



**FREE**



# *Crying Over Christmas*

The Grapevine Says Good Bye to Sirkus • The Grapevine visits Suburbia  
The Grapevine Explores Satanic Black Metal • The Lonesome Traveler Faces Certain Death

## Articles

<b>A Rebel Without A Cause</b> Interview with Svavar Lúthersson, owner of Torrent.is	06
<b>The Secret to Gift Giving</b> An opinion by Gabriele R. Gudbjartsson	08
<b>Getting Away From it All</b> An opinion by Viktor Banke	08
<b>Obituary: News Photography</b> Interview with photographer Þorvaldur Örn Kristmundsson	10
<b>Interview with Arnar Eggert Thoroddsen</b>	12
<b>Interview with Óttar Martin Norðfjörð</b>	13
<b>Icelanders Don't Care About Satan</b> Grapevine explores the Icelandic Black Metal scene	20

## Features

<b>Scenes From Suburbia: 112 Grafarvogur</b>	14
<b>Last Call: Sirkus is Closing</b>	16

## Music & Nightlife

<b>When Reykjavík visits Rotterdam</b> Grapevine reviews the Reykjavík 2 Rotterdam festival	18
<b>Reviews</b>	19

## Outside Reykjavík

<b>What a Day for Window Viewing</b> An adventure in Stykkishólmur	22
<b>Across the Country in 40 Days</b> Adventures of the Lonesome Traveller, Leg IV	28

## info.

<b>Listings</b>	B2
<b>Food Reviews</b>	B10
<b>Shopping</b>	B12
<b>Icelandic Christmas Traditions</b>	B14
<b>Back to the Beginning</b> Interview with artists Marguerite Keyes and Scott Alario	B15

### The Reykjavík Grapevine

Vesturgata 5, 101 Reykjavík  
[www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is)  
[grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is)  
[www.myspace.com/reykjavikgrapevine](http://www.myspace.com/reykjavikgrapevine)  
 Published by Fröken ehf.

#### Editorial:

+354 540 3600 / [editor@grapevine.is](mailto:editor@grapevine.is)

#### Advertising:

+354 540 3605 / [ads@grapevine.is](mailto:ads@grapevine.is)

#### Publisher:

+354 540 3601 / [publisher@grapevine.is](mailto:publisher@grapevine.is)

### The Reykjavík Grapevine Staff

#### Publisher:

Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson

[publisher@grapevine.is](mailto:publisher@grapevine.is)

#### Editor:

Sveinn Birgir Björnsson / [birgir@grapevine.is](mailto:birgir@grapevine.is)

#### Assistant Editor:

Steinunn Jakobsdóttir / [steinunn@grapevine.is](mailto:steinunn@grapevine.is)

#### Editorial Intern:

Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir / [vala@grapevine.is](mailto:vala@grapevine.is)

#### Contributing Writer:

Ian Watson / [www.ianwatson.org](http://www.ianwatson.org)

#### Art Director:

Gunnar Þorvaldsson / [gunni@grapevine.is](mailto:gunni@grapevine.is)

#### Photographer:

Gunnlaugur Arnar Sigurðsson

[gulli@grapevine.is](mailto:gulli@grapevine.is)

#### Marketing Director:

Jón Trausti Sigurðarson / [jontrausti@grapevine.is](mailto:jontrausti@grapevine.is)

#### Sales Director:

Aðalsteinn Jörundsson

[adalsteinn@grapevine.is](mailto:adalsteinn@grapevine.is)

#### Support Manager:

Oddur Óskar Kjartansson / [oddur@grapevine.is](mailto:oddur@grapevine.is)

#### Distribution:

Samúel Bjarnason / [samuel@grapevine.is](mailto:samuel@grapevine.is)

#### Proofreader:

Jane Victoria Appleton

#### Press releases:

[listings@grapevine.is](mailto:listings@grapevine.is)

#### Submissions inquiries:

[editor@grapevine.is](mailto:editor@grapevine.is)

#### Subscription inquiries:

+354 540 3605 / [subscribe@grapevine.is](mailto:subscribe@grapevine.is)

#### General inquiries:

[grapevine@grapevine.is](mailto:grapevine@grapevine.is)

The Reykjavík Grapevine is published 18 times a year by Fröken ltd. Monthly from November through April, and fortnightly from May til October. Nothing in this magazine may be reproduced in whole or in part without the written permission of the publishers. Although the magazine has endeavoured to ensure that all information inside the magazine is correct, prices and details may be subject to change. The Reykjavík Grapevine can be found in Reykjavík, Akureyri, Egilsstaðir, Selfoss, Keflavík, Ísafjörður, Kárahjúkar and at key locations around road #1 and at all major tourist attractions and tourist information centres.

You may not like it, but at least it's not sponsored. (No articles in the Reykjavík Grapevine are pay-for articles. The opinions expressed are the writers' own, not the advertisers').

Printed by Landsprent ehf. in 30.000 copies.

## From the Editor's Chair

A friend of mine has a fascination with ninjas. It coincides very well with my own fascination for Lee Van Cleef, for, as everyone knows, he was the first Occidental to become a ninja. Besides exploring the mystic cult of the dark assassins, Lee Van Cleef also starred as the Man in Black and Angel Eyes in Sergio Leone's Spaghetti Westerns, The Good, The Bad, The Ugly and For a Few Dollars More. There is not an actor out there who can top that.

As a young kid, Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns served as my first taste of Italian culture. Here we have Leone, a great Italian film director, a great Italian writer in Luciano Vincenzoni, the great Italian composer Ennio Morricone, and the actor Mario Brega. All this, brought to me by way

of Lee Van Cleef (and that other guy, but who can remember his name?)

Why bring this up? Here is the thing; it is hard to define cultural institutions. Some people may relate Italian culture with Fellini or even Da Vinci, but I think of spaghetti westerns.

This issue, the Grapevine pays its last respect to Sirkus, a tiny bar that somehow has managed to serve as the main cultural institution in this city for a decade. It is impossible to put a number on the countless art projects or musical collaborations that were born by the bar at Sirkus. Sadly, that era has come to an end and I think that cultural life in Reykjavík will suffer for it.

But, that's modern life. Spaghetti westerns gave way to something else. Instead of Lee Van

Cleef, we got Bruce Lee fighting Chuck Norris in the Coliseum. Instead of Sirkus, we will have more available shopping space, and hopefully, we will have the equivalent of Lee vs. Norris in the Coliseum in the near future.

Enjoy the issue, and the holidays.



#### On cover:

Birta María Stefánsdóttir

#### Photo by:

GAS

#### Thanks to:

Garðheimar for tree and ornaments



# WINTER RETREAT

Type: Tinna  
Colors: Marron and black  
Material: Waterproof and breathable 3 layer  
Price: 32.990 ISK

CINTAMANI CENTER // LAUGAVEGUR 11 // 101 RVK  
[WWW.CINTAMANI.IS](http://WWW.CINTAMANI.IS)



DRESS CODE ICELAND

# Sour Grapes

Say your piece, voice your opinion, send your letters to [letters@grapevine.is](mailto:letters@grapevine.is).

Dear Madam, Sir,

In the frame of making a filmed documentary for the Belgian television, we have started a worldwide search for individuals born on very specific dates. Our goal is to obtain the largest panel of people possible i.e. diversity of nationalities, ethnicities, social backgrounds, professions, faith, etc. The idea behind this documentary is to film lives in parallel from people who have nothing in common but their date of birth. You could see it as an attempt to answer the question: "what would my life be if I was born in another part of the world?"

We are looking for people born on:

Men	Women
29 April 1933	5 April 1943
18 July 1948	2 May 1950
19 July 1948	20 July 1963
20 August 1949	24 March 1964
11 February 1952	10 February 1965
18 January 1956	26 March 1975
5 May 1956	4 November 1977
27 August 1958	27 December 1979
30 December 1960	24 July 1982
24 July 1962	
14 January 1965	
27 January 1965	
5 October 1968	
5 February 1969	
6 April 1969	
3 May 1981	

Could you publish this mail in your magazine, in order to be seen by as many people as possible? We would be delighted to find a birthday twin in Iceland!

This request is strictly limited to a research for our documentary.

You may contact us [attwins@docfish.be](mailto:attwins@docfish.be)

We thank you in advance and hope that you will be able to help us.  
Kindest regards,

Annelore De Donder

Dear Annelore,  
Consider your wish to be fulfilled.

Editor

Dear Grapevine,

Thanks for covering the increased pressure on citizenship application procedures (Ian Watson, "You Too Can Be a Citizen", #17, 2007).

Concerning Article 6, the granting of citizenship at parliamentary discretion: Let's everyone--members of parliament and immigrants alike--keep our hands off it! It should be neither "a privilege in the hands of the few" nor an alternative for the many.

A "quick fix" procedure exists for humanitarian reasons. Its flexibility--that it leaves the granting of citizenship to discretion--is also humanitarian. Discretion may be a slippery slope, but that is why normal bureaucratic procedure exists for 99% of us.

Article 6 is intended for extraordinary circumstances when

the granting of Icelandic citizenship can rescue stranded children, reunite loved ones, or save someone from acute injustice. To offer an example based on precedent, a political refugee might be granted citizenship quickly to enable her to return home to aid a dying relative without facing arrest and imprisonment.

Changing circumstance may force new legislation, and abuse of privilege must be guarded against, but let's not throw the baby out with the bath.

Sincerely,

Sarah Brownsberger

Dear Sarah,

Thanks for your letter. Are we right that you are worried that there is a movement to get rid of Parliament's ability to grant citizenship at its own discretion? No one, to our knowledge, is advocating that. Current law is clear: Parliament can grant citizenship to anyone it wants to, at its own initiative, for humanitarian purposes among others, as the Bobby Fischer case illustrates.

Ian Watson's article was about a somewhat different side of the issue: a de facto application procedure has grown up around that law, through which individuals can call Parliament's attention to their interest in being granted such express citizenship. This procedure does not seem to be grounded in any law or regulation, information about it has never been well publicised, and it seems that not every resident of Iceland has been given an equal opportunity to take advantage of it.

It sounds like you would be glad to see this procedure abolished, rather than reformed. This is an idea worth pondering. You still think, though, that express citizenship should be an option in humanitarian cases. And that begs the question of how Parliament would find out about these worthy humanitarian cases. The real puzzle is how to design a system which both uses government resources efficiently, and allows those with a great and sincere need for express citizenship to receive it without string-pulling or insider knowledge.

Ian Watson

Dear Grapevine,

Re: the skyr letter from Lauren M in the last issue of The Reykjavik Grapevine

I've bought skyr.is in Whole Foods in NYC. Their product is sold at selected metropolitan Whole Foods stores. You can get more info on skyr.is retailers at [www.skyr.is](http://www.skyr.is).

There's also a domestic manufacturer of organic skyr in the states, Siggí's Skyr. It's run by a very nice Icelandic guy called Siggí. They currently only sell their product in the New York area, but wider distribution is forthcoming. Siggí's site is [www.skyr.com](http://www.skyr.com).

Thanks,  
-Sveinbjörn

Dear Sveinbjörn,

We have also learned about this mysterious new phenomenon called Siggí's Skyr, which is apparently manufactured by an Icelandic person who, believe it or not, is named Siggí. That is a one in a million chance right there. But, yes, Siggí's Skyr, available from both Murray's and Real Food Markets. Go get some.

Editor.



THE CENTRE // THE OFFICIAL TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE IN REYKJAVIK

## All you need

### for a great holiday

City Centre Booking Service // Bus Tours and Activities

Hotels and Guesthouses // Car Rentals // Horse Riding

Whale Watching // Internet and Phone Centre

VAT Cash Refund – Money Exchange



## Iceland's Largest Booking Service

**FREE BOOKING SERVICE**

Simply the most comprehensive Booking Services in the City specialized in customizing and developing travel packages to suit your interests and needs.

We can arrange your accommodation, transfers, tours, flights and car hire based on your requirements.

**City Centre BOOKING SERVICE**



## Your key to the Capital

Reykjavik Tourist card

Gives admission to:

- all the thermal pools in Reykjavik
- public transport
- museums
- Reykjavik Zoo and Family Park,
- discount on tours and much more.

Great value for money.

Free Internet access for cardholders.

[www.visitreykjavik.is](http://www.visitreykjavik.is)



**GREAT VALUE FOR MONEY**

24 HOURS 1.200 ISK  
48 HOURS 1.700 ISK  
72 HOURS 2.200 ISK



**THE CENTRE**  
The Official Tourist Information Centre in Reykjavik

Adalstraeti 2 · 101 Reykjavik · Tel +354 590 1550 · [info@visitreykjavik.is](mailto:info@visitreykjavik.is)

## Hressingarskálinn

**Hressingarskálinn (Hressó) is a Classical Bistro, located in the heart of the city at Austurstræti 20.**

Food is served from 10 until 22 every day. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, after the kitchen closes Hressó heats up with live music. Weekends, DJs keep the party going until morning, with no cover charge.



# Special offer



## Discounts on day tours

- ▶ 5% discount for 1 daytour
- ▶ 10% discount for 2 daytours
- ▶ 15% discount for 3 daytours

Tours must be purchased at Reykjavik Excursions sales offices: BSI Bus Terminal, Radisson SAS Hotel Saga, Icelandair Hotel Nordica, Icelandair Hotel Loftleidir.



Our brochure is available at all major hotels and guesthouses.



Torrent.is mogul Svavar Lúthersson days before the police closed his operation.  
Photo by GAS



## A Rebel Without A Cause, Really

**“Well, I make a living from running a file-sharing site. There are not a lot of those around, and I know that I can make a living by providing one. I don’t think it compares to being a musician.”**

*Svavar Lúthersson’s favourite band is Europe, and he lives with his parents in Hafnarfjörður. He is 24 years old, and he also happens to be owner and CEO of now-infamous file-sharing portal Torrent.is, where around 25,000 registered users have shared records, TV shows and movies for over two years, supposedly generating a great loss for the Icelandic entertainment industry. Days after Grapevine met with Lúthersson, Icelandic copyright-holders filed an injunction that effectively shut down his website. At the time of writing, it is still down.*

### What is a torrent?

Well, to put it simply, torrent is a certain standard of file-sharing technology, used to transfer a file from one place to another – or many, as it were. The would-be file-sharer generates a “hacked” file that supplies those who want to download with all the relevant information needed to do so. They then run that file through a special program that’s designed to download and distribute torrent files, and start sharing it themselves.

### What is Torrent.is then?

It is a web-portal that interested parties can use to share those files that they feel like distributing. Once they upload their torrent files, other users can download whatever takes their fancy and pass it on. Torrent.is is run as a private limited-liability company and owned exclusively by me. I am responsible enough not to waste the company’s funds, and I am not using them to finance the good life for myself, especially since I know that they are made up of contributions to the Istorrent fund. It costs 500,000 ISK to found a limited-liability company, and we used the Istorrent collection fund to finance that. We run an honest operation, and pay all the relevant taxes and fees. At the moment, my sole job is acting as CEO and director of Istorrent Ehf.

### Why do you operate Torrent.is?

Because I am interested in the ideal and vision that the web stands for. At first, running Torrent.is was my hobby, but it started taking more and more time out of my schedule until I had no choice except to operate it for a living, instead of working somewhere else and limiting the time I could spend on the site. If I had a 9 to 5 job, I wouldn’t be able to keep the site up.

### So, you are an idealist, and your motives for operating Torrent.is are purely idealistic. What is the ideal in question?

It is to encourage the free exchange of files. The internet is a huge thing that didn’t exist in Iceland until around 1986, and we want to... fight unfair censorship. For instance, copyright holders often use copyright laws for vast censorship. There are examples of copyright holders refusing to allow someone to use their work because they don’t agree with their opinions.

### Like when the band múm sued the Nike Corporation for illegally using their song in an advertisement, because they didn’t agree with what the company stood for?

Exactly. Do we sometimes kick or ban people from Torrent.is? Only when it is absolutely necessary. We’ve often let people stay even though they disagree with our opinions. Also, those who hold the copyrights for really old material, some of whom demand sky-high prices to let someone use it. There was a group that was making a documentary on the first half of the 20th century, and they were collecting video clips to use in it. The copyright holders of those clips demanded such a high price for their use that they had to make due with using only stock materials, which really affected the quality of the documentary.

### Does Torrent.is make a lot of money? How big a salary are you on, as CEO and single shareholder of Istorrent Ehf.?

There’s no profit from running Torrent.is. I manage to pay myself a salary but there’s not a lot left to go around after that, although our capital is slowly growing. That’s to be expected in the early stages of running a company. We recently started selling ads for the web, and that has been taking off more slowly than I’d assumed. My accountant told me that I should pay myself a minimum of 342,000 ISK per month, as I am the CEO.

### So, you sell almost no ads but still manage to pay yourself a fairly high-end salary as well as increasing the starting capital of 500,000 ISK. Where is the money coming from?

Many of our users opt to support the operation by donating a small amount of money. We also have the web-store, where people can purchase certain benefits for their file-sharing pleasures. But there’s not a lot of money coming in.

### Icelandic proponents of file sharing often justify themselves by pointing to mandatory tolls on copy-making materials, such as CD and DVD burners. However, that toll only amounts to a very slim portion of the retail price of a copyrighted CD, for instance, and it is relatively obvious that musicians stand to make a fraction of what they normally would if you download their music and burn it to a tolled CDR. Do you feel you are justified in using this argument?

Yes. I also think that if musicians don’t get enough money from STEF [the Icelandic association of music-rights holders], then that’s STEF’s problem, not mine. Plus I haven’t seen any official information on how much a musician stands to make from a CD-sale.

### I am telling you, they stand to make around 2-700 ISK for a single CD-sale, depending on their record deal.

Assuming those figures are correct, then I must say that they’ve got better deals than foreign musicians. For instance, Toni Braxton only received 35 cents for every CD sold, and then she had to declare bankruptcy because she wasn’t meeting the expectations of her record company. Overseas, if you don’t sell enough copies of your CD, the record company will demand back the money they put into making it.

And then there are many musicians who make the mistake of trying to live off their music. I know that in most cases they work jobs along with their careers in music. They should view music more as a hobby than a career, and they should make it out of their passion for music, instead of the money.

### Couldn’t you say the same thing about yourself?

Well, I make a living from running a file-sharing site. There are not a lot of those around, and I know that I can make a living by providing one. I don’t think it compares to being a musician.

### Why not?

Well, it’s hard to put to words. I think it’d probably be interpreted the wrong way if I were to answer that. In some cases, you can make a living from your passion, and in some cases you can’t. I’m not exactly paying myself a full salary.

### You’re not? I’d have to work 80 hours a week minimum to make around two-thirds of your salary. And you live with your parents? That sounds like a fairly full salary.

I’ll move out eventually. It’s not as if I’m going to live there forever. The salary I’m on is the bare minimum of what the accountant told me I’d have to pay myself. I would have given myself a lower salary if I’d had the choice.

### If users won’t pay for their desired content, who should? Should musicians and filmmakers work for free in your opinion?

No, that isn’t my opinion that they’d have to do that endlessly. There should be an increase in their rewards, I won’t deny that. How? We could envision it as a bonus to what they already make. Not exactly like a tip, but as Radiohead have demonstrated, free donations to popular bands can amount to major sums. They haven’t released the figures, but it’s safe to say that they’ll be getting millions, straight into their pockets. They’re cutting out the middleman. At Torrent.is, we have plans to make it easy for our users to donate directly to musicians, if anybody would agree to that.

### I released an album in 2006 that had been downloaded around 1,000 times from Torrent.is at last count. I just made my last monthly 20,000 ISK payment on the loan I had to take two years ago, to record that album. Do you feel it is normal for me, as content provider, to be creating income and capital for you without receiving anything in return?

No, and if you disapprove of your album being distributed on our site you can always e-mail us and ask us to remove it and then ban it from further distribution. We usually respond kindly to such requests.

### So, if any copyright holder asks you to prevent the distribution of their material, you will?

Yes, if the owners contact us, definitely.

Text by Haukur Magnússon



# I'M SENDING MY SUPPORT

## WESTERN UNION

Fast, reliable, worldwide money transfer.



☎ 410 4000 [landsbanki.is](http://landsbanki.is)

© 2007 WESTERN UNION HOLDINGS, INC. All rights reserved.



FREE  
CD Guide

# It's the journey - not the destination

Enjoy ...

... the beautiful nature of Iceland with your own CD guide. When booking please ask for the GRAPEVINE offer.

The best and easiest way to get to know the rugged beauty of Iceland is simply to have your own car. We are your car rental experts in Iceland.



+354 522 44 00 • [www.hertz.is](http://www.hertz.is)

Hertz locations in Iceland: Keflavik Airport, Reykjavik, Ísafjörður, Akureyri, Höfn, Egilsstaðir, Selfoss

Valid until 01/01/08

## The Secret to Gift Giving



Gabriele Guðbjartsson moved to Iceland from New York, USA. She married a lucky local, and together they have one child.

Giving the perfect gift is a talent. It requires months of listening, paying attention to fine details and if you're lucky finding the right deal to go along with it. However, the secret to gift giving is not synonymous with finding the Holy Grail. It can be taught to virtually anyone with a heart, some time and a little effort. So, if you find yourself in a state of distress, surrounded by crazy shoppers, and nowhere to turn, consider the following advice and you'll never have to experience the madness again.

### The Who

Deciding on whom to give gifts to is not as easy as some may think. Romance, politics, debt, obligation, peer pressure and pride are a few reasons why people exchange gifts with one another. Neither the law nor the Bible states that everyone you know must receive a Christmas present from you. For some, an expressive card or even just a phone call can have more meaning than a half-hearted gift found at the corner pharmacy. Making an intimate list of whom to buy for as opposed to constantly piling on an arbitrary group of names solely out of obligation can not only save you time, but force you to reflect on why you desire to give gifts unnecessarily or without good reason. Conducting this activity also gives you more time to focus on giving more meaningfully and without regret or expectation. What's important is that when you give gifts purposefully, you're more likely to give for the right reasons.

### The What

In order to find the right gift for someone, the most important thing is to pay attention. Why give someone a gift that they're going to give away the following year, or worse, "put it away," meaning, to no longer be seen by any human being ever again. Asking someone directly what they want is just boring and kind of kills the spirit of it all. The only way to know what someone truly wants for Christmas is to pay serious attention to how they live and what they love. Overhearing a phone conversation, listening to their inherent needs or being aware of an interest in which they need to collect proper materials are all very easy ways to find out how to surprise someone on Christmas Day. The idea is to put in effort without seeming obvious. Taking the time to find an endearing and special gift can give someone a lifetime of Christmas memories.

Another major rule in giving is that a gift must never look

cheap or as though you got it on the bargain table at the biggest bargain store in town. When I was younger my six siblings and I used to do the Secret Santa game in which you secretly exchange names and therefore only have to shop for one person (gifts for our parents were always homemade). My parents would give us five dollars each and take us to this big discount store so that we could "explore our options" and find the perfect five-dollar gift. Well every year, my brother, who shall remain cheap and nameless, used to pocket the money and give us his old Hardy Boy books, nicely labelled with his name on the inside cover and pawn it off as a well thought out gift. Although we all knew he lacked humility and the embarrassment gene we still got mad year after year. Thankfully today, he is one of the most generous individuals I have ever met. I guess all that Navy Seal training paid off! Anyway, the point is that cheap gifts are insensitive and pointless. If you can't afford expensive material gifts, be sentimental and give something from the heart.

### The Point

As we know, gold, frankincense and myrrh were the first Christmas gifts given. Considered to be the most valuable of the ancient world, that precious metal, oil and perfume had a higher purpose: to honour a child that was to change the course of history. As the gifts were granted in the most altruistic and principled manner, symbolising royalty, divinity and healing, the custom was rooted, manifesting into an affectionate exchange that has continued for thousands of years. Consequently, the gift-giving element of Christmas goes deeper than the way we know it today. While in these modern times we have lost our focus a bit, and that it may seem impossible to replicate the aforementioned example, I think it wouldn't hurt to rethink our approach to how we give to honour this long and blessed tradition.

Enjoy this Christmas with your loved ones and keep the spirit that this day was meant to bestow.

## Getting Away From it All



Viktor Banke moved with his girlfriend from Åhus, Sweden. They are currently not battling homesickness.

Just two months ago, my loved one and I were sitting by a beautiful little rivulet, talking about big universal matters, surrounded by small Swedish birds and trees. We had talked about moving way up north, to the wilderness, and now we were changing our plans. Just minutes before that, I sat alone there, reminiscing with a disturbing feeling that ran across my every nerve.

Reykjavík, hmm, Reykjavík... Iceland?

Or maybe Oslo... Norway?

It was really all the same to us.

And then, only a month later, when everything has become normal again, in another country with other habits, I wonder why I came. Did I even move?

Why did I come here? What made me want to give up a beautiful house, jobs, plus a very much longed for Jonathan Richman show? What on earth could possess me to move further away from my wonderful little siblings? Did I need to "get away from it all"? Clearly not, I love and adore the landscapes of Österlen in the south east of Sweden. Oh, and then there's that commonly asked sub question: Did I need to find myself?

Truth is, I pretty much know where I am, and therefore I know that it was restlessness that drew me here. But still that phrase doesn't leave my mind: "Get away from it all, find yourself", what does it mean?

Let's face it, I'm the product of my youth, my surroundings and my environment; that's a huge part of who I am. So when I told my mom and dad that I was going away, I really believed it. But here I am, again.

It all started when Magdalena, my loved one, got a job at a café. I went in there one morning to have a cup of tea. One of the first things I noticed was a Swedish daily paper, which of course I opened. A well-known face was staring back at me, and if he could have moved and weren't made of ink, I'm sure he'd have had an evil grin. It was a huge photo of a musician, from one of the three bands ever to come out of my little home village, Åhus.

The very same night we were at a gathering. When the wine hit the Icelanders, they all started to sing this old Swedish tune, "Vem kan segla förutan vind" – in Swedish! I had to see it to believe it, and even then I was doubtful. Later that night I found myself in a bar, trying to focus on a bottle of Absolut Raspberry. At the bottom, written in fine print, I found what I was looking for: "Bottled and produced in Åhus, Sweden."

I sank into romantic memories of my bike rides around that old vodka factory, and for a while I desperately held on to these memories, until I lost them in a toilet downstairs, which of course was made by IFÖ, in Skåne, Sweden.

All these memories, how did they survive abroad? Are the Ice-

landers guilty of feeding them? I don't know, but it sure is hard to get away from anything these days.

The story doesn't end here, though I almost wish it did. My other roomie got a job at a clothing store. And now, please keep two things in mind: One, that both jobs were coincidentally arranged, and two, that the little village of Åhus has no more than 10,000 citizens.

Anyway, to pass time, she borrowed an Ipod from a colleague whom she doesn't even know. And since I've got a computer, the responsibility fell on me to fill it up with some music. And the first thing that damn shuffle function hits me with is Acid House Kings – another band from Åhus.

As this started to confuse me in my days here, the Reykjavik Film Festival opened. The first spot in the schedule was the screening of "Shotgun Stories", an American film from the beautiful south. But for some reason, the language they spoke before me was Swedish, and the scenes were from Stockholm. It wasn't a film from the beautiful American south, it was the Swedish director Roy Andersons latest flick, "You, the living"! After twenty minutes, a guy with a RIFF-shirt came in and said some things in Icelandic, I guess it was about the mishaps. But it might as well have been a malicious joke about the foolish Swedish person sitting in the cinema. The one who can't escape himself.

So let's bury all this 'get away from it all' nonsense, once and for all.

# Everybody loves a holiday greeting



We'll deliver your presents and greetings  
for family and friends in time for Christmas

Please observe our recommended  
last posting dates:

4 december	Christmas parcels to countries outside Europe
7 december	Christmas cards to countries outside Europe
12 december	Christmas parcels within Europe
14 december	Christmas cards within Europe
18 december	TNT-express to countries outside Europe
19 december	TNT-express within Europe
19 december	Christmas parcels within Iceland
20 december	Christmas cards within Iceland

HVITA HUSID / SIA 07-1333

[www.postur.is](http://www.postur.is)

# TUBORG

...after all Christmas  
comes only once a year!



0.0%

The medium is the message.  
Photo by Þorvaldur Örn Kristmundsson



## Obituary: News Photography

**News photography in Iceland is dead; the only thing left is to write the obituary.**

*Þorvaldur Örn Kristmundsson is one of the most experienced news photographers in Iceland. Last month he curated a news photo exhibition in conjunction with the 110-year anniversary of the Icelandic Journalist Association. The exhibition demonstrates the development of news photography in Iceland from the beginning to modern times. However, Kristmundsson is worried about the future of the industry. A Grapevine reporter sat down with him to discuss the crisis in Icelandic news photography.*

**How did you select the photos for the exhibition? What was the guiding light?**

I didn't really have a guiding light. I just wanted to find old photos, all the way from the beginning of photography in Iceland, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and examine a different side of these old photos. I tried to select photos I hadn't seen before, and which were related to aspects of news photography, daily life, or extraordinary events. I really wanted to stress the early days. It surprised me how many photos I found. From a photographer's standpoint, these were big old cameras they were using back then – 4x5 or 10x12 cameras with glass plates – and it was not easy to take all these photos. Nevertheless, whenever something happened, like when there was a big fire downtown around the turn of the century, all these events were photographed. These photos have all the characteristics of news photography, although they may not have been taken as such at the time. As the years go by, however, you can see how this becomes a more conscious effort. When you put these photos together, they represent a fraction of the history of photography in Iceland.

**When does the concept of news photography first emerge in Iceland?**

I would say that news photography in Iceland begins for real in the 1960s. At that time, there was much competition in the newspaper industry; there were five or six newspapers at the time. Of course, it had started earlier, although people didn't necessarily regard it as such. Many photos documenting newsworthy events were taken without ever being intended to complement news stories.

**You don't see a lot of photojournalism in Icelandic newspapers. There is little attempt to document unfolding stories and tell it visually. Do editors lack understanding of the work of the news photographer and the power of photojournalism?**

It is very difficult to give you a short answer, because there are many factors at play here. My feeling is that there are two things destroying news photography. On the one hand it is the market economy and on the other hand digital cameras. These elements have ruined news photography. Since Icelandic newspapers stopped being political party papers and became corporations in a competing market, the mandate has been to

constantly cut expenses. The first thing they cut is quality. For that reason, newspapers will accept anything, as long as it doesn't cost much. If you don't have to send a photographer to the scene, they will use a photo even if it's rubbish. And then there is the digital revolution. Before, not anyone could be a photographer. It was expensive, you needed both equipment and know-how and you had fewer chances to catch the photo, working with the amount of films you had. That meant that you could see who stood apart as photographers. The only people who lasted in this environment were the people who had talent. Today, anyone can buy a digital camera and everyone is a photographer. You shoot a thousand photos that you can see instantly on your screen.

