

# The most successful *water tourism* examples in Lithuania

*How Lithuania turned water into tourism experiences.*

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Who am I

# Simonas Rudaminas

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Founder & Publisher of **We love Lithuania**.

More than **15 years** of experience in tourism, digital communication, and audience growth.

**2014** One of the most successful Facebook projects presenting Lithuania in real time.

**2018** Awarded **Best Tourism News Portal**.

**Today** Reaching hundreds of thousands of travelers every month.



*"I don't sell places. I analyze why people choose them."*

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Introduction

# Water in Lithuania has become *more than water.*

It has become

Tourism business

Communities

Stories

Lifestyle

Regional economy

Today, this talk is about

Beautiful places.

How Lithuania transformed water bodies into  
into *tourism products.*

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*“Lithuania did not become successful because it has water. Lithuania became successful because it learned how to turn water into experiences.”*

A framework

# Lithuania through water.

River → Lake → Sea → Lagoon → *New Water Models*

Step 01

## Experience

What people feel when they meet the water.

Step 02

## Community

People build relationships around it.

Step 03

## Lifestyle

It becomes part of how they live.

Step 04

## Economy

A region grows around the experience.

*“Water becomes bigger than water itself.”*

# 01

Chapter 01

# River *tourism*.

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*How Lithuania turned rivers into tourism products.*

Experience instead of transportation

# Nemo *Journeys.*

What they created

- Multi-day cruises
- Slow travel
- Storytelling
- Regional discovery
- Premium experiences

What they sell

- Atmosphere
- Emotions
- Experiences



*“The Nemunas River transformed from a transportation route into an experience product.”*

River as a city stage

# Vilnius & *electric boats*.

Before

The city was viewed from bridges.

Now

The city is viewed *from water*.

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Electric boats became

01 Transportation

02 A tourist attraction

03 A city image

04 A sustainability symbol

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*“Cities that turn toward their rivers gain an entirely new tourism layer.”*

River as a city stage

# Vilnius & *electric boats*.



Mass active tourism

# Kayaking *culture.*

150+

popular kayaking routes across Lithuania.

Most popular

Merkys

Ūla

Verknė

Dubysa

Šventoji

Žeimena

Kayaking created

Countryside homesteads

Campsites

Transportation services

Local economy

*“In Lithuania kayaking became more than a sport — it became a weekend ritual.”*

*Lithuanians can turn almost anything into a weekend tradition — apparently even floating down a river.*

01 · Rivers

# Kayaking *culture.*



# 02

Chapter 02

## Lake *tourism*.

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*How Lithuania created different models around lakes.*

Lake as city identity

# Zarasai.

Before

A city near a lake.

Now

A city *built around* lakes.



What was created

01 Great Island

02 Events

03 Beaches

04 Water sports

*“Successful projects do not build cities near water. They build cities around water.”*

Lake systems as travel products

# Aukštaitija *National Park*.

Connected

Lakes + Rivers + Kayaking + Cycling + Hiking

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The result is not a destination — it is *a route*.

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*“Tourists no longer buy a lake. They buy a route.”*



Active lake tourism

# Plateliai.

Connected

01

Water activities

02

Cycling

03

Nature

04

Culture

*“The more activities around water, the longer tourists stay.”*



Cooperation instead of competition

# The *Lake Region*.

# 5

municipalities. One region.

