

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Alfrún Gísladóttir
Neil Holdsworth
Ása Baldursdóttir
Evar Örn Guðjónsson
Jón H. Hallgrímsson
Gerður Jónsdóttir
Davíð Roach Gunnarsson
James Ashworth
Bob Cluness
Nathan Hall
Kári Túlínus
Quentin Bates
Nanna Árnadóttir
Birkir Þjalar Viðarsson
Clyde Bradford
Ásgeir H. Ingólfsson
Egill Helgason
Paul Fontaine
Marc Vincenz

EDITORIAL INTERNS:

Lynn Klein / lynn@grapevine.is
Melanie Franz / melanie@grapevine.is
Sarah Pepin / sarah@grapevine.is
B.R. Neal / bess@grapevine.is

ON-LINE NEWS EDITOR

Paul Fontaine / paul@grapevine.is

ART DIRECTOR:

Hörður Kristbjörnsson / hoddi@grapevine.is

DESIGN:

Páll Hilmarsson / pallih@kaninka.net

PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Alisa Kalyanova / www.alisakalyanova.com

SALES DIRECTOR:

Áðalsteinn Jörundsson / adalsteinn@grapevine.is

Guðmundur Rúnar Svansson / grs@grapevine.is

Helgi Þór Harðarson / helgi@grapevine.is

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER:

distribution@grapevine.is

PROOFREADER:

Jim Rice

RELEASES:

listings@grapevine.is

SUBMISSIONS INQUIRIES:

editor@grapevine.is

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES:

+354 540 3605 / subscribe@grapevine.is

GENERAL INQUIRIES:

grapevine@grapevine.is

FOUNDERS:

Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson,
Hörður Kristbjörnsson,
Jón Trausti Sigurðarson,
Oddur Óskar Kjartansson,
Valur Gunnarsson

The Reykjavík Grapevine is published 18 times a year by Fróken 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. The Reykjavík Grapevine is distributed around Reykjavík, Akureyri, Egilsstaðir, Seyðisfjörður, Borgarnes, Keflavík, Ísafjörður and at key locations along road #1, and all major tourist attractions and tourist information centres in the country.

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').



Cover by:
Döður / Hrefna Sigurðardóttir

Editorial | Anna Andersen

Europe's Ex-Best Kept Secret

Anna's 6th Editorial



Every now and then Icelanders—and expats especially—complain about living on an island. The produce can certainly get old in every sense of the word, and then everything comes at an island price—it's not cheap to fill a tank of gas.

But imagine living somewhere so remote that supply ships can only reach you two months of the year. Grapevine photographer, Hvalreki, and I just spent four days in Ittoqqortoormiit, East Greenland where that's the reality for its 475 residents.

Getting to this town isn't easy, especially if you're coming all the way from somewhere like China, but from Reykjavík it's not too difficult: an hour and forty-five minute flight from Reykjavík to Kulusuk, another one from Kulusuk to Constable Point, and then a short helicopter ride from there to Ittoqqortoormiit.

That's also how they get their goods when ship supplies run out. Yep, they fly in our wonderful produce up to two times a week during the summer and once a week during the winter.

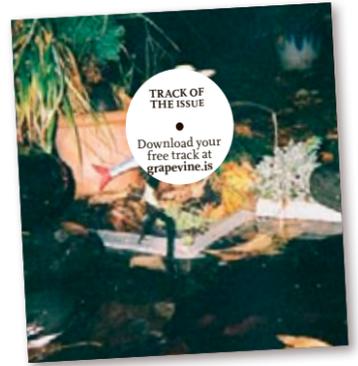
While such isolation could prove inconvenient

at times, it also has its benefits. There were no gift shops selling stuffed animal polar bears or T-shirts with tacky slogans in town and it was exhilarating to race around on snowmobiles through an untouched glacial wonderland.

This got me thinking about how Iceland has changed over the last decade. Only ten years ago you could have called Iceland one of Europe's best kept secrets. It was exotic, untouched, foreign to most people who might have been able to tell you that Iceland is green and Greenland is icy or perhaps that they knew Björk was Icelandic.

As Hvalreki put it, Iceland is becoming a bit like "Greenland Light"—a diet version of spectacular untouched, raw nature. Of course it's still possible to enjoy being alone in the world in the remote West Fjords or in the middle of the highlands, but beautiful spots like Gullfoss might as well be renamed Disneyland Falls.

But who knows what'll happen in the coming decade. Chinese businessman Huang Nubo was not permitted to purchase Grímsstaðir á Fjöllum,



TRACK OF THE ISSUE

Muck - "Circles"

Download the FREE track at www.grapevine.is

The mighty Muck spent the last two years making their latest album, 'SLAVES,' which was released a couple of months ago. Muck break some new ground on this record, which is their second long-player. 'SLAVES' features explosive punk melodies on top of scraping guitar riffs. This coupled with some choice early hardcore sounds and the two singers' guttural shouting ensures the album is a unique piece, a must for any fan of rock or hxc. If you've yet pick up their album, go get a taster www.grapevine.is, where you can score a free download of the excellent, all-over-the-place fifth track, "CIRCLES." While you're listening, you can flip to page 36 of this very issue to read an interview with the band. Fancy that!

