KPY Novapolis provides a flexible range of

facilities to meet the needs of companies in Kuopio.

Although many things are easy to do remotely, face-to-face interactions are still valuable.

“Creative brainstorming and establishing new customer relationships require physical encounters. Safe encounters give you positive energy”, says Huhtiniemi.

TALENT IS EASY TO HIRE FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Kuopio provides an ideal home for global companies with experts working in different cities and countries. The Savilahti district forms an exceptional hub of competence with its companies and educational institutions.

Specializing in smart clothing, Myontec has employees from Kuopio to Helsinki and as far as Thailand. Thanks to well-working remote connections, it really makes no difference where in the world everyone is.

“Things can be done easily over the internet, because we know each other’s personalities and ways of

The Wellbeing of Residents is the Key to Our Future

Smooth everyday life, good study and employment opportunities, a living environment close to nature and a sense of communality are the keys to good life. However, the real drivers behind an attractive municipality are its residents and their wellbeing.

TEXT RIITTA JUSSILA
PHOTO TIINA HARING



Kuopio aims to build a Capital of Good Life together. This is part of the strategy of the city.

“The strategy reminds us of the core mission of the city: we are here for the residents”, says Mayor **Jarmo Pirhonen**.

**According to surveys,
Kuopio is home to
satisfied people.**

“The wellbeing of residents is promoted by reinforcing the routines and safety nets that are part of good everyday life and enabling meaningful hobbies, work, livelihood and a living environment”, says Director of Wellbeing Promotion **Janne Hentunen**.

INSPIRING EVERYDAY LIFE

The elements of good everyday life are regular exercise, sufficient rest and balanced, healthy nutrition.

“Human health and wellbeing depend on lifestyle as a whole. It is important to live a healthy lifestyle – instead of focusing on one particular diet or form of exercise”, says **Jussi Pihlajamäki**, Professor in Clinical Nutrition at the University of Eastern Finland.

An inspiring life not only has room for friends and family, but also opportunities to fulfil yourself and bring joy to others. Hobbies, voluntary work and meaningful activities enrich your everyday life. The hundreds of organizations, associations and others operating in Kuopio offer everyone a chance to find a community to join.

Kuopio has also invested in providing its residents opportunities to exercise, for example

by building more local sports and exercise facilities. The improvement of pedestrian and bicycle ways, on the other hand, encourages people to cycle or walk to school or work.

COMPETENCE IS OUR STRENGTH

Kuopio offers businesses a continuously developing business environment and competent labour. The city has both vocational and higher education institutions providing high-quality education. Kuopio is a university town and the University of Eastern Finland is home to the most wide-ranging education in the health sciences in Finland, among other disciplines.

Jobs and entrepreneurship promote livelihood and wellbeing in the province. The North Savo Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centre) supports businesses through e.g. the EU structural funds and promotes employment through labour market, recruitment and targeted training.

“High-tech export companies can be considered an asset and a pull factor of the province. These business networks give rise to new innovations and businesses”, says Director General of the North Savo ELY Centre **Pasi Patrikainen**.

COMMUNAL LIVING BY NATURE

A down-to-earth atmosphere, doing things together and communality are the heart and soul of Kuopio. According to surveys, Kuopio is home to satisfied people. Nature and a city that is just the right size encourage people to make healthy everyday choices. Distances are short and many districts of the city allow access to natural waters. Comfortable, safe residential areas and meeting places are built by including the residents in the process and listening to them – the key persons of good life are the residents themselves. ●



Adaptation is a Win-Win Game

Ricardo Patino's story about ending up in Kuopio begins the usual way: "There was this girl..."

TEXT TIMO MANSIKKA-AHO
PHOTO AHOOY CREATIVE OY

Having met in Boston where both were au pairs, Ricardo, originally from Medellín, Colombia, and his wife moved to Kuopio to help Ricardo's mother-in-law take care of her ailing husband.

They had one daughter at the time and another on the way, and decided to stay. While there were really no expectations of how life was going to turn out, Ricardo realized one essential thing in the integration courses provided by the state.

It would all to come down to his willingness to adapt.

"Adaptation is the main ingredient of survival", he emphasizes. "No matter the place, if you don't have the willingness to become a member of

the culture, you will end up frustrated."

Ricardo adapted, got a job at a printing house, then another at an advertising agency. While he did not speak Finnish, let alone Savo at first,

It would all to come down to his willingness to adapt.

he noticed that the society opened up to him, if for nothing else, for appreciating the effort he put in.

Today, he enjoys going to the sauna and cycling to work daily, throughout the year. While the beauty of the

route from Saaristokaupunki to the city centre keeps amazing him every day, Kuopio has provided him much more than this.