Zarasai

Ignalina

Molėtai

Utena

Anykščiai

Before

*“Visit our lake.”*

Now

*“Visit the Lake Region.”*

*“One lake can attract tourists. A region can make them stay.”*



# 03

Chapter 03

## Sea *tourism*.

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*How Lithuania created different models from a short coastline.*

Resort as a brand

# Palanga.

What it sells

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Summer atmosphere

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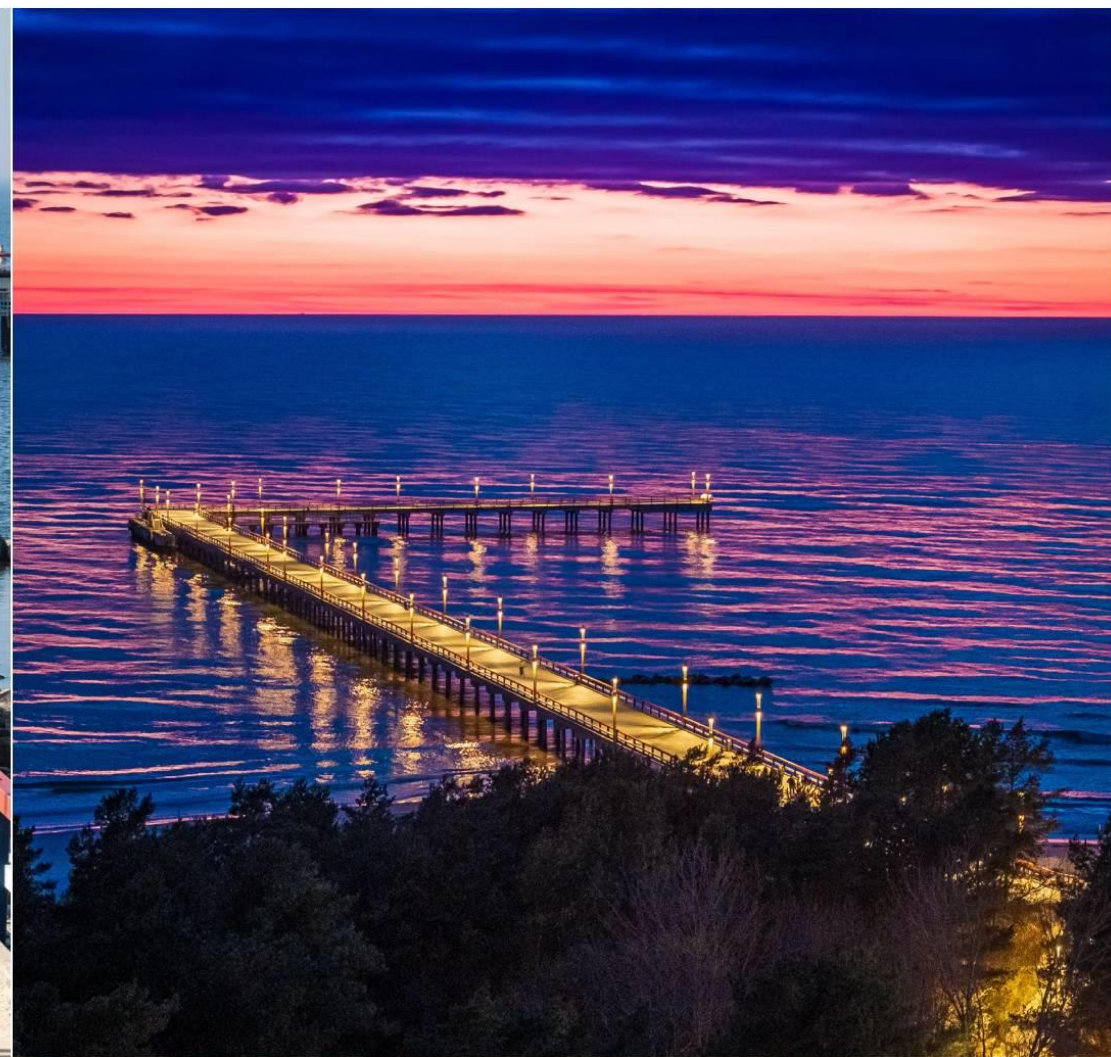
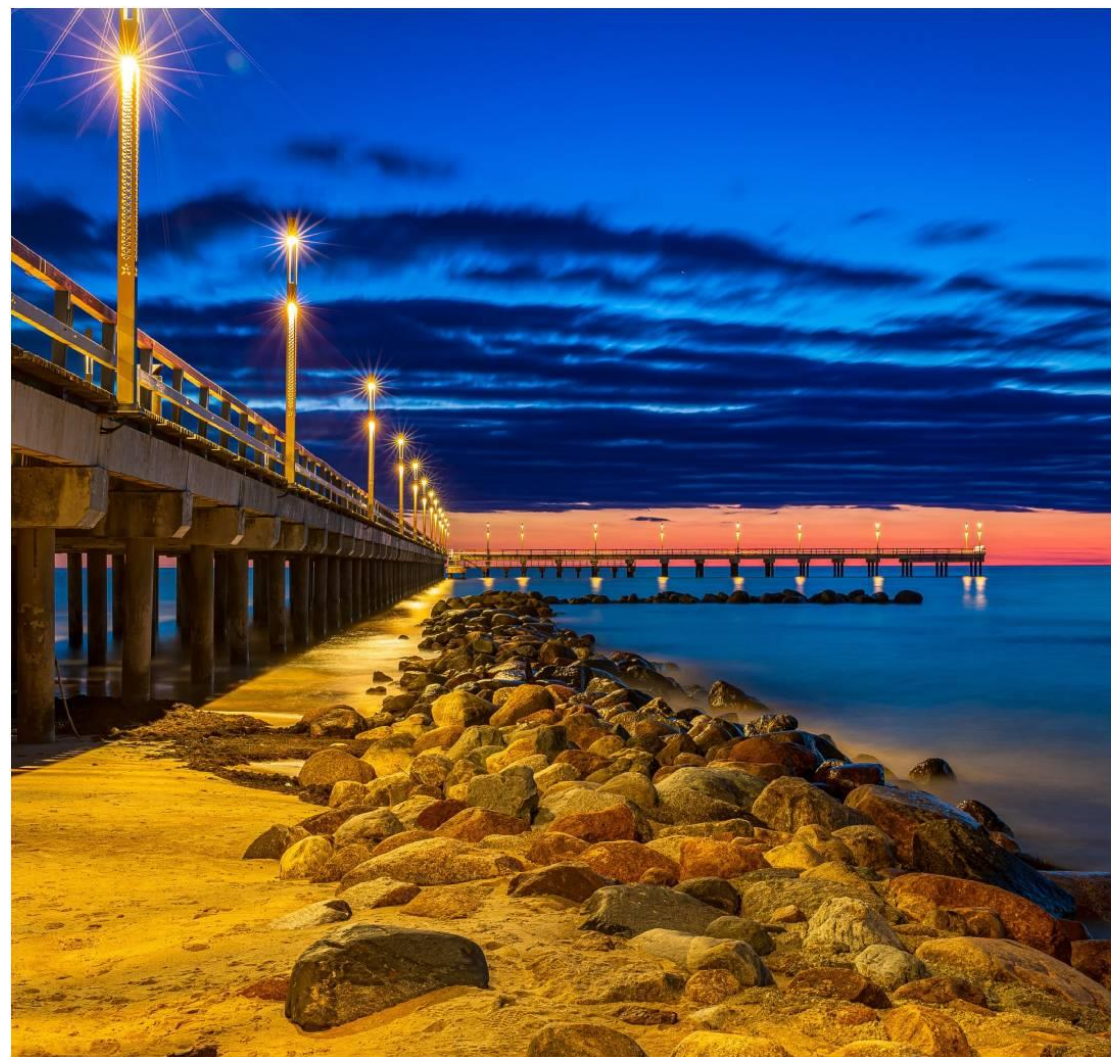
Emotions