The newspapers even run photos from mobile phones. The events are not given the proper attention. The standard of quality has been brought down. The abundance of photos from amateurs or young aspiring photographers has devalued the market, so now it's impossible for established photographers to work on large expensive documentation projects. Big photo agencies like Getty and AP have been forced to bring down their price in competition with amateur photo banks. The demand from the market is that newspapers must turn a profit above anything else, so they drive down the price. Fortunately, there have been a few papers and magazines that have tried to fight this, and these are the papers that stand out from the rest: The Washington Post, The New York Times, Sunday Times, Newsweek and Times. These papers value photography. Other papers have been going in the opposite direction and buy cheap photos that have little or no news value and run with it.

**Sometimes, papers use doctored photos; splice together people from two photos or crop a photo to show one certain item for instance. Is that a part of this as well?**

Yes, that's another thing I find strange; how the photo is always the last thing considered. The respect for the work of the photographer is minimal. This is a constant struggle between editors and publishers, because the publishers want to cut down the costs. It used not to be like this. It used to be that newspaper publishing was an ideal. There are no ideals anymore, it's just business. Obviously, the responsibility rests in many hands, but news photography in Iceland is dead, the only thing left is to write the obituary.

**In the exhibition you put together, I noticed you only have one photo there yourself. The subject is a girl at an outdoor concert, giving us, the viewers, the finger. Is there a hidden message contained in that photo?**

Absolutely. I think it is great that you mention this, because not many people have noticed it, but I did this absolutely on purpose. Actually, I first thought of using that photo because it contrasts so well with the old photos of very civilised people, but

teenagers today are a different matter. The generation gap is evident in that photo. I thought about whether people would read into it that I was giving photography the finger, like you did, but I decided I could very well let them think that. I'll admit that was not the first reason I chose that photo, but I also thought that it fit what I was thinking, there is a little message contained in there, I won't deny it. I could have chosen many other photos.

**Looking at your website [www.rawfile.com] I noticed you have several photo journalism series, but they are all taken in other countries, such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Palestine. Is it really the case that there are no subjects for photographers to document in Iceland?**

No, that would be a very incorrect assumption. Ten years ago, I was fascinated with foreign news as a subject. War photography, disasters, and human tragedies. This was just a phase, like you go through a phase when you only buy bellbottom jeans, and then you buy something else. The website was set up around that time, rather hastily. I've always meant to add more to it, but it hasn't happened. Iceland is a country of opportunities in photojournalism. I am certain it is one of the best places in Europe to document, because the changes in our society are so visible, and there are only two or three people who are documenting these changes: the country that is now, but might not be here in just a few years. I've been documenting farmers and deserted farms around Ísafjörður for two years. This used to be a very large farming community, but it's disappearing very fast. This is the last chance to document this. This is a dream project for me, since it mirrors the changes in our society and, really, the Nordic region as a whole. This is what drives me forward. That's why I'm very sad to see that news photography is dying. People don't seem to realise that people want to see good photos. No one is ever going to remember the text about the event 50 years from now, but people still remember the different photos of the event. Why is it that newspapers today are overflowing with photos of recipe dishes and quilts, giant photos, while the news photos that really matter are cut down and drowned in text and advertisements?

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson



# Hreinn Friðfinnsson

Hafnarhús

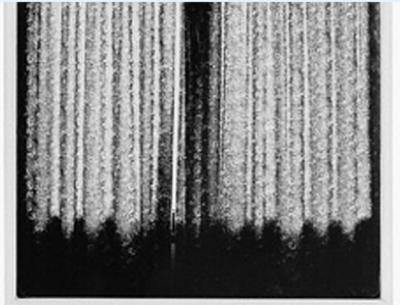
2 November 2007 – 27 January 2008



Hreinn Friðfinnsson is initiated and produced by  
Serpentine Gallery, London



Open daily 10–17.  
Free entrance on Thursdays.



One admission ticket is valid for three days  
in Hafnarhús, Kjarvalsstaðir and Ásmundur  
Sveinsson Sculpture Museum.



Morgunblaðið



[www.listasafnreykjavikur.is](http://www.listasafnreykjavikur.is)

[listasafn@reykjavik.is](mailto:listasafn@reykjavik.is)

Tel +354 590 1200

Fax +354 590 1201

## Þekkir þú þinn rétt?



Á Íslandi eru lágmarkskjör tryggt með kjarasamningum og óheimilt er að greiða lægri laun en þar er kveðið á um. Færð þú rétt laun? Færð þú launaseðil við hverja útborgun? Þú átt rétt á því. Því miður misnota sum fyrirtæki erlent launafólk og notfæra sér þekkingarleysi þess. AFL Starfsgreinafélag er eitt stærsta verkalýðsfélag landsins og við aðstoðum alla félag okkar, sama af hvaða þjóðerni þeir eru. Við höfum pólsku- og enskumælandi starfsfólk.

## Czy znasz swoje prawa?



Na Islandii, minimalne warunki placowe sa zapewnione przez umowy zbiorowe i niedozwolone jest zaniżanie plac które sa ustalone. Czy otrzymujesz prawidłowe wynagrodzenie? Czy otrzymujesz odcinki wypłat? Masz do tego pełne prawo. Z przykrością stwierdzamy, że niektóre przedsiębiorstwa zatrudniające pracowników, wykorzystują niewiedzę pracowników. AFL Związek Zawodowy rejonu sa jednym z większych Związków Zawodowych na Islandii i udzielają pomocy wszystkim swoim członkom, niezależnie od ich narodowości. Mamy pracowników polsko i anglojęzycznych.

## Do you know your rights?



In Iceland everyone is guaranteed minimum wages as stated in the collective bargaining agreements and it is illegal to pay someone lower wages. Are your wages correct? Do you always receive a pay statement? You have the right to. Unfortunately some companies abuse the fact that immigrants have a lack of knowledge in this area. AFL Labour Union is one of the largest labour unions in the country and we support all of our members, no matter their nationality. We have Polish and English speaking employees.



# Arnar Eggert Thoroddsen

**“Of course it is open for debate, whether the whole manufactured pop scene – from the Spice Girls, or Take That, all the way back to The Monkeys – is inherently evil. Many people think it is.”**

*Arnar Eggert Thoroddsen is a music journalist for the daily newspaper Morgunblaðið. Actually, he's a bit more than that. He is a self admitted music nerd and an unchallenged authority on Heavy Metal and fringe music. Now, Thoroddsen has published his first book, a collaboration with Iceland's leading music agent and band manager, Einar Bárðarson who has been the leading proponent of market-friendly pop music, besides managing the career of the Icelandic tenor Garðar Thor Cortez. A Grapevine reporter sat down with Thoroddsen to learn more about this curious cross-over.*

**You and Einar Bárðarson really come from opposite ends of the Icelandic music scene, how did you end up writing a book with him?**

Yes, people have wondered about this. Einar sent me an email last April and presented me with the idea of writing a textbook on how to manage a band. After a little toing and froing between the editor, and me, the idea for the book was born. I told Einar he would have to step forward and tell his story, which he agreed to do. Then we just approached it in a cold and calculated manner. I've been a music journalist for six years, Einar started coming into his own as an agent and manager around the same time, and we have always enjoyed a good professional relationship. He always played it cool, even if when I trashed some of his bands. So our cooperation was very natural, but I can understand when people look at the two of us... they place us in certain boxes.

**On some level, I can't help thinking of this as a publicity stunt on Einar's behalf, getting the arch-enemy, so to speak, to write a book about him.**

Exactly, Einar is clever, and to some extent, this was a publicity stunt. He said to me, 'now I have the left field covered,' meaning that doing this with me, someone who comes from the complete opposite end of the music scene, and I tend to agree with him, gives the book more weight. If he had done this alone, it would have come off as a total ego-trip. But, with me, he had someone to keep that in check, and control what needed to go in and what should be kept out.

**You mentioned the left side, and that is something I noticed in the book, how Einar continually refers to music in the political terms, left vs. right.**

Exactly, the book is written as an 'as told to' book, I did my best to maintain his voice in the book and use the phrases he uses, and this is his terminology. He is involved with right wing pop music, and then he talks about the left field, and 'his people' if I allow myself to generalise about the fm-pop crowd that is around him; they talk like this. But as he says in the book, he is at home on the right wing, and he's never attempted to reach out to the other side much. He is strongly rooted in market friendly pop-music with a strong suburban flavour. He'd be the first man to admit this and he often does. He often disarms people by just coming straight out with that fact up front.

**Do you think that this left-right analysis is a viable theory to dissect the music industry?**

Well, up to a point maybe, I don't know how far you could take it by putting it in political terms, but I understand the difference he is trying to make, the way he uses it to define mass market-friendly pop-music and more indie type of music. I understand what people are referring to when they use this definition, but I am not sure it applies as a whole.

**How did you feel about this yourself, a person firmly placed in the 'left wing' to become a mouthpiece for a leading figure of the 'right wing'?**

I have thought about it, naturally. As a music jour-

nalist for Morgunblaðið, I have been writing about all sorts of music, and different kinds of people, and always on an objective level. I think I was able to approach this the same way. But I can imagine that people think this affects my credibility or that people imagine that I jump at any project for the money – and nota bene, there is no money in writing books – or that people see me as a sell out. But people who think that, obviously have no idea what I have been doing for the last few years. I think I can stand up for myself.

**Has your own image of Einar changed during this project?**

Naturally, I have seen more sides to the man than the general public. I think this could have gone either way really, but I must admit, I walked away from this project pretty impressed with him. He doesn't take things very seriously. I always imagined a manager like that being on the phone, going nuts all the time, but Einar is always calm as a placid lake. Nothing sets him off balance.

**One thing I wondered about when I read the book was that in the beginning, he talks about being in this industry for his love for the game, and his love for music. He was having fun doing something he loved in working with the artists and helping them out. Towards the end of the book, he's stopped talking in that manner, and started speaking of the artists and his work in financial terms, he talks about investment opportunities, required rate of return for big investors who have invested in his artists, and so on. It seems that the whole thing has now become a business to him. Do you think that is true?**

No, I think I would have to disagree with that. Of course, in the chapter about his adventures with [Icelandic tenor singer] Garðar Cortez and how he has managed to attract investors to try to establish him as an opera star, then we are talking about a heavy weight fight for finances. Maybe this is a good example. Einar wants to take Garðar Cortez all the way in the opera world, and in order to do it, he needed financial back-up to play the game. He asked large Icelandic investors for one million British pounds, so he could concentrate on advancing his career without thinking about money. Einar is very sincere in his work to establish Garðar Cortez, because he enjoys doing it. People might have a mental image of the fat, greedy agent, but that's not how it is in reality.

**One of the things Einar has been criticised for is making manufactured mass marketing pop music, like his girl band Nylon or his boy band Luxor, Do you think there is going to be a backlash for him when people realise the extent to which this is actually manufactured? When people realise that he actually had some of the richest men in Iceland investing in his idea to create an international supergroup, like Nylon?**

I think this is just something he is interested in. He says himself that he did not really see himself as a musician, standing on stage, but he enjoyed the work around it and making things happen. Of course it is open for debate, whether the whole manufactured pop scene – from the Spice Girls, or Take That, all the way back to The Monkeys – is inherently evil. Many people think it is. This will probably create a backlash from some people, but others will admire him for being smart. But obviously, how justified this is, or even how tasteful, will always be debatable. But that is a material for a different book.

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

→ *Arnar Eggert Thoroddsen and Óttar Martin Norðfjörð have both recently published books, just in time for the Christmas shopping spree. Although their books share precious little in terms of subject matter, narrative, or anything else, both authors have faced question regarding integrity and motives.*



# Óttar Martin

## Norðfjörð

**“It took me a while to figure out that there is a difference between what the general public wants to read, and a poetry book that a group of 50 literature friends of yours want to read.”**

*Young author Óttar Martin Norðfjörð is a member of the Nýhil poetry collective, a group of young poets who have fought the good fight to revive poetry as an art form. The Nýhil poetry collective has entered the public awareness for its take-no-prisoners approach to literature and vehement insistence on breaking up the form. Now, one of their own is publishing Hnúfur Abrahams (Abraham's Knife), a cultural crime novel that tells the tale of an Irish professor of history of religion who stumbles upon a great secret when his colleague is murdered and finds there are certain powers that will do anything to keep the secret a secret, a la The Da Vinci Code. A Grapevine reporter sat down with Óttar to learn more about this curious cross-over.*

**When did you get the idea to write this book?**

The idea first came to me when I was in Scotland, studying for a Master's degree in Philosophy. It first came to me on an airplane really, on the way to Scotland, when I noticed that every passenger on the plane was either reading Dan Brown or [Icelandic crime novelist] Arnaldur Indriðason. I had just published a book of poetry, and I thought to myself, 'what am I doing? Why should I have to pigeonhole myself like that, writing for this small audience only?' I had ideas for other kind of books as well, but I was very arrogant towards that kind of literature, and it took me a while to figure out that there is a difference between what the general public wants to read, and a poetry book that a group of 50 literature friends of yours wants to read. So I decided to swallow my pride, take this seriously and try this genre. Although I've always enjoyed reading crime novels, I couldn't see myself writing them. But, since I had an idea for a book, which is the book I wrote, I decided to do it.

**So, you felt a prejudice against this genre?**

Yes I did. It's interesting, and I could discuss this with you all day. You write a poetry book, nobody buys it, but you get a little respect from the literature elite for being the broke artist, thinking outside the box. But there are many prejudices; I had them, partly from the literature elite and cultural apostles, against this genre of literature. This is not really considered literature.

**Personally, I thought The Da Vinci Code was an incredibly poor book, and I was a little surprised at how much your book was influenced by that formula. When I read it, I started to develop my own theory that once you had decided to do this sell-out, for lack of a better term, you then just decided to take it all the way.**

I read The Da Vinci Code, and I really didn't like it. It is embarrassingly badly written. But I'm not blind; I could see what effect it had on people. I decided to follow in Dan Brown's path, but that was also because it fitted the subject, the idea I had for the plot. With the idea I had, I think it was inevitable that the book would be shaped in the The Da Vinci Code mould, no matter how much or how little influence that book had had on me. Once I realised that, I had no hesitation in borrowing from that formula.

**The book reads as though it is written with the idea of being developed into a movie [and in fact, Icelandic film production company Zik Zak has bought the rights to develop a movie from the book]**

Yes, it is. There are a lot of cliffhangers and it should be an easy adaptation, so it's no coincidence that Zik Zak has bought the rights to the story. That's the bottom line; this is a 'user-friendly' book. It's just that there is such a divide between the general public and the literati. Until now, I have only been writing for very small cultural readership, trying to break up the form. This book is the total opposite. It is geared towards the pub-

lic. I doubt anyone will think about this book two days after reading it. It is essentially the same as seeing a Hollywood blockbuster. And I'm OK with that. I don't understand why you always have to position yourself on one side of that divide. I have come to realise that this is exactly how publishing houses work. They publish bestsellers to finance the publication of fine literature. Everyone thinks that is OK, but as soon as a writer does the same thing, people don't agree.

**Have you faced this prejudice from the literary elite? Are you scolded?**

Not exactly scolded, but my friends ask me why I want to write shit. Coming from friends, I think that's OK. Then you have people from the literature circles. For example, I was recently on the literature television talkshow Kiljan, and the host, Egill Helgason opened the interview with the question 'are you joking?' That was incredible. Let's not think about whether I was joking or not for a moment. That is an extraordinarily loaded question and if I'm not joking, it is offensive. I told him I was not joking, that I've spent two years on this project and that would be a rather sick joke. Then he starts talking about the book as being clichéd, as if other Icelandic crime novelists don't write clichés? The difference is that I am writing into an American tradition, while other Icelandic crime novelists write into a Scandinavian tradition. It seems to irritate people endlessly that I wrote this kind of book instead of a Reykjavík novel, where the hero is drunk at Kaffibarinn, finds the purpose of life and falls in love.

**How does this affect you? Do you think you will write another book like that to silence your critics?**

I've already started writing another book like this. The truth is, I had a great time writing that book. I loved doing the historical research, and creating the puzzle. This was fun, so why not do it again. But I doubt I could do this for the next 30 years. This is a formula, I don't have any reservations about that. It is airport literature, but that's OK. If I'm having fun writing it, I don't mind. Although I have been a part of Nýhil, I have not agreed to only write poetry for the rest of my life.

**I think on some level, this criticism stems from people's fear of seeing someone turn their back on their ideals.**

I think you are absolutely right. That is exactly the thing. You are supposed to be a struggling writer, there is a level of martyrdom, and you are supposed to suffer for your art. I think this is such a 19<sup>th</sup>-century attitude towards literature. If there is any ideal behind Nýhil, it is exactly to break these kinds of stereotypes. But I can't escape the feeling that people think I have betrayed my true colours.

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

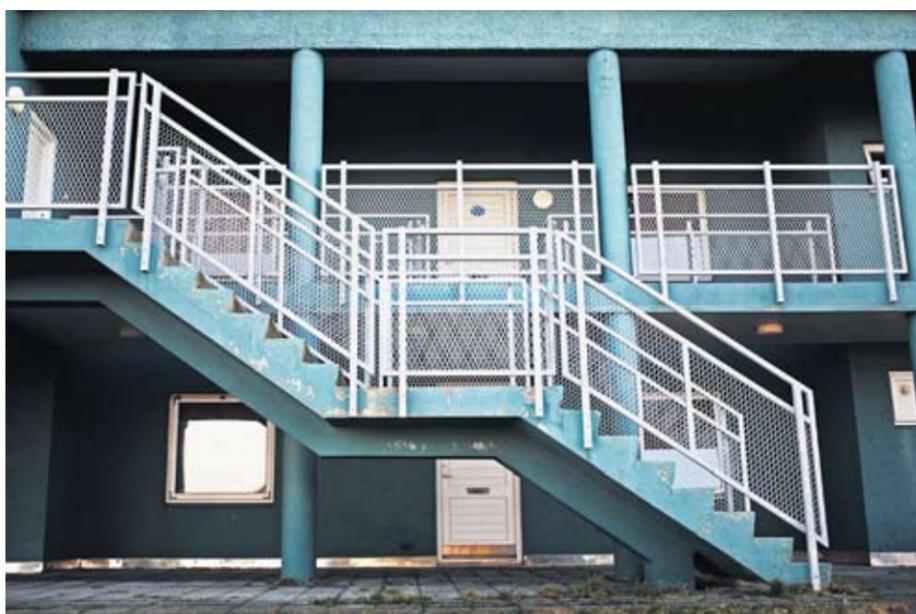
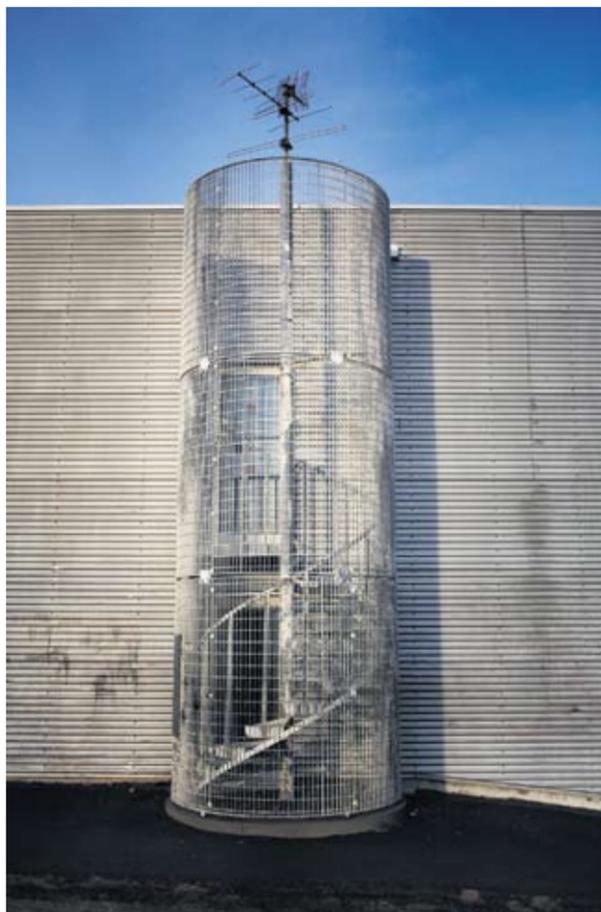


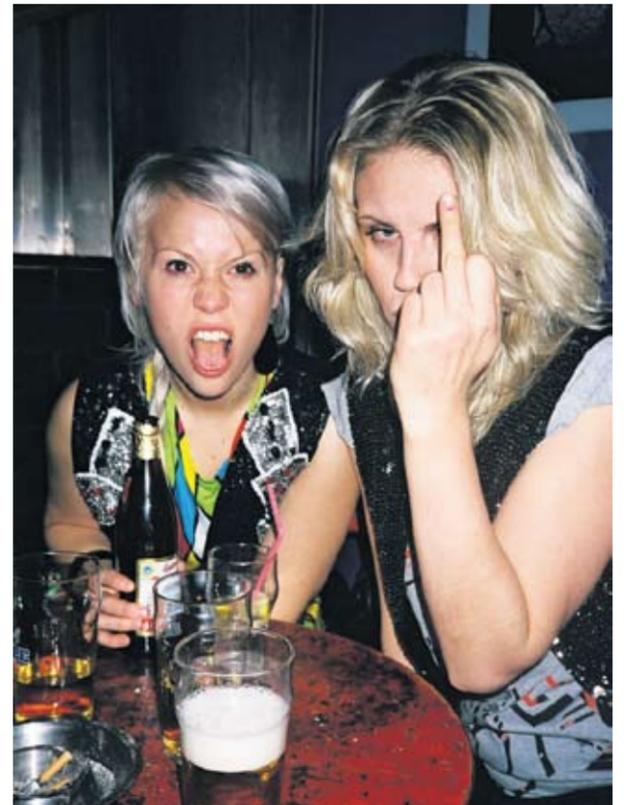
# SCENES FROM SUBURBIA

## *112 Grafarvogur*

Photos by GAS







## ***Last Call: Sirkus is Closing***

**“Just imagine Unuhús (which was a popular hangout among young artists and writers in the beginning of the 20th century) and what a significant role that building played in Reykjavík’s culture. Sirkus is like the Unuhús of our time. Sirkus isn’t a house but plenty of souls that gather to create this unique atmosphere.”**

“Of course I’ll miss this place. I mean, where else can you find such a good vibe on a Sunday evening?” says the bartender at Sirkus and hands over a beer. It’s around midnight and a few people are dancing to Michael Jackson’s ‘Beat It’. Sparkling leftovers of last night’s decorations still hang from the ceiling. It was a Super Hero costume party, a crazy night I was told. The staff and a couple of regulars sit around the bar and chat about the weekend and the fact that in two months, the party will at last be over. In February, the tiny tavern will have to close its doors to make room for underground parking lots, hotel rooms and fashion shops.

Sirkus, this notorious little bar on Klapparstigur 30, bred a peculiar and energetic culture years ago and the many loyal beer-drinkers see the shutdown as the end of an era. The staff, as well as the regulars, talk about their small Sirkus community as a big friendly family where Sigga, the owner, is like a mum. It’s no overstatement that few places in the world have established as big and loyal a customer base as Sirkus. The affection among the customers can perhaps best be seen by all the postcards and souvenirs from faraway countries that decorate the bar today.

Frequented by the creative crowd, Sirkus is known as a shelter for artists, fashion designers, writers, filmmakers, art-lovers and music-lovers. The city’s many barhoppers break free to the music blasting from the speakers every weekend, or on a Monday night for that matter, and dance for hours on the sticky floor. With a capacity to accommodate around 100 people, this hut with palm trees painted on the outside walls, is a place where world-famous DJs come to spin their records and party people climb the walls and queue for up to an hour outside to be part of the lunacy that goes on inside.

Sirkus’s reputation has travelled the world. With Björk DJ-ing from time to time, renowned and up-and-coming bands throwing awe-inspiring concerts and movie-stars dropping by for a night on the town, the bar is featured in music videos, magazines and travel books. Every year, it attracts

a growing number of curious tourists who go on sight-seeing trips just to take a look.

“Sirkus is a ‘night-care’ for grown-up teenagers” explains Sigga, the owner, and laughs. Sigga, usually called Sigga Boston, is the woman in charge. She’s seen it all. Good times and bad times. In 2006, she opened a new bar, Boston, with her longtime friend Hildur Zoega and can today frequently be seen running between the two taverns with her dog Hekla tagging along.

“I can’t be too bummed about it. We always knew this would soon be over but somehow Sirkus always stays open for another year. I’ve said my goodbyes plenty of times,” one regular said when asked how he feels about Sirkus finally closing its doors. “Maybe it’s just time to move on, but I’ll leave Sirkus with countless great memories” he adds.

One of the most remarkable things about Sirkus is the fact that it is even still open. The end has been around the corner more than 20 years, long before Sirkus became Sirkus or today’s clientele even started drinking. But like a cat with nine lives, it has managed to extend its life longer than anyone could ever dream of.

### **Creative Hotspot**

“No one is grieving the house per se but rather everything that has happened inside the house,” says artist Gabriela Friðriksdóttir, a long-time Sirkus family member. She continues: “Just imagine Unuhús (which was a popular hangout among young artists and writers in the beginning of the 20th century) and what a significant role that building played in Reykjavík’s culture. Sirkus is like the Unuhús of our time. Sirkus isn’t a house but plenty of souls that gather to create this unique atmosphere. Sigga plays a leading role in this. She has everything needed to run a place where you can feel at home and get to be just the way you want to be. She’s like a mother, a shrink and a friend.”

The valuables that belong to Sirkus have little to do with concrete or corrugated iron. As a building, Sirkus is almost worthless. All the danc-

ing and drinking have taken its toll and today, it could hardly be described as majestic. Some might even call it a dump. But although its walls, covered with music posters and artwork, might collapse any minute, they’ve witnessed an essential part in the city’s culture, as for years, Sirkus has been a hotbed of everything related to any grassroots genre in art, music, fashion and film-making. Here, local bands have taken their first steps and new talents have been discovered. In between touring around the world, groups such as GusGus, Sigur Rós, múm have gone to Sirkus to relax. Brian Jonestown Massacre’s Anton Newcomb has basically moved in. Friendships that lead to collaborative projects have evolved over a few drinks and numerous artists and designers come by regularly to seek inspiration for new pieces. It’s hard to put a price on that.

“In my view, the bar represents this cross-over between art and music. To find my inspiration, I go to Sirkus for example always. You can be just the way you want to, you can easily get to know whomever you choose without any barriers or uncomfortable formal introductions. All the crew I’ve worked with I met in this building. That’s why we always give a special credit to Sigga Boston, Mother Superior, when we exhibit around the world,” says Gabriela.

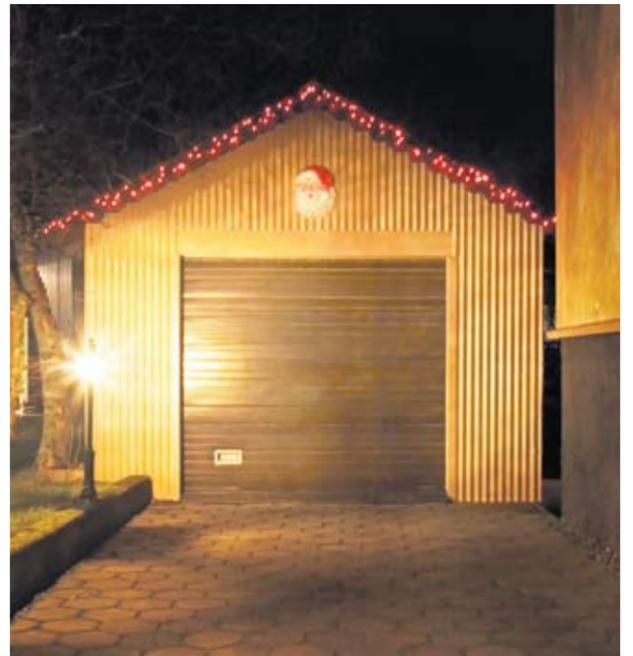
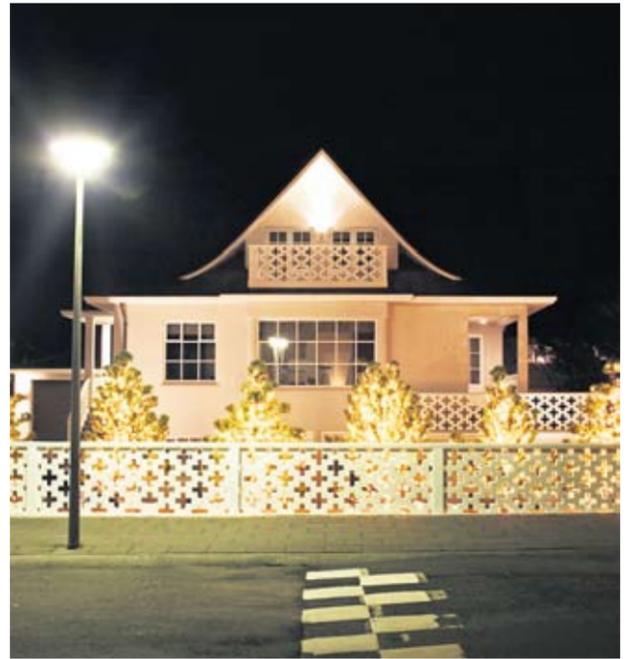
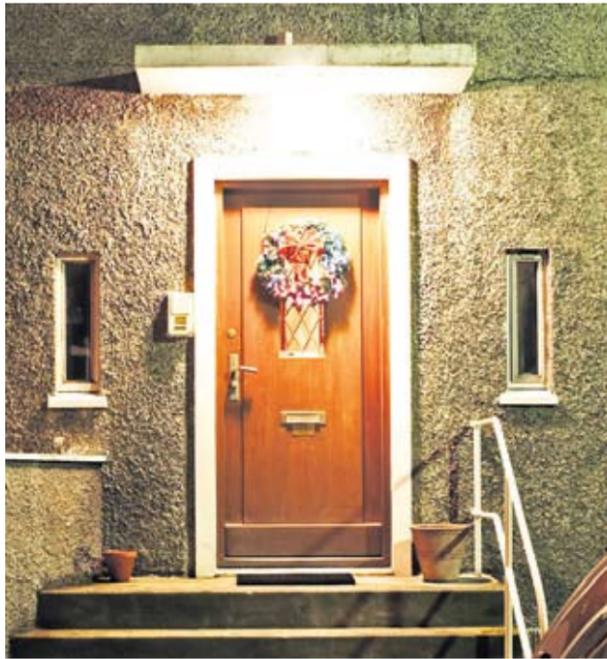
### **A Legendary Hangout**

The small hut that today houses the notorious bar has a long history. In the early 19th century it housed the grocery Vaðnes but for the past two decades, it’s been a centre for socializing and drinking. In 1990, N1 bar, popular among musicians and music-lovers, opened its doors, pub Grand Rokk moved in for a while and in the late 1990s, Reykjavík’s very first French wine bar served fine wines and snacks to downtowners. That bar was called Sirkus and has kept its name since.