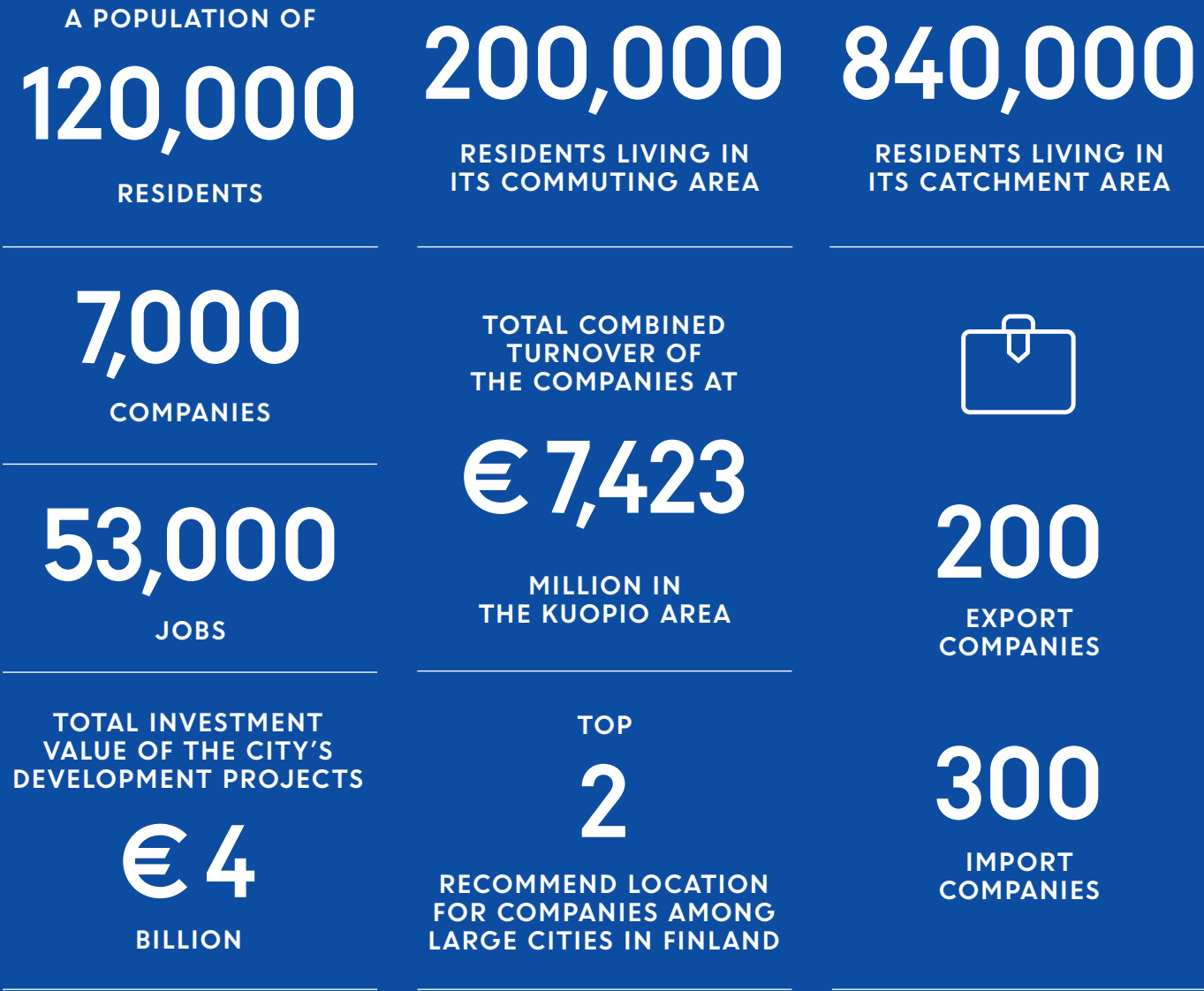
"The social system gives such peace of mind as you would not believe. It has enabled my development as a person and a professional – and allowed me to make myself valuable to society."

Because Ricardo Patino was willing to adapt, both he and the city he loves are now reaping the benefits.

Indeed, no price can be set on the quality of life. ●

Working life & Business

Success stories emerge from places where they have room to grow. The attitude of Kuopio's residents is built on courage, persistence and, above all, collaboration.



Kuopio - the Capital of Good Life

Kuopio is the center of Eastern Finland – the Capital of Lakeland – and one of the most dynamic cities when it comes to residential development, attractiveness, job opportunities and population growth.