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Holiday feeling

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*“People do not come because of water. They come because of atmosphere.”*



Nature as a product

# Nida.

What it sells

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Slow living

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Peace

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Authenticity

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*“Sometimes the strongest tourism product is simply more space.”*



City + sea model

# Klaipėda.

What it sells

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Maritime culture

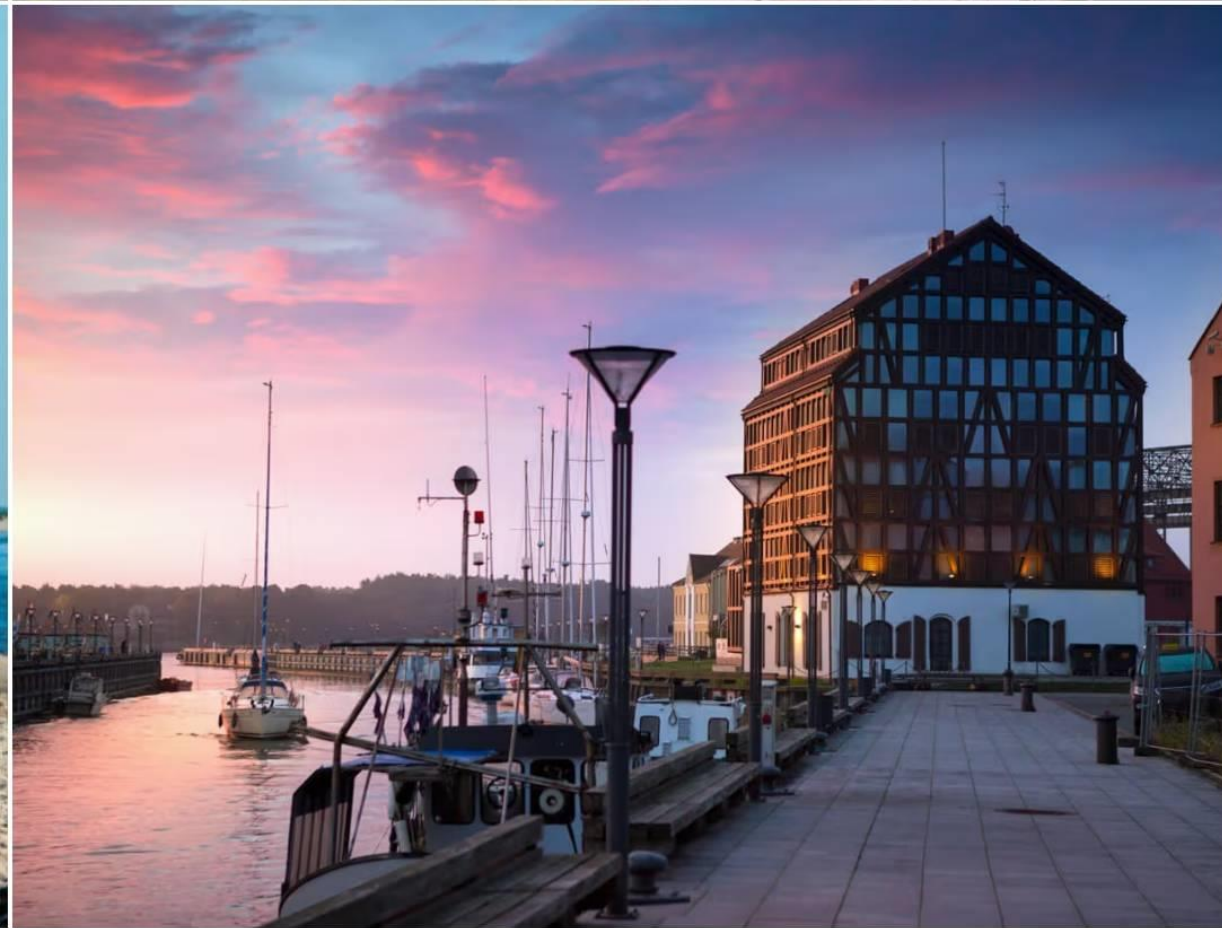
Old town

Gastronomy

Atmosphere

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*“Not every seaside city needs to become a noisy resort.”*



Events as tourism products

# Sea *Festival.*

~500K

visitors every year.

