



TODD NELSON

Owner and President of Kalahari Resorts



As owner and president of Kalahari Resorts, Todd Nelson has been the driving force behind the development, creation and expansion of the brand since its inception in 2000. With a myriad of accomplishments and a brand synonymous with innovation, Nelson is defined as a leader in the waterpark industry's constant evolution and growth.

A Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin native and an entrepreneur at heart, Nelson combined his intimate knowledge of the region and business savvy to launch into the waterpark and hospitality business in 1997 with the opening of an indoor waterpark at the Raintree Resort in Wisconsin Dells.

Armed with the experience Nelson gained during his first waterpark venture and a remarkable drive, the Kalahari Resorts brand was born in 2000 when Nelson opened the highly visible and authentically African Kalahari Resort, perched along I-90/94. Under Nelson's leadership, Kalahari Resort added a \$12 million expansion in 2002 which included innovative indoor waterpark attractions such as the nation's first indoor FlowRider surfing attraction and Master Blaster water roller coaster. Guided by Nelson's vision, Kalahari Resort-Wisconsin has continued to expand and now features a 125,000-square-foot indoor waterpark, a 77,000-square-foot outdoor waterpark, 742 guest rooms and suites, 10 five-bedroom "Ny-Um-Ba" suites, a 100,000-square-foot convention center, Spa Kalahari and Salon, Trappers Turn Golf Club, shopping outlets, a variety of restaurants and more.

In 2005, with a strong belief in the growth potential of the Kalahari brand, Nelson took his "under-one-roof" waterpark resort concept to Sandusky, Ohio where he opened the second Kalahari Resort. In late 2007, Kalahari Resort-Ohio unveiled a show-stopping expansion that made the resort home to the largest indoor waterpark in the nation at a whopping 173,000-square-feet. In addition, the resort added 288 guest rooms, making Kalahari Resort home to the largest hotel in Ohio at 884 rooms. Kalahari Resort-Ohio also features a 77,000-square-foot waterpark, 100,000-square-foot state-of-the-art convention center, Spa Kalahari and a unique array of dining and shopping options.

Today, Nelson continues to serve as the brand's visionary overseeing the expansion of Kalahari Resorts. In December 2008, Kalahari Resort-Wisconsin opened an indoor theme park featuring 110,000-square-feet of family entertainment. Also under development is a \$200 million indoor waterpark resort in the Celebrate Virginia tourism district of Fredericksburg.

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Beyond waterparks, Nelson is also dedicated to philanthropic giving and corporate responsibility. Under Nelson's leadership, Kalahari has worked closely with non-profit organizations that serve local Kalahari communities. Kalahari serves as the host of annual fundraising events, such as the United Way Duck Derby, a toy duck race to benefit United Way, Golf for a Song, an annual charity golf tournament at Kalahari's Trappers Turn Golf Club to raise funds for Wisconsin Dells High School's marching band and music programs, and the annual Andy North Classic at Trappers Turn Golf Club to raise funds for the University of Wisconsin Paul P. Carbone Comprehensive Cancer Center. In addition, Kalahari Field, a new synthetic sports field at Huron High School in Ohio, opened thanks to contributions of \$500,000 in cash, in-kind donations and fundraising events donated by Kalahari. Kalahari also supports organizations including, the Make A Wish Foundation, American Cancer Society and Multiple Sclerosis Society, through a myriad of ongoing philanthropic activities.

In recent years, Nelson and Kalahari have continued to broaden their long-standing commitment to eco-friendly initiatives at Kalahari Resorts. As a responsible industry leader, Nelson is dedicated to introducing state-of-the-art "green" operations that protect the environment. Notably, Kalahari Resort-Wisconsin is home to the state's largest solar hot water system and an Entergize Energy Control System that conserves energy, and as part of the 2007 Kalahari Resort-Ohio expansion, the property introduced a Texlon transparent roof system which works as a natural heating source for the indoor waterpark. Most recently, Kalahari Resorts introduced the AquaRecycle system, a laundry water recycling and filtration system which allows the reuse of 70 percent of laundry water at both properties.

As a leader in the waterpark industry, Nelson has been honored with numerous industry awards and profiled in many respected media outlets including, *Business Week*, *USA Today*, NBC's "The Today Show," ABC's "Good Morning America" and CNBC's "Mike on the Money".

Nelson operates the family waterpark business with his wife and five children.

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