Sigga knows more about the house and its past and present customers than most people and she’s no rookie when it comes to running a successful bar. She has followed the Icelandic art and music scene for decades and in the 80s, →

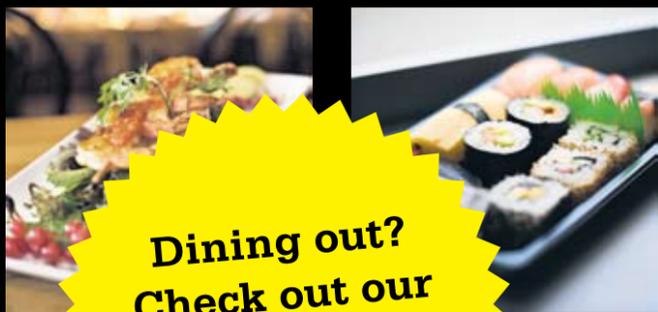
# info.

Music, Art, Films and Events Listings · Eating, Drinking and Shopping · Map  
**plus** Akron/Family at Organ · Benny Crespo's Gang release concert



Photos by GAS

**above** Christmas is coming. Find out how to celebrate it the Icelandic way (B14)



Dining out?  
Check out our  
many food  
reviews online!



WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS



Music

## Benny Crespo's Gang Release Concert

The Benny Crespo's Gang foursome will be hosting a concert in honor of their recently released debut album, self-titled. The concert will be held on Wednesday, December 19 in Tjarnarbíó, the first release concerts in recent memory to be held in a seated hall.

After taking things slow follow-

ing the release of singer Lovísa's solo album, the quartet is back in full swing, and their album has received critical acclaim from various media in Iceland, The Grapevine included. The group is known for their kick-ass live performances, and are sure to deliver an energetic show. The concert is scheduled

to begin promptly at 20:45. Seating is limited so secure your tickets soon. Tickets can be purchased in Skífan and BT stores, and at midi.is.

December 19  
Tjarnarbíó, Tjarnargata 12

If you would like to be included in the Grapevine listings, free of charge, contact the Grapevine by email at listings@grapevine.is.

## Music

- **B5**  
*Bankastræti 5*  
Fri. 07.12. Dj Biggo  
Sat. 15.12. Patrick Chardronnet (live) as well as DJs Jack Schidt, Sexy Lazer and President Bongo  
Fri. 28.12. Dj Biggo
- **Bar 11**  
*Laugavegur 11*  
Fri. 07.12. DJ Óli Dóri Weapons  
Sat. 08.12. DJ Gulli Ósóma  
Fri. 14.12. DJ Óli Dóri  
Sat. 15.12. DJ Gulli  
Fri. 21.12. DJ Benni  
Sat. 22.12. DJ Óli Dóri  
Sun. 23.12. Concert: Sign / DJ Gulli  
Fri. 28.12. DJ Óli Dóri  
Sat. 29.12. DJ Benni  
Sun. 30.12. DJ Óli Dóri  
Mon. 31.12. DJ Gulli  
Fri. 04.01. DJ Gulli  
Sat. 05.01. DJ Óli Dóri
- **Barinn**  
*Laugavegur 22*  
Fri 07.12 DJ Cazanova (1 floor) / DJ Ernir (2 floor)  
Sat. 08.12. DJ Jack Schidt (1 floor) / DJs Ý and Ási  
Wed. 12.12. DJ Manny  
Fri. 14.12. TATATA (1 floor) / DJ Eypór (2 floor)  
Sat. 15.12. DJ Inpulse (1 floor) / DJ Sesar A (2 floor)
- **Café Paris**  
*Austurstræti 14*  
Every Friday and Saturday night DJ Börkur and DJ Lucky play soul and funk
- **Domo**  
*Pingholtsstæti 5*  
Wed. 12.12. Haukur and Óskars quartet

- **Gaukurinn**  
*Tryggvagata 22*  
Sat. 08.12. Kimi Records presents: Hellvar, Hjaltaín and Morðingjarnir. Special guests are : Reykjavík! Starts at 20:00 and tickets cost 1,000 ISK
- **Gerðuberg Culture Centre**  
*Gerðuberg 3-5*  
Sat. 08.12. Polish singer Halina Frackowiak with Marcin Riege (piano). Free entrance. Starts at 20:00
- **Grand Rokk**  
*Smiðjustígur 6*  
Fri. 07.12. Peðinn presents the play "Tröllapera". Starts at 20:00  
Sat. 08.12. Peðinn presents the play "Tröllapera". Starts at 14:00 and 17:00  
Sun. 09.12. 8pm Peðinn presents the play "Tröllapera"  
Sun 20.12. X-fm 9.77's Christmas party  
Mon 21.12 Final performance of Tröllapera followed by Sesar A's release party later that night. Special guests include xxx Rottweiler hundar
- **Háskólabíó**  
*At Hagatorg*  
Fri.07.12. The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Gala concert  
Fri.04.01. Icelandic Symphony Orchestra  
Sat. 05.01 Icelandic Symphony Orchestra
- **Háskólatorg**  
*At Suðurgata*  
Wed. 19.12. Samúel Jón Samúelsson Big Band, Einar Scheving, Tómas R. Einarsson, Óskar Guðjónsson/Ómar Guðjónsson/Ingibjörg Guðjónsdóttir and Jagúar will be performing. Starts at 20:00. Free entry.
- **Hellirinn (TÞM)**  
*Hólmaslóð 2*  
Sat. 08.12. Open house: TÞM party  
Fri. 14.12. Death Metal Night: Plastic Gods, Disintegrate, Gone Postal, Universal Tragedy  
Sat. 29.12. Anti-Christian/Solstice festival. Bands will include: Helshare, Svartidauð, Vorastreal, Blood Feud, Disintegrate, Atrum, Finnþálkn, Darknote and IX Dimension

- **Hressó**  
*Austurstræti 20*  
Sat. 01.12. Troubadour Tryggvi Vilmundar / DJ Maggi  
Fri. 07.12. Pub-lic / DJ Maggi  
Sat. 08.12. Troubadours Alexander and Örvar / DJ Maggi  
Fri. 14.12. Menn ársins concert followed by DJ Bjarni  
Sat. 15.12. Bacon Live Support Unit concert also featuring The Way Down and Naflakusk followed by DJ Maggi  
Fri. 21.12. Pub-lic / DJ Maggi  
Sat. 22.12. Troubadours Alexander and Örvar / DJ Maggi  
Sun. 23.12. Krummafótur jazz concert followed by jazz band Tepokinn  
Wed. 26.12. DJ Johnny  
Fri. 28.12. Dalton / DJ Johnny  
Sat. 29.12. Tepokinn / DJ Johnny  
Mon. 31.12. (New Years Eve) DJ Maggi  
Tue. 1.1 Troubadours Alexander and Örvar / DJ Maggi
- **Kaffibarinn**  
*Bergstaðastræti 1*  
Fri. 07.12. DJ Terrordisco  
Sat. 08.12. DJ Magic  
Thu. 13.12. DJ Maggi Lego  
Sat. 15.12. DJ Árni Sveinsson  
Sat. 22.12. DJ Magic  
Thu. 27.12. DJ Biggo  
Fri. 28.12. DJ Maggi Lego  
Tue. 04.01. DJ Peter Parker  
Sat. 05.01. DJ Biggo
- **Kristskirkja church**  
*Hávallagata 16*  
Sun. 09.12. Polish carols by Halina Frackowiak. Free entrance
- **Laugardalshöll**  
*Engjavegur 8*  
Sat 08.12 Björgvin Halldórsson's Christmas Concert. Special guests include Bjarni Arason, Eyjólfur Kristjánsson, Friðrik Ómar, Helgi Björnsson, Ragnar Bjarnason, Stefán Hilmarsson, Svala Björgvinsdóttir and Sigga Beinteins. Tickets at www.midi.is  
Fri 04.01. Bubbi Morthens and The Reykjavík big band will perform in a New Year's Concert. Special guests include Garðar Thor Cortes and Ragnar



Art

## Living Art of the Harbor

On November 24, the Reykjavík harbour celebrated its 90th anniversary. On that occasion, the ASÍ Art Museum opened an exhibition containing art that relates to the port's history and the ships docked there for the past century.

Works include paintings from as early as 1900 to the present day by renowned artists such as Jóhannes Kjartal, Ólafur Elíasson and Dieter Roth. The paintings on display reflect the evolution and vibrant atmosphere of

the harbor for the past hundred years and document numerous significant moments in Reykjavík's history.

November 24 – December 31  
ASÍ Art Museum, Freyjugata 41

### Bjarnason

Sat 05.01. Bubbi Morthens and The Reykjavík big band will perform in a New Year's Concert. Special guests include Garðar Thor Cortes and Ragnar Bjarnason

■ **Nasa**  
by Austurvöllur

Sun. 23.12. Concert: Bubbi Morthens will perform in his annual Þorláksmessa concert

Fri. 07.12. Concert: Ljótu hálfvitarnir and Hvanndalsbræður.

Fri. 14.12. Concert: Megas og Senuþjófarnir

Sat. 15.12. Concert: Nýdönsk

Fri. 28.12. Flex Music presents: DJ Nick Warren. Further info on flex.is

Sat. 29.12. Gusgus concert; final concert in the "Forever" tour

Mon. 31.12. (New Year's Eve) The last in the series of NO-LIMIT nights, dedicated to the sound and style of the 90's. Featuring DJ's Kiki-Ow and Curver. For more information see www.midi.is

### ■ The Nordic House

Sturlugata 5

Sat. 08.12. Actress María Pálsdóttir will read Nordic Christmas stories

Sun. 9.12. Author and musician

Aðalsteinn Ásberg Sigurðsson will read from Nordic children's books in Icelandic and sing popular Christmas songs.

Sat. 15.12. Nes Kirkja's Children's Choir will sing Christmas songs. The Puppet Theatre will perform the Little Drummer boy under the supervision of Messíana Tómasdóttir.

### ■ Óliver

Laugavegur 20a

Fri. 07.12. DJ JBK

Sat. 08.12. DJ JBK

Wed 12.12. Cheesy Monitor Night

Thu. 13.12. Concert: Jagúar

Fri. 14.12. DJ Jói B

Sat. 15.12. DJ Jói

Thu. 20.12. Concert: Páll Óskar

Fri. 21.12. DJs Símon and Hlynur

Sat. 22.12. DJ Hlynur

Thu. 27.12. Concert: Benni Hemm Hemm

Fri. 28.12. DJs Símon and Daði

Sat. 29.12. DJ Daði

Mon. 31.12. New Year's Eve Party

### ■ Organ

Hafnarstræti 1-3

Fri. 07.12. Concert: Akron/Family (US).

Opening act: Hjaltalín. Tickets at www.midi.is

Wed. 12.12. Cocnert: Miná Rakastan

Sinua and The Way Down

Fri. 14.12. Barcode presents: DJ F.E.X

Sat. 15.12. Samtökin 78 Christmas

dance with DJ Páll Óskar

Thu. 20.12. Tim Ten Yen

Fri. 21.12. Concert: Mugison

Thu. 10.01 Concert: Singapore Sling

### ■ Prikið

Bankastræti 12

Fri. 07.12. Franz and Kristó followed by

DJ Jónas

Sat. 08.12. DJ Kvikindi

Thu. 13.12. DJ Gulli ósóma

Fri. 14.12. DJ Danni Delux vs. DJ

Kocoon

Sat. 15.12. DJ Anna brá

Wed. 19.12. DJ Maggi Egó

Thu. 20.12. DJ Anna brá

Fri. 21.12. Frískó followed by DJ Gunni

Stef

Sat. 22.12. DJ Rósa

Sun. 23.12. DJ Árni Sveins

Thu. 27.12. DJ Jói B

Fri. 28.12. DJs Robbi og Benni B-Ruff

play old-school Chronic classics

Sat. 29.12. DJ Gísli Galdur

### ■ Sirkus

Klapparstígur 30

Fri 07.12 DJ Nuno Lx

Sat. 08.12. DJ Lazer

Fri. 14.12. DJ Heimir

Sat. 15.12. DJ Maggi Legó

Wed 19.12. DJ Chuck

Thu. 20.12. DJ Maggi Legó

Fri. 21.12. DJ Thor

Sat. 22.12. DJ Árni Sveins

Sun. 23.12. Cocktail Vomit DJ-set

Wed. 26.12. DJ Maggi Legó + friends

Fri. 28.12. Sirkus DJ

Sat. 29.12. DJ Natalie and DJ Marie

Mon. 31.12. New Year's Eve Party

### ■ Thorvaldsen

Austurstræti 8-10

Thursdays in December: DJ Anna

Rakel and DJ Haukur.

On weekends: DJ Daddi "Diskó" and

DJ Hlynur

### ■ Tjarnarbíó

Tjarnargata 12

Wed. 19.12 Concert: Benny Crespo's

Gang

## Art

### ■ 101 Gallery

Hverfisgata 18

Thu.–Sat. 14–17 and by appointment

www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/

Nov 29 – Jan 3

Joint exhibition featuring Stephan

Stephensen, Rakel Gunnarsdóttir,

Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir, Guðmundur

Thoroddsen, Helgi Þórsson and Sara

Riel

### ■ 12 Tónar

Skólavörðustígur 15

Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-14/16

Until Dec 31

Pilgrims

Úlfur Karlsson exhibition. Intriguing

and unusual photographs taken in

Spain.

### ■ Artótek

Tryggvagata 15

Mon. 10–21, Tue.–Thu. 10–19, Fri.

11–19, Sat. and Sun. 13–17

www.sim.is/Index/Isenska/Artotek

Current exhibition:

Exhibition by Eva G. Sigurðardóttir

### ■ ASÍ Art Museum

Freyjugata 41

Tue.–Sun. 13–17

Free Entrance

Nov 24 – Dec 16

Living Art of the Harbor

An exhibition of art relating to the

Reykjavík Harbour. Includes works by

prominent artists such as Jóhannes

## 10 KÉSHILLA SHPIRTËRORE

1. Mendo pozitiv, është më e lehtë të mendosh pozitiv për gjithcka.
2. Ruaje atë që është më e shtrejtë për ju.
3. Vazhdo të mësosh për sa kohë që jeton.
4. Mëso nga gabimet e tua.
5. Lëvizja e përditshme, lehtëson gjendjen shpirtërore.
6. Mos e vështirso jetën tënde pa arsye.
7. Mundohu t' i kuptosh dhe t' i nxisësh të tjerët përreth teje.
8. Mos u dorëzo, mirëqenia në jetë është maraton.
9. Kërko dhe kultivoi aftësit e tua.
10. Vendos një kufi dhe lëre ëndrrën tënde të realizohet.

LYDHEILSUSTOD  
- 1010 heil

Geðrækt

## We don't serve foreigners...

because to us - nobody is foreign.

Only 45 min. drive from Reykjavík is Eyrarbakki, a beautiful village by the south coast, where foreigners have been feeling at home since the 9th century AD. So welcome to Rauða húsið, a restaurant that makes you feel at home.

Tel: (+354) 483-3330,  
Eyrarbakki - South coast

rauða húsið  
RESTAURANT Eyrarbakka



## CHANGE YOUR TV INTO ART!

alternative souvenir



IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS WITH THIS NEW DVD WITH ICELANDIC MOVING ART. GREAT FOR PARTIES OR A COZY NIGHT IN

WITH GREAT ICELANDIC SOUNDTRACK INCLUDING ÓLÖF ARNALDS, APPARAT ORGAN QUARTET AND JÓHANN JÓHANSSON

AVAILABLE FROM 12 TÓNAR, MÁL OG MENNING, KVK, HHSMEKKLEYSA, KRÓN KRÓN, NAKED APE AND OTHER GOOD STORES IN REYKJAVÍK

EYE LOVE  
co

tel. 552 5147 • WWW.EYELOVECO.COM • EYELOVECOMPANY@GMAIL.COM



## Upcoming concerts

- CHRISTMAS SPECIAL** SATURDAY, **DECEMBER 15TH** @ 14 & 17 PM  
 Conductor :: Gary Berkson  
 Dancers :: Students from the Iceland Ballet school  
 Pyotr Tchaikovsky :: The Nutcracker
- VIENNESE GALA**  
 THURSDAY, **JANUARY 3RD** @ 7:30 PM  
 FRIDAY, **JANUARY 4TH** @ 7:30 PM  
 SATURDAY, **JANUARY 5TH** @ 17 & 21 PM  
 Conductor :: Ernst Kovacic  
 Soloist :: Auður Gunnarsdóttir  
 Viennese Waltzes :: operetta arias etc.
- YOUNG SOLOISTS**  
 THURSDAY, **JANUARY 10TH** @ 7:30 PM  
 The winners of a young soloist competition perform with the orchestra
- SONGS OF LOVE AND HEARTBREAK**  
 THURSDAY, **JANUARY 17TH** @ 7:30 PM  
 Conductor :: Rumon Gamba  
 Soloist :: Rannveig Friða Bragadóttir  
 Gustav Mahler :: Rückert-Lieder  
 Ralph Vaughan-Williams :: Symphony nr. 5  
 Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson :: Bows of light
- MUSICAL DESCENDANTS**  
 THURSDAY, **JANUARY 31ST** @ 7:30 PM  
 Conductor :: John Neschling  
 Soloist :: Natasha Korsakova  
 Carmargo Guarnieri :: Abertura concertante  
 Johannes Brahms :: Violin Concerto op. 77  
 Sergei Rachmaninoff :: Symphony nr. 2, op. 27
- DARK DAYS OF MUSIC – A FESTIVAL OF NEW ICELANDIC MUSIC**  
 THURSDAY, **FEBRUARY 7TH** @ 7:30 PM  
 Conductor :: Roland Kluttig  
 Soloists :: Gunnar Guðbjörnsson and Ágúst Ólafsson  
 Atli Heimir Sveinsson :: Symphony nr. 3 - World Première  
 John Speight :: Symphony nr. 4 - World Première

TICKETS SOLD AT [WWW.SINFONIA.IS](http://WWW.SINFONIA.IS)  
 OR TEL. 545 2500

All concerts take place in Háskólabíó.



FL GROUP IS THE MAIN SPONSOR OF  
 THE ICELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



ICELAND SYMPHONY  
 ORCHESTRA  
[WWW.SINFONIA.IS](http://WWW.SINFONIA.IS)



Art

## Products of Photo-blogs Displayed

Entitled 'Flickr Era - Digital Horizons', the exhibition now on display at the Reykjavík Museum of Photography focuses on the immensely popular photo-community Flickr.com. The exhibition features more than 200 photos shot by 95 Icelandic professional and amateur photographers that all use the Flickr website as a tool to post and promote

their pictures. With the transformation of photographic methods in the new digital environment, the site and the community that it represents has flourished and many people claim that today's photography is to be found on Flickr, which hosts millions of photo-blogs from all around the world. The exhibition is divided into five popular

Flickr categories: Daily Life, Portraits, Black and White, Fashion and Music and Environment.

Dec 1 – Feb 17 2008

Reykjavík Museum of Photography,  
 Tryggvagata 15

## CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ICELAND



ÞJÓÐMINJASAFN ÍSLANDS  
 National Museum of Iceland



STARTS DECEMBER 9, 2 PM  
 THE YULETIDE LADS COME VISITING,  
 ONE EACH DAY, DECEMBER 12–24, 11 AM

DECEMBER 15 AND 22, 1 PM  
 TERRY GUNNELL: THE ICELANDIC YULE.  
 AN ILLUSTRATED PRESENTATION IN ENGLISH.

Open: 11–17 daily, except Mondays open 11–12  
 when the yuletide Lads come.

Suðurgata 41 - Tel. 530 2200 - [www.natmus.is](http://www.natmus.is)

## Attention Electrical Workers!

### Basic pay

For unskilled workers:

No less than 153.409 Ikr pr. Month – 885 Ikr. pr. hour in daytime,  
 1.521 Ikr. pr. hour in overtime.

For skilled worker:

No less than 194.805 Ikr pr. Month. – 1.124 Ikr. pr hour in  
 daytime, 1.946 Ikr pr. hour in overtime.

### Market wages

Unskilled Electrical worker:

1.000 – 1.200 Ikr. pr. hour for in daytime, 1.800 – 2.000 Ikr pr.  
 hour in overtime.

Skilled Electrical worker:

1.450 – 1.700 Ikr. pr. hour for in daytime, 2.100 – 2.500 Ikr pr.  
 hour in overtime.

For more information, Contact  
 Rafiðnaðarsamband Íslands  
 Stórhöfða 31 - 112 Reykjavík  
 Tel. 580 5200 Fax 580 5220

rsi@rafis.is  
[www.rafis.is](http://www.rafis.is)



Kjarval, Ólafur Elíasson and Dieter  
 Roth.

The museum will be closed for repairs  
 from December 16 to March 8 2008.

### ■ Auga fyrir Auga

Hverfisgata 35

Open Thu.–Fri. 15–19, Sat.–Sun. 14–17

### ■ Café Mokka

Skólavörðustígur 3a

Open daily from 9-18:30

Current exhibition:

Ukrainian Reality

Pétur Geir Óskarsson's photography  
 exhibition features black and white  
 photos from the Ukrainian coal mining  
 city Krasnyi Luch.

### ■ The Einar Jónsson Museum

Eiríksgrata

Tue.–Sun. 14–17

[www.skulptur.is](http://www.skulptur.is)

Permanent exhibition:

The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson

### ■ The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15

Open daily 11–17

[www.thjodmenning.is](http://www.thjodmenning.is)

Permanent exhibitions:

Medieval Manuscripts; The National

Museum – as it was; The Library

Room; The Road to Zion; Berlin

Excursion

Current exhibitions:

Surtsey – Genesis

The exhibition traces the emergence

and evolution of the island Surtsey

until the present day and predicts

its geographical and ecological

development over the next 120 years.

The Nation and Nature

A nature film by filmmaker Páll

Steingrímsson

### ■ Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21

Opening Hours: Fri. and Sat. 18–20

[www.this.is/birta](http://www.this.is/birta)

### ■ Fotografi

Skólavörðustígur 4a

[www.fotografi.is](http://www.fotografi.is)

### ■ Gallery 100<sup>o</sup>

Bæjarháls 1

[www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/](http://www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/)

Open weekdays from 08:30 – 16:00

Oct 20 – Jan 15 2008

Cube

Project of media artists Holger Mader

and Alexander Stublic and architect

Heike Wiermann

### ■ Gallery Art - Iceland

Skólavörðustígur 1a

[www.art-iceland.com](http://www.art-iceland.com)

Current exhibition:

Biðhetjur-Biðenglar

Bergur Thorberg exhibition

### ■ Gallery Ágúst

Baldursgata 12

Wed.–Sat. 12–17

[www.galleriagust.is](http://www.galleriagust.is)

Nov 17 – Dec 29

Magnea Asmundsdóttir's solo

exhibition

Dec 20

Late Night Opening.

The gallery will be open long into

the dark evening with a program of

artist talk and other events. See [www.galleriagust.is](http://www.galleriagust.is) for information

### ■ Gallery Fold

Rauðarárstígur 14–16

Mon.–Fri. 10–18

Sat. 11–16

Sun. 14–16

[www.myndlist.is](http://www.myndlist.is)

### ■ Gallery Gel

Hverfisgata 37

Mon.–Fri. 13–18

Sat. 11–16

Sun. 14–16

[www.myspace.com/gallerigel](http://www.myspace.com/gallerigel)

### ■ Gallery Turpentine

Ingólfsstræti 5

Tue.–Fri. 12–18

Sat. 11–16

[www.turpentine.is](http://www.turpentine.is)

Nov 30 – Dec 15

Paintings by Kristín Gunnlaugsdóttir

### ■ Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Gerðuberg 3–5

Mon.–Thu. 11–17

Wed. 11–21

Thu.–Fri. 11–17

Sat.–Sun. 13–16

[www.gerduberg.is](http://www.gerduberg.is)

### ■ Hitt Húsið

Pósthússtræti 3–5

[www.hithusid.is](http://www.hithusid.is)

Dec 14 and Dec 21

Christmas Bazaar

### ■ i8 Gallery

Klapparstígur 33

Tue.–Fri. 11–17

Sat. 13–17 and by appointment

[www.i8.is](http://www.i8.is)

Nov 8 – Dec 13

Installations by Ragna Róbertsdóttir

### ■ Living Art Museum

Laugavegur 26

Wed., Fri.–Sun. 13–17

Thu. 13–22

[www.nylo.is](http://www.nylo.is)

Nov 24 – Dec 23

For the Common Good

Olga Bergmann and Valgerður

Guðlaugsdóttir exhibition

### ■ The Lost Horse Gallery

Skólastræti 1

[www.this.is/subaqua/losthorse.html](http://www.this.is/subaqua/losthorse.html)

Dec 1 - Dec 18

Marguerite Keyes and Scott Alario.

Stories told through sculptural

reliquaries

Dec 8

Publishing Party

Poetry and comic books about 'The

Adventures of The Sick Girl'. The

opening will feature reading and

concerts. Starts at 20:00

Dec 22

Christmas Show

Kira Kira sound installation, concerts

with Cocktail Vomit, Christmas tree

sale, hot cocoa and wine

### ■ The National Film Archive of Iceland

Hvaleyrarbraut 13

[www.kvikmyndasafn.is](http://www.kvikmyndasafn.is)

The National Film Archive of Iceland

screens old movie classics and



Art

## Pilgrims at 12 Tónar

From time to time, the 12 Tónar record shop on Skólavörðustígur plays host to intriguing exhibitions by up-and-coming local talents. The newest addition to the long list of promotions is young photographer Úlfur Karlsson who recently opened a very special photo

exhibition inside the shop. Entitled 'Pilgrims,' all the images displayed were shot in Spain this year with a Chinese Holga camera, a cheap film toy camera that takes very special type of photos and has become popular among photographers. During one of those many

downtown strolls its ideal to drop by, explore some art, browse through the record selection and buy some Christmas presents in the meantime. The exhibition is open until December 31.

12 Tónar, Skólavörðustígur 15

masterpieces twice a week for 500 ISK per ticket.

Dec 8

Ingmar Bergman's 'Viskingar och rop'

### ■ The National Gallery of Iceland

Friðirkjuvegur

Tue.–Sun. 11–17

Free Entrance

[www.listasafn.is](http://www.listasafn.is)

Nov 2 – Feb 10 2008

Kristján Davíðsson exhibition

Nov 2 – Feb 10 2008

Works from the collection of Markús Ívarsson

### ■ The National Museum

Suðurgata 41

Open daily 10–17

[natmus.is/](http://natmus.is/)

Permanent exhibition:

The Making of a Nation

Sep 9–Jan 27

Extraordinary Child

Photographs by Mary Ellen Mark and Ívar Brynhólfsson, artwork by students in Öskjuhlíðaskóli and Safamýrarskóli, and a documentary by filmmaker Martin Bell.

Dec 15 and Dec 22

The Icelandic Yule:

An illustrated presentation in English reviewing the beliefs and traditions of Icelandic Christmas past and present, from pagan gods to practical joking Christmas Lads.

Presenter: Terry Gunnell, Head of Folkloristics at the University of Iceland. Starts at 13:00

Dec 9

Opening of the National Museum's Christmas program. The trolls Grýla and Leppalúði will visit to tell people about their sons, the Icelandic "Santas". Starts at 14:00

Dec 12 – Dec 24

The Icelandic "Santas" will visit the National Museum on the day they travel into town to give children gifts and will be eager to tell children a

little something about themselves.

Starts at 11:00

### ■ The Nordic House

Sturlugata 5

Tue.–Sun. 12–17

[www.nordice.is/](http://www.nordice.is/)

Oct 27 – Nov 25

Mementi

Photographs by Ove Aalo

### ■ The Numismatic Museum

Kalkofnsvegur 1

Open Mon.–Fri. 13:30–15:30.

Free admission.

Permanent exhibition:

The Central Bank of Iceland and the National Museum of Iceland jointly operate a numismatic collection consisting of Icelandic notes and coins.

### ■ Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

Aðalstræti 16

Open daily 10–17

Permanent exhibition:

The Settlement Exhibition

### ■ Reykjavík Art Museum

– Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

Sigtún

Open daily 10–16

Admission ticket is valid for three days in all three museums.

Free entrance every Thursday.

[www.listasafnreykjavikur.is](http://www.listasafnreykjavikur.is)

Mar 31–Dec 31

Folk Tales

An exhibition of works by Icelandic draughtsmen who took on the task of illustrating folk tales from the oral tradition.

Apr 2–May 31

The Shape of Line

A new retrospective of the works by Ásmundur Sveinsson. The exhibition focuses on abstract works from 1945 onwards.

### ■ Reykjavík Art Museum

– Hafnarhús

Tryggvagata 17

Open daily 10–17

Nov 2 – Jan 27 2008

Hreinn Friðfinnsson exhibition.

Friðfinnsson's practice encompasses photography and drawing as well as sculptures and installations. His works are linked by a common sensibility and lightness of touch.

Nov 8 – Dec 31

Touching the Membrane

Margrét H. Blöndal exhibition.

Aug 31–Dec 31

The Erró Collection

Paintings by Erró

Nov 2 – Jan 6 2008

D Gallery

Karlotta Blöndal exhibition

Jan 10 – Mar 2008

The Golden Plover has Arrived by Steingrímur Eyfjörð. This installation was Iceland's contribution to the Venice Biennial in 2007.

Jan 10 – Mar 2

D7

Ingi Rafn Steinarrsson

### ■ Reykjavík Art Museum

– Kjarvalsstaðir

Flókagata

Open Daily 10–17

Sep 8–Dec 31

Architecture at Eye Level

Paintings by Eggert Pétursson, an Icelandic artist famed for his meticulous depictions of flowers.

