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POV online pressroom: [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom)

## **POV's "Steam of Life" Reveals Naked Truth About the Inner Lives Of Modern Men, Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2011, on PBS; Film Streams on POV Website Aug. 3 – Nov. 1**

The Warm Mists of Finland's National Rite of the Sauna Open Up a Famously Reticent People

"Life at its most real. . . the small hot room becomes something sacred and transformative.  
Reservations melt away, and a kind of joy rises up like steam from a bed of hot rocks."

– John Anderson, *Variety*

### ***MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET***

National Dates: **Steam of Life** has its national broadcast premiere on **Tuesday, August 2, 2011**, at 10 p.m. on the [POV \(Point of View\)](#) documentary series on PBS. (Check local listings.) **Steam of Life** will also stream in its entirety from Aug. 3 to Nov. 1 on the POV website, [www.pbs.org/pov/steamoflife](http://www.pbs.org/pov/steamoflife). Now in its 24th year, POV is American television's longest-running independent documentary series and is the winner of a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking, the IDA Award for Best Continuing Series and NALIP's 2011 Award for Corporate Commitment to Diversity.

The Film: From a land of long, dark winters comes **Steam of Life**, a moody, comic and moving study of Finnish men as framed by the national obsession with the sauna. There, they come together to sweat out not only the grime of contemporary life, but also their grief, hopes, joys and memories. Beautifully and hauntingly shot, the acclaimed film provides a surprising glimpse into the lives of Finnish men and a remarkable depiction of the troubled and often reticent hearts of contemporary Western men.

The 12 protagonists in **Steam of Life** open up with incredible candor about their families, children, marriages, divorces, love, loss, struggles and redemption. We hear from a soldier who served in Afghanistan as part of NATO forces and thinks of returning against his own best instincts and, in an unexpectedly hilarious moment, a man who describes his extraordinary best friend.

Making **Steam of Life** was a feat in itself. The crew used old 16mm film cameras in rooms that were 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Prior to filming, the cameras had to be warmed slowly to the sauna's temperature. The resulting images have a richness and luminosity unique to the film medium.

**Steam of Life** is a production of Oktober Oy in association with Nordisk Film and Films Transit International.

Embed a trailer, download press materials and learn more at [www.pbs.org/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pressroom).

## Filmmakers'

### Statement:

"The idea for **Steam of Life** came to us on a Friday evening in 2005, as we sat in the men's side of a public sauna," say filmmakers Joonas Berghäll and Mika Hotakainen. "A sauna is a place where Finnish men not only clean their bodies, but also clean their spirits. We were struck by the way gruff Finnish guys entered the sauna and immediately began sharing insights about their lives with each other, often in a deeply emotional way. A sauna is the perfect place and atmosphere to dive deep into your own soul and deal with life issues. **Steam of Life** takes a fresh look at how men can confront their emotions and share things through dialogue. One of the reasons we wanted to make this film was to update the stereotypical image of modern Finnish men.

"We people need each other," they conclude. "We need to share things. We need to have somebody listen to us. And listen carefully, without interrupting."

### Bios:

#### **Joonas Berghäll (Director/Writer/Producer)**

Joonas Berghäll was born in 1977 in Kemi, Finland. He studied film production at the Tampere University of Applied Sciences, School of Art and Media and founded his production company Oktober Oy in 2004 with fellow directors Katja Gauriloff and Mika Hotakainen. **Steam of Life** is his second film after "Freedom to Serve" (2004), both co-directed with Mika Hotakainen. As a producer, Berghäll has seven films to his credit including "The Smoking Room" and "A Shout into the Wind," recipients of Finland's State Quality Support for cinema in 2007 and 2008 respectively. Among his latest projects as a producer is "Canned Dreams" by Katja Gauriloff, a lyrical and episodic documentary film that builds a portrait of European workers through the journey of canned ravioli. The film goes into production early 2011.