30,639 hectares in east Iceland, but it turns out that he's going to rent it so there's a good chance that we'll be getting that fancy resort and golf course.

And the tourism industry seems keen on expanding across the country, so let's just hope we don't turn all of our natural beauty into accommodation for tourists, and that we don't destroy what makes Iceland special. We should probably enjoy our island and its unique qualities while we can.

Comic | Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



Loving the elements

Hot spring steam baths
Sauna
Geothermal baths

LAUGARVATN

fontana

ICELANDIC FOUNTAIN OF WELLNESS
SINCE 1929

55 min. by car*

*or thereabouts - depending on the elements

www.fontana.is

GEYSIR

ICELANDIC WOOL



WORN OUT FOR CENTURIES

We offer clothing & other merchandise that
reminds us of good old Iceland



GEYSIR



Reykjavík WELCOME CARD

See more and save more when visiting Reykjavík.

Free admissions and discounts off tours, shopping and services for 24, 48 or 72 hours.

Great value for money.

The Welcome Card can be purchased at:
The Centre, major hotels, museums, tourist information centres and Hlemmur and BSÍ bus stations.



THE CENTRE
The Official Tourist Information Centre in Reykjavík

Adalstræti 2 • 101 Reykjavík • Tel: +354 590 1550 • info@visitreykjavik.is

www.visitreykjavik.is

Licensing and registration of travel-related services

The Icelandic Tourist Board issues licences to tour operators and travel agents, as well as issuing registration to booking services and information centres.

Tour operators and travel agents are required to use a special logo approved by the Icelandic Tourist Board on all their advertisements and on their Internet website.

Booking services and information centres are entitled to use a Tourist Board logo on all their material. The logos below are recognised by the Icelandic Tourist Board.



List of licenced Tour Operators and Travel Agencies on: visiticeland.com

FISH MARKET FISKMARKAÐURINN

Taste the freshness of a farmer's market

Housed in one of the city's oldest buildings, Fish Market uses ingredients sourced directly from the nation's best farms, lakes, and sea to create unforgettable Icelandic dishes with a modern twist.

OPEN FOR LUNCH WEEKDAYS 11:30 - 14:00
OPEN EVERY EVENING 18:00 - 23:30



ADALSTRÆTI 12 | +354 578 8877 | FISHMARKET.IS

Say your piece, voice your opinion, send your letters to: letters@grapevine.is

Sour grapes & stuff

MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Hello guys,

i was very glad to find your feature about rental market in Reykjavik (and capital area), since i was one of those in the search of the rental apartment. And because my search is over now, i decided to share some of my experience - maybe it will help some others in this tough market.

It is not very long since i am a tenant myself, this is my second rental place - if i don't count the one i was renting some ten years ago, just when i came to Reykjavik, when i was renting a room for 14.000 per month; an amazing price even for those times.

You say in your article that rental places are gone withing about three days after they are advertised - in my experience, they are gone within few hours. Many people have the 'first come, first got' strategy (that is my best translation of 'fyrstur kemur, fyrstur fá'). When i were calling around noon for ads in that days' paper, it was usually already gone. But i had found that most of the people would advertise on as many places as possible: that means on both Leigulistinn and Bland.is and anywhere, where is free for them. And it is very fast process, for the landlords. Those in the search may feel like they are choosing their future home, but after all, we tenants are the selectee, the selectors are the landlords. Very logically, they can choose whom to rent, when they have so many potential tenants. And that's exactly what i had done, i did not go for the best place i had seen, but for the one which was offered to me. Maybe i am weird, but for me the search for a place means taking a look at as many flats as possible, even those not suitable. Not viewing anything felt like i was not searching hard enough.

I were surprised what everything is on the market these days, people would rent anything, only to be able to pay their mortgages: i had seen cellars and places never build as living space turned into something what owners called 'studio', sometimes even with more than one room. And it is not very hard to find such place in size of some 30 sq m for 80 thousand per month! Yes, they can do that, because they will find someone who will be forced to take it, everyone has to live somewhere. And the landlords are happy, they can still pay for their huge houses and leasing for all their cars (cos every member of the family needs to have a car). And every such family needs to have a tenant so they could afford it all.

The mind of a landlord is changing faster than the Icelandic weather, so watch out for the promises, and don't stop searching until you have a lease in your hands. You can be told to be signing the lease in few days, and when you call as arranged, 'your' flat might be already rented. And so don't be afraid

I read your story Spending the Night with a Farmer (14.5.2010). I'm traveling to the West Fjords by myself in May 2012 and I would love to stay with the farm family Samuelsson / Samuelsdottir in Djúpídalur.

I'm 60yrs old and truly enjoy sheep and farming. This will be my 2nd trip to Iceland and I intent to visit Iceland at least once a year. Yes, I love Iceland. I've already booked all my other lodging with Icelandic Farm Holidays + hostels, but this experience sounds perfect.

MOST AWESOME LETTER FREE GRAPEVINE TEE HEE HEE!



