



Hotel of the Month, Norway:

Bjorli Snow Hotel - Ice and Warmth

By Anette Berve | Photos: Bjorli Snow Hotel

“I cannot even attempt to describe the feeling you get when you are inside the ice chapel and the absolute silence you experience,” says Trond Jansen.

Imagine walking down the aisle hand in hand with your loved one: a beautiful white dress, surrounded by your family, feeling chills run down your spine as you walk through the dim blue light created through the ice and the muted sound of music.

Getting married in an ice chapel is an unforgettable experience, and at Bjorli Snow Hotel you can be ice princess for a day.

Buckets of ice

Regarded as the area in Norway with the most stable weather, Bjorli was the perfect location for building an ice hotel, and some four years ago the owners of Bjorligard Hotel did just that.

Every year a new hotel is created, and every year it melts away as spring arrives and only the memories remain.

It takes between 20,000-25,000 tons of snow to construct the basic structure of the hotel and another 30-40 tons of ice for the chapel and the furniture. Led by the renowned sculptor Peder Istad, ice sculpting artists from all over the world put in a year worth of working hours in just three or four weeks to complete the hotel in time.

“Weather conditions and temperature decide when we can start the building process,” says Jansen. “This year has been very good and we have already begun the building process now in late October. Everything in the hotel is carved by hand: all the furniture, beds and sculptures are made from huge bricks of ice. No room is the same, and there are ice sculptures to enjoy everywhere.”

On the rocks

Bjorli Snow Hotel is a part of Classic Norway Hotels, a chain of ten distinct hotels that all have a completely unique location, whether it is on the mountainside or by the coastline.

The hotel is situated next to Bjorligard Hotel, which provides guests with the alternative of a night in a warm bed following a night at the Snow Hotel. With the choice of alternating between the two hotels one can get the whole experience. For those who fear the cold, a tour around the hotel or a visit to the bar is equally impressive without having to dread jumping into a cold sleeping bag at the end of the night.

Jansen is quick to point out that no one has ever complained about the cold. “It is between minus 2 and 3 degrees Celsius here, but since it is inside it does not feel cold. But we do have a lot of woollen garments at hand if anyone feels chilly.”

Also on site is a Norwegian 'gamme', a large, solid tent made up of wood, rocks and pea gravel, which can accommodate up to 80 people. With a fire in the middle of the 'gamme' where a chef prepares traditional food, the outdoor experience becomes complete.

For those who are not the outdoorsy type a bit of pampering might sound inviting. With a modern well-being centre with a heated pool to slip into and a sauna it is easy to warm up after a cold day. "By offering people a hotel experience, wilderness and well-being, we feel we can make everyone happy," says Jansen.

Finally, so that no ice is wasted, the hotel is even equipped with glasses made of ice to match their equally cool bar, giving the phrase "on the rocks" a new meaning.

New season, new design

Bjorli Snow Hotel has proved to be very popular with families and groups of friends and not only couples seeking a romantic getaway. "Because of this we have decided to make larger rooms to accommodate groups and families wanting to stay together." Jansen further describes how the muted sound created by the ice is the perfect setting for good conversations and thoughts after a day out.

For obvious reasons, the hotel melts each spring and has to be rebuilt over and over again. However, because of the Bjorli's geographical location, the hotel has a longer season than other snow hotels. It is usually the first to open and the last to close.

"Last year we were open until Easter was over, so we had a long and good season," Jansen says. "Now we are anxiously awaiting this year's opening. It is always an exciting time when we first start building the hotel. We have been looking at launching on December 11. Or we at least have to open by December 18 as that is when we have our first wedding," Jansen ends with a nervous laugh.

Please log onto www.snowhotels.no for more information about Bjorli.