The largest maritime event in Lithuania.

Every year

Concerts

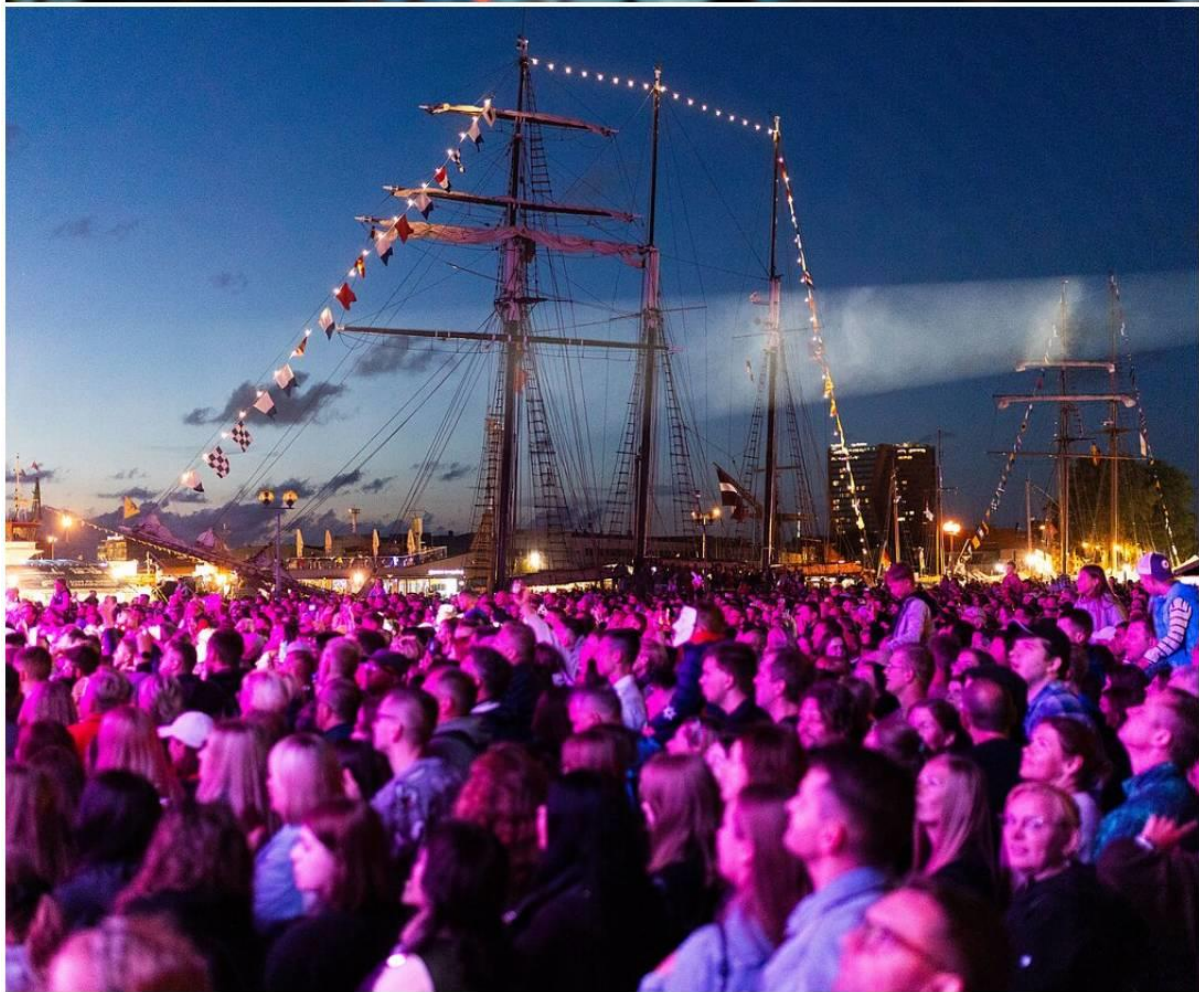
Ship parades

Fairs

Maritime culture

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*“Sometimes water becomes a stage where experiences happen.”*



# 04

Chapter 04

## Lagoon *tourism.*

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*How Lithuania transformed lagoon into lifestyle and experience tourism.*

Small town transformation

# Dreverna.

Before

A fishing village.