There's prize for all your **MOST AWESOME LETTERS**. And it's a scorcher! Whoever sends us **THE MOST AWESOME LETTER** each issue will receive a cool new **REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE T-SHIRT**, featuring the majestic G that adorns our cover. So you should make sure to keep writing us fun and/or interesting letters. This new Grapevine tee surely is the **SHIZNIT** (whatever that means)! It was designed by our very own art director man, **HÖRÐUR KRISTBJÖRNSSON**, and it's good for posing in front of a mirror, impressing folks with your impeccable taste or picking up men or women of all ages (no minors). **DON'T PANIC** if your letter wasn't picked **AWESOME LETTER**. You can still get a tee for a low, low price over our website, WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS. Now, if you're in the market for free goodies next month, write us some sort of letter. Give us your worst: LETTERS@GRAPEVINE.IS

to do the same. If you find something better during those few days, take it right away, even if you had promised to be renting to someone else. They might do that to you, and if they could, they surely would.

Considered all this, i am quite lucky i found a place in about two months of search. I don't believe i was my landlords first choice, but that doesn't matter. My rent is sky high (higher than my salary, but don't tell my landlord, please). At least i got proper state approved lease. During my search i've heard from many about new law according to which landlords pay 20% taxes from the amount of rent they get, and so very few are willing to give state approved lease. Or they are forced to rise the rent of those 20%. I did not have to take this place, but i got tired of searching. What is perfect about it is the location, and the landlord is from the same place as me. That must be a good sign.

Even it can be hard sometimes, i will never own any real estate again (i owned the place together with my husband), it is very hard to get a rid of it. Renting gives me more freedom and is kind of way of life. And i like moving.

With wish of good luck to anyone in search for place to stay,

Milka

Dear Milka,

thank you for your letter, which managed to be informative, flattering and a nice read in and of itself all at the same time! Well done!

And thank you for your kind words. They mean a lot, they really do.

And **CONGRATLATIONS** on finally finding a place you like. If there's one thing we learned through researching that whole apartment feature, it's that finding a suitable place to stay that doesn't cost **ONE MILLION KRÓNUR** out of pocket can be really tough.

But it's so weird that you enjoy moving. You really do? Maybe if you were one of those enlightened folks that have denounced all earthly possessions (well, you do seem to have denounced owning an apartment) it would be a different thing. If you're such a person, your position makes a lot of sense, actually. You just have to throw your underwear and socks into your overnight bag and off you go. No problem! However, if you own a huge piano, then you surely must be lying about your enjoyment of moving. Because moving huge pianos around is no laughing matter. It's really hard. Those fuckers are heavy. Even moving something as soft and cushy as a mattress can be a real headache. Especially if you're moving to or from a

place that has lots of stairs. Like, with the bedroom or piano room or whatever on the top floor. Of a four floor building. With really narrow stairways. Goddamn, that's annoying.

Someone really should have thought of some sort of moving alternative or helper or technology something by now. It's the 21st century goddamn it. We can make our phones order us 12" pepperoni pizzas and a 2-litre bottle of coke while massaging our butts, tracking our heart rate and reciting the complete works of Raymond Carver in the voice of Leonard Nimoy. **THERE ARE 3D PRINTERS** for crying out loud! **THEY CAN PRINT REAL OBJECTS!** IN 3D! Still, the process of moving a piano up a flight of stairs remains the same as it was around the time the piano was invented in 1948. How barbaric! How Neanderthal! Is this due to our society's built in disdain for manual labour and the people that do it? Is this because the only manual labour we value is... wait we don't really value manual labour or the people that work it at all. Nope. The only people we celebrate are nerds that like to eat 12" pizzas and drink 2 litre bottles of coke while listening to their cell phones reciting the complete works of Raymond Carver in the voice of Leonard Nimoy while their heart rates are being tracked and their 3D printer shits out parts for a model airplane or whatever. We will celebrate muscle and physical strain, but only if its done for purely cosmetic reasons. We'll pay someone **ONE MILLION KRÓNUR** to yell at us while we lift multiple kilos of steel, if the lifting is done for purely cosmetic reasons. We will reward people that look like browned sausage balloons after heaving multiple kilos of steel while starving themselves or eating Powdered Foetus Brand Heavy Proteins, but only if they heaved that steel for no apparent reason save for looking like browned sausage balloons (mmm... sausage...). No one is giving out awards for **BEST MOVER** or **BEST FISH-GUTTER** or **BEST WAREHOUSE BOX STACKER**, but there are like seven different awards for people who pretend they're someone else for a living (like that's so difficult, pretending you're someone else? Bah!).

ANYWAY. Surely we can all agree that something must be done for the plight of movers everywhere. Some of those nerds that are always inventing things when they're not playing around with their iPads should invent something for the movers. Like an anti-gravity something. Surely, you engineers out there can do something about that, even though you never have to lift anything yourselves. Quit being so selfish, engineers!

OK here's to the movers!

Do you have a way for me to contact them? An address, website? Phoning is difficult as I am in Colorado USA. I guess I could phone once I arrive in Iceland but I'd prefer to make arrangements way ahead of time.