#### **Mika Hotakainen (Director/Writer)**

Born in 1977, Mika Hotakainen graduated as a fiction director in 2004 from Helsinki University of Applied Sciences, Stadia. He has been working in television and film industry since 1998 and is co-owner of the production company Oktober Oy. He co-directed with Joonas Berghäll the feature length documentaries "Freedom to Serve" in 2004 and **Steam of Life** (2010). His latest documentary film, "Loose Wires," is about marginalization.

### Outreach:

POV works with public television stations and national and community groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in our films. For a list of upcoming screening events for **Steam of Life** go to <http://www.pbs.org/pov/outreach>. POV also and nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow have developed a [discussion guide](#) with background information to help event organizers facilitate conversations. Cari Ladd, M.Ed., has created the [lesson plan](#), *Discover the Structure of Natural Narratives*, which asks students to look closely at the unrehearsed stories that people tell each other every day ("natural narratives") and discover their underlying organization. Jean-Marie Miele of the San Diego Public Library has compiled a [multimedia resource list](#). Educational materials are available free of charge at: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/steamoflife/>.

### POV Website:

POV's **Steam of Life** companion website, [www.pbs.org/pov/steamoflife](http://www.pbs.org/pov/steamoflife), offers a streaming video trailer of the film, a list of related websites, organizations and books, a lesson plan, discussion guide and these special features:

- Photo gallery of film stills;
- Background on saunas and sauna culture worldwide;
- Additional video;
- Photo gallery of immigrant- and modern-day era Finnish-American saunas in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan from the book *The Opposite of Cold: The Northwoods Finnish Sauna Tradition* by Michael Nordskog (University of Minnesota Press, 2010);

- Photo slideshow from the mobile-sauna festival held in Teuva, Finland; and
- Are you pronouncing “sauna” correctly?

Credits:                    Co-directors:                    Joonas Berghäll, Mika Hotakainen  
                                   Producer:                         Joonas Berghäll  
                                   Cinematographers:             Heikki Färm, Jani Kumpulainen  
                                   Editor:                            Timo Peltola  
                                   Sound Design:                 Christian Christensen  
                                   Original Music:                 Jonas Bohlin

POV Series Credits:

Executive Producer:                    Simon Kilmurry  
 Co-Executive Producer:                Cynthia López  
 Vice President, Production and Programming:    Chris White  
 Series Producer:                         Yance Ford

Running Time: 56:46

Awards and

Festivals:                    Nordic Film Council Prize, 2010  
                                   Risto Jarva and Audience Awards, Tampere Film Festival, 2010  
                                   Interreligious Jury Award, Visions du Réel, 2010  
                                   Film Producer of the Year Award (Joonas Berghäll), Central Organization of Finnish Film Producers, 2010  
                                   International Competition Award, DocAviv Film Festival, 2010  
                                   Millennium Award, Planete Doc Review Film Festival, 2010  
                                   Nominated for Distinguished Feature Documentary Award, International Documentary Association Awards, 2010  
                                   Artistic Vision Award, Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, 2011  
                                   DocPoint Helsinki Documentary Film Festival, 2010  
                                   International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, 2010  
                                   SilverDocs, 2010  
                                   DocPoint NYC Finnish Documentary Film Event, 2011

Related Stories: *The Washington Post*: “At Finnish Embassy, the Heat is On,” by Jason Horowitz, March 18, 2010.  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/17/AR2010031703965.html> “The Diplomatic Finnish Sauna Society of D.C. counts among its 150 members the operatives who make Washington spin: Capitol Hill staffers, public-policy wonks, lobbyists, administration officials — and reporters eager to pick up some off-message analysis.”

Lanka Business Online: “Sauna Therapy on the Decline in Finland,” Gael Branchereau, January 22, 2007.  
<http://www.lankabusinessonline.com/fullstory.php?nid=1812014718> “When negotiations get thorny Finnish businessmen and politicians often turn up the heat, holding crunch talks in a sauna. But ‘sauna diplomacy’ is on the decline, officials say, due to demands for greater efficiency and the rising number of women in the halls of power.”

Pressroom:                    Visit POV’s pressroom, [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom), for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 24th season on PBS, the award-winning **POV** series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September, with primetime specials during the year, **POV** has brought more than 300 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

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