Nov 17 – Jan 13 2008

Blonde Miss World 1951

Paintings by Birgir Snæbjörn Birgisson. He has painted portraits of Miss World winning contestants from 1951 onwards.

Sep 15–Dec 31

Jóhannes S. Kjarval – Key Works

Paintings by Jóhannes S. Kjarval

Oct 20 – Jan 13 2008

Meditation on Furniture

Works of architect and designer Óli Jóhann Ásmundsson

### ■ Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Grandagarður 8

Open Tue.–Sun. 11–17

"You haven't been in Iceland  
if you haven't been to us"  
Don't miss it!

Viking feasts every night  
– live entertainment

- Hotel
- Restaurants
- Souvenirs



For booking and  
further information:

Tel.: +354 565-1213

[www.vikingvillage.is](http://www.vikingvillage.is)

[vikings@vikingvillage.is](mailto:vikings@vikingvillage.is)

Strandgata 55 Hafnarfjörður

Fjörúkráin

## The Great Wall of China

Vesturgata 6-8

Tel: 552-1900

Fax: 552-9988

[www.greatwall.is](http://www.greatwall.is)

Also Available for Banquettes



12 course buffet  
from monday - friday, 11:30 - 14:00  
only 1.450 ISK

Menu Special Every day  
3 Course Meal for two persons  
only 2.500 ISK each

### Meal 1:

Springrolls  
Deepfried fish  
in s'n's sauce  
Almond Chicken  
Fried Noodles

### Meal 2:

Hot n' sour soup  
Pork w onion  
s'n's King Prawn  
Fried Noodles

### Meal 3:

Chicken Satay  
Fried Beef with  
Sacha sauce  
Mixed Meat Dish  
Fried Noodles



Uncle Tom's Cabin

Laugavegur 2



Espresso, Cappuccino, Café Latte, Soya Latte, Tea and Organic Tea



Coffee in French Press, Take Away Coffee



Real hot Chocolate



Various light meals, sandwiches and more

Dj playing on weekends and dancing  
Open until 5:30 on weekends

# Icelandic Art

...  
The Essence of a Nation



## Art Gallery Fold

offers the country's largest selection of contemporary Icelandic art

Rauðarásstígur 14, near Hlemmur bus station, tel. 551 0400  
Kringlan Shopping Mall, tel. 568 0400 · www.myndlist.is

LISTMUNASALA  
**fold**



**mikli**

Laugavegur 56 • sími 551 7600  
www.mikli.is



HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA FRIENDS OF THE ARTS SOCIETY - 26<sup>TH</sup> SEASON

# Hallgrímskirkja Christmas Festival

DECEMBER 2007

## Dec 6th – Thursday

8 PM: REYKJAVÍK BOYS' CHOIR OF HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA'S CHRISTMAS CONCERT  
Gunnar Guðbjörnsson tenor, Members of the Reykjavík Male Choir perform with the choir. Organist: Lenka Mátéová. Conductor: Friðrik S. Kristinsson. Various Christmas Music.  
Admission: 1.500 ISK



REYKJAVÍK BOYS' CHOIR OF HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA

## Dec 8th – Saturday

12 Noon – 5 PM: CAROLS AND ORGAN MUSIC AT ADVENT  
*The Klais Organ 15 years anniversary*  
Number of choirs and organists perform Advent and Christmas Music for five hours with the Klais organ and the audience joins in the singing!  
Free entry, donations for the Church Aid accepted.  
Café in the South Hall is run by the Hallgrímskirkja Friends of the Arts Society.



THE KLAIS ORGAN

## Dec 9th – Sunday

5 PM: BACH AND CHRISTMAS  
Organist Björn Steinar Sólbergsson and the outstanding Schola cantorum chamber choir sing and play Christmas Music by Johann Sebastian Bach.  
Conductor: Hörður Áskelsson.  
Admission: 2.000 ISK



HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA MOTET CHOIR

## Dec 31st - New Years Eve

5 PM: FESTIVE SOUNDS AT NEW YEARS EVE  
Two Trumpets and organ. Ásgeir H. Steingrímsson and Eiríkur Örn Pálsson trumpet together with Hörður Áskelsson organ play famous festive music, Bach: Toccata and Fuga in d-minor, Albinoni etc.  
Admission: 2.000 ISK



HÖRÐUR ÁSKELSSON



SCHOLA CANTORUM



HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA

BOX OFFICE IN  
HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA  
TEL: 510 1000

www.listvinafelag.is

Stjórn Reykjavíkurborg  
MENNINGAR- OG FERÐAMÁLARÁÐ

HALLGRÍMSKIRKJA

spron

SLITNIR

www.sjominjasafn.is

Current exhibition:

Trawlers in Iceland

■ **Reykjavík Museum (Árbæjarsafn)**

Kistuhylur 4

Open daily from 10–17

www.arbaejarsafn.is

Current exhibitions:

Building Techniques in Reykjavík

1840-1940; Disco and Punk – Different

cultures?; Christmas is Coming;

History of Reykjavík – from farm to

city; Memories of a House; Living and

Playing

Dec 9

Old Icelandic Christmas traditions,

Árbær Museum. From 13:00 to 17:00

■ **The Reykjavík Museum of**

**Photography**

Grófarhús, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor

Weekdays 12–19

Sat.–Sun. 13–17

Free entrance

www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is

Oct 25 – Dec 18

Photographs by Linda Völundardóttir

■ **Safn**

Laugavegur 37

Wed.–Fri. 14–18

Sat.–Sun. 14–17

Free entrance

www.safn.is

Nov 23 – Dec 31

Drawings I – XV

Kristján Guðmundsson exhibition

Eternal Eruption

Collaboration between artists Birgir

Andrússon and Ragna Róbertsdóttir

New Videoworks

The Spanish/Icelandic collective Lidia

Castro and Ólafur Ólafsson

■ **Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**

Laugarnestangi 70

Open Tue.–Sun. 14–17

Permanent exhibition:

Works of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson

■ **SMÁTÍMA**

Laugavegur 21 (basement)

Dec 7

Opening: Atli Már Oddsson and Undór

Egill Jónssons exhibition

Dec 14

Opening: Eva Ísleifsdóttir and Katrín

Inga exhibition

Dec 21

Opening: Anna Álfheiður

Brynjólfsdóttir and Brynja Björnsdóttir

exhibition

Dec 28

Opening: Logi Bjarnason and Hanna

Birna Geyrmundsdóttir exhibition

■ **Start Art / Art Shop**

Laugavegur 12b

www.startart.is

Current exhibition:

The Start Art Group

Exhibitions devoted to Icelandic design.

■ **The Icelandic Settlement Centre**

Brákarbraut 1–15, Borgarnes

Opening hours: May to Sep 10–20; Sep

to May 11–17.

www.landnam.is

Permanent exhibitions:

The Settlement of Iceland: The Saga of

Egill Skalla-Grímsson

■ **Suðsuðvestur**

Hafnargata 22, Keflavík

Thu.–Fri. 16–18

Sat.–Sun. 14–17

www.sudsudvestur.is

■ **Vatnasafn / Library of Water**

Bókhöðustígur 17, 340 Stykkishólmur

www.libraryofwater.is

Open daily from 11–17.

Permanent exhibition:

Roni Horn installation. She has

replaced stacks of books with glass

columns containing water gathered

from Iceland's glaciers and glacial

ivers.

■ **Sandgerði Museum**

Gerðavegur 1, Sandgerði.

Until Feb 7, 2008

Polar Adventures

Exhibition on the life and work of the

French polar explorer, scientist and

doctor Jean-Baptiste Charcot.

■ **Jónas Viðar Gallery**

Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri

Fri.–Sat. 13–18

www.jvs.is/jvgallery.htm

■ **Akureyri Art Museum**

Kaupvangsstræti 12, Akureyri

Tue.–Sun. 12–17

www listasafn.akureyri.is

Oct 20 – Dec 16

Taktföst tortíming / Rhythm Decay

Group exhibition with Baldvin

Ringsted Vignisson, Will Duke, Erica

Eyres, Jóna Hlíf Halldórsdóttir and

Lorna Macintyre. Curated by Francis

McKee

■ **DalÍ Gallery**

Brekkgata 9, Akureyri

Mon.–Sat. 14–18

www.daligallery.blogspot.com

■ **GalleriBOX**

Kaupvangstræti 10, Akureyri

www.galleribox.blogspot.com

Current exhibition:

Porbjörg Halldórsdóttir exhibition

■ **Skafffell**

Austurvegur 42, Seyðisfjörður

www.skafffell.is

Dec 1 – Dec 31

Books, Paper and Print



## Outside Reykjavík

■ **Hafnarborg**

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður

Mon.–Sun. 11–17

www.hafnarborg.is

Oct 13–Dec 22

Portrait Nu!

Portraits that were part of the 2006

Nordic portrait competition, The

Brewer J.C. Jacobsen's Portrait Award.

■ **Gljúfrasteinn**

– **Halldór Laxness museum**

270 Mosfellsbær

Open daily except Mondays from

10–17.

Dec 9

Book reading by: Hjálmar Sveinsson,

Sigurbjörg Prastardóttir, Kristín Marja

Baldursdóttir, Þórarinn Eldjárn and

Þórunn Erlu-Valdimarsdóttir

■ **Kópavogur Art Museum**

– **Gerðarsafn**

Hamraborg, Kópavogur

Open daily 11–17 except Mondays

www.gerdarsafn.is

■ **The Icelandic Museum**

of Design and Applied Art

Lyngás 7–9, 121 Garðabær

Opening hours: Tues.–Fri. 14–18; Sat.

and Sun. 16–18.

www.mudesa.org

## Films

■ **Hitman**

Smárabíó, Laugarásbíó, Regnboginn,

Borgarbíó, Sambíóin Keflavík

■ **Wedding Daze**

Smárabíó

■ **Balls of Fury**

Smárabíó

■ **Dan in Real Life**

Smárabíó, Regnboginn, Borgarbíó

■ **Heartbreak Kid**

Smárabíó

■ **American Gangster**

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin

Kringlan, Sambíóin Keflavík

■ **Beowulf**

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin

Kringlan, Sambíóin Keflavík, Sambíóin

Akureyri, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ **Sydney White**

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin

Kringlan, Sambíóin Akureyri

■ **30 Days of Night**

Sambíóin Álfabakki, Sambíóin

Akureyri, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ **Stardust**

Sambíóin Álfabakki

■ **Foreldrar**

Sambíóin Álfabakki

## Music

## Akron/Family Comes to Town

New York based experimental folk-pop quartet Akron/Family will conclude its European tour at Organ tonight, December 7. Renowned for its unforgettable and powerful live performances, the band released its fourth album, 'Love is Simple' in September this year, and has received very positive reviews from many respectable music critics. Open-

ing acts of the night is the American one-man-band Phosphorescent and local indie-pop nine-piece Hjaltalín. Tickets cost 1,700 ISK and can be bought at [www.midi.is](http://www.midi.is) and at the door.

December 7  
Organ, Hafnarstræti 1-3

■ **Michael Clayton**

Sambíóin Álfabakki

■ **Jesse James**

Sambíóin Álfabakki

■ **Across the Universe**

Háskólabíó

■ **Veðramót**

Háskólabíó

■ **Eastern Promises**

Háskólabíó, Sambíóin Selfoss

■ **Rendition**

Háskólabíó, Laugarásbíó, Borgarbíó

■ **Everyone's Hero**

Sambíóin Kringlan, Sambíóin Keflavík,

Sambíóin Akureyri

■ **Mr. Woodcock**

Laugarásbíó

■ **La Vie en Rose**

Regnboginn

■ **This is England**

Regnboginn

■ **Lions for Lambs**

Regnboginn

■ **Saw IV** (Dec 7)

■ **Butterfly on a Wheel** (Dec 7)

■ **Bee Movie** (Dec 7)

■ **Alvin and the Chipmunks** (Dec 14)

■ **Run, Fat Boy, Run** (Dec 14)

■ **Fred Clause** (Dec 14)

■ **Enchanted** (Dec 21)

■ **We Own the Night** (Dec 21)

■ **The Golden Compass** (Dec 26)

■ **I Am Legend** (Dec 28)

doors on Njálsgata 14. The store, run by six young people with a background in visual-arts, specializes in Icelandic and foreign artist books as well as books and magazines on art. Útúrdór will also house a gallery and feature exhibitions and events regularly. For the opening party, Benni Hemm Hemm will play some carefully selected tunes, but his new album, 'Eini í leyni' was released only days ago. Starts at 17:00.

■ **Historical walks around**

**Reykjavík**

Dec 8-9, Dec 15-16

The practical economics department of the University of Iceland and The Reykjavík Museum of Photography will host walks on the weekends of the December 8 to 9 and December 15 to 16. The walks will go through the Hlíðar, Laugarnes, Smábíúðarhverfi and Rauðarárholt neighbourhoods. During the walks, participants will be shown old photographs of the neighbourhoods and told about the neighbourhoods' history. The first walk on December 8 starts at 11:00 outside Þóróddsstaðir, Skógarhlíð 22, and on December 9 outside of the old Laugarnes School building on Reykjavegur.

■ **The National Museums**

**Christmas Program**

Dec 9 – Dec 24

On December 9 the National museum will begin its Christmas program which involves lots of fun Christmas activities for families, children and even adults. Grýla and Leppalúði, a troll couple, will visit the museum to tell people about their sons, the Icelandic jólasveinar ("santas"). The Icelandic santas will visit the museum as well, each on the day they come into town to give children gifts (or potatoes depending on the behaviour). For those a little bit older and more experienced in Santa Claus relationships there will also be interesting lectures about the traditions and history of the Icelandic Yule. For more information see [www.natmus.is](http://www.natmus.is)

■ **Jesus Christ Superstar**

Dec 28

The opening night of Vesturport's adaptation of the famous 70's rock-opera classic 'Jesus Christ Superstar'. With Krummi from Mínus and Jenni from Brain Police in the leading roles and a band consisting of veteran local rockers, this version is bound to be interesting. Directed by Björn Hlynur Haraldsson. A famous piece with a classic moral and music that will make it impossible to keep your feet still. For more information see [www.borgar-leikhus.is](http://www.borgar-leikhus.is)

■ **New Year's Eve Bonfires**

Dec 31

As in many other countries there is tradition for bonfires on New Year's Eve in Iceland. Some people come to warm themselves around the fire, some to meet their friends and neighbours and some just to see something burn. Now Reykjavík Excursions offers a chance for tourists to take part first hand in the traditional pyromania with a tour of the more popular bonfire spots. Bus and guidance is included. For more information see [www.re.is](http://www.re.is)

## Movie Theatres

■ **Regnboginn, Hverfisgata 54**

101 Reykjavík, Tel. 551-9000

■ **Háskólabíó, Hagatorg**

107 Reykjavík, Tel. 525-5400

■ **Laugarásbíó, Laugarás**

104 Reykjavík, Tel. 565-0118

■ **Smárábíó, Smáralind**

201 Kópavogur, Tel. 564-0000

■ **Sambíóin, Álfabakki 8**

109 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900

■ **Sambíóin, Kringlan 4-12**

103 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900

■ **Sambíóin Akureyri, Ráðhústorg**

600 Akureyri, Tel. 461-4666

■ **Nýja-Bíó, Hafnargata 33**

230 Reykjanesbær, Tel. 421-1170

■ **Selfossbíó, Eyrarvegur 2**

800 Selfoss, Tel. 482-3007

## Events

■ **Hellvar Bus Concert**

Dec 7

Icelandic band Hellvar have decided to celebrate the release of their new album 'Bat out of Hellvar' in a rather original and scenic way. On Friday, December 7 the band will begin their gig on a bus leaving Lækjatorg at 18:00 to drive around the city. The band states that they are very eco-friendly and love the idea of being able to use their performance as a way to lure people into the public transport system. For those who get easily car sick or are simply not excited by the idea of being driven through Reykjavík while listening to live music, the band will also be playing at Gaukurinn the following night.

■ **Opening of Útúrdúr Bookstore**

Dec 8

On December 8, a new bookstore/gallery called Útúrdúr will open its

## Christmas products



German quality chocolates



Konfektbúðin  
Kringlan Shopping Mall  
tel: 568-9966



German chocolate balls



Belgian Galler chocolate roses

## Various products available



Belgian chocolates with liqueur



## GOING HOME?

Sexually transmitted diseases  
are more common than you think.

Take care – with condoms!



LANDLÆKNISEMBÆTTIÐ  
Directorate of Health

Hemmi og naf

## glaumbar

oldest  
sports bar  
in town



Soccer  
Football  
Basketball  
Tennis  
Rugby

glaumbar - tryggvagötu 20 - tel: 552-6868  
[www.glaumbar.is](http://www.glaumbar.is)



NJÓÐLEIKHÚSIÐ

The National Theatre of Iceland

## For the Family

[www.leikhusid.is](http://www.leikhusid.is)



**The Message Pouch**  
A fairytale musical for the  
whole family by Þorvaldur  
Þorsteinsson and Jóhann G.  
Jóhannsson

**The Search for  
Christmas**  
An entertaining and  
enlightening show about the  
old and new Christmas  
traditions

**INDIAN MANGO**

**RESTAURANT**  
Press reviews:

.. Probably the best addition to Icelandic restaurant landscape

.. Great food, something new in Iceland, like never seen before

Fine dining Indian cuisine, hard to beat anywhere!!

**Frakkastigur 12,**  
tel: 551-7722  
open 17 til late  
www.indianmango.is

**Grand Rokk**  
Reykjavík

**Open every day from 11:00**

Smiðjustigur 6, downtown Reykjavík

**THE REYKJAVÍK GRAPE VINE**

**WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS**

News // Dining  
Travelling // Shopping

**1 EATING**

**Vor**  
Laugavegur 24

Vor's refreshing take on café-style dining is distinctive for its use of fresh ingredients and a health-conscious menu that emphasises French and Mediterranean cuisine. Fresh spring salad and carrot-ginger soup are excellent pick-me-ups on rainy days, and the coffee served is of the highest quality.

**2 Jómfrúin**  
Lækjargata 4

If your stomach is aching for some traditional Danish smørrebrød with all the proper toppings, Jómfrúin is the place to go. Reasonably priced hearty dishes and a variety of lunch specials, Danish style of course, should satisfy anyone looking for a nice meal. Add to that a large Danish beer and a shot of Akvavit, and you have a cocktail that can't fail to impress.

**3 Argentina Steakhouse**  
Barónstígur 11

True to its name, Argentina Steakhouse restaurant specialises in Argentinean steaks and has been cooking up juicy char-grilled steaks since 1989. The tender meat, excellent wines, generous portions and a selection of quality cognac, whiskey, liqueurs and cigars all add to its reputation as a place for fine dining in Reykjavík.

**4 Icelandic Fish Chips**  
Tryggvagata 8

This is not the regular fish'n'chips diner but a healthy restaurant using only organic vegetables, quality fish products and no wheat or white sugar in its kitchen. Deep-fried catch of the day served with oven baked potatoes and Skyronnes – a sauce made out of the fat-free milk product Skeyr and flavoured with all sorts of spices – on the side is 1350 ISK.

**5 Sægreifinn**  
Verbúð 8, Geirsgata

Located right next to the Reykjavík harbour, fish shop and restaurant Sægreifinn is truly like no other you'll experience in the country. The menu offers various fish dishes and a rich portion of the best lobster soup we've ever tasted. The good food and welcoming service make this place a must-try.

**6 Við tjörnina**  
Templarasund 3

One of Reykjavík's classics, with a view over the pond and a menu dominated by traditional Icelandic dishes, this restaurant is just as popular among tourists as it is among Reykjavík's residents. The reindeer steak with port-wine sauce or the pickled herring and fermented shark served with Icelandic schnapps both come highly recommended.

**7 Indian Mango**  
Frakkarstígur 12

Located on a quiet Laugavegur side street, Indian Mango has infused the Reykjavík restaurant scene with incredible delicacies originating in the rich food traditions of the Goa region in India, honed to perfection at Four Seasons during the owner's stint there as head chef. A local favourite, Indian Mango is known both for the quality of the food as well as the service.

**8 Hornið**  
Hafnarstræti 15

This casual family-friendly Italian-style corner restaurant has been operating at the same location since 1979 and has become a steadfast part of the Icelandic dining-out tradition. Most famous for its pizzas and the generously stuffed calzone, the wholesome menu boasts all sorts of high-quality pasta dishes, as well as vegetarian and meat dishes, all easily affordable.

**9 Sjávarkjallarinn**  
Aðalstræti 2

In an elegant setting, the Seafood Cellar chefs serve gourmet fusion-style dishes, where the emphasis is not only on the ocean's delights, but all sorts of tempting Asian-inspired dishes. The most fun is to order the exotic menu – an array of courses carefully selected by the chef – to share with your dining companions.

**10 Hamborgarabúllan**  
Geirsgata 1

Frequently lauded by Iceland's hamburger aficionados as the best place to get a real hamburger in Reykjavík, 'Búllan' does indeed serve up some extra-tasty burgers that are sure to take the edge off any hangover. What makes it so good is hard to say, but liberal helpings of rare beef and the old-school basket you eat from contribute a lot to the experience.

**11 Sushibarinn**  
Laugavegur 2

The Sushi Bar on Laugavegur has fast become the talk of the town among Reykjavík sushi-lovers, and for good reason as their rolls are among the best in the city. The whole atmosphere inside the small bar is a good blend of oriental tradition with the somewhat more familiar settings of the West.

**12 Great Wall Restaurant**  
Vesturgata 6-8

This newly opened addition to the Reykjavík Chinese palate offers great service and a staggering 100-plus traditional Canton, Szechuan and Peking dishes, as well as a weekday lunch buffet. Specialties include the duck and the "magic hot plate."

**13 Garðurinn**  
Klapparstígur 37

Ecstasy's Heart Garden, as Garðurinn is called in English, is a small, simple, friendly, family-operated vegetarian restaurant on Klapparstígur. The menu is no-nonsense, and consists of the ever-changing soup de jour and other daily specials. Open until 17:00, closed on Sundays.

**14 Á næstu grösom**  
Laugavegur 20B

Many locals claim this to be the best vegetarian restaurant in town offering a menu with plenty of vegan and vegetarian options. Ask for the day's special or simply try the selection of three different courses. The Indian theme on Fridays is usually a hit and the sugar free banana cake is just one of the highly tempting desserts.

**SPOT THIS: B5**

Bankastræti 5, 101 Reykjavík

By day, B5 is a chic little bistro with good food and a prime location on Laugavegur for people watching. By night, B5 is one of the most stylised bars in town, with a "whiskey room" resembling a buccaneer's jail, and another room reminiscent of a high-class Manhattan bar.



**15 DRINKING**

**Organ**  
Hafnarstræti 1-3

This stylish two-floor bar and concert venue presents a diverse range of concerts by local and international acts at least four times a week. The venue features established bands and young and emerging musicians. It can accommodate 300 people and has enough seats for weary concertgoers to rest between sets. Open until way past late on weekends.

**18 Sirkus**  
Klapparstígur 30

This packed haunt of artists, musicians, trendsters and other party-people oozes character and unique style. At Sirkus, a mishmash of good music and spirited crowds are key elements for a great party. Although the bar is small in size it probably offers the biggest late-night drinking fiestas you'll find downtown as well as some of the most intimate concerts.

**21 Hress**  
Austurstræti

A spacious neutral type of clientele where the menu specialties during the day and tab-beer are the highlight. It becomes a somewhat quiet weekend spot with a large amount of seats.

**16 Belly's**  
Hafnarstræti

A spacious pub, yet the complete opposite of bright and airy, Belly's deserves praise for having the cheapest bar-price around, selling a large beer for only 390 ISK. Attracting a mixture of students, sailors and anyone who doesn't want to drain the wallet, there are enough tables for everyone and TVs on every wall for all you sports enthusiasts out there.

**19 Café Cultura**  
Hverfisgata 18

Located inside the Intercultural Centre, Cultura is a restaurant/bar with a cosmopolitan feel, hosting an array of events and various theme nights such as Salsa lessons, tango nights and fusion parties. The menu features all sorts of international dishes like Thai soup, Spanish tapas, fajitas and falafel as well as bistro regulars such as sandwiches and salads.

**22 Vegamót**  
Vegamót

Nothing really beats a Vegamót with its dishes served until the fish of the day, dishes that attract usually packed during hours every day of the kitchen closes, Vegamót is a regular hangout for trekkers into a lively nightclub.

**17 Kaffibarinn**  
Bergstaðastræti 1

Kaffibarinn is a popular coffee place on weekdays, especially among students and downtown workers who like to enjoy a beer after a busy day. On weekends, it becomes a very lively destination as its two floors fill up with late-night souls. With DJs playing live sets from Wednesday to Saturday the party doesn't start winding down until early morning.

**20 Kaffi Amsterdam**  
Hafnarstræti 5

Kaffi Amsterdam is a 101 tavern which seems to have been in business forever, as some of their decorations bear witness to. Recently reinvented as a live venue, weekends see some of Reykjavík's most rockin' bands strap on their guitars for some... rockin'. The beer's also cheap and you will get exposed to some 'colourful' characters.

**23 Óliver**  
Laugavegur

If you like trendy parties like crazy to a lively glamour is all that counts. A spacious dance floor, nightclub for you. Fave that kind of conditioning, fine brunch served during the day. Óliver a recommended priced meals.

**tveir fiskar**

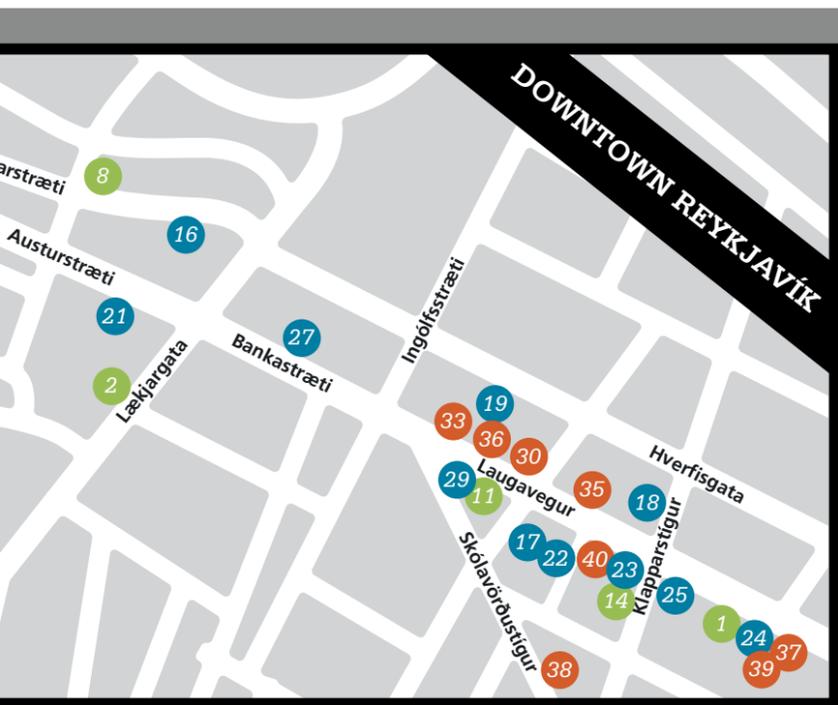
**DISCOVER ICELANDIC SEAFOOD**

At the Reykjavík harbour

Gissur Guðmundsson  
Owner of Tveir Fiskar  
President of the Nordic and Icelandic Chefs Association  
European Continental Director for World Association of Cooks Societies

Treat yourself to Reykjavík's richest blend of seafood by Our Award-Winning Chefs

**tveir fiskar**  
At the Reykjavík harbour, Geirsgata 9, 101 Reykjavík  
Tel. +354 511 3474 restaurant@restaurant.is, www.restaurant.is



### 30 SHOPPING

#### Cintamani Laugavegur 11

Cintamani stocks quality Icelandic outdoor-gear and travel equipment, guaranteed to keep the whole family nice and warm in any type of weather. Here you'll find almost everything needed for your trip across the country and beyond, and you can book an adventure excursion on the spot.

### 37 Laugavegur 28 Laugavegur 28

Four separate stores under one roof, second-hand clothing and accessories store Elvis, Rokk og Rósir and the Smekkleysa record store. In addition, the new store, Pop, supplies smart stuff for the home. The collective offers all kinds of unique clothing and ornaments.



### 31 Glamúr Laugavegur 41

Vintage clothing shop Glamúr stocks everything from second-hand boots, capes, Japanese kimonos and fur coats to 60's style party-dresses and big leather belts. A selection of glamorous necklaces and accessories will help sharpen the look. They just love vintage!

### 38 12 Tónar Skólavörðustígur 15

Walk into 12 Tónar on any day of the week and the friendly folk inside will sit you down, fix you a nice cup of coffee, and tear open jewel cases just to show you the latest in Icelandic music. A record label as well as a record store, this place features all the best local music and hosts concerts almost every Friday at 5 pm.



### 32 Húfur sem hlæja Skólavörðustígur 18

Loosely translated as 'Happy Smiling Headwear', the shop's owners have designed whacky hats and headwear since 1994 and stock a good selection of warm handmade products for women and children at the downtown store. Check out the elf hats if you want to look different.

### 39 Spúútnik Laugavegur 32

Who knows why this hip second-hand clothing shop is named after the first Russian spaceship? Spúútnik is the one of the best second-hand stores in the country, with great recycled designer clothes at a range of prices. Expect to see the cream of the bohemian crop shopping here.

The best Vegetarian Restaurant in the World?

**Ánæstu grösum**  
FIRST VEGETARIAN

Laugavegur 20b • Tel: (+354) 552 8410  
[anaestugrosum.is](http://anaestugrosum.is)

### 33 Álafoss Shop Laugavegur 1

The downtown outlet store for the Álafoss factory – the famous makers of traditional Icelandic wool sweaters. Here one can also find woollen mittens, gloves, caps, scarves and blankets as well as other woollen goods.

### 40 Mál og menning Laugavegur 18

Mál og Menning book store occupies three levels on Laugavegur. It sells stationary, children's games, foreign newspapers, Icelandic books, CDs, postcards and souvenirs. You'll find the always-bustling café and the foreign book section on the top floor.

The best STEAK HOUSE in town!