Hope you can help out and thank you, Claudette

Hi Claudette,

I can't find an email address for them, but I believe you could phone this number +354-434-7853 (which is the number

of the swimming pool in Djúpídalur) and if that's not Guðrún and Leifur's direct number, you could probably ask to be put in touch with them. In fact they are actually the only people living in Djúpídalur.

Best Of Luck!



Leading in Price and Quality!

Budget guarantees you highest quality rental cars at unbelievable low rates. We combine the strength of one of the world's largest car rental brands together with detailed local knowledge, flexibility and great value for money.

Call us from any hotel or guesthouse in Reykjavík
and we will pick you up FREE of charge.



Car Rental

Call us on
+(354) 562 6060

Alternatively email us at budget@budget.is
(Office hours are from 8 am to 6 pm)

www.budget.is

THE HAARDER THEY FALL... THE ANGRIER THEY GET!



Reykjavík, April 23. Former Prime Minister Geir H. Haarde is red in the face following Landsdómur's verdict: guilty of one of four charges of negligence leading up to the 2008 financial crisis. He tells reporters that the verdict is "ridiculous and laughable." PHOTO: SIGTRYGGUR ARI/DV

News | Roundup

News In Brief: April Edition

A brief overview of some stories we published online at www.grapevine.is/news since our last issue—go there for the full story on EVERYTHING mentioned...

Well, **Hamborgarabúllan**, one of Iceland's most treasured hamburger shops, will soon be opening in London. Owner Tómas A. Tómasson told the Icelandic business paper *Viðskiptablaðið* that it will open parallel to Oxford Street. "But I guess it's best to say that it's close to Debenhams," he added "because every Icelander knows where Debenhams is."

Apparently the UK isn't satisfied with JUST our hamburgers. It wants our electricity too. UK Energy Minister Charles Hendry will be visiting Iceland later this month to explore those possibilities.

But this is dependent on constructing that **underwater cable**, which one Danish engineer says isn't so simple. The cable would be about 1,000 to 1,500 kilometres long, making it the longest in the world. Furthermore, it would be 1,200 metres below the surface of the sea. Today only one cable is deeper than that.

In other news, a **plastic cup** that Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir drank from was auctioned off with proceeds going to a charity for chronically ill children. **The Visual Arts Centre in Akureyri** took it home for 105,000 ISK,

which really pissed off some artists who feel cheated because the museum never buys their art.

The saga of the plastic cup didn't end there. The Youth Organisation of the Independence Party of Iceland (SUS) offered to pay twice as much for it due to its historical importance. The word for "disposable cup" in Icelandic is "mál," but "mál" also means "matter" or "issue," SUS claimed that this was the only "mál" that the PM has finished.

Meanwhile people are still **pretty unhappy with the government**. A poll conducted by daily newspaper *Fréttablaðið* revealed that the it has a 24% approval rating, which is what the previous government enjoyed just before it was forced out of office in 2009.

Then the **Chinese Premier paid us a visit**. He brought an entourage of 100 people with him and left after signing six "willingness agreements" with our government. More about that on PAGE 22.

Now, to the BIG news. **Landsdómur acquitted** former Prime Minister Geir H. Haarde on three of four charges of negligence and mismanagement leading up to the 2008 financial crisis. He received

no punishment and the State will cover his expenses.

You'd think he'd be happy, but **Geir was livid** as he told reporters that the verdict was both "ridiculous" and "laughable." He says he plans to take this matter to the European Court of Human Rights as soon as he can.

Then the church elected **Agnes M. Sigurðardóttir**, a parish priest from Bolungarvík, as the next bishop. She is **Iceland's first female bishop**. HOO-RAY.

What else? A small newspaper in west Iceland reported that they have reliable evidence that Iceland will **resume hunting fin whales** this summer, despite the International Whaling Commission's moratorium.

The majority of the **Icelandic police**, who are currently armed with pepper spray and batons, would like to have **tazers** or even handguns, as they believe their job is becoming more dangerous.

As Iceland continues in the EU negotiation process, the **majority of Icelanders are still against joining the union**. A new poll conducted by a pro-

fessor of sociology shows that 54% of Icelanders are against joining the European Union, and the greatest opposition arises from distinct demographics.

Oh and then there's Icesave... **BORING, BORING**. The European Free Trade Agreement's Supervisory Authority (ESA) says that Iceland violated the basic principle of international banking that depositors should be allowed to withdraw the money they put into an account, and that ultimately the government of a country's banks are responsible for making sure this happens. It asks the Icelandic government to admit it violated the treaty. Iceland has until May 11 to respond.

And finally **seagulls have been terrorizing residents of Kópavogur** ever since meat pellets—used as a cheap fertilizer—were strewn across the local football field. OOPS. ♡

ANNA ANDERSEN

Trivia | No prize

Trivia Question!

Which nationality of tourist spent the most on their family per person at the liquor store during their visit to Iceland in 2011?

- A) American
- B) German
- C) French
- D) Spanish
- E) Italian
- F) Norwegian

Turn to page 36 to find out. Hint: it's not the Belgians.