Now

A *gateway* to the Curonian Lagoon.

What was created

Small boat marina

Restaurants

Ferry to Juodkrantė

Water activities

Observation tower

Tourism infrastructure

*“Today we are sitting in a place that never had an obvious formula for tourism success.”*

*From a fishing village to a tourism ecosystem.*

*“Dreverna proved that sometimes miracles are created not where something already exists, but where a clear idea appears.”*







Creating a new community

# Svencele.

Before

People used to come here.

Now

People want to *live here*.

What was created

Residential projects

Canals

Restaurants

Accommodation

An active community

*“The strongest water projects sometimes create not tourism attractions, but new communities.”*





Culture as a tourism product

# Fish *Road.*

Connected

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Fishing heritage

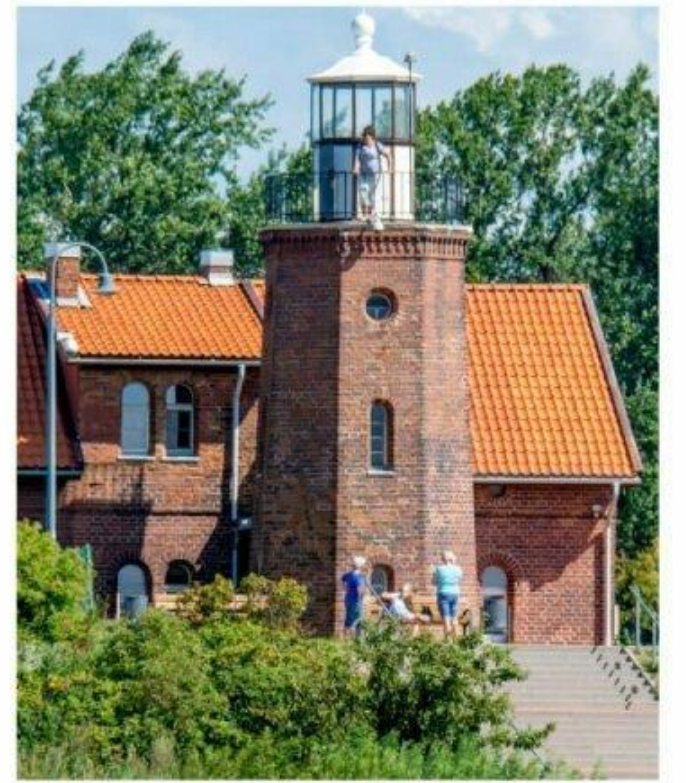
Gastronomy

Traditions

Local stories

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*“Water attracts tourists. Stories make them remember places.”*



# 05

Chapter 05

## Artificial water bodies & *wake culture.*

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*When the water doesn't exist yet, you build it.*

Sport as a tourism driver

# 313 *Cable Park.*

Four pillars

01

Sports

02

Events

03

Community

04

Atmosphere

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*“Sports attract people. Community makes them return.”*



Water comes closer to cities

# Wake parks *near cities.*

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*“Sometimes the most successful place is not the most beautiful one, but the most accessible one.”*



How water changed countryside tourism

# The countryside *moved to the water.*

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Before

Sauna

Countryside homestead

A side amenity

Now

House by the water

Private beach & SUP boards

*Water experiences*

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*“Sometimes water becomes not an additional benefit, but the main reason to visit.”*







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End

Thank *you.*

*Water turns places into experiences — and experiences into businesses.*

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