**Grillhusið**  
Tryggvagata  
Gott steakhús

Tryggvagata 20 - Tel: 562-3456  
[www.grillhusid.is](http://www.grillhusid.is)

### 34 The Viking Hafnarstræti 3

The large tourist shop The Viking sells all sorts of souvenirs and smart gift items to bring back home. The selection includes postcards, outdoor clothing, teddy bears, maps, books, woollen sweaters and plastic Viking helmets as well as Viking statues and shot glasses.

### 41 Friða Frænka Vesturgata 3

This small boutique is a treasure trove overflowing with antique furniture and items to perk up your apartment. In every corner of the shop, you'll find some unique items, including lamps, pillows, gorgeous 60's sofas, tables, and a selection of vintage jewellery.

Cozy atmosphere and delicious food in a beautiful environment

**GEYSIR**  
Bistro & Bar

Ádalstræti 2 - Tel: 517 4300  
[www.geysirbistrobar.is](http://www.geysirbistrobar.is)

### 35 Blue Lagoon Store Laugavegur 15

The geothermal seawater spa The Blue Lagoon is a world famous healing spot as the water is rich with silica and sulphur, which are extremely good for the skin. The natural skincare products made from the healing minerals are sold at the downtown Blue Lagoon shop.

### 42 Dogma Laugavegur 32

Dogma offers street clothing with interesting prints. Hooded sweaters and shirts made by both Icelandic and foreign designers can be found, including the "How do you like Iceland?" shirt and band shirts from groups such as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. You'll also find a Dogma stall in the Kringlan shopping mall.



### 24 Boston Laugavegur 28b

A place with no special theme, Hressó is a place where a variety of lunch and dinner options are available throughout the day and troubadours perform in the order of the night. What basic club durable for its size and

### 27 B5 Bankastræti 5

By day, B5 is a chic little bistro with good food and a prime location on Laugavegur for people watching. By night, B5 is one of the most stylised bars in town, with a "whiskey room" resembling a buccaneer's jail, and another room reminiscent of a high-class Manhattan bar.

### 25 Barinn Laugavegur 22

Barinn is quite a popular hangout among Reykjavik party scenesters. Its three floors and equally many bars become quite crowded on weekends where its mix of dancing downstairs and chatting upstairs makes for a good night out. Though mostly a DJ bar, Barinn occasionally hosts live gigs and is always a fun party place.

### 28 Gaukurinn Tryggvagata 22

Also known as Gaukur á stöng, this is the oldest standing bar in Iceland. Gaukurinn is considered to be one of the rowdiest rock clubs in Reykjavik. This is the place to enjoy live music from upcoming bands (at a high volume) and some of the cheapest beer prices in town.

### 36 Kisan Laugavegur 7

Kisan sells goods that you're unlikely to find elsewhere in Reykjavik. The selection is a mix of interesting items from around the world, such as high-street brands, children's clothing, household items, stationary, toys, DVDs and even books on Japanese street fashion.

### 43 Fígúra Skólavörðustígur 22a

The small designer shop Fígúra stocks a nice selection of fashionable Icelandic designer wear, from casual street-clothing to elegant party dresses. Fígúra is owned and run by six young designers in their early twenties who needed a place to sell their designs and promote other young designers in the meantime. The selection today features printed T-shirts, hair accessories, sweaters, leggings and more.

### 26 Glaumbar Tryggvagata 12

Glaumbar follows in the American sports bar tradition as it boasts a humongous satellite television that broadcasts matches from across the globe. This is the place to be on the night of any big game. Glaumbar is also notorious in town for its late closing hours and loud music.

### 29 Kofi Tómasar frænda Laugavegur 2

With its basement location, Kofi Tómasar Frænda (Uncle Tom's Cabin) has the feel of a tucked-away alley café in London. During the day, the café has a relaxed feel with easy access to Laugavegur and Skólavörðustígur. At night, it becomes a happening and diverse bar.



ORIGINAL INDIAN & PAKISTANI TASTE

**SHALIMAR**

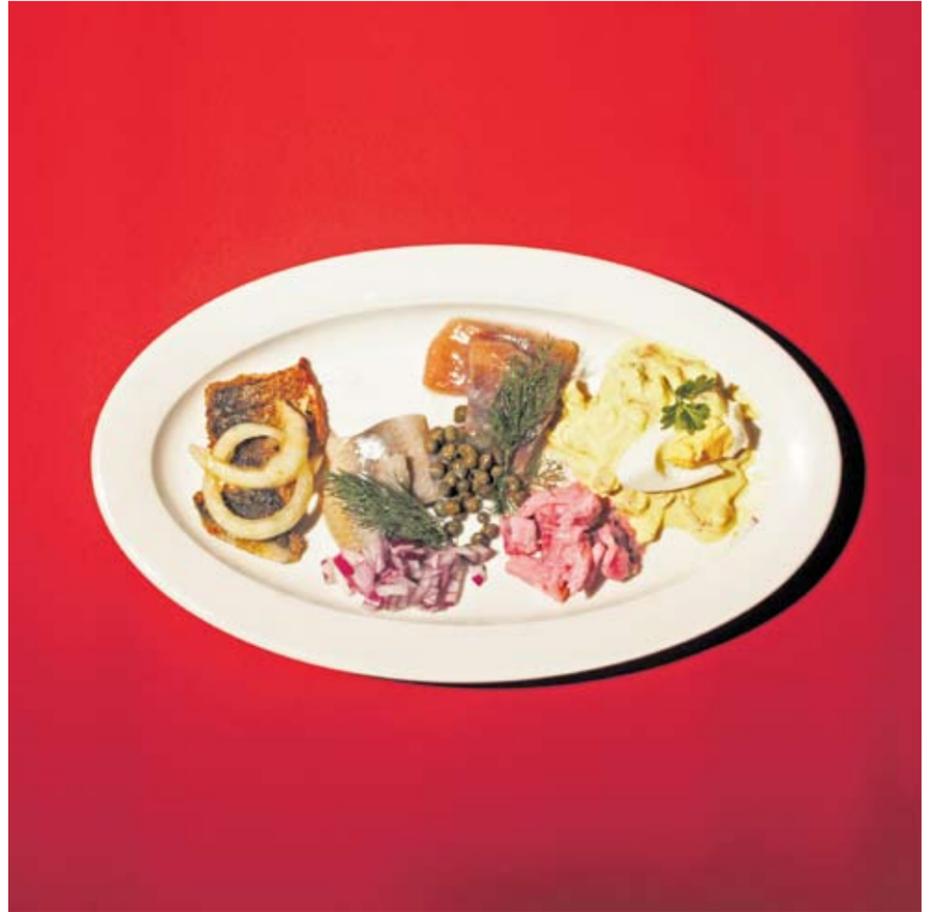
INDIAN LUNCH 950.-

INDIAN - PAKISTANI CUISINE

INDIAN DINNER 1150.-

AUSTURSTRÆTI 4, Tel. 551 0292 [www.shalimar.is](http://www.shalimar.is)





Photos by GAS

## Hotel Loftleiðir

In recent years it has become a widespread tradition for many Icelanders to attend a Christmas buffet at some point during the weeks before the holidays. Over the years Hotel Loftleiðir has earned a good reputation for its ambitious and elegant Danish buffet. Serving traditional Danish courses best enjoyed with a cold Tuborg Julebryg and live Christmas carols, it has become one of the most popular and best known buffets in town.

After a brief and informative tour around the buffet with our hosts, my date and I headed for the starters. Since this was a Danish-style buffet it was packed with different kinds of herring. The variety was such that should I attempt to tell you about all of them it would take up the whole article. Suffice it to say it offered all the classic forms of herring plus one I had never come across before; the "Gammel Dansk-Herring". For those of you that didn't know, Gammel Dansk is a Danish bitter, brewed with a large number of herbs and spices, similar to Jagermeister. The herring was covered in a jam made out of the schnapps which gave it a rather unexpected but very enjoyable taste. I also had the seafood terrine, which was new to me. I must admit I don't have a clue how it's made, but wow did it taste good! The smooth texture and salty yet sweet taste made it something to remember.

Next on my menu was sweet n' sour pork side, warm Danish liver paté with bacon and reindeer paté. All of it absolutely delicious.

For the main course I had the smoked duck served with potatoes au gratin and a very special beetroot and horseradish salad. The duck was excellent, not overcooked as so often happens, and the salad its perfect sidekick.

I wish I could say this article did the experience justice, but I can't, so I strongly recommend that you try it for yourselves and I promise you won't regret it.

**Address:**  
Hlíðarlótur  
101 Reykjavík  
Tel.: 444 4500

**Reviewed by**  
Svenrir Hjálmarsson

## Café Alvar A

The Nordic House is a cultural institution that serves to highlight Nordic cooperation and cultural inheritance. The house is designed by renowned Finnish architect Alvar Aalto and serves as a great testimony to the early days of modern Scandinavian architecture. Located near the University of Iceland, it offers one of the most exhilarating viewpoints of downtown Reykjavík, across the pond, towards the old Reykjavík village, with Hallgrímskirkja Church towering above.

Julefrokost, or Christmas Breakfast Buffet (or even smorgasbord) is a Scandinavian tradition that has firmly entered the Icelandic version of the festival routine in the last two decades or so. Traditionally, Julefrokost consists of several celebratory courses, although what exactly those are may depend on the country or region you are in. Considering the origin of the tradition, it is hard to imagine a more fitting place to enjoy Julefrokost than Café Alvar A, the Nordic House in-house restaurant/cafeteria.

I took my partner for a visit to Café Alvar A on December first, a perfect date to kick the Christmas spirit in gear, and really, there is no better way to do it than eating hangikjöt and laufabrauð (page b14 for further explanation.) As luck would have it, a Norwegian childrens' choir was singing Christmas carols in the auditorium at the time of our visit, setting the scene perfectly for the sneak-peak of Christmas we were about to enjoy.

Chef Mads Holm has put together a buffet that features the best traditional Christmas courses the Nordic countries have to offer. From the obligatory herring dishes I particularly enjoyed throughout the region to more localised courses like Swedish salted Christmas ham or Danish roasted pork steak and Norwegian gravlax (salmon cured in salt, sugar, and dill.) I would have liked to see the obligatory uppstúfur, (potatoes and white sauce) available with the hangikjöt meat dish, and roasted white bread available with the gravlax, but I am nit picking here, really. Overall, this was a very good experience. Even more positive is the price, but the Julefrokost at Café Alvar A comes at 2,800 ISK per head, most likely the best price you will find in town.

**Address:**  
The Nordic House  
Sturlugata 5  
101 Reykjavík  
Tel.: 551 7553

**Reviewed by**  
Sveinn Birkir Björnsson



LÆKJARGATA 2a IÐUHÚSINU  
101 REYKJAVÍK S | 5610562 OSUSHI.IS  
MUNIÐ LÍKA EFTIR SUSHI TAKEAWAY BÖKKUNUM !

by the sea  
and a delicious lobster  
at Fjöruborðid in Stokkseyri



At the seashore the giant lobster makes appointments with mermaids and landlubbers. He waves his large claws, attracting those desiring to be in the company of starfish and lumpfish.



< Only 45 minutes drive from Reykjavík

Eyrbraut 3 · 825 Stokkseyri · Iceland · tel. +354-483 1550  
fax. +354- 483 1545 · info@fjorubordid.is · www.fjorubordid.is

## CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE 2007

UPPLIFDU FERÐALAGIÐ MED OKKUR!  
EXPERIENCE ICELAND WITH US!

### DEPARTURES

FROM	TO	Sun 23/12	Mon 24/12	Tue 25/12	Wed 26/12	Sun 30/12	Mon 31/12	Tue 01/01
Reykjavík	Akureyri	15:00	--	--	15:00	15:00	--	17:00
Akureyri	Reykjavík	15:00	--	--	15:00	15:00	--	17:00
Akureyri	Egilsstaðir	12:00	--	--	12:00	12:00	--	--
Egilsstaðir	Akureyri	16:15	--	--	16:15	16:15	--	--
Reykjavík	Hellissandur	18:30	--	--	18:30	18:30	--	18:30
Hellissandur	Reykjavík	17:45	--	--	17:45	17:45	--	17:45
Reykjavík	Borgarnes	13:00;15:00;17:00	13:00	--	13:00;15:00;18:30	--	13:00	15:00;18:30
Borgarnes	Reykjavík	14:45;20:00	14:45	--	14:45;20:00	--	14:45	17:00
Reykjavík	Reykholar	13:00	--	--	--	13:00	--	--
Reykholar	Reykjavík	17:00	--	--	--	17:00	--	--
Reykjavík	Reykholt	17:00	--	--	--	17:00	--	--
Húsavík, Þórshöfn, Húsavík		--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Akureyri	Húsavík	15:00;20:15	13:00	--	15:00;20:15	--	13:00	--
Húsavík	Akureyri	13:00;18:30	11:00	--	13:00;18:30	--	11:00	--
Akureyri	Ólafsfjörður	14:00	--	--	--	--	10:00	--
Ólafsfjörður	Akureyri	10:00	--	--	--	--	08:00	--
Varmahlíð	Sauðárkrókur	16:25;19:55	--	--	16:25;19:55	16:25;19:55	--	18:25;21:55
Sauðárkrókur	Varmahlíð	15:45;19:15	--	--	15:45;19:15	15:45;19:15	--	17:45;21:15
Sauðárkrókur	Siglufjörður	16:30	--	--	16:30	--	--	16:30
Siglufjörður	Sauðárkrókur	18:30	--	--	18:30	16:30	--	16:30

The usual winter schedule is valid on weekdays not mentioned above.

Please see our website [trex.is](http://trex.is) or call 553 37 37 if in doubt or for further information.

Opening hours at Akureyri (Hafnarstræti 77):

Sunday 23. dec. 14:00 to 18:00  
Monday 24. dec. 10:00 til 12:00

Opening hours on days between Christmas and New Years Day are limited to arrival and departure times of schedule busses.

Opening hours at Reykjavík (Hesthals 10) :

Saturday 15. dec. 13:00 - 17:00  
Sunday 16. dec. 13:00 - 17:00

From 17. to 21 dec. - schedule and parcel services open until 19:00

Saturday 22. dec. 13:00 to 19:00  
Sunday 23. dec. 13:00 to 19:00

... TO YOUR ADVANTAGE!



[www.trex.is](http://www.trex.is)

Hóperðamiðstöðin  
Vesttravel



Hesthals 10, Reykjavík SÍMI/TEL 587 6000 & Hafnarstræti 77, Akureyri SÍMI/TEL 461 1106 FAX 567 4969 E-MAIL [info@trex.is](mailto:info@trex.is) URL [trex.is](http://trex.is)



Dining out?  
Check out our  
many food  
reviews online!

[WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS](http://WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS)

News // Culture // Dining // Travelling // Shopping // Articles // Interviews

Let's  
spend the night  
together!



Radisson SAS  
1919 HOTEL

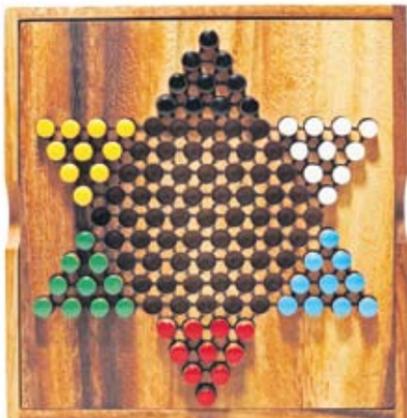
Pósthússtræti 2, 101 Reykjavík ICELAND Tel. +354 599 1000 [www.1919.reykjavik.radissonsas.com](http://www.1919.reykjavik.radissonsas.com)

Gaukur á stöng is proud to be the oldest pub in Iceland.  
Live music every fridays, saturdays and then some.



[www.myspace.com/gaukurastong](http://www.myspace.com/gaukurastong) \* Tryggvagata 22 \* 101 Reykjavík

Since 1983



**Clockwise from the top:**

**2,490 ISK**

Classic, classic, classic tournament quality poker chips. The fastest way to a man's heart.  
*Spilaverslun Magna, Laugavegur 15*

**22,900 ISK**

A silky red Afterwear nightgown by Signe Telstrup for silky Christmas nights.  
*Systur Lingerie Boutique, Laugavegur 70*

**3,900 ISK**

100% wool gentleman's cap. Practical and good looking. Suits every head-shape. So in right now.  
*Herrafataverslun Guðsteins Eyjólfssonar, Laugavegur 34*

**7,900 ISK**

A soft green sleep-mask to round out your Christmas colours. By Afterwear.  
*Systur Lingerie Boutique, Laugavegur 70*

**6,900 ISK**

Classic Burgundy Baron robe, made from 100% cotton by Bown of London. For your rich-mahogany-smelling apartment.  
*Herrafataverslun Guðsteins Eyjólfssonar, Laugavegur 34*

**2,490 ISK**

Chinese Checkers are a great gift for distracting your sugar-high kids after their hundredth cookie. Up to six players.  
*Spilaverslun Magna, Laugavegur 15*



**Pay Attention!**

## ***Systur Lingerie Boutique***

The newly opened Systur Lingerie Boutique on Laugavegur is proud to sell the most expensive, but most fabulous underwear in the country. Offering everything from silky panties, lacy bras and nightgowns to perfumes, robes and breast tassels, the store specializes in everything delicate and sensual you might be tempted to wear underneath or after the everyday.

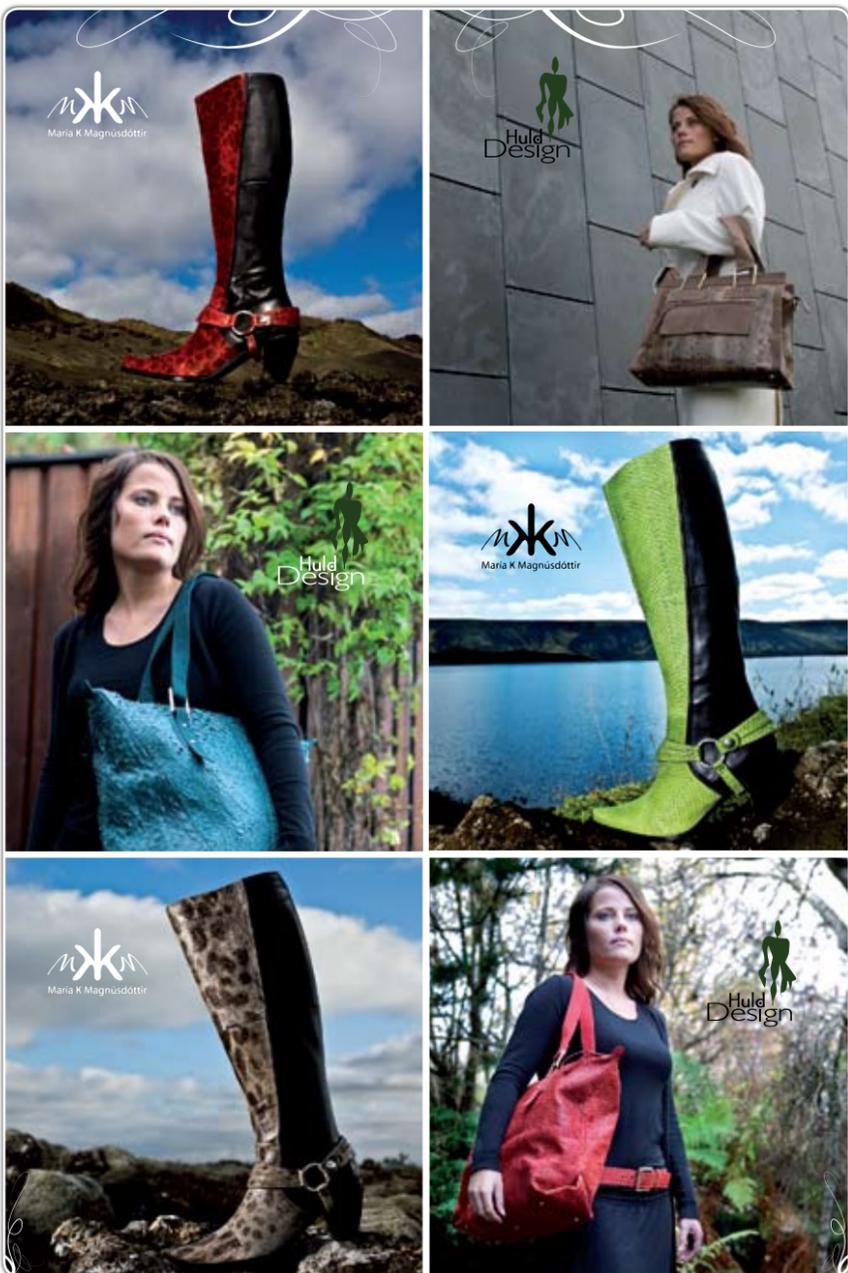
All the designs in the store are hand-made by top-notch English and Danish designers including Mimi Holiday, Fleur T, Myla, Buttress & Snatch and Afterwear among others.

Sisters Sigrún Edda and Ragnheiður Eð-

varösdóttir opened the beautifully renovated two-story space last October hoping to draw as much attention from women shoppers as from their husbands and boyfriends. The store is a haven for gift-shoppers this holiday season looking for classy, sexy gifts. Guaranteed successful intimates shopping.

Laugavegur 70, 101 Reykjavík





íslensk náttúra

**Embla**

íslensk hönnun

Laugavegi 68 | Sími 551 7015

# Inside Reykjavík

## The Grapevine Guide




The only guide that tells you the talk of the swimming pools, how to find the best cafes, how to recover from all night parties, an A to Z of Icelandic music and what "Viltu kaffi?" can really mean.

### Travel Guides Can Be Honest. Really



Available at your nearest bookstore

Discover the wonders of Iceland in a Berg car.

**BERG**  
car rental

Safety all the way!

Check for special offers at your hotel or guesthouse.



Free pickup at your hotel in the Reykjavík area.



Contact Info: Tel: +354 577 6050 - Fax: +354 567 9195 - Tangarhöfði 8 - [www.bergcar.is](http://www.bergcar.is) - [berg@bergcar.is](mailto:berg@bergcar.is)

# Icelandic Christmas Traditions

## Laufabrauð

The making of laufabrauð, or "leaf-bread," is usually a family-affair taking place early in December. People gather together to cut intricate patterns into this deep-fried, thin flatbread, which is then enjoyed as a tasty snack to accompany any Christmas event or meal.

## Hangikjöt

Hangikjöt – literally meaning "hung meat" – is smoked Icelandic lamb which takes its name from the old tradition of smoking food in order to preserve it by hanging it from the rafters of a smoking shed. Hangikjöt is a traditional Christmas meat, often served with potatoes in a sweet white sauce and pickled red cabbage. Mmmm...

## Church & Churchbells

The main Christmas celebration in Iceland begins promptly at 18:00 on Christmas Eve, December 24, in keeping with an old Catholic custom. The ringing of the church bells of Reykjavík's Lutheran Cathedral is broadcast on all major television and radio stations throughout the country, at which point everyone wishes each other a Merry Christmas, and sits down to eat.

## Malt & Appelsín

The ultimate Christmas drink, "Christmas Ale" is created by mixing an elusive ratio of Malt and Appelsín orange soda. Although you can now buy this drink premixed, but it's just as fun to mix it yourself, according to taste.

## The Yule Lads

Descended from mountain trolls and with a mother who eats children, Iceland's thirteen Santas are by far our most bad-ass Christmas legend. Every night for thirteen days leading up to Christmas, children put a shoe in the windowsill and the Santas come down from the mountains one by one, bringing treats each night. Naughty children receive a potato.

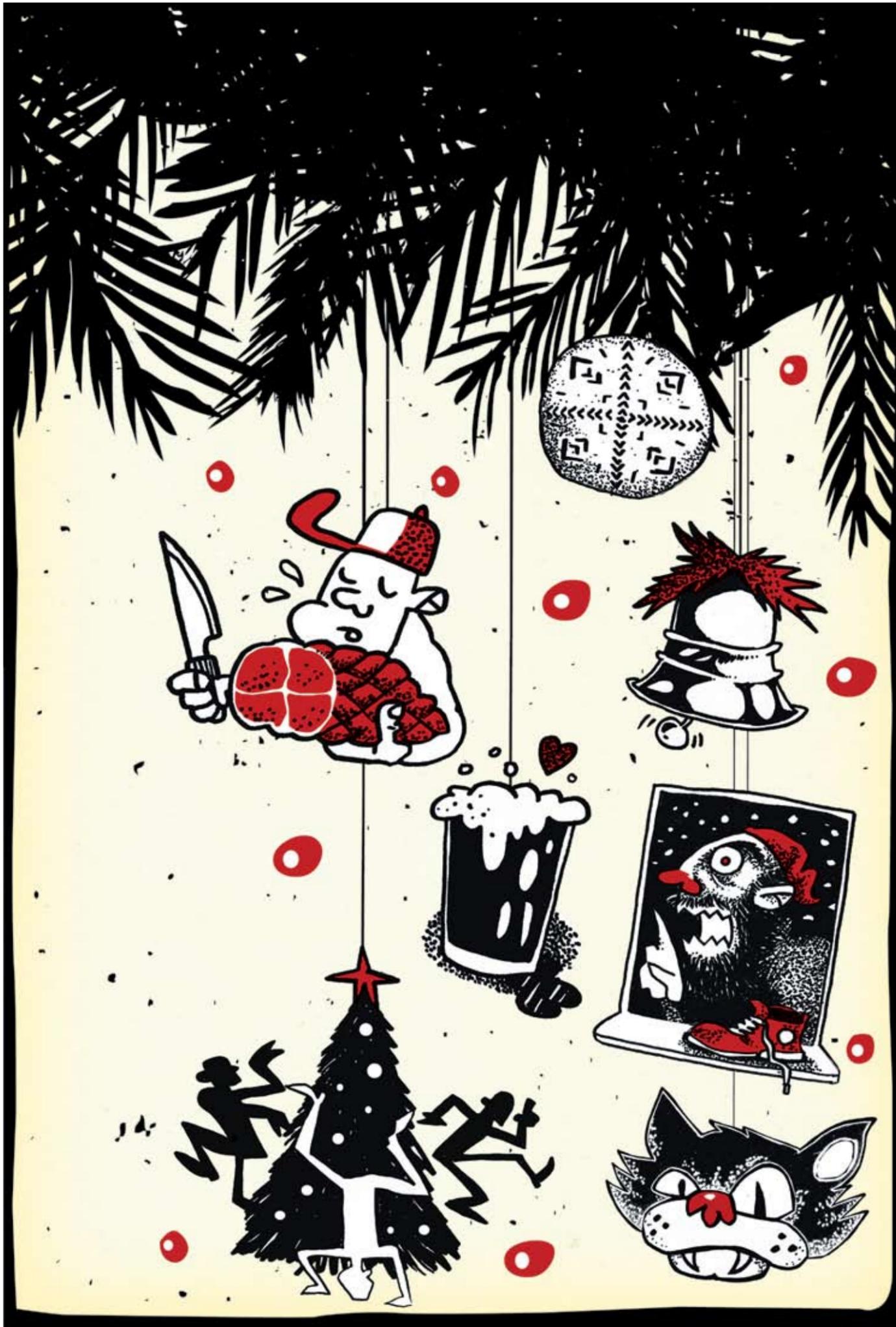
## Walking Around the Christmas Tree

Walking around the Christmas tree is still a widespread fad at Christmas dances in children's schools around the country, but the tradition is slowly dying out as a practice in homes. It involves holding hands around the tree and walking repeatedly in circles whilst singing Christmas carols. Hours of fun.

## The Christmas Cat

To avoid, as the saying goes, "going to the Christmas cat," children are required to receive at least one piece of new clothing in time for Christmas each year. Otherwise, the cat will eat them.

Text by Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir  
Illustration by Bobby Breidholt  
– www.krotborg.blogspot.com



# b5

---

## Bar - Bistro

Bankastræti 5 □ 101 Reykjavík □ b5@b5.is □ www.b5.is □ www.myspace.com/b5\_bar

What's on? [www.getrvk.com](http://www.getrvk.com)

b5 offers internet access and provides a laptop, free of charge

Opening hours:

Sun-Wed. 11:00 - 24:00  
Thursday 11:00 - 01:00  
Fri - Sat. 11:00 - 03:30



American artists Keyes and Alario exhibit  
at Gallery Lost Horse.  
Photo by GAS



## Back to the Beginning

**“The year that we were in Iceland we lived in a big old house with six of our friends that I had known my whole life. We wanted to hold on to this idea, friendship and culture, and how you can make close communities with a small group of people.”**

American artists Marguerite Keyes and Scott Alario recently opened an exhibition at Gallery Lost Horse on Skólastræti 1, a small side-street off Bankastræti. Entitled, ‘We Filled Our Pockets Up,’ the exhibition is their first collaborative exhibition in Iceland but the artists, who met in Boston while studying at the Massachusetts College of Art, both live in Reykjavík at the moment.

“We were here last summer visiting friends and had such a good time that we decided to come back. We returned by the end of this summer and will probably stay for about a year,” explains Marguerite. “We share a company [in Iceland] with two of our friends, called Moss Stories, and we wanted to be more part of it. Working abroad made it difficult,” Scott adds.

Moss Stories is a Reykjavík-based independent publishing company and record label established by Marguerite, Scott, Sigur Rós’ Jónsi and Alex Somers. The company’s first publication was Jónsi and Alex’s picture book, Riceboy Sleeps, released in 2006. “We will eventually release some music too. Alex and I are in a band [Parachutes] and Alex and Jónsi [who create art and music together under the name Riceboy Sleeps] are working on a release. Marguerite and I will also continue to make some more stuff and another book is scheduled. We will hopefully do more releases within the company and eventually extend it outside Iceland,” Scott explains.

### Inspired by Different Cultures

Scott and Marguerite’s exhibition at the Lost Horse gallery consists of small relics, paintings and drawings. People collecting food in the wilderness,

rowboats docked in a quiet creek and portraits of indigenous people are a few examples of the subjects. “We looked at a lot of different cultures like Romanian gypsies, Native Americans or the Sami people,” Scott says when explaining the idea behind the exhibition. “There is this photographer, named Edward Curtis, who documented the Native Americans a little over one hundred years ago. We looked at a lot of his photographs and got inspired to do drawings with a similar feeling.”

They go on to explain that they want to develop a new culture: “We had an idea for a collaborative piece last summer but we never got around doing anything. It was supposed to be focused on this culture we want to create. We wanted to show it through photographs and paintings but it was too big of an idea. But we kept thinking about it. This exhibition is kind of the beginning, the introduction,” Marguerite says. “Like a prologue to this community we eventually want to create and build in our minds,” Scott continues: “The year that we were in Iceland we lived in a big old house with six of our friends that I had known my whole life. We wanted to hold on to this idea, friendship and culture, and how you can make close communities with a small group of people. That’s kind of what it’s all about.”