Create your comfort zone

Have you ever tested your ability to change the elements - turning cold to warmth or damp to dry? It's actually not so hard. You just need the right clothing like this jacket called Snæfell. Made with Polartec® Neoshell®, it's fully waterproof and yet fully breathable. It creates a comfort zone of its own - making it easier to change the elements around you.



Snæfell Jacket is the winner of the Scandinavian Outdoor Award and the soft goods ISPO Outdoor Award



So Who Is This Geir H. Haarde Guy I Keep Hearing About?



Geir Hilmar Haarde, Geir Haarde for short, was Prime Minister of Iceland when the economy sank back in 2008. His signature moment was addressing the nation on TV right after the crash and asking God to bless Iceland, which in terms of Icelandic political discourse was as incongruous as hearing the Queen of England quote Linkin Park.

THAT WAS AGES AGO! WHAT HAS HE BEEN UP TO SINCE?

He has been arguing about how much he is to blame for the events that led to the downfall of the Icelandic financial system. He and his defenders argue that he was a good man in an impossible situation and that he did the best he could with the information that was available to him at the time. His accusers say that he neglected his duties and was at least in part culpable for what

Words

Kári Túliníus

Illustration

Hörður Sveinsson

went wrong, that a man of his experience should have seen the iceberg coming. He is basically the Edward Smith of Iceland.

WHO'S EDWARD... AH, THE CAPTAIN OF THE TITANIC.

Yes. Though, to be fair to Geir Haarde,

"Though, to be fair to Geir Haarde, Iceland did not literally sink to the bottom of the Atlantic."

Iceland did not literally sink to the bottom of the Atlantic. But like with the good-or-not-so-good Captain Smith, people disagree vehemently about his conduct while in command. The Icelandic parliament charged him with neglecting his duties as a minister. A special court called Landsdómur finally ruled on April 23 that Geir was guilty on one count of four. Specifically he failed his ministerial responsibility and his constitutional duties to keep his cabinet informed about major events, namely the precarious situation of the Icelandic banks.

HE WAS FOUND GUILTY OF VIOLATING THE CONSTITUTION? THAT SEEMS PRETTY SERIOUS.

Geir Haarde argued in his post-verdict press conference, in a tone that even the most co-dependent friend would describe as mildly intemperate, that he had merely been found guilty of not

fulfilling a minor formality. Others have joined him in interpreting the verdict this way, notably Pawel Bartoszek, one of the authors of the proposed new constitution who summed up his defence of Geir Haarde by saying: "It is a peculiar sort of justice to find a man guilty of violating procedural rules, even though they are laid out in the constitution, in connection to the collapse of an entire banking system."

VIOLATING THE CONSTITUTION STILL SEEMS LIKE KIND OF A BIG DEAL.

You are not alone in thinking so. For instance, law professor Sigurður Lindal, Iceland's most well known legal commentator of the last few decades, says that Geir Haarde was found guilty of more than violating a mere formality, and that it is clear that Geir was constitutionally required to hold cabinet meetings about major issues, which he neglected to do.

SO WHAT AWAITS GEIR HAARDE NOW, THE GALLOWES?

No, given his age and lack of prior convictions, the court did not sentence him to any punishment. He is available for work should you have a national economy that needs an experienced captain. 🍷

Opinion | Neil Holdsworth

Tourists: The New Herring?



Siglufjörður is a beautiful fishing village, about an hour's drive north of Akureyri on the northern coast of Iceland. The town's museum tells the story of its herring fisheries, a sector of the economy that experienced a long cycle of growth for much of the twentieth century, eventually seeing the population of the town expand to 3,000. However, in the late 1960s the herring disappeared without warning, leaving bankruptcies, industrial decline and a reduced population that today stands at 1,200.

Like Siglufjörður's herring in years gone by, Iceland's tourist economy is going through a period of unprecedented growth. Foreign arrivals have just about doubled between 2001 and 2011, from 300,000 to 566,000—and this figure will likely be surpassed again in 2012.

It has led to a boom that can be observed in some unlikely places. For instance, I was surprised to find a bakery open in Hveragerði, a town of 2,000 inhabitants in south Iceland, at 8 AM on a freezing Sunday in January, full of tourists.

Over the past few years, I've watched Icelanders' attitude towards tourism change. Views are polarised: depending on whom you talk to, it is either a fantastic economic opportunity or a deep-seated threat to their cultural identity. As evidence of the latter, Sigur Rós, perhaps Iceland's most famous export, recently remarked that the growth in tourism was one of the worst things about Iceland's economic crisis.

The knife-edge between economic opportunity and cultural destruction is no more acute than it is in the Westfjords: a remote region with only 8,000 permanent residents. Mountains and sea surround the region's largest town, Ísafjörður, where hundred-year-old streets host craft shops, knitting cafés, and art galleries. If you take a stroll around the industrial area, you might hear thrash metal bands rehearsing amidst the derelict factories, or stumble unwittingly onto a film set. The creative economy is flourishing here: there is a vibrant community.