THE HAPPIEST

RESIDENTS AMONG THE LARGEST CITIES IN FINLAND

112

DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES

200,000

RESIDENTS LIVING IN ITS COMMUTING AREA

TOTAL INVESTMENT VALUE OF THE CITY'S DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

€4

BILLION

KUOPIO IS KNOWN FOR

THE MARKET SQUARE, PUIJO AND TAHKO

25,000

STUDENTS

SURROUNDED BY OVER

100

LAKES

THE LARGEST NATIONAL CITY PARK WITH A SURFACE AREA OF

7,200

MILLION SQUARE METRE

THE 8TH

LARGEST CITY IN FINLAND

A POPULATION OF

120,000

RESIDENTS

THE IMAGE OF KUOPIO

THE 2ND

MOST POSITIVE (AMONG FINNISH CITIES)

7,000

COMPANIES

53,000

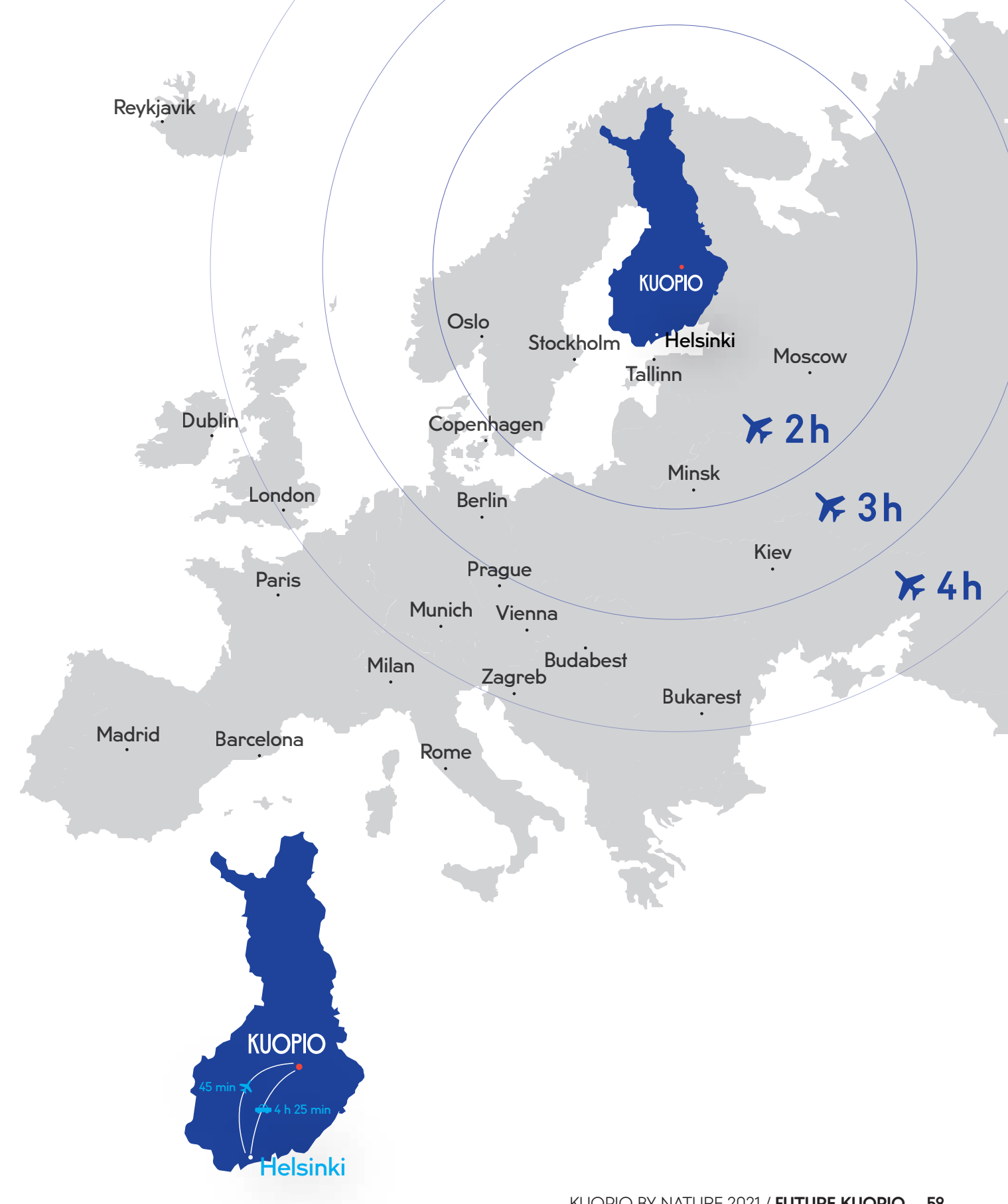
JOBS

200

EXPORT COMPANIES

300

IMPORT COMPANIES



**The best memories are born,
where the heart lives.**



Kuopio is easy to love,
but difficult to explain.
It is a city full of sensation
from the freshness of the morning
to the pulse of the night.

KUOPIO