### Ode to the Ancestors

“We wanted to make these really sacred objects that would tell the culture’s stories,” Scott explains. These stories are told through the pieces on display, the neatly cut relics and the drawings framed in small antique picture frames they’ve collected over time. These are objects they like to think people

would put in their pockets and bring to their new community. “We filled our pockets with things you can bring with you and things that you might think about bringing with you. A lot of it has to be mental but there are also these physical things you want to wrap up and keep in your pocket,” says Marguerite. Two items exhibited hold a sentimental value, and are the only two pieces not for sale. One is a tiny locket Marguerite has decorated and the other an old game box now used as a picture frame. These are items inherited from their great grandparents. “They kind of connect us to our own ancestors,” Scott says. “It’s like our thanks to the people who are the reason we’re here,” Marguerite adds.

While viewing the artworks, soothing ambient sounds by Riceboy Sleeps set the mood inside the gallery. “We asked [Jónsi and Alex] to have animal sounds and create something rhythmic. We wanted the music to give the exhibition this tribal or naturalistic feeling,” says Scott. And the atmosphere gets dreamlike. Their world is a peaceful one where nature plays a leading role, the total opposite of the stressful, modern city life. Asked if this is the culture they want to create they reply, “Yes definitely. Back to the beginning. Whether it’s after an apocalypse or before. Just living in the grass or something, eating berries.”

The exhibition is open until December 18. On Saturday, December 15 they plan to throw a special ‘Closing Reception’ from 17:00-20:00. Lost Horse gallery is open from 13:00 to 18:00 Tuesday to Sunday or by appointment via 849 4628.

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

**Breakfast  
special**



**Cappuccino + bagle + yoghurt = 650 kr.**

**roma** Rauðarárstígur 8

online store:  
[www.kimirecords.net](http://www.kimirecords.net)

kimi records introduces:

the records:



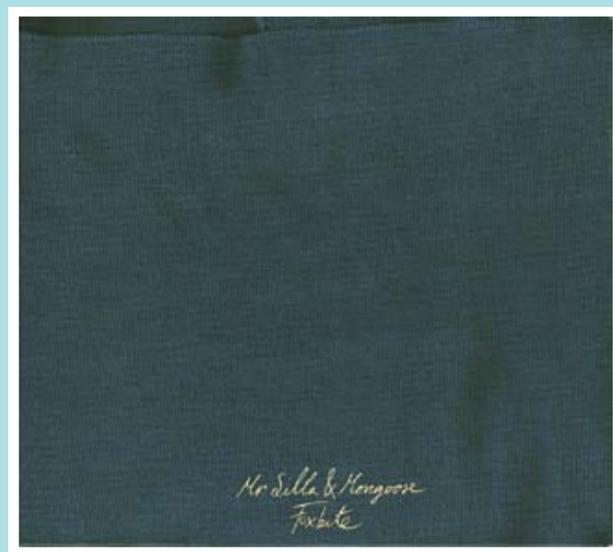
*hjaltalín - sleepdrunk seasons  
kimi records*



*hellvar - bat out of hellvar  
kimi records*

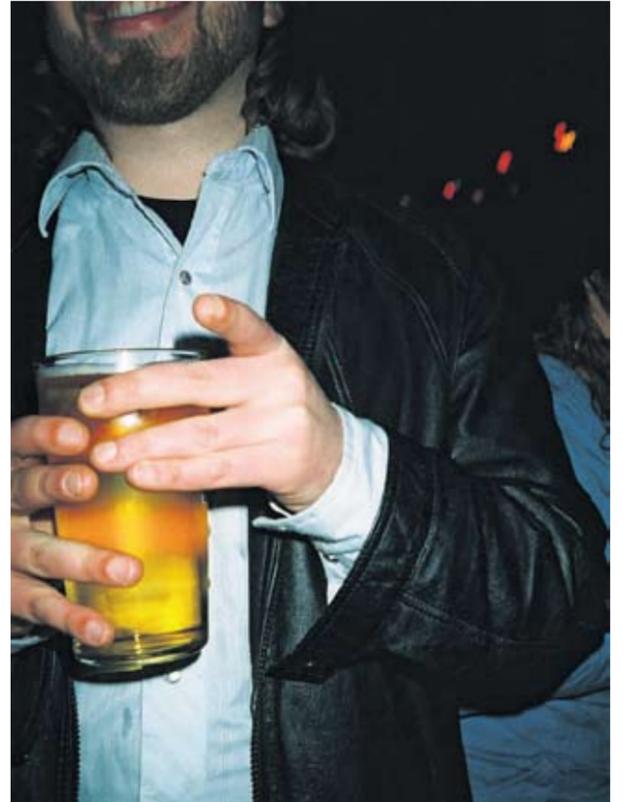
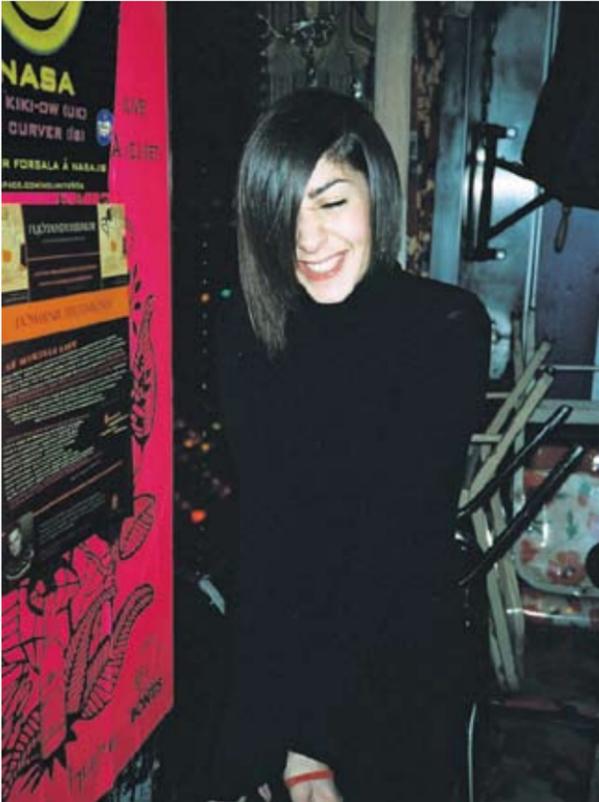


*benni hemm hemm - ein í leyni  
smákökurnar*



*mr. silla & mongoose - foxbite  
rafraf*

icelandic music available in a record store near you



Photos by Jói Kjartans – www.joi.is

while studying in Boston, ran her own club inside an old diner called Premia. Since 1990, the building on Klappartígur has been her second home and she has waited for years for the moment it would all come to an end.

"I started working there in 1990, but my first job after I moved back home was to design N1 bar. At that time, the decision had already been made to tear down the house," she says. Sigga goes on to explain that in the 90s, N1 bar was the hangout of the Icelandic supergroup the Sugarcubes and their friends. "Me and Einar Örn even owned the bar for three months and the Sugarcubes got their mail delivered there, it was that much of a home. Björk was a DJ, Magga Örnólfs and Sigtryggur Baldursson worked at the bar and Einar Örn managed the door," she adds.

On December 20, 2000, Sigga reclaimed Sirkus: "Stephanie, who ran the French wine bar, wanted to sell the business. Some business guys had offered her 20 million ISK for the place but she didn't feel good about it. One day, when we sat down for a drink she asked me: 'Sigga, don't you feel like this place is like your child? Isn't it sort of like we share this child together? I won't sell it to anyone but you.' And I bought Sirkus for 4 million ISK!"

#### Intimate Melodies and Rowdy Rock Shows

Ever since the Sugarcubes called the place home almost two decades ago, the importance of Sirkus for the Icelandic art and music scene has been significant.

"Musicians who grew up here still come running straight from the studio with a song they just recorded and ask if they can try out the new material at the bar," says Sigga, adding that although the venue only has room for a small audience, established bands come there to practice before going abroad. "Ghosdigital always play a show at Sirkus before they go on tour. They do this because they know they'll get honest feedback from the crowd."

Sirkus has hosted numerous unforgettable concerts that feature both local and foreign

bands. The entry is always free and concerts are rarely advertised. Big artists such as Petter and the Pix, Jimi Tenor and Kid Carpet have played some of their best shows at Sirkus, as have local acts such as Trabant, Singapore Sling and Benni Hemm Hemm. With his multi-membered brass-band, Benni played the packed venue with more charisma than seen elsewhere last Christmas. "Stereo Total were also insane. People literally hung from the ceiling," Sigga recalls. "Not to mention all the adorable Icelandic bands that have played here." There is no stage at Sirkus so the bands have to squeeze in the corner, which results in much more personal and intimate shows than other venues could ever offer.

"If you look at the place and think of it as a concert venue, the first thought would be, no way! But inside a vibrant place like Sirkus, anything is possible. When I look back, I see that the bar has meant a great deal to this town, particularly to the music scene," says Gabriela.

It's not just bands that are eager to play, legendary DJs from around the world flock to Sirkus to play the small venue when they are in town and veteran local DJs such as Maggi Lego, President Bongo, Árni Sveins, DJ Lazer and KGB are household names. The DJs share a similar view:

"There's something unique about playing at Sirkus. You somehow get away with anything. Everyone knows each other and people respect what the DJ is doing," says Hairdoctor's singer Jón Atli, aka DJ Lazer. "I remember when Sirkus was at its best, the DJs tried to break the 'chair-record', that is, how many people you could get up on the chairs and tables to dance. I remember that Maggi Lego and me were always competing. I think my record was 18."

DJ President Bongo of GusGus has played at huge clubs all over the world, he puts it simply when asked what makes Sirkus so special: "It's home". He continues: "It's such a tiny place. No matter how many people are inside, if you can get ten people on the dancefloor, you'll have a great time."

He has played Sirkus numerous times over,

but one incident sits foremost in his mind: "I remember one Saturday night when Germany had just won the World Cup. I was of course wearing the national team shirt and started the set by playing the German national anthem. After about one-and-a-half minutes a really pissed American stood in front of me. He was totally furious! I had asked Óttarr Proppé to fix me up with the song but didn't know that he gave me the extended version, the one used in Nazi Germany in the Second World War. Without knowing about it, I was playing some crazy Nazi version of the national anthem!"

#### The Final Round

One of Sirkus's many little secrets is the cosy and roomy garden that belongs to the lodge, and loosing that summerhangout is a gap that will be hard to fill. Railed off in the heart of the centre, the popular sunbathing spot has put more life to the downtown scene than most places around. The sunny spot has been a safe haven for years where people gather to chill out, play poker or backgammon and kids and dogs can run around freely. For the past five years, the outdoor Sirkus flea market has attracted a great mix of customers, the garden has been used for packed BBQ parties, played host to overcrowded rock concerts, (Minus on Culture Night 2006 are especially memorable) not to mention the world-famous Tom Selleck competition, where the toughest guys in town compete in an old-school beauty contest about who has the coolest moustache.

"The garden is like a friendly oasis. There's nothing really like it," Hildur says, and Sigga and Gabriela agree. "We have to remember, that a lively city centre isn't all about fancy buildings or shops stuffed with fashionable things. We can find that elsewhere. Those who travel to new countries look for a centre with a soul. That's what Sirkus and everything surrounding it is all about. If we talk about city planning, people need to think whether they want to have this kind of culture or not. And this doesn't only apply to Sirkus, but to all sorts of places facing demolition and reconstruction" Gabriela says.

The city of Reykjavík and the tourist industry as a whole have benefited incredibly from the vibrant art and music scene thriving inside places like Sirkus. No politician could deny that. A rapidly growing number of travellers visiting the country go where they hope to experience the creative vibe they read about and hear about from friends who have stumbled inside at some point. When discussing what will happen to Sirkus and all its history Sigga has a clear answer: "The bar itself should of course be moved to the Árbæjar-safn museum. It's a bar from the last century! All these kids, this generation that has conquered the world. It's important to treasure a part of their culture and where they came from". That's not such a crazy idea. A small Sirkus would undoubtedly be no less of a tourist attraction today than all the museum's old turf houses.

No one really knows what will happen to Sirkus but Sigga says she will serve the final round in the beginning of February. When asked about the next step she replies: "I will just play it by ear. Whatever happens, happens."

Until the last drop, Sirkus will have plenty to offer its customers. There will be concerts at least twice a week, costume parties are scheduled and numerous surprise celebrations for all those who want to party and play for one last time. Sigga tells me that the plan is furthermore to film all the concerts, release a DVD, and donate all the profits to building a school or a well in Africa. "We'll then keep the Sirkus sign and take it to Africa someday," she adds. Although Sirkus will surely be missed, Sigga isn't too worried. "There's no need. This kind of energy always finds its way," she concludes.

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

From left: Seabear and Evil Madness.  
Photos courtesy of Reykjavik To Foundation



## When Reykjavík Visits Rotterdam

**I refuse to miss Apparat Organ Quartet, so I walk and get lost. I stumble around the pier for twenty minutes before finding the venue halfway through Apparat's set. Immediately, the walk is worth it.**

It is cold, but serenely clear tonight. The atmosphere feels transparent, as if Rotterdam is opening up its sores to be assuaged by the healing music invading for the weekend for the Reykjavík 2 Rotterdam festival. It is also quiet, very quiet on the streets. Rotterdam rarely lights up on weeknights. A few degrees colder and this would easily feel like Reykjavik. The city feels like it is waiting for the music to wake up, or like the weather joined the bands for the trip. Either way, all is serene.

Latern/Venster, the night's venue, is quiet, so off to the bar for a few Belgian ales while waiting for the show to start. It is Mr. Silla and Mongoose, along with Hafdis Huld tonight. The louder acts are playing at the opposite end of town, a good twenty-minute walk away.

Forty minutes on and the lovely Silla and her musical companion, Mongoose, roll through an introspective and whimsical set of flowery pop tunes. Melodically little is afoot. The progressions are awash with silence, only awakened when Silla rouses the soft pokes of electronic samples, ukulele and keyboard with her voice. Songs built on airy, atmospheric huffs sequencers and programmed beats flick and flutter over enchanting vocals and simple, plaintive accompaniment. This is beautiful music, inherently Icelandic inasmuch as it is built upon a pathetic fallacy and forever influenced by that relationship. Yet, this is not transplanting me back to Iceland; I remain in Rotterdam. But Rotterdam feels much nicer now.

I have to leave Latern/Venster now. Reykjavik to Rotterdam is split between two venues and Apparat Organ Quartet is due to begin at Waterfront, the other venue. Splitting the festival makes little sense, as it ruins any festival ethos developed, but it is justified. The organizers split the genres, placing the mellower stuff at Latern/Venster and the harder stuff at the grittier, rough-around-the-edges Waterfront. I refuse to miss Apparat Organ Quartet, so I walk and get lost. I stumble around the pier for twenty minutes before finding the venue halfway through Apparat's set. Immediately, the walk is worth it. This band is fucking brilliant. On stage a nerd, made up of four keyboards and a drummer, is mastering every single old Nintendo theme, adding electronics and freaking out. Urgent blips and bleeps soar from this and that keyboard, buttressed by steady earfuls of trance, house and acid-jazz. 'Romantika' is

a progressive beast well worth the impending seizure, while 'Cruise Control' melts the walls, providing a perfect addendum to the performance at Latern/Venster. I can see why this music needs to be separated, as the bands would not share the same stage in Reykjavik either. Unfortunately, the losers of this scheduling conflict are Rass and Hafdis Huld, both artists I was looking forward to. Oh well, it is only Thursday and besides, it's late and the last train is leaving. 'Till tomorrow.

It is Friday night now and I am back to the awkwardness that permeates Rotterdam. It is more alive, but still odd. This city must be perfect for some, but I'm uncomfortable here. It feels too 'North-American'. Tall buildings steal the sunset, cars dominate bikes and everybody seems like they are in some perpetual, never-ending rush. So tonight, I will stay put. I'm going to remain at Latern/Venster, as it's much closer to Centraal Station. This time, the lounge dividing the concert space and the secondary venue – housing screenings of Sigur Rós' Heima – is packed. Getting a drink at the bar proves an ordeal. Last night the venue was half-empty, as if Iceland forgot it shipped a small army of musicians to the Netherlands for this. Tonight, however, both Icelanders and locals alike are out, sharing pints of Belgian ale alongside conversation. There is an aura of success afoot. Reykjavik to Rotterdam feels rooted, almost habitual tonight. The festival is turning a corner. In 2005, a similar event took place – a Scandinavian Music Festival of sorts. The event was a good idea, but financially it proved tough on the promoter. 2006 was spent regrouping and relocating to Reykjavik from Rotterdam, before finally returning back for another shot. Now the festival is burgeoning outwards, introducing the sights and sounds of Reykjavik throughout Europe. Copenhagen and Berlin are scheduled next year, and the conversation tilts towards discussing both. Being here is utterly rewarding. Everyone is a part of something – proof that life is beautiful when you travel and swap experiences. And good music is borderless.

Lost in Hildurness is opening up for Seabear tonight. Armed with a cello, a harp of sorts and a whole slew of samples and delay effects, Hildur embarks on crafting a melody of sorts within a cacophony of ambience, settling down twenty-minutes later to just her and the cello quivering away delicately to escape all the noise. The one song

she decides on is, again, a perplexing, weather-influenced adventure, but instead of searching for songs within the slop of sound, Hildur remained too content on achieving nothing, and whatever she tried to accomplish on stage suffers as a result. Too much ambience becomes just that, only ambience. There are no songs here. Everyone else loved it, though, so count me as the odd man out. Besides, one musical mulligan is permissible. Thankfully, Seabear rectifies the scenario with an embracing set of countrified folk and lo-fi pop set to violins, keyboards and yet more samples. The theme of quiet over loud continues, as the septet crafts a mass of songs soft enough to break under the weight of a paperback. It all sounds rather cute. Very, very cute. There is no angst whatsoever, but there need not be. Ever heard of anything proven to be too cute? Exactly. Again, there were schedule conflicts and subsequently, winners and losers. This time, Reykjavik! and Mammut lost. I heard both performances were loud. Go Figure. I also had to fly to London on Saturday, so I missed the final night, one headlined by múm and Rökuró. My friends gloated about being there.

This festival has left a lasting impression. Reykjavik to Rotterdam is not simply about the music, nor is it about showcasing, or at least trying to showcase Rotterdam. This was a cross-cultural exchange of hospitality, where one country lent an ear to another that wants nothing more than to scream from the rooftops. Icelandic music continues to expand geographically, as the roads Björk and Sigur Rós paved are weathering through an endless exodus of creativity. Reykjavik to Rotterdam just proves, once again, that the world is listening intently, despite the scene residing thousands of miles away. For a country so ridiculously isolated from everything else, Reykjavik to Rotterdam made the two cities feel like neighbours, as if they were just across the river from each other, bickering away like neighbours. I would have preferred the festival to be in Amsterdam, but the promoter, who now lives in Reykjavik, is originally from Rotterdam. He wins.

Text by Shain Shapiro

Looking for tickets  
to concerts in Iceland?



GET THEM ONLINE!

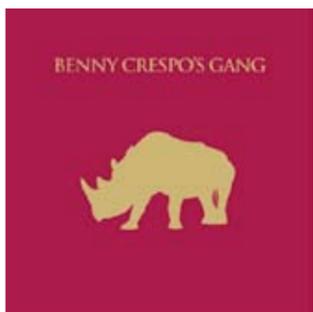
**midi.is**

**EXPECT  
HANG  
OVERS...**

**NASA**

**THE BIGGEST CLUB IN  
DOWNTOWN REYKJAVIK.  
LIVE MUSIC EVERY WEEKEND.  
WWW.NASA.IS**

**CD**



**Benny Crespo's Gang**  
*Benny Crespo's Gang*

As far as I'm concerned, the race for Icelandic Album of the Year was over the day Benny Crespo's Gang ended a three-year recording process and released their self-titled debut just over a month ago. At the heart of it lies a rather basic indie-rock formula, but when you add the intangibles, the pounding drums, the small breaks and time changes, the abrasive guitars, the split-duty singers Lovísa (Lay Low) and Helgi Rúnar, and most importantly, the synth driven melodies; the formula has been twisted and stretched so far and so wide that the band teeters between sounding experimental and aggressive and the overall effect induces the same chaotic experience as listening to The Pixies' Doolittle for the very first time. For those about to rock, this is a required possession. *SBB*

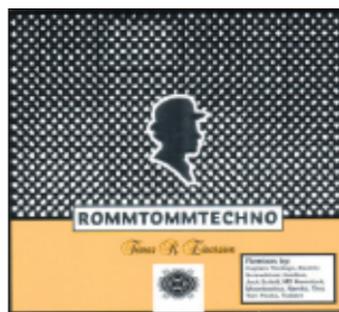
**CD**



**Foxbite**  
*Mr. Silla & Mongoose*

There's something to be said for revision. Writers do it constantly; cut down and rewrite. Mr. Silla & Mongoose's debut album, Foxbite, seems like a compilation of unrevised speculations, a record full of first drafts that could have been solid, lucrative paragraphs. For the record, these speculations certainly aren't worthless. Both Silla and Maggi are hypersensitive to the inflection of voice, and their executions on the guitar are at times completely heartbreaking. The songs Raggedy Pack, I Don't, How do you, and Ten Foot Bear, are golden. If I were to judge this album based on those four tracks alone, I'd call it the album of the year. In them, the duo has proven they have the exceptional gusto to make something poignant. As far as this album goes, they just should have trimmed a little around the edges. *VP*

**CD**



**Rommtommtechno**  
*Tómas R. Einarsson*

Rommtommtechno is a collaboration project where 10 distinguished DJs and electro musicians remix music by the respected Latin jazz artist Tómas R. Einarsson from three of his earlier CDs, Kúbanska, Havana, and Romm Tomm Tomm. Several big names guest star on the album, including former Moloko member Mark Brydon, Frenchman Tom Pooks, Germans Moobootica and Namito; in addition to Iceland's own Trabant, GusGus and Jack Schidt, to name a few. It would be easy to fuck up when you bring in so many quality artists to remix a quality artist, but Rommtommtechno does not buckle from the combined star power of its contributors, but rather delivers everything it should; club music that combines electro and Latin music, a combo that should make you want to dance, a priori. You can expect to dance to these tracks some Saturday night around 5 AM in the near future. *SBB*

**CD**



**The Hope**  
*Sign*

For most people not named Chuck Klosterman, the hair metal era is similar to the time when your armpits started growing hair, your voice betrayed you and girls made you blush, that is, it's a period you'd just rather not remember. Not so for Sign, a band that draws heavily on 80's hair metal influences. Sign's sophomore release, The Hope, is a big step forward from their last album. The metal riffs are heavier, the pop hooks are more grabbing, and the sound is powerful. Songs like Misguided, Hold Me Alive and Beautiful/Depressing could turn out as stellar rock-radio hits. Ultimately, I feel the album suffers for Sign's die-hard loyalty to a by-gone era of pop-metal that condemns this effort to an exercise in formulaic song writing. But, you can bet there is a legion of fans that will love it for exactly that reason. *SBB*

**CD**



**Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious**  
*Sometime*

Sometime's Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious is an exceptionally well-mixed album. Their spin on the techno formula is ultra-smooth and effectively clean, a range of cultivated synths and various electronic drums and turntable spins. Diva De La Rosa has a classically smooth and invariably optimistic voice that mingles flawlessly into the fluid beats with lyrics that are, however, as forgettable as they are unambitious. There is nothing inherently unpleasant about this album, but also nothing inherently interesting. It is entirely inoffensive in every way. In fact, a little too sugary sweet for my taste. *VP*

**CD**



**New Wave**  
*Thundercats*

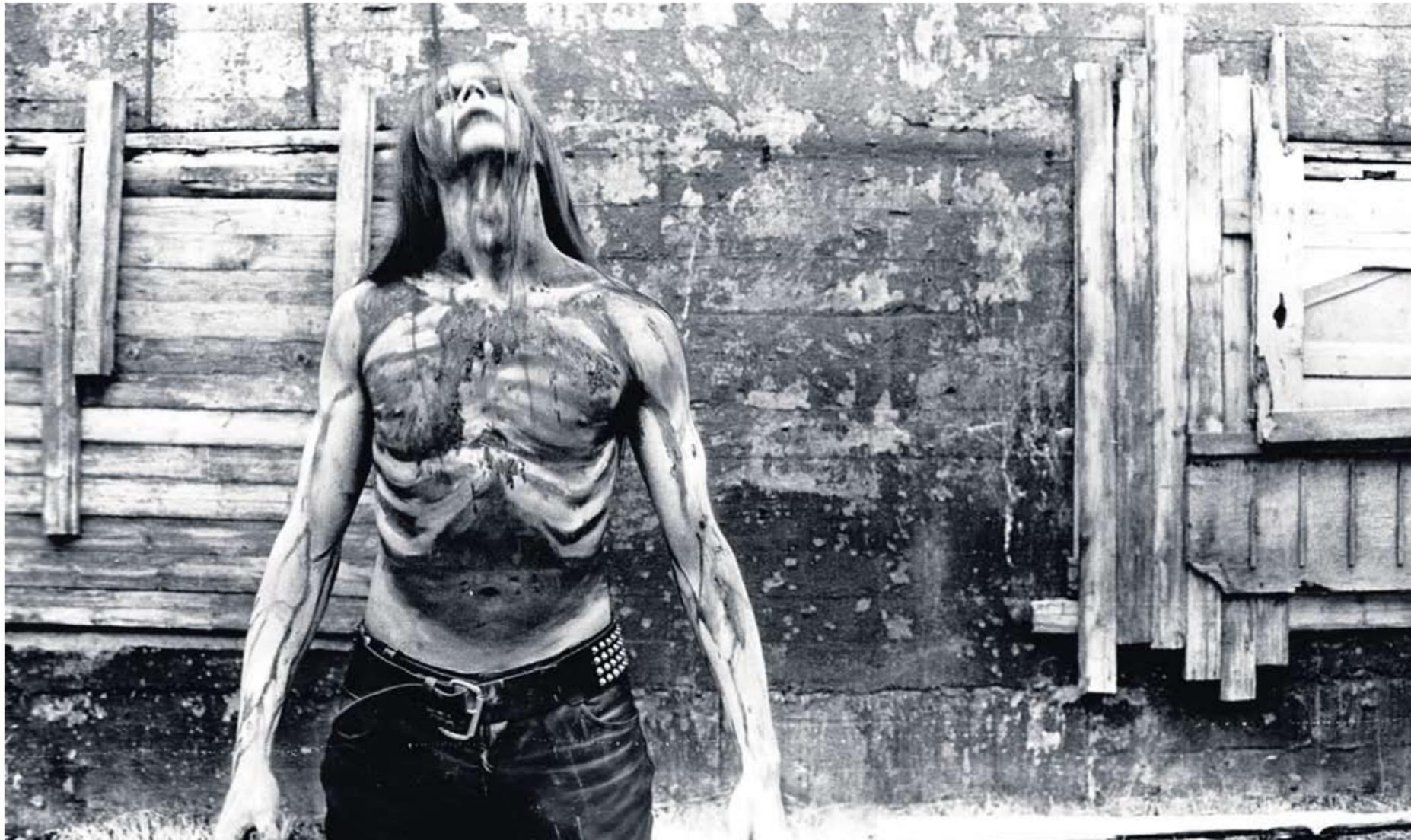
Thunder Theme, the opening track of the Thundercat's debut, New Wave is misleading to say the least. I was ready to write this off and throw it into the garbage at the opening line, "Are you ready for the cats? - Pussycats!" And the cheesy retro-break-beat barrage that follows. Luckily, opening tracks only take you so far. What follows is an ass-grabbing, indie-dance-funk cross-over concoction of synths, daring baselines, guitars and electric drums that at times recalls The Cure, but most of the time something else entirely. The first adjectives I thought of when listening to the Thundercats were "dark" and "sexy." The last adjectives I thought of when listening to the Thundercats were "dark" and "sexy." Maybe it is a testimony to my own sense of self worth or maybe it has something to do with lines like "would you fuck me baby, fuck me once again." I don't know, but the verdict is out. This comes recommended. *SBB*

**EDDAS AND SAGAS**  
Iceland's national treasures

MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS – EDDAS AND SAGAS. EXHIBITION AT THE CULTURE HOUSE.

**The Culture House - Þjóðmenningarhúsið**  
National Centre for Cultural Heritage  
Hverfisgata 15, 101 Reykjavík  
Tel.: +354 545 1400, www.thjodmenning.is

Open daily between 11am and 5pm  
The admission fee grants entry to all exhibitions at the Culture House. Adults ISK 300. Senior citizens ISK 200. Students ISK 200. Free entry for children 16 years of age or younger. Admission is free on Wednesdays.  
An open guided tour of the Manuscripts exhibition is offered every weekday except Wednesdays at 3:30 pm.



## Icelanders Don't Care About Satan

**“When I was first getting into the music, young and inexperienced, the theatricality of the whole thing was a real factor. Murder, church burnings, corpsepaint, how you had to really struggle to get your hands on the music, let alone badly Xeroxed interviews with the bands or any piece of information on them – all of these things contributed to my fascination with Black Metal.”**

Stulli and Gauti sit opposite me and sip their coffee. Black coffee. Stulli is in the midst of outlining the philosophy behind his band, Svartidauði (Black Death), one of Iceland's more accomplished Black Metal bands of today. They are wearing all black. Outside, the northern November sky is black too.

“I'm not sure who said it. But humans are a flawed design and that just... yeah, we're not so much singing about burning churches, a lot of our lyrics are focused on self discovery and the like. They're very introverted, but at the same time, we're using things we see every day, the horrors we've all witnessed, as inspiration for our music. If there's any one thing we're promoting with our music, it isn't necessarily Satanism so much as an extreme sort of hedonism. A philosophy that emphasises new experiences and knowledge of the self, yet also fights the weak, Christian slave mentality that sickens us so much.”

Stulli handles vocal and growling duties for Svartidauði. He is 21-years old, and already a Black Metal veteran of six years. He has been performing with various bands for much longer. He is markedly more interested in espousing his allegiance to the Dark Lord than Gauti, nine years his senior, although Gauti also professes to follow his teachings. “I'm more of an egotist, really. I believe in myself,” he says. When prompted, Stulli will say that he doesn't agree with the Golden Rules and morals – the sympathy and brotherly love – of a Christian society. That is herd mentality, the agenda of the weak. “I go by absolute selfishness, and I don't feel I owe anybody any consideration. If it benefits me, then I'll do it, whatever it is.”