But change is afoot. Subway, the global sandwich chain, is opening a shop here next month, taking advantage of the low rents, which is the result of two decades of economic decline and depopulation. And whereas the town's business community used to joke about the prospect of tourism in such a remote location, it is now taken very seriously as an area of the economy that should be developed. It isn't hard to see why: luxury hotels, boat charters and toy puffins are a much more lucrative game than picture frames, wool and old photo albums.

The bottom line is the town cannot be sustained by the creative sector alone. Developing the tourist industry offers the prospect of investment and new employment opportunities. It also offers an environmentally positive alternative to heavy industry. Most people are in agreement that as long as the growth in tourism is managed carefully, the two worlds can peacefully co-exist to the benefit of everyone.

When the herring boom of the 1960s led to overfishing, a quota system was eventually introduced. When fisheries are managed carefully, the resource is virtually endless and renewable. However, this is not the case with foreign tourists: every airplane that lands at Keflavík burns up thousands of litres of aviation fuel—and despite the apparent discovery of oil in Icelandic waters, the oil isn't going to last forever. Not even easyJet can change that.

Perhaps there is a valuable lesson here from Siglufjörður's disappearing herring: focusing too much on one sector of the economy is not a good thing, in the long run. 🍷



ATV & BLUE LAGOON TRANSPORT

Special Grapevine offer!

- 1-Hour ATV tour and all transport
Price: 12.900 ISK p.p two on each bike.
Add 3.000 ISK p.p for a single bike.
- 2-Hour ATV tour and all transport
Price: 19.900 ISK p.p two on each bike.
Add 3.500 ISK p.p for a single bike.
- 3 to 4-Hour ATV tour and all transport
Price: 24.500 ISK p.p two on each bike.
Add 5.000 ISK p.p for a single bike.

Pick-up times 9:00/11:00/13:00 and 16:15

For no extra cost we can drop you off at the airport.

www.lavatours.is - atv4x4@atv4x4.is - +354-857-3001 facebook.com/atvtours

Day Tours

Taste the Saga

See a Glacier Up Close

The Blue Lagoon

Viking horse

All Terrain Vehicle Ride



Airport Express

Easy Transfers For Less

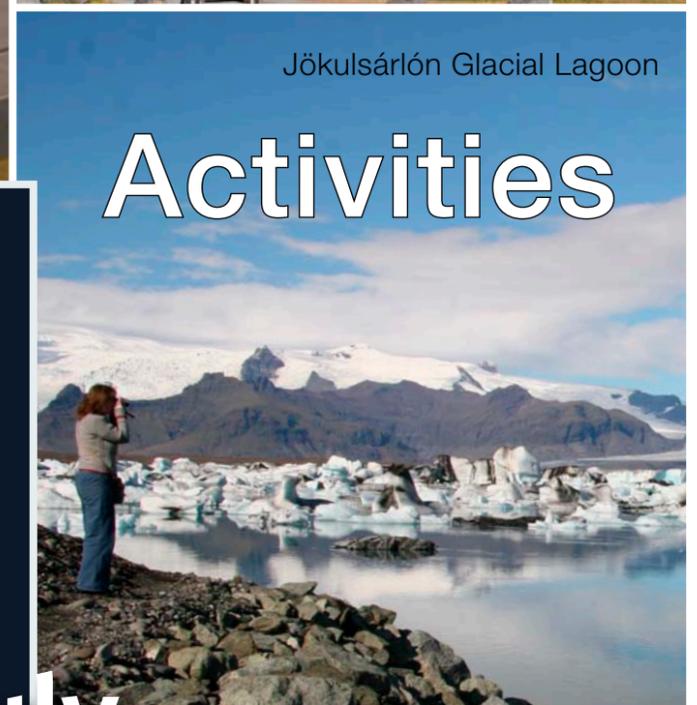


Seljalandsfoss waterfall



Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon

Activities



AH35 South Coast & Jökulsárlón Lagoon -
Dar wrote: Sunday, April 22, 2012:



"I enjoyed this tour a lot! Taking in not only beautiful waterfalls and Jökulsárlón, but also the landscapes of southern Iceland."

AH12 The Golden Circle Classic -
VanEaton wrote: Tuesday, April 24, 2012:



"If you only have two days in Iceland this is the tour to take. Don't miss your chance to see it."

AH30 South Coast & Pórsmörk -
Segger wrote: Friday, October 14, 2011



" (...) Our guide was friendly and really knew everything about the areas we were touring. I had taken a similar tour with Gray Line 5 years ago and loved that so wasn't sure if this one could equal the other...but it did! Would not hesitate to book with Gray Line again...and will!"

24 hour
booking service
(+354) 540 13 13

7ruly,

The Local Expert

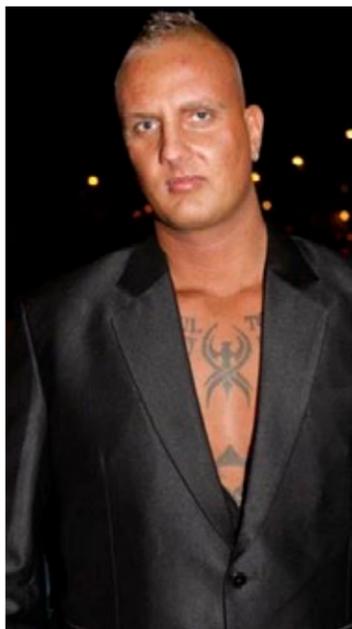
www.grayline.is



Visit our sales office downtown at Lækjartorg square (👍 Like-yar-torg), call (+354) 540 1313 or go to www.grayline.is

IS 'BLACK'S GAME' A REALISTIC DEPICTION?

