

## INTERVIEW



**Stephan Kehren**  
Landscape Architect &  
Creative Director for Fountain  
Technology at Oase Living Water



### **Please give us a brief information about OASE?**

In short, OASE Living Water is passionate about water. As the premium brand for fountain feature and water gardening products, for both the commercial as well as the non-commercial sector, we develop and manufacture a wide range of professional water feature equipment. To name some, we talk about water feature pumps, underwater illumination, as well as other robust water maintenance technologies. Powering the world's most exciting fountains with our products, customers can expect the latest state-of-the-art technology and highest grade of quality. In cooperation with our global network of partners engaged in planning, construction and maintenance we ensure a competent service at any time.

### **When did your company first set up business in the Region?**

Our market entry in Dubai dates back to 1983. We realized our first project together with our local partner (Bahri & Mazroei Trading Co.).

Subsequently, with the growing market of beautiful and exciting fountains in the region, demand for Fountain Technology products increased continuously. Our products, due to their water-saving and energy-saving characteristics, gained immense popularity in the region, where water is scarce and valuable.

To cater to the growing market demand and provide better and faster service to our partners we established OASE Middle East in 2008.

### **Please outline your company's Main Activities & Services?**

In the GCC region, our focus is mainly on fountains and lakes. This includes all kinds of water features in public and private areas with commercial and non-commercial purposes.

We provide complete services from design and engineering support up to maintenance and aftersales a huge variety of fountain features.

In addition to component supply we support our partners with installation and commissioning of their individual projects.

Apart from this we also offer planning support to landscape architects, designers and planners.

### **What are the special features of each of your products?**

Hidden Technology is the magic word accompanying our products, which operate invisible, noiseless and uninterrupted under water to generate brilliant and surprising water effects day by day.

Beside the water- and energy saving nature, the components have little space-requirements and can be easily connected. Due to a decentralized setup, they can be installed submersed below the effect itself. This reduces cost intensive parts of civil engineering, piping and cabling, as well as energy losses created by friction in long roads of water pipes - a reason why planners and installers love to integrate our system technology in their own projects.



A small controller, the Water Entertainment Control System (in short WECS), plays and monitors the fountain features via DMX bus.

**Can you please highlight your past experience in the GCC region in the past years?**

Having been present in the GCC region for almost ten years now, we learned that luxuries and extravagant inquiries are not rare. Especially in large scale projects, we are often requested to think out of the box to be able to develop new and never before seen water effects. Having in mind how fast and unbelievable cities like Dubai and Doha are developing we have to acknowledge that nothing is impossible. On the other hand without having dreams and visions in mind, we will not be able to fascinate people with our fountain features again and again.

Take the example of the Fountain Flame Effect, where the idea was born to combine two opposite elements - water and fire - in a single feature.

Can you imagine a ball of fire burning on top of a water jet which is moving up and down? Ideas like these are born in projects with extraordinary demands only.

**What are some of the major projects that you have been involved with in the past years?**

We have successfully implemented our products in many international projects including the Middle East region. To name some - Katara Fountain Flames in Doha (2016), Mall of Egypt in Cairo (2016), Al Marina Floating Fountain in Dammam (2015), Watergarden Multimedia Fountain in Istanbul (2016) and Seawater Fountain in Malta (2013). Besides we supply our equipment for leading water feature projects in the entire GCC region.



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### What are the main challenges of doing business in the current Middle East market?

As the market leader working in a niche business, the competition worldwide is limited. There are only a few manufacturers globally who are able to offer a complete range of fountain equipment starting from the pump to the entire range of lights and accessories. The main challenge we face here is that the market is full with low quality and cheap products not appropriate to the special requirements of water features. Water features installed with such poor quality materials, not following any safety standards, might be affected by issues such as water-leakage or worse and set a bad example of the entire field of water and fountain features. Here, our prime task is to educate and train local installers to make them understand the importance of quality.

### Do OASE activities/projects reach other international markets?

Our projects are as international as OASE. We have 15 subsidiaries worldwide, in Europe, Middle East, Asia and US. In addition, we have a well-elaborate and very closely network partner concept, making us the global player in Fountain Technology. We realize projects with the utmost satisfaction of investors from Europe to Asia & Americas. In order to meet our requirements, we also offer an after-sales service so that the installations can remain in operation for a long time.

### Please outline your company's plans for the future including new products and developments?

As the global leader in product and system innovation, OASE is committed to provide the customers and partners with the best products, support and service in the industry. To provide high-quality products and services that exceed customer expectations we are continuously seeking new technologies that enable us to address customer needs more swiftly and effectively.

Wherever you look an overall and permanent connectivity is the presence and future of this generation. Internet of Things is just one word to express this trend.

OASE already offers new ways of smart and effective fountain operation and maintenance through DMX/RDM-controllable fountain equipment. With proactive monitoring,



failures can be avoided and issues solved before they become problems. This leads to better availability and less downtime of your system, thus resulting in actual cost savings.

And this is the just the beginning of a vision where fountain systems will be intelligent and able to interact autonomously with the environment and spectator.

The growth strategy of OASE focuses on the development of different business fields.

Therefore the company has done huge acquisition over the past years all related to water. Being specialists in our field this opens up new possibilities to discover and create our own trends for the future with Living Water. ■