I ask him if that includes committing murder, if that were to benefit him.

“Not really. I am not interested in spending the next eighteen years behind bars. My reasons for not committing murder are purely selfish – but if I were guaranteed to get away with it, I'd definitely give it a shot. I do not offer the other cheek – I do not believe in that at all.”

### Misanthropic Blasphemy of the Christfucker

What bothers me is that these guys I am interviewing on the current state of Satanic Black Metal in Iceland, they're too nice. They smile too much. They're too happy, and they light up when they talk about Black Metal and their love for the relatively (or: wholly and intentionally) obscure genre. This will be equally true of all the other Black Metal scenesters I'll meet for the purposes of this article; although their favourite song might be a 13 minute cassette demo noise-fest epic named “Misanthrop-

ic Blasphemy of the Christfucker” performed by convicted murderers such as Count Grishnack (or people called Necrobutcher or Gaahl), they are all genuinely nice guys that actually seem more modest and down to earth than most of the half-assed garage bands I've interviewed.

I finally reach the conclusion that the only thing that sets them apart from your average music nerd is their unlimited devotion to their genre of choice. Take Gauti, for instance. The 30-year old has been heavily into Black Metal since the early nineties, when the excruciatingly heavy style got its first taste of notoriety outside its native Norway (those crazy Norwegians kept getting themselves in the spotlight by burning churches, murdering one another and being generally unpleasant to associate with –Google it for further info: this ain't no primer).

Gauti never formed a Black Metal band. However, his affection for the style has led him to publish a plethora of fanzines and newsletters for the last decade. He has trouble remembering the names of many of them, and doesn't even have copies of his first zines. In what must be acknowledged as an extreme labour of love (for nobody is rewarding him financially, and it doesn't really impress girls that much.) Gauti has spent countless hours corresponding with BM figureheads across the globe, trading tapes, reviewing demos and even releasing some in extremely limited (or “trve kvlt”-style) numbers of 50 or less. And although he admits that family and fatherhood are limiting his time for it lately, he's still at it.

### How the Internet Killed the Underground and Made Black Metal 27 New Fans

While many would find it frustrating to strive laboriously on their particular passion with the outside world giving it nary a glance of interest, except for maybe to poke fun at some of the more (and, dare I say, intentionally) comical aspects of it, Gauti and Stulli seem happy to keep it that way. In fact, along with almost everyone else I met with, they express annoyance at how accepted and widespread Black Metal has gotten in the past few years. It seems one of the key tenets of trve Black Metal is its inherent mystique and obscurity. This is not meant to be for everybody, this is meant to be special.

“When I was first getting into the music, young and inexperienced, the theatricality of the whole thing was a real factor. Murder, church burnings, corpsepaint, how you had to really struggle to get your hands on the music, let alone badly Xeroxed interviews with the bands or any

piece of information on them – all of these things contributed to my fascination with Black Metal,” says Gauti, and Stulli agrees. “One of the bad things about the Internet is that as all of that information becomes readily accessible and available, the music loses a lot of its mystique and charm. It is a really important part of it – Black Metal has always been about more than just the music.”

Icelandic Doom Metal band Sólstafir were among the first wave of Icelandic Black Metal bands during the mid-nineties, although they've since mostly abandoned the style. Their drummer, Gummi, is an avid Black Metal enthusiast and, unsurprisingly, shares Stulli's and Gauti's feelings towards the Internet. When asked, he agrees that Black Metal is a kind of shadow scene that has the vampiristic tendency to disappear the instance some light is shed on it.

“Nowadays, anyone can go out and record a shitty demo in their basement and it'll be on-line within minutes. They can look up Black Metal on Wikipedia and know everything there's to know about the whole genre, while I had to furiously order underground magazines from abroad for over five years to gather even half of that info. When anyone with a computer can fart something onto the Internet, searching for pearls in all that shit becomes a fearsome task. The Internet ruined the underground, yeah, kinda.”

This all gets kinda weird considering that all of those interviewed estimated the number of Black Metal fans in Iceland to include, at most, all of 200 people. Actually most of them guessed the scene to be around 30-100 person strong – even considering Iceland's meagre population, those really aren't sell-out numbers. If they are close to accurate, us at the Grapevine could conceivably host our very own Black Metal festival, in our office kitchen.

### Our Fjords are Just as Böring

But why did Black Metal blow up in neighbouring countries like Norway, Sweden, and the rest of Scandinavia, while never catching any real foothold over here? Iceland has for long been a source for fascination for Black Metal acts and fans alike. Norse mythology – Ásatrú and Vikings and Odin and whatnot – plays a large part in many BM bands' aesthetics. In fact, one of the biggest (and therefore not really trve BM anymore) Black Metal bands in the world is named Dimmu Borgir, after the Icelandic nature reserve. And some misguided Black Metal souls have actually recorded whole albums in a not-really-understood-by-themselves-at-all form of Icelandic.



From left: Curse, Potentiam and Carpe Noctem. Photos by Guðmundur Óli Pálmason – www.heldriver.com

In the early nineties, all the conditions were right for a big Black Metal uprising. Much the same as in Norway, Death Metal was extremely popular in every fjord and cranny of the country, with bands such as Sororicide, Strigaskór Nr. 42 and Cranium all gaining notoriety among Icelandic teens. In fact, members of the Icelandic Death Metal scene are known to have corresponded with key players in Norwegian Black Metal circles, infamous folks such as Euronymous of Mayhem and his killer, Count Grishnack (AKA Varg Vikernes) of Burzum.

Icelandic fjords were just as böring as Norwegian ones, and Icelandic teenagers were just as rebellious as their Scandinavian cousins. Teen drinking was just as big over here, as was teen spraying-upside-down-crosses-and-pentagrams-on-walls. Not to mention teen wearing-black-on-all-occasions-and-having-really-straight-long-hair. So what went wrong (or right, depending on who you ask)? Why were there no church burnings, no satanic rituals – no larger than life cult figures named after Orcs from Tolkien books – in Iceland?

#### Waiting for a Black Metal Mínus...

Arnar Eggert Thoroddsen, long-time music scribe for Icelandic newspaper Morgunblaðið, host of nationally broadcast metal-themed radio show on Icelandic National Radio 2 and avid BM enthusiast agrees that it's certainly strange that Black Metal all but surpassed Icelandic audiences. He has followed the Norwegian BM scene since its very first controversies surfaced, and counts an extremely rare Mayhem LP, the Deathcrush EP, among his most prized possessions – he is an authority on the shape, size and history of Death and Black Metal in Iceland. But he offers little in way of an explanation.

"You would have thought we had all the right ingredients for a Black Metal scene over here. But maybe our scarce population worked against us in this respect. There were, and are, so few of us that we can't really afford to close ourselves off in small scenes. Death Metal bands like Sororicide were associating, sharing drummers even, with indie fare like Kolrassa Krókríðandi (later Bellatrix). The Icelandic Death Metal scene rather went on to play a type of indie or grunge music than progress into the heavier Black Metal style. Nobody really thought of forming a band like that while that whole freakshow was going on in Norway.

"I am really happy with the output Icelandic Black Metal bands have put out thus far, make no mistake. It's quality stuff. But I kept waiting for a

full-blown scene to take shape here. All of the BM bands we've had have kind of stayed on the fringes of Icelandic music, and often they don't even play concerts. I still feel we need a band to step forward for the genre, sort of like Mínus did for their brand of metal, four guys in corpsepaint, doling out controversial statements, shocking interviews, etc.

"I used to think Myrk were really promising in that respect, before they evolved into Momentum, which isn't really a Black Metal band. But we still have lots of folks who are really strong in the field, and have a large output of great music. Einar Eldur, of very notable BM acts such as Potentiam, Curse and others is a good example in this respect. He releases all of his albums internationally, good strong albums that actually make an impact in the international world of Black Metal [more on him later]."

#### Satan's Foul Trickery Goes Unnoticed, for the Most Part

Another explanation for Black Metal's apparent lack of impact in Iceland is offered by an Icelandic theology scholar-slash-long term BM fan that wishes to remain incognito. It is a simpler one. Namely:

Nobody cares about Satan in Iceland.

True, there might be the occasional fundamentalist Christian sect here and there that will care; their preachers will warn their flock of Satan's foul trickery, and they will spot the mark of the unholy beast in all the right places. However, those people form a very timid minority. Nobody cares about Satan in Iceland, and this is probably why Black Metal has had less of an impact here than in other places. At least according to our nameless theologically inclined friend.

"Ideology has never been big in Iceland. Not Communism, Fascism, Environmentalism, Christianity nor Satanism. Icelanders are utilitarian; they care about getting food on their plates and taking care of their families, being able to afford a vacation away from the snow every now and then.

"This is why no matter what anyone tells you, and regardless of the fact that almost every Icelander is a registered member of the State Church, Icelanders aren't really religious. At all. And, furthermore, they don't care about religion. In fact, that's probably the reason that they don't care if they're members of that church, or any other church for that matter. This is a very different scenario from the staunchly Christian Norwegians, who have a long and deeply rooted tradition of Christianity, especially in the remote regions of

the country where many of the influential Black Metal bands come from.

"Icelanders are very down to earth in that manner. It is often said that Icelanders never really let go of their paganism when Christianity was thrust upon them, and this is probably true to some extent. Just ask all the folks walking around believing in elves and the like. And this is why it is my firm belief that the threat of a satanic uprising is something most people wouldn't really concern themselves about so much. And this is why Satanism, or Satanic Black Metal, doesn't seem like such a big threat to society, and incidentally why it isn't as exciting to our rebellious teens to wear corpse paint and desecrate graves. Their mothers would probably laugh it off, and rightfully so, as juvenile behaviour meant to raise attention."

#### A Given Central Tonic and the Tritone Interval

And then there's the fact that if you leave all the church burnings, Orc names and murders out of the equation – when you eschew the ideology, Black Metal actually seems kind of... boring.

Try looking up "Black metal" on Wikipedia and skip to the part labelled "Characteristics". Do you understand some of the words? Does it feel like you're reading a particularly boring physics textbook? Do you feel like you are at Juilliard, studying to be a composer of obscure modern classics?

"There is a frequent use of chromatics shifted up and down by semitones from a given central tonic to create an uneasy atmosphere (commonly featuring the tritone interval)." Pendulum strumming may be applied to fully voiced chords (usually minor, sometimes diminished) in a denser portion of a piece, and an altering of already established scales for a more dissonant, "evil" sound (such as the harmonic minor)."

Mind you, this is from Wikipedia. It was written by fans and scholars of the style, and you've got to assume that they were trying to educate and ensnarl the masses on the greatness of their beloved genre. And it sounds about as interesting as a geometry test.

#### Like, "Fuck Jesus!" Was a Big Statement

Einar Eldur has sold more albums than most of the great white hypes of Iceland Airwaves. Combined. And no one knows about this in his native Iceland. He truly is a fairly well known name in some international Black Metal circles, and all of his albums get released abroad, and they sell out. Mind you, as Black Metal is a very exclusive genre, most of

them are only printed in runs of 1,000 and none of them are available in major Icelandic record shops. But all of them sell out sooner or later, and he has had an incredibly productive, if totally invisible, career. He's actually been called the most productive person in Icelandic metal, and the evidence seems ripe. Just ask anyone who's bought an album by Curse, Potentiam or Fortíð (although you probably won't find them in Iceland.)

Eldur has released seven full-length albums, a single, a split album and an LP under his various chosen monikers. As well as six demos. All of them have been released by record labels in Germany, Italy, and the U.S. And he guested as a vocalist for Norwegian BM band Sykdom.

He estimates that he has sold around or over 10,000 records worldwide.

He is as friendly and welcoming as the rest of the Black Metal crew I've met, but for some reason (perhaps since he's been involved in Black Metal since the beginning) manages to give off a macabre vibe as well. And when he talks about Satanism, about how some members of the very small mid-nineties scene flirted with burning down churches and occult ceremonies, you believe that he's not just being sensationalist. You'll believe they were that close.

"It's always about the music, first and foremost," he tells me. "It's about making good music. Oh, of course the events in Norway were what got me interested at first. And people toyed around with the idea of burning churches over here, even going so far as attempting it, and desecrating some graves. But the main difference is that Norwegians are very Christian, especially on the west coast, and thus it was a much bigger issue there. Like, "Fuck Jesus!" was a big statement. Icelanders have never been very Christian, much more heathens in disguise. Now, if somebody would have successfully torched a church back then, maybe we would have gotten a stronger Black Metal scene. But it doesn't really matter. This music, it's a certain form of art; it involves certain philosophical investigations and certain modes of thoughts. But at the core, it's about music. Good music"

And in the end, I must concur. Try giving A Blaze in the Northern Sky ten or twenty listens and see if you don't agree.

Text by Haukur Magnússon



## What a Day for Window Weather

**Here's the thing about Stykkishólmur. It's a small town. With a conceitedness that is partial to any small grouping, people here have a thing about staring.**

"Stykkið," or "the piece" from which Stykkishólmur takes its name, now sits under the largest of three wharves in the small town's harbour. From where I stand on top of Súgandisey, a tall island bridged with the town's mainland, I see only the dock's dark wooden beams reaching down from the platform into the ocean, covering the name-sake.

Stykkishólmur was born by that cryptic spot. Since late in the sixteenth century this small village, just north of the Snæfellsnes peninsula on the western fjords, has been a commercial centre and major fishing port for the Breiðafjörður area and, until last year when local company Agustson ehf. moved all its production to Denmark, the country's biggest distributor of shrimp and shellfish.

At the precipice of Súgandisey, the most magnificent and easily accessible natural lookout I've ever mounted, my travel team-of-two and I stand next to a small, orange lighthouse. With our backs to the town, we have a sprawling view of the entire Breiðafjörður fjord, splattered with small islands to which, had it been a few months earlier, we could have sailed and observed a plethora of birdlife. On this November day however, the sky is clear and cold, allowing us not only a far-reaching view north across the inlet, but a worry-free romp in what is usually an area infested with moody arctic tern protecting their nesting young.

The town is glowing in the afternoon sun. To the east is the hospital, joined by the Franciscan nunnery that founded it and which continues to some extent to staff it to this day. West of the hospital and directly ahead is the now obsolete fish-processing plant formerly used by Agustson ehf., a dark-green boxy building connected to their main offices, a sprawling red wooden house that can be seen from almost anywhere in town. Next door is another processing plant, this one about a hundred years older; Sjárþakkhúsið, humorously called The Sea Bastard's Inn in English, is an old fish-packinghouse turned summertime-restaurant (turned summer-home) that, during its short lifetime as an eatery, managed to earn a solid reputation for the best fish-stew in the country. (I must note for objectivity's sake that my grandfather was co-owner and co-chef at this establishment and

that I spent many summers serving this delicious stew.) Finally, just west of that, the sun setting behind it, on the only spot in town that rivals this view, stands the town's peculiar Library of Water.

As of this moment, we have yet to comprehend the sizeable role that water will play in our days ahead. Apart from the liquor store we noticed driving into town, Stykkishólmur seems like quite a dry place. At this moment, the water spanning this panorama registers as little more than a catalyst for the quaint glow of the sun setting ahead of us.

But this moment has already passed and we are cold and going back to the car. The adventure is just beginning.

### Something to Stare At

We park our car beside the Sea Bastard's Inn, our home for the next two days, and decide to gather provisions for the night from the local shopping centre, a.k.a. Bónus. We walk up towards the aptly named Main Street, passing a red pickup idling in front of the bookstore. The car is full of teenaged boys, and they are all watching us as we pass by. The driver returns from the store carrying a crowbar in one hand. He too is staring. Blatantly.

Here's the thing about Stykkishólmur. It's a small town. With a conceitedness that is partial to any small grouping, people here have a thing about staring. My first visit here at the tender age of 15 was burned into my memory forever vis-à-vis the most intense staring fit I had had before and have ever encountered since. At the height of summer, the time of year when the town is at its peak occupancy with teens returned home from school and work around the country, I walked up this same street with my visiting American best-friend at the time, young, naïve and innocently unaware of the ocular assault we were about to experience.

It began thus. Height of summer, young teens flocked home and participating en masse in the social ritual that is "rúnturinn," or driving repeatedly around the downtown "route." Walking up this street was like walking the red carpet, but creepier, because everyone was peeping at us from behind a pane of glass whilst moving very slowly past and talking on their cell phones to

people in the surrounding cars. It was fifteen minutes of undeserved fame. It was weird.

But we won't be having any of that today. At this time of year the town seems quite empty, to say the least. Two cars pass us on our way to the store; but the drivers are old and show us only subdued interest. We pass the town's two restaurants, the old and now abandoned movie theatre, the bank, the insurance company with lace curtains on the second floor and a handful of quaint two-storey houses, and finally come to the town's shopping centre. A whole five-minute walk.

### Unwinding the City Pace

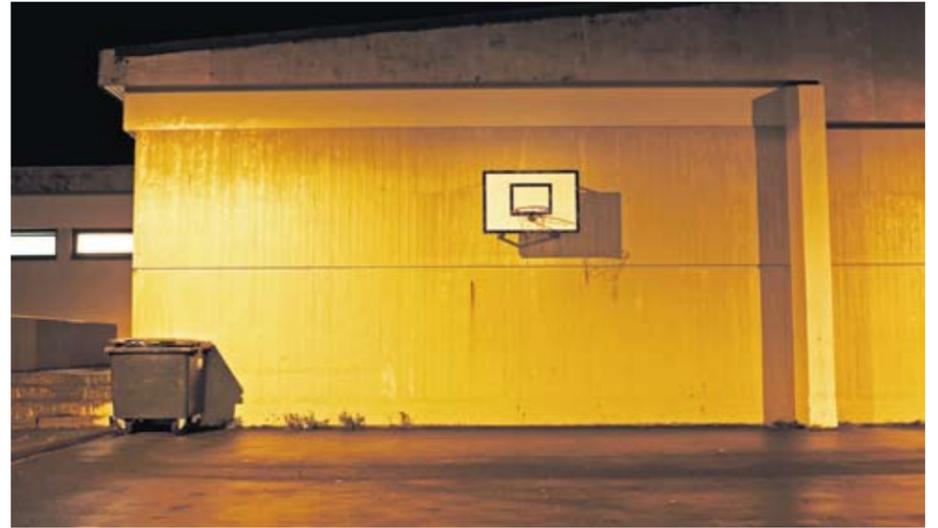
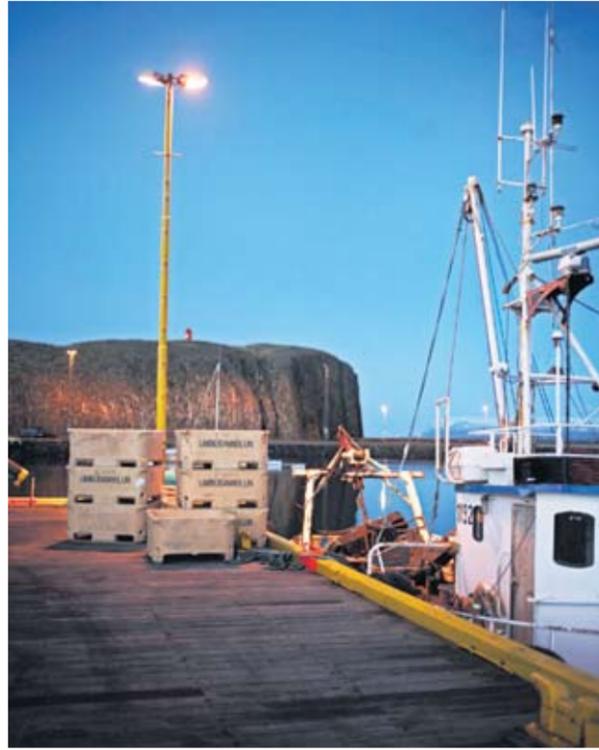
I'm not sure whether the list of utilities this town boasts is commonplace or impressive for a population of 1,100. Here we find the supermarket, pharmacist, liquor store and newly opened hardware shop. Across the street are the police station and the swimming pool. Food, booze and a place to get naked, what more could a small town need? We traipse into Heimahornið, or "the home corner," the town's version of the-everything-store, where you can buy, well, just about everything that categorically fits somewhere between dress-shirts and Christmas decorations. The store connects to the supermarket Bónus by a yellow glass door. "That's locked kids," the storeowner shouts our way when we've just found out as much. "Sometimes I don't bother to unlock it," she says decidedly without moving from her spot behind the counter. "I just want my customers to myself." We thank her, take another moment to consider our need for underwear and/or miniature ceramic Santa statues, and make our way out the front door.

Inside Bónus I start to believe the myth that Stykkishólmur breeds basketball star giants when I notice the six-foot-something teen in sweatpants and sneakers stocking the shelves in the freezer section. His enormous limbs as well as a box of some sort of perishable food are blocking the forward motion of a stout middle-aged woman and her yellow cart. He notices this and immediately apologizes but she just laughs and says, "Oh no no dear, I'm not in any hurry." As I stand amusedly observing this I realize that I have been running around the store in a fit of haste, despite the fact

CAR PROVIDED BY:

**Hertz**

Tel.: 522 4400



Photos by GAS

## — An Adventure in Stykkishólmur

that my two travel mates and I have no engagements for the next four hours. I tell myself that I'm not high-strung, that it's just the city pace in my bones, and make a silent vow to walk more slowly in this town. At the checkout I see that the young kid behind the counter is not abnormally sized in any way, but is wearing a nametag that read "anas," or "pineapple." I guess everyone has his or her quirks.

### The Frosty Night Ahead

Before we knew it night had fallen and we were behind schedule in the progression of events that was to conclude with the Ben Frost concert in the Library of Water at 21:00. We bundled up and set out into the freezing night air.

After stopping at the gas station, we walk alongside the fence of the school track and cut around it in the direction of the swimming pool. In this small strip of land, between a gravel soccer pitch and the track, stands the most beautiful spectator's box, bright white and strikingly angular; An architectural feat in the most bizarre and unannounced of places. We can now see the blood-red "HOTEL" sign hanging in the black night air, and after passing through the playground of the elementary school, running through some tyres and then literally crawling up the steep hill below the hotel, we feel thoroughly boot-camped and hungry.

The main door is locked and we follow the lights towards a side entrance. Inside, a TV is playing in front of an empty lounge. On a table beside the vending machines is a piece of worn paper directing us to "knock on room 143" if we need service, and at the other end of the lounge we find a door leading to the dismantled lobby, clearly in the midst of major renovation. The scene couldn't have been any lonelier if I had planned it that way. Yet it was a quaint kind of lonely. I imagined some teenaged kids lying on a hotel bed watching TV, and thoroughly enjoying their jobs. I didn't dare disturb them, and we headed for dinner somewhere else.

### A Concert in the Castle

"Here I am, living in a glacial-water castle," explains Guðrún Eva Minervudóttir, the live-in cura-

tor of Stykkishólmur's Library of Water. "I'm pretty sure I have the world's greatest basement-view," she adds, laughing. The three of us all nod in agreement. She's so right it's not even funny. This silvery palace, sitting even higher than the lighthouse of Sígandisey, has the most impressive outlook of any house I've ever visited. The entire fjord is at its mercy. Even from the basement.

The Library, 24 floor-to-ceiling columns of water collected from as many glaciers around Iceland, is a sight in itself. 3 metres high and 30cm in diameter, the columns are lit from each end and clustered around the room. The pillars reflect the light, and in turn each other, and in the dark night they fill the whole room with a hazy, ethereal glow.

Originally built and used as the town's library, the space was recently renovated and rented out, permanently, by American artist Roni Horn. The project, Guðrún says, was inspired by the unique location and appearance of the house, which Horn visited some years ago. It excels, as Horn was well aware, as a weather observing spot. Thinking back to our visit earlier in the day to the top of Sígandisey, I realize I would have much preferred looking across the fjord from behind these enormous panes of glass.

There's a light hum emanating from the amp sitting in the midst of the pillars. Beside it, a chair and a table with a guitar and computer. We take a seat on the floor in the opening of the room. All around us, written into the rubbery floor, are weather words, collected from a series of interviews with locals from the Snæfellsnes area. Right now, I'm sitting across from the words "quiet," and "temperate." I'm watching the assembled audience of four locals waiting patiently with their blue booties on, like the rest of us, to protect the floor. Along with them, the crew accompanying Frost, Guðrún, and us Grapeviners, attendance hovers around a measly 13.

Ben has been walking in and out of the room for the past couple of minutes, and now suddenly appears again. "Welcome," he says in Icelandic. "I'm Ben Frost, and I'm going to play something. I'm not quite sure what yet, we will just have to see."

Emitting from the speakers now is a heavy,

scratchy sound that after a few moments, perhaps just by process of osmosis, begins to resemble running water. Ben is sitting at the table staring down at his guitar, and I become wholly sensitive to these four strangers watching him, completely unaware of the ambient rollercoaster they are about to ride.

As the show begins, slowly but surely, people are sinking closer to the rubbery floor, flattening out their bodies against the various adjectives. The first song lasts somewhere between 45-minutes and an hour. It was an experience something akin to being in a trance, sitting so close to this acute, fierce sound, feeling the full vibration of every pulse through the soft floor. Ben has a kind of instinct that manages to continually catch you off guard. His magic lies in dissecting sound, slicing beats open and stretching them from within, then rejuvenating them one tiny piece at a time.

At the end of this first song, two people leave. The rest of us reposition ourselves on the floor. Ben looks stressed. The whole scene is difficultly bare, with a half-empty room and a couple of old folks politely sitting it out. Yet the stark nature is also positively expository for his material which, though ambient and pensive, is also inherently jarring. It's a unique and rather exciting experience when music demands so intently that you be fully, body and soul, at its mercy.

At the end of the concert, Ben admits that he was seriously worried about breaking the columns. "There goes my citizenship application out the window," he says and laughs. We had all had the same thought. We are still pulsating as we remove our booties and head out into the black night.

### The Cautiously Slow End

The next morning finds us bright and early for lunch at Narfeyrarstofa, the town's premier dining establishment. Co-owner Steinunn greets us with an enthusiastic smile and suggests we try the cod. The centre of the place is littered with music equipment and she tells us that they hosted a celebration for Agustson ehf. last night. When it quickly arrives we find the cod to be veritably delicious, melt-in-your-mouth soft with roasted potatoes and a dark-green salad. The atmosphere of the place,

decorated with old photographs of the town and peninsula, only adds to our spiritual comfort, and we delight in chatting with Steinunn, a life-long local, about the various goings-on of this town.

After saying our goodbyes and taking a short compulsory "rúntur" through town, stopping to see the gorgeous white church stellar against the black night, we attempt to drive home but are caught in a storm five-minutes out and sensibly turn around. I insist that we rent a video, one of the activities I remember from my time here, and the night goes accordingly. The next morning we stop for breakfast at the local bakery, Nesbrauð. Just as I am mulling over how fully-stocked this town is with local comforts, enjoying a nice hot cup of soup, we are assaulted by a little kid who claims to know what we had been talking about in the pool the day before. "I know what you said," he sneers at me maniacally. I, however, do not.

Just as the speed limit jumps to 70 driving out of town, we pass a pair of women power-walking who peer into our car. I think back to all the small, quiet moments that somehow seemed, like so much here, bold and sharp, like a bright white church against a black sky. Like the town's "piece" itself, the magic of Stykkishólmur is kept modestly covered, un-flaunted to tourists and visitors passing through. You can catch a glimpse of it every so often in the right light or from the right height, but sometimes it's best to be able to peer at something from behind a nice pane of glass.

Text by Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir

## Reykjavík Then & Now

### In the 1980s...

the Reykjavík Harbour was a place of import and export. Harbour related business kind of stuff.

Photo by Gunnar V. Andrésson



### In 2007...

the Reykjavík Harbour is the site of the under construction Music and Convention Center. A different kind of import and export really.

Photo by GAS



**The only thing lower than the standard of this ad ...**

**... the price of a Sixt Rent a Car.**

(Book at [www.sixt.is](http://www.sixt.is), call 540 2222 or contact your Hotel reception.)



Travelling?  
Check out our  
many travel  
stories online!

**WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS**

*News // Culture // Dining // Travelling // Shopping // Articles // Interviews*

## Andkristnihátíð 2007

Helshare

Svartidaudi

Atrum Forgardur Helvítis

Darknote

Disintegrate

Vorestral

Blood Feud

Finngáalkn

IX Dimension

Sérstakir gestir

22. Desember - Tónlistarþróunarmíðstöðin - Þólmastöð 2

Byrjun helst 18.00 - 1000kr aðgangseyrit

<http://www.myspace.com/andkristnihatid>

# Þorláksmessa

## December 23

On the 23 of December, Þorláksmessa, or the Mass of Þorlákur, commemorates the death of Iceland's first and only saint.

The holiday has been celebrated since Þorlákur's canonisation by Althingi just five years after his death in 1193, though he wasn't formally canonised by Pope John Paul II until 1985. Although the holiday is generally the year's biggest shopping day, as most stores are open close to midnight, the oldest tradition surrounding the holiday involves the ingestion of putrefied skate.

Hailed from the tradition of the Catholic Christmas fast, when meat wasn't allowed until the 24th, the practice of eating skate has all but consumed the function of the holiday. The tradition originated in the West Fjords, where the skate was caught most easily in late autumn and putrefied just in time for Christmas.

The fish, much like shark, must be putrefied to shake-off dangerous enzymes present in the fresh meat. The smell of ammonia accompanying the putrefied fish is quite fierce, and only intensifies when the meat is cooked. The taste of the fish is said, however, to be better than the smell, which is so potent that it generally permeates the house for days.

Thus skate-parties are a popular tradition in Iceland, where the smelly burden falls on only one family each year.