-Our two-man panel of experts isn't so sure...



Set in late '90s Reykjavík, blockbuster 'Black's Game' purports to shed a light on a lesser-known side of innocent ol' Iceland, one where criminals, drug dealers and violent berserkers run amok, raising hell, terrorising people and engaging in sexy orgies to a soundtrack of old pop music. It is already one of the most successful Icelandic movies ever, and it has been lauded for its 'stark realism.'

We, your friends at the Grapevine, usually don't like to hang out in those circles, so we have no idea whether those claims are true. We asked some guys who are familiar with Reykjavík's underworld to review it for realism. Jón H. Hallgrímz (AKA Jón Stóri) has battled with demons through his life and was once arrested in connection to one of Iceland's bigger drug cases, elements of which reportedly inspired 'Black's Game' (he hasn't been convicted for anything since then) and is known to be outspoken on the subject

Words

Evar Örn Guðjónsson and Jón H. Hallgrímz

Photography

Facebook / Svartur á leik

of crime in Iceland. Evar Örn Guðjónsson also speaks from experience; he was once deeply involved in the underworld but has turned the page and now focuses on helping others. He is described by his friend Jón as "a stand-up citizen that will give you the shirt right off his back."

Together they went to the movies. Read on for their assessment.

ÆVAR AND JÓN'S CRIME ASSESSMENT OF BLACK'S GAME IS THUS

We give the movie 4.5 stars.

First off, we would have started by beating up Brúnó (Damon Younger), as he is a skinny, two-bit loser that no one likes. If you are going to run a crime syndicate, everyone in the inner circle needs to look up to you and like you; you don't last long by intimidating your co-workers.

Brúnó couldn't survive for long in our old world, because everyone would turn against him quickly. He would be taken on a so-called 'car ride' and after that he would crawl to rehab, crying the whole way.

If you're at the top, you can shit all over those who are way below you in the pecking order, but never on your peers—that will break up the sense of fraternity that keeps things together and

running smoothly. This is something Brúnó would need to learn, probably the hard way.

Tóti (Jóhannes Haukur Jóhannesson) is a guy that we definitely would have allowed to party with us, a fun and brutal cat. Jóhannes has the looks and mannerisms down to a tee and gives the most realistic performance out of anyone in the movie. Skál to you, Jóhannes, one of the best—if not the best—crime actors in Iceland!

The second most realistic character is Robbi Rotta (Vignir Rafn Valþórsson). Definitely a guy that would never go far in this world, no matter who he knew, a punk like him would maybe be al-

However, when Gillz tells you you're disgusting you just think, "yeaaaah right, a beefy Páll Óskar is trying to intimidate me..." He didn't manage to portray a volatile psycho more realistically than that, unfortunately.

Dagný (María Birta) is the girl you hate to love. Very frequently you'll see a girl like that pop up in a group of friends and break it up in a short time—friends will fistfight and stop talking because of a beautiful junky ho that only wants two things: drugs and money.

But when a girl like Dagný doesn't get the drugs or money she wants, she'll use her beauty

driven by drug use, greed and power-hunger, just like a politician is driven by his or her greed.

Still, the criminal will think through his moves with a care that most people learn in jail, as Iceland's prison, Litla Hraun, is the criminal's best school. The paranoia that arises from days upon days of staying up also ensures that they are careful when selling their drugs.

There is only one rule: don't get caught. However, after months of partying you stop thinking straight and rationally, and that's when people in this world make their mistakes. That's when all their thoughts revolve around drugs and money, all feelings of friendship and mutual respect have vanished and everyone has turned into a chieftain that nobody likes or trusts.

But kids, there is nothing exciting about this world. Do everything you can to avoid it. Some of us don't have that option, some of us are born into this kind of shit and there is nothing cool about that. 🍷

"But kids, there is nothing exciting about this world. Do everything you can to avoid it."

lowed to be a small time dealer, but never anything beyond that.

As Sævar K., Gillzenegger depicts a character that we have often come across. Still, the difference between Sævar K. as played by Gillzenegger and a real psycho is huge. When a real psycho maniac tells you that you're disgusting, it echoes in your soul—and if you're not completely insane yourself, you will accept his words without a sound.

to destroy gullible and drugged up individuals. A woman like her never stops for long in the same group of friends, because people see through her in the end.

The cops in the movie uttered a classic sentence that everyone in the underworld knows and dreads: "Would you come talk to us for a bit?"