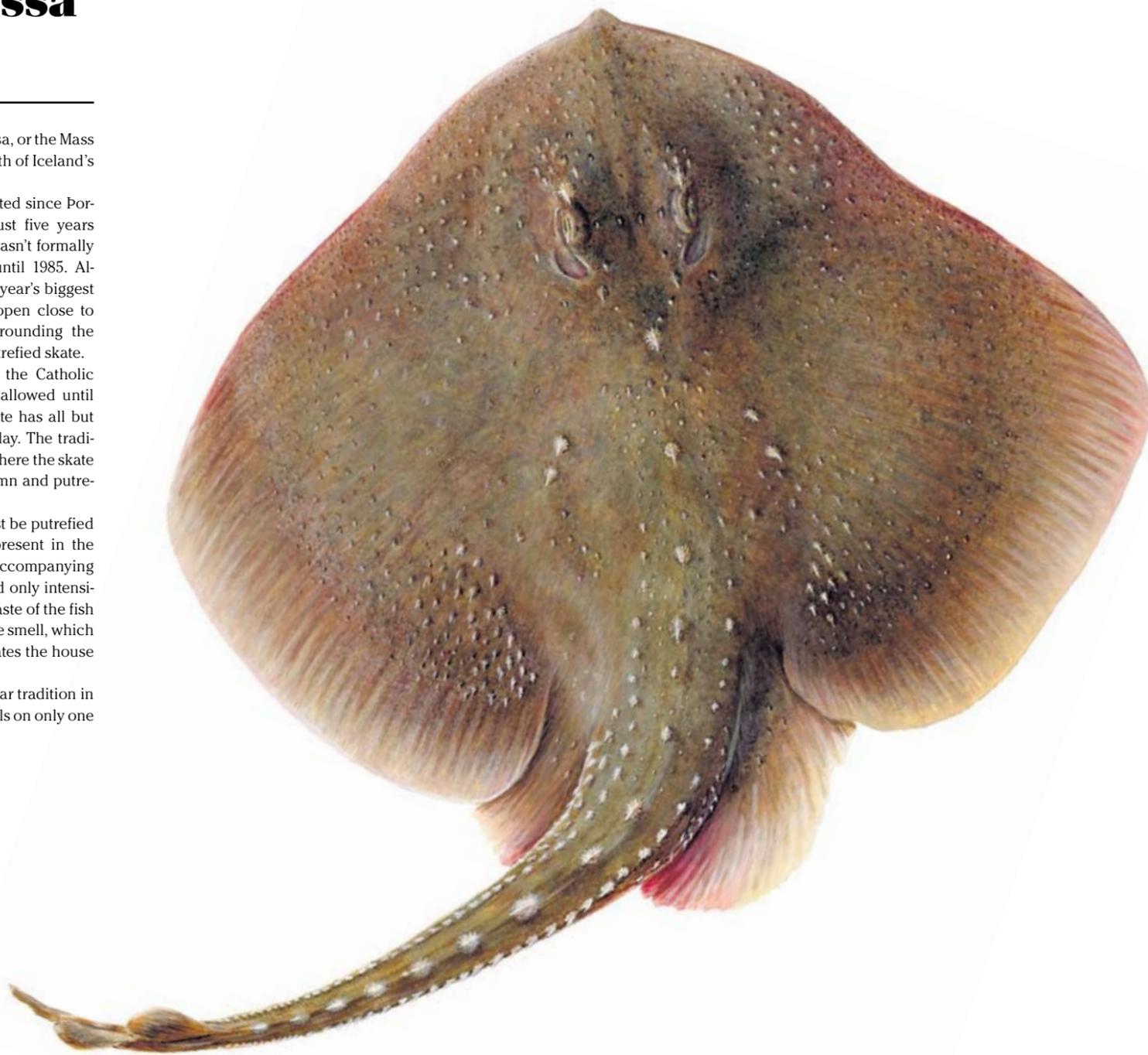


Illustration by Jón Baldur Hlíðberg – www.fauna.is

**AIR ICELAND**

# Fly and discover

Air Iceland destinations

- NUUK Greenland
- AKUREYRI
- GRIMSEY
- VOPNAFJÖRDUR
- EGILSSTADIR
- FAROE ISLANDS
- WESTMAN ISLANDS
- REYKJAVIK
- NARSARSSUAQ Greenland
- KULLUSUK Greenland
- NERLERIT INNAAT Greenland

airiceland.is

/ tel. 570 3030

© AIR ICELAND 2007



## New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve is no less a celebration in Iceland than Christmas. The year is traditionally sent off with a shitload of firework, bonfires around town, and, but of course, general public drunkenness at a barbaric level. If Gremlins ruined Christmas for you, there is still no excuse not to enjoy New Year's Eve. Check the info section for further details. *Photo by Jim Smart*



Get your action-packed day tour brochure at hotels, airports or any travel agent.



## Across the Country in 40 Days

**Before I realise that what I'm doing is ridiculously stupid and I should turn back, all support gives way.**

I had anticipated a baptism of fire sooner or later on my 40-day march across the Highlands. It was inevitable. After ten days of walking in fair weather and without obstacles, the improbable prospect that I might traverse the country unscathed began to appear more likely, and I greeted this realisation with mixed feelings of relief and disappointment.

From the very beginning, I had looked upon the area of wasteland that spreads across the outskirts of Vatnajökull between Askja and Nýdalur with apprehension. I feared the sandstorms frequently vomited onto the plains by the glacial winds; I dreaded crossing Rjúpnabrekkuvísl, the first major river on my course; and I was uncertain about the availability of clean water in the area. I did not expect the biggest threat to show up even sooner.

### The Hiker's Dilemma

It is July 19, and I am on my way to put Askja and the base camp of Drekgil behind me. The whole of the previous day was spent resting and taking care of routine things – washing overused clothing, rearranging the backpack with newly received supplies and preparing maps and itineraries for the days ahead. In the evening I enjoyed a few drinks in the company of a Danish family and then went to sleep early.

However, in spite of the apparent peacefulness, the hours had been marked by an ongoing

inner struggle about what course to take. According to my original plan, I was to leave along the jeep trail, just a few kilometres on the beaten track to avoid the grim Dyngjujöll massif, and then make my way due southwest. But in a casual conversation with the land-wardens another option emerged, whereby I would cut across the mountains, rather than bypass them, seeking a tortuous and steep passage along the rim of the Askja caldera. I had initially ruled this out as unfeasible. "It's a difficult way," they warned me, "and one point in particular is very dangerous. Most hikers prefer not to face it, and keep their course at a lower altitude rather than along the rim." On the one hand I could choose a challenging and spectacular path, riddled with difficulties and potential delays. On the other hand, the dull yet reassuring safety of the road. Torn by the choice at hand, I decide to let the weather make the final call.

The skies offer no clear response. It is dry when I wake up at 6:00, but still somewhat humid. Overall, conditions seem favourable, except for a few clouds assembling in the hazy air above. The wind has changed – it's now blowing from the south – and "that could mean sandstorms," I am told. No accurate forecast will be available until the evening. Without any definitive guidance, I am left alone with my decision. I summon up all my resolve, and before I have a chance to start worrying about the darkness accumulating above, I see the camp of Drekgil becoming smaller in the

distance and finally disappearing from sight. I am climbing up, on my way to the rim and the passage across the mountains.

### Sandstorms

As I reach 1300 metres, the depth of Lake Askja reveals itself in the concavity beneath, but there is no blue today – instead, it appears as leaden and heavy as a static plate of stainless steel. The skies above are no different; the clouds have suffocated all light and a surreal dimness is upon the land. The weather has worsened at an appalling rate – even swifter than this morning's hints suggested. It drizzles, and the altitude exposes me to the lashes of the wind.

The scenery is intensely dramatic. The great Vatnajökull glacier is close by to the south, majestic and imposing in its whiteness, and the stern summits of the Kverkfjöll massif tower above a black desert battered by the storms – sand is seen whirling in the distance, as foretold by the morning wind. In the opposite direction, the Askja caldera can be viewed in its entirety. Seen from here, it is a dazzling spectacle of golden and scarlet rock, steep walls, and inaccessible fumaroles, encircling the uterine lake like a mausoleum.

Treading this ground easily becomes an adrenaline-pumping experience on the brink of a precipice with the constant threat of a hopeless tumble towards the water. As the altitude keeps rising, so does the sense of challenge – almost de-

Both photos from Mývetningahraun.  
Photos by Fabrizio Frascaroli



*Energy for life through forces of nature*



## – Adventures of the Lonesome Traveller, Leg 4

fiance - like ascending to the apex of a forbidden mystery. By now, and despite the adverse conditions, excitement and inebriation are inflating my confidence. Without a second thought, I carry on along the rim.

### It Feels Good To Be Alive

I believe that accidents never occur by pure chance, even when walking on difficult ground. It is not a matter of fatality or misfortune. Rather, accidents happen when there is a deficiency in focus and attention, a lack of due care, and an abundance of fear and arrogance – two sides of the same sin. I find this somewhat encouraging, and a good argument against those who claim that mixing solitude and wilderness implicitly asks for trouble. However, this does not avoid the crude truth of human error which makes mistakes inevitable; a concept that I should perhaps repeat to myself more often.

A thick fog has descended on the mountains. I can distinguish the border of the cliff, but little else ahead. However, I do not need to see more to realise that – heedless of all warnings – I have finally come to face the most difficult point on the entire walk, the one I had been so vigorously warned about. There is no doubt now that a narrow passage along the rough surface lies before me: a sheer cliff and a 300m tumble on the right, another cliff and a 200m fall on the left – it feels good to have a choice.

Even in optimal weather and free from all encumbrance, I probably would have hesitated before venturing into this. Today's weather is far from optimal – the ground is wet and occasionally slippery, the wind strong enough to unbalance me – and I am carrying some twenty kilos on my back. For today, hesitation will mean retreat.

Haste, however, is a short-sighted solution, and before long the remedy reveals itself to be far worse than the ill itself. I do not even take rationality into consideration: instead of retracing my steps and looking for a more convenient spot from which to leave the edge of the rim, I just attempt to descend from where I am, along the steep slope of the cliff. Things happen quickly. I can't get a solid grip on the friable volcanic rock around, while the backpack itself seems to be pushing me into a lethal dive. Before I realise that what I'm doing is ridiculously stupid and I should turn back, all support gives way. Using all four limbs, I can barely stop myself before the slide-down degenerates into a desperate fall. I am completely stuck. Every small gesture risks losing the uncertain stability and heading for disaster. I decide, against my better judgement, to stare at one stone as it relentlessly gains speed while rolling down the mountain and vanishing in the void. A pang of nausea instantly grips my entrails.

I cannot say how long I spend there, bound to the rock, paralysed by the impossibility of any movement. Nor after how many false starts and

failed attempts I finally rescue myself from that nightmare. All I know is that, in a moment of utter despair, I manage to loosen my backpack straps with my teeth, which will prove to be the turning point in resolving the stalemate. As I regain stable ground, I am aching all over, but lacking the right epithets with which to properly insult myself. Smoking a cigarette, however, never felt this good.

Saying that I spend the rest of the day walking my course away from the rim would just be misrepresenting the facts: rather, I literally stumble along the slopes, my body stiffened like wood by physical stress and fear. I make camp that night on a lava field near the lake. I fetch some snow-melt water and prepare a warm meal. As I tend the stove, I am surprised to find myself chuckling and grinning about the day and about my own foolhardy choices. The big scare is blowing over and I am happy to be in one piece.

### Onwards to Nýidalur

It was 1907 when German scientists Walter von Knebel and Max Rudloff set out in a small boat to explore the Askja Lake before disappearing without a trace. An expedition to search for them was later organised and led by the widow von Knebel. But it yielded nothing: neither the corpses nor any evidence of what had happened were ever found. A monument, however, was erected on that occasion to commemorate the two perished researchers.

That memorial plaque stands, solitary, at Mývetningahraun, in a clearing at the southwest border of the lake, in the most remote and inaccessible part of Askja. Crimson and smooth is the lava of Mývetningahraun, like clotted blood beneath the threat of the mountains. Even the glowing yellow of my tent cannot stand out with such a vibrant backdrop. A strange and spectral atmosphere hovers in the stillness of the evening, peaceful and disquieting at the same time. No noise is in the air except the echoes of distant voices and sorrows. If Askja is a sanctuary, Mývetningahraun can easily be considered its most sacred altar. As the sharp peaks break into the green and blue mirror of the water, no views can match those offered by this secret alcove.

In the morning, I spend some more time exploring the area and it's around noon by the time I'm finally ready to leave Mývetningahraun. I make straight for Suðurskarð, the southwesterly pass into and out of Askja. In the end, the baptism of fire has come, and the Highlands have had the chance to reveal their most unforgiving face. I have managed to cross the Dynjufjöll Mountains, and the barren way to Nýidalur is now awaiting me.

Text by Fabrizio Frascaroli

Lárus & Lárus

What do you do when you have nothing to do?

Nothing

**ORKAN** ALWAYS NICE

Dining out? Check out our many food reviews online!

[WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS](http://WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS)

News // Culture // Dining // Travelling // Shopping // Articles // Interviews



Night falls over Stykkishólmur.

Photo by GAS

## Classifieds

Classified ads are free for individuals! If you want to place a classified ad, email [class@grapevine.is](mailto:class@grapevine.is)

### Grundarfjörður Hostel



comfortable - affordable  
Central in Snæfellsnes



[grundarfjordur@hostel.is](mailto:grundarfjordur@hostel.is)

[www.hostel.is](http://www.hostel.is)

+354-5626533  
+354-8956533

Bring THIS AD and  
get 15% discount!



Your Affordable Quality Bed  
2-6 bedded rooms. Prices from 1750 isk.

Next door to Laugardalur pool and  
campsite.  
Bus 14 from Center/BSI. Flybus pickup.

Free WiFi. Kitchen. Laundry. 24 hrs.

Tel: (+354) 553 8110  
[reykjavikcity@hostel.is](mailto:reykjavikcity@hostel.is)  
[www.hostel.is](http://www.hostel.is)



**WOMEN'S  
SHELTER**  
tel. 561-1205



ASÍ ART MUSEUM  
FREYJUGÖTU 41  
101 REYKJAVÍK  
TEL. 511-5353

#### Accommodation

##### Bakki, Laugarbakka

tel: 4512987 / 6163304  
email: [elinborg8@msn.com](mailto:elinborg8@msn.com)  
Quiet surroundings, only one kilometer  
from Highway 1, Rooms, Sleeping Bag  
Accommodation and Camping w/electricity  
Mini-Market and Cafe Angling sold for  
lakes in Arnarvatnsheiði

#### Accommodation Needed

"Accommodation wanted for december"  
We are a couple that is looking for a  
room/flat/studio in Reykjavik to rent  
for a reasonable price during december.  
We are both grad.students. 30 and 26  
years old. References can be given if

asked for.  
Call to Orri:003548647652 or Mail to (in  
english) to Miriam:miriamlisak@hotmail.  
com

#### Apartments for rent:

Apartment for rent in Reykjavik town  
center from 1.Jan'08 - 1.Mar'08, two  
bedrooms. 70.000 ISK. (1.150 USD) (560  
GBP) (780 EUR) pr. month. Furniture incl.  
(dishwasher man!) Available to those  
that do not set the place on fire nor steal  
books.  
[steinarsson@gmail.com](mailto:steinarsson@gmail.com)

#### Job openings:

Looking to hire a full time live in nanny to  
care for my two children ages 16 months  
and 12 years old. Must be willing to  
move the Richmond Virginia ( USA ) must  
drive and speak some english. NO CRIMI-  
NAL HISTORY OF ANY KIND will pay  
600.00\$ per month. Please sent replies to  
: [demevergos@yahoo.com](mailto:demevergos@yahoo.com)

#### Job needed:

I am a twenty year old American looking

for work in Iceland during my three  
month summer recess. Please contact  
Paul Shufro at [shufro@wisc.edu](mailto:shufro@wisc.edu).

#### Personals:

**In search for my father!**  
I am a dutch citizen in search for  
my father, i suppose he never knew  
about my existence. He met my dutch  
mother Maria/Marijke in 1964 in  
(Göteborg?), Sweden, where he was  
studying fish farming/processing.  
His name is Einar, supposedly Einar  
Einarsson. I was born in 1965. I just  
wish to meet him at least once. I  
don't have any financial interests or  
of that kind at all. Please contact me  
if you know something: [wijnkus36@zonnet.nl](mailto:wijnkus36@zonnet.nl)



# WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS

News // Culture // Dining // Travelling // Shopping // Articles // Interviews

## Services

### Useful Numbers

- **Emergency number:** 112
- **Police:** 569 9000
- **Medical help:** 1770
- **Dental emergency:** 575 0505
- **AA:** 551 2010
- **Information:** 118
- **Telegrams:** 146

### Tax Free Refund

■ **Iceland Refund,**  
Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 564 6400  
www.icelandrefund.com

### Post Office

Post offices are located around the city as well as in the countryside. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5. For a full list and info on opening hours visit [www.posturinn.is](http://www.posturinn.is). Stamps are also sold in bookstores, gas stations, some grocery stores and tourist shops.

### Embassies and Consulates

- **United States,** Laufásvegur 21, Tel: 562 9100
- **United Kingdom,** Laufásvegur 31, Tel: 550 5100
- **Russia,** Garðastræti 33, Tel: 551 5156
- **China,** Viðimelur 29, Tel: 552 6751

For a full list visit Ministry for Foreign Affairs: [www.mfa.is/diplomatic-missions/icelandic-missions/](http://www.mfa.is/diplomatic-missions/icelandic-missions/)

### Internet Access

Most coffeehouses have wireless Internet access. Computers with Internet connections are available at:

- **Ráðhúskaffi City Hall,** Tjarnargata 11
- **BSÍ Bus Terminal,** Vatnsmýrarvegur 10
- **Ground Zero,** Vallarstræti 10
- **The Reykjavík City Library,** Tryggvagata 15
- **The National and University Library,** Arngrímogata 3
- **Tourist Information Centre,** Aðalstræti 2
- **Icelandic Travel Market,** Bankastræti 2

### Opening hours

■ **Bars and clubs:** According to regulations bars may be open until 01:00 on weekdays and 05:30 on weekends.  
 ■ **Shops:** Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

■ **Swimming pools:** weekdays 06:30-22:30, weekends 08:00-20:30 although some may be open an hour longer.

■ **The State owned ÁTVR liquor stores:** Mon-Thu 11-18, Fri 11-19, Sat 11-18.

Banks in the centre are open Mon-Fri 09-16.

### Laundry Service

- **HI Hostel,** Sundlaugarvegur 34, Tel: 553 8110, [www.hostel.is](http://www.hostel.is)
- **Úðafoss,** Vitastígur 13, Tel: 551 2301, [www.udafoss.is](http://www.udafoss.is)

## Getting Around

### Public transport

The only public transport system in Reykjavík is the bus. Most busses run every 20 minutes and price per fare is 250 ISK for adults and 75 ISK for children. Complete route map at: [www.bus.is](http://www.bus.is). Tel: 540 2700  
 Busses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends

### Rent a bike

- **Borgarhjól,** Hverfisgata 50, Tel: 551 5653, [www.borgarhjol.net](http://www.borgarhjol.net)
- **HI Hostel,** Sundlaugarvegur 34, Tel: 553 8110, [www.hostel.is](http://www.hostel.is)
- **Tourist Information Centre,** Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, [www.visitreykjavik.is](http://www.visitreykjavik.is)

### Taxi

- **Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir,** Tel: 553 3500 or 588 5522
- **BSR,** Tel: 561 0000
- **For disabled travellers:** Reykjavík Group Travel Service, Brunastaðir 3, Tel: 587 8030, [www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik\\_group\\_travel\\_service/](http://www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik_group_travel_service/)

### Car rentals

- **Átak Car Rental,** Smiðjuvegur 1, Tel: 554 6040
- **ALP,** Dugguvogur 10, Tel: 562 6060
- **Avis,** Knarravogi 2, Tel: 591 4000
- **Eurocar,** Hjallahraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
- **A.G Car Rental,** Tangarhöfði 8-12, Tel: 587 5544
- **Atlas Car Rental,** Dalshraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
- **Berg Car Rental,** Tangarhöfða 8, Tel: 577 6050
- **Hertz,** Flugvallavegur, Tel: 522 4400

### Airlines

- **Air Iceland,** Reykjavíkflugvöllur, Tel: 570 3030, [www.flugfelag.is](http://www.flugfelag.is)
- **Air Vestmannaeyjar,** Tel: 481 3255, [www.eyjaflug.is](http://www.eyjaflug.is)

### Bus Terminal

■ **BSÍ,** Vatnsmýrarvegur 10, Tel: 562 1011, [www.bsi.is](http://www.bsi.is)

### Samferda.net

A reasonable choice for the budget traveller. You log on to the website [www.samferda.net](http://www.samferda.net), choose your destination and hopefully find a travel buddy to share the cost.

### Cultural Centres and Tourist Offices

■ **The Intercultural Centre**  
The Intercultural Centre throws occasional cultural events and conferences but its main purpose is to be an information and counselling centre and serve as an advocate for the rights of immigrants in Iceland. Hverfisgata 18, Tel: 530 9300 [www.ahus.is](http://www.ahus.is)

■ **Icelandic Travel Market**  
Bankastræti 2, Tel: 510 5700, [www.kleif.is](http://www.kleif.is)

Information on day tours, accommodations, car rental and everything else you need to know when travelling in Iceland.

■ **Iceland Visitor**  
Lækjargata 2, Tel: 511 2442, [www.icelandvisitor.com](http://www.icelandvisitor.com)

A travel agency offering travelling package trips and custom-made tours as well as car rental, day tours and accommodations for visitors.

■ **Tourist Information Centre**  
Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, [www.visitreykjavik.is](http://www.visitreykjavik.is)

Offers information for tourists as well as providing internet access, booking service, a phone centre, money exchange service, tax refund and selling the Reykjavík Tourist Card. The Reykjavík Tourist Card gives admission to city busses, various museums, Reykjavík swimming pools, The Family Park and Reykjavík Zoo, The Culture House and the National and University Library.

■ **The Icelandic Tourist Board**  
Lækjargata 3, Tel: 535 5500, [www.visiticeland.com](http://www.visiticeland.com)

All information needed before travelling in Iceland.

■ **Goethe Institute**  
Túngata 14, Tel: 561 5921, [www.goethe.de/island](http://www.goethe.de/island)

A cultural institute that offers movie screenings, lectures and German language courses.

■ **Nordic House**  
Sturlugata 5, Tel: 551 7030, [www.nordice.is](http://www.nordice.is)

The Nordic cultural centre organises various cultural events, conferences and exhibitions.

*All major tourist spots in Reykjavík also offer brochures, maps and information for travellers.*

## Useful Information

### Where to learn Icelandic as a foreign language

- **Icelandic on the Internet,** [www.vefskoli.is](http://www.vefskoli.is)
- **Mímír Continuing Education,** Skeifán 8, Tel: 580 1800, [www.mimir.is](http://www.mimir.is)
- **Námsflokkar Reykjavíkur,** Fríkirkjuvegur 1, Tel: 551 2992
- **Fjölmenning,** Laugavegur 59, Tel: 511 1319, [www.fjolmenning.is](http://www.fjolmenning.is)
- **The Icelandic College of Engineering and Technology,** Höfðabakki 9, Tel: 577 1400, [www.thi.is](http://www.thi.is)
- **Iðnskólinn í Reykjavík,** Skólavörðuholti, Tel: 552 6240, [www.ir.is](http://www.ir.is)
- **The University of Iceland – Department of Continuing Education,** Dunhagi 7, Tel: 525 4924, [www.endurmenntun.is](http://www.endurmenntun.is)

### Religious movements

The national church in Iceland is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Masses are generally held on Sundays at 11:00 in churches all around the capital. Service in English is at Hallgrímskirkja every last Saturday each month, starting at 14:00. The Roman Catholic Church also has masses in English and Polish.

Other religious movements in Reykjavík are for example:

- **The Muslim Association of Iceland,** Ármúli 38
- **Ásatrú Association,** Grandagarði 8
- **Bahá'í,** Álfabakka 12
- **The Church of Evangelism,** Hlíðasmári 9
- **The Icelandic Buddhist Movement,** Víghólastígur 21
- **Reykjavík Free Lutheran Church,** Fríkirkjuvegur 5
- **Pentecostal Assembly,** Hátún 2
- **Roman Catholic Church,** Hávallagata 14
- **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,** Ásabraut 2
- **Jehovah's Witnesses,** Sogavegur 71
- **Seventh-Day Adventists,** Suðurhlíð 36
- **Zen Buddhism in Iceland,** Reykjavíkurvegur 31
- **Independent Church,** Háteigsvegur 101
- **The Russian Orthodox Church in Iceland,** Sólvallagata 10
- **The Cross,** Hlíðasmári 5-7

### Trade Unions

- **The Icelandic Federation of Labour,** Sætún 1, Tel: 535 5600, [www.asi.is](http://www.asi.is)
- **The Federation of State and Municipal employees,** Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8300, [www.bsrb.is](http://www.bsrb.is)
- **The Association of Academics,**

Borgartún 6, Tel: 581 2090, [www.bhm.is](http://www.bhm.is)

■ **Efling,** Sætún 1, Tel: 510 7500, [www.efling.is](http://www.efling.is)

■ **The Commercial Workers' Union,** Kringlan 7, Tel: 510 1700, [www.vr.is](http://www.vr.is)

■ **Union of Public Servants,** Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8340, [www.sfr.is](http://www.sfr.is)

### Useful Websites

- **www.visitreykjavik.is** (The official tourist website of Reykjavík)
- **www.gayice.is** (Information about the gay scene in Iceland)
- **www.fjolmenningarsetur.is** (The Multicultural Centre)
- **www.hostel.is** (Hostel International in Iceland)
- **www.vinnumalastofnun.is** (Public employment services)
- **www.gulalinan.is** (The yellow pages)
- **www.leigulistinn.is** (Rent a flat)
- **www.ja.is** (Icelandic telephone directory)

### Where to get ...

■ **Work and residence permit:** The Directorate of Immigration, Skógarhlíð 6, Tel: 510 5400, [www.utl.is](http://www.utl.is).

■ **Insurance and benefits:** The State Social Security Institute, Laugavegur 114-116, Tel: 560 4400, [www.tr.is](http://www.tr.is)

■ **Icelandic citizenship:** Unless you come from a Nordic country, foreign citizens have to have had an unrestricted residence permit in Iceland for at least seven years in order to get an Icelandic citizenship although some exceptions exist to that general rule. Applications are at the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs, Skuggasund, Tel: 545 9000, [www.domsmalaraduneyti.is](http://www.domsmalaraduneyti.is)

■ **Unemployment benefits:** Directorate of Labour, Public Employment Service, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 515 4800, [www.vinnumalastofnun.is](http://www.vinnumalastofnun.is)

■ **Icelandic social security number (kennitala):** National Register, Borgartún 30, Tel: 560 9800, [www.hagstofa.is](http://www.hagstofa.is)

■ **Driver's license:** Those who have a foreign license don't need an Icelandic one for the first six months. After that time you have one month to apply for an Icelandic driver's license. Applications are at police stations.

■ **Tax card:** Tax office, Laugavegur 166, Tel: 563 1100, [www.rsk.is](http://www.rsk.is)

■ **Rent subsidies:** Social Service Office, Tryggvagata 17, Tel: 411 9000 [www.felagsthjonustan.is](http://www.felagsthjonustan.is)



Don't miss **KISAN** when in downtown Reykjavík. A truly unique concept store carrying world known brands as well as local delights like the quality sweaters from **Farmers Market** – only place in downtown.

**KISAN**  
CONCEPT STORE  
Laugavegi 7 • 101 Reykjavík  
Sími 561 6262 • [www.kisan.is](http://www.kisan.is)

Annick Goutal, Bonpoint,  
Farmers Market, Orla Kiely, Sonia Rykiel,  
Jamin Puech, Petit Bateau, Steiff ...



**flickr.era** – digital horizons  
1. 12. 2007 – 17. 2. 2008  
LJÓSMYNDASAFN REYKJAVÍKUR  
Reykjavík Museum of Photography  
Tryggvagata 15, 6<sup>th</sup> floor • 101 Reykjavík • Tel. 563 1790 • [photomuseum@reykjavik.is](mailto:photomuseum@reykjavik.is) • [www.photomuseum.is](http://www.photomuseum.is)  
Opening hours 12–19 mon–fri, 13–17 weekends • ADMISSION FREE

## Stuffed with stuff

**Sirkus, this notorious little bar on Klapparstígur 30, bred a peculiar and energetic culture years ago and the many loyal beer-drinkers see the shutdown as the end of an era.**

Steinunn Jakobsdóttir visits Sirkus, one last time.

Page 16

**If there's any one thing we're promoting with our music, it isn't necessarily Satanism so much as an extreme sort of hedonism.**

Svartidauði vocalist Stulli explains the band's philosophy.

Page 20

**My friends ask me why I want to write shit.**

Novelist Óttar Martin Norðfjörð talks about facing criticism.

Page 13

**No one is ever going to remember the text about the event 50 years from now, but people still remember the different photos of the event.**

Porvalur Örn Kristmundsson explains the value of news photography.

Page 10

**I'm watching the assembled audience of four locals waiting patiently with their blue booties on.**

Valgerður Þoroddsdóttir visits Stykkishólmur to enjoy Ben Frost

Page 22

**If I had a 9 to 5 job, I wouldn't be able to keep the site up.**

Svavar Lúthersson explains how a torrent site works.

Page 6



1. desember Laugardagur DJ-Símon	2. desember Sunnudagur Dj's Hangout	3. desember Mánudagur 2 fyrir 1	4. desember Þriðjudagur Cocktail Workshop	5. desember Miðvikudagur Hm, man ekki...	6. desember Fimmtudagur Sprengjuböllin	7. desember Föstudagur Dj JBK
8. desember Laugardagur Dj JBK	9. desember Sunnudagur Dj's Hangout	10. desember Mánudagur 2fyrir1 út að borða	11. desember Þriðjudagur 2fyrir1 út að borða	12. desember Miðvikudagur Cheesy	13. desember Fimmtudagur Jaglar	14. desember Föstudagur Dj Jói Bé
15. desember Laugardagur Dj Jói	16. desember Sunnudagur Dj's Hangout	17. desember Mánudagur OLIVER	18. desember Þriðjudagur Hm, man ekki...	19. desember Miðvikudagur G&R	20. desember Fimmtudagur Jóla "poppur" and Pól Óskari	21. desember Föstudagur Dj Símon & Hlynur
22. desember Laugardagur Dj Hlynur	23. desember Sunnudagur "skótu" party?	24. desember Þriðjudagur Jóla Lunch	25. desember	26. desember Miðvikudagur Hm, man ekki...	27. desember Fimmtudagur Benni HemmHemm	28. desember Föstudagur Dj Símon & Daði
29. desember Laugardagur Dj Daði	30. desember Sunnudagur Dj's Hangout	31. desember Mánudagur Aramótapartý	1. janúar Þriðjudagur Cocktail Workshop			

AUKAKRÖNUR 5%

# Jólin á Oliver

OLIVER  
BAR CAFE GRILL