Regarding the underworld organisation portrayed in the movie, it gives criminals too much credit. Nothing is that planned: it's mostly

Mountaineers of Iceland

SUPER JEEP & SNOWMOBILE TOURS

Mountaineers of Iceland • Skútuvogur 12E • 104 Reykjavík • Iceland
Telephone: +354 580 9900 Ice@mountaineers.is • www.mountaineers.is • www.activity.is



FJÖLMENNINGARDAGUR

INTERCULTURAL DAY

12. MAÍ 2012

- 13.00 Skrúðganga fer af stað frá Hallgrímskirkju
Parade starts from Hallgrímskirkja
- 13.30 - 17.00 Fjölbjóðlegur markaður í Ráðhúsi Reykjavíkur
Intercultural market at City Hall
- 14.00 - 18.00 Skemmtidagskrá í Tjarnarbíó
Intercultural festival at Tjarnarbíó



reykjavik.is/fjoldemningardagur

The Eight Presidential Candidates, So Far...

The Grapevine's guide to the Icelandic presidential elections



THE INCUMBENT



THE TELEVISION PERSONALITY



THE MOUNTAINEER



THE PROFESSOR



THE HUMANIST



THE WORKING MAN



THE DETECTIVE



THE FIRECRACKER



THE ACTIVIST



THE WINNER

The Icelandic presidential elections are less than two months away and the race is heating up. For the first time ever it looks like incumbent President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson will be getting a run for his money. So far eight candidates have announced their intention to run, with a ninth intending to join them soon. At the moment it's looking like a two horse race between the two most polarising candidates in the media, Ólafur and Þóra Arnórsdóttir. However, Andrea Jóhanna Ólafsdóttir, chair of Hagsmunasamtök heimilanna ("The Coalition of Home Owners"), announced her intention to run just before we went to print so hold off on placing your bets just yet.

THE INCUMBENT

Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson has been leading a rollercoaster ride of popularity since the 2008 economic crash, leading some to want to stay on his ride forever, and others wanting to head for the nearest toilet. Although he implied in his New Year's speech that he would not be going for a fifth term—and left us hanging for months—he ultimately decided to run after receiving a petition of approximately 30,000 signatures urging him to do so.

Wanting to protect people's interests in "the ongoing political turmoil," Ólafur told newspaper Morgunblaðið that he intends to step down if the political situation becomes stable within his term. After

servicing for four terms, if he wins the election, he will be the longest serving president the country has seen.

THE TELEVISION PERSONALITY

In her announcement to run, Þóra Arnórsdóttir said "there is a need for a new tone in the national debate." She is a former journalist and television reporter who has made headlines with her pregnancy; she is due to have a baby in

guages, and used to be a radical communist. In an interview with state broadcasting agency RÚV, he said his role would be to promote "more responsibility, fairness and humanism." He stated that he thinks it is very important to increase our connection to the environment and that the president's role should be more home based than abroad.

Pundits place him in a strong position as a popular figure in Icelandic society

"The most recent poll conducted by the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland has Þóra leading with 49%, Ólafur in second with 35%."

May. Þóra has made it clear that women of childbearing age should not be disregarded from running for office. "I will take care of my children as I always have, as a full-time worker," she explains on her Facebook page.

At 37 years old, some are worried that the nation will continue to pay a president's salary for too long after she has left office, but she disagrees. "The law changed on this matter in 2009 and any president elected thereafter will receive six months pay upon leaving office and then get paid the same pension as others in civil service," she stated on Facebook. Furthermore she added, "I don't intend to retire until I'm in my seventies."

THE MOUNTAINEER

Ari Trausti Guðmundsson is a writer, geophysicist and former TV weatherman who has climbed at least 150 mountains, published ten poems, speaks five lan-

and ask whether his decision to run will affect Þóra or Ólafur in splitting support between candidates.

THE PROFESSOR

Herdís Þorgeirsdóttir, a human rights and law professor at Bifröst University, has multiple degrees and a doctorate. She states on her website that she stands for human rights and democracy and that her candidacy is "an experiment to see if the nation is ready to support a candidate against an incumbent president and financial powers in Iceland."

She argues that the president's role should not be to take the easy road, but to stand up for democracy. In the past she has also been heavily critical of the corruption in politics surrounding the economic collapse and recently the media, specifically on what she considers its misuse of news sites Vísir and DV's online polls.

THE HUMANIST

Always the bridesmaid, never the bride, Ástþór Magnússon is running for the third time. He is an educated photographer, an entrepreneur, and a declared humanist who wants to make the presidential role a symbol for world peace. He set up the international organisation Friður 2000 ("Peace 2000") in 1995 and has reportedly gone on many humanitarian missions since. A much debated, often ridiculed, figure, he is also one of the only people in Iceland who have run against Ólafur in the past.

Ástþór has often criticised the media for unfair coverage. Recently, in an open letter to National Broadcasting Service RÚV, he asked whether "candidates should not be allowed to introduce their policies to the nation without financial powers or cliques spoon feeding the people who to vote for."

THE WORKING MAN

Hannes Bjarnason is a former farmer who has lived and worked in Norway for the past 14 years. His decision to run is based on his observations of the political situation in Iceland. With dismay, he claims to have looked on at the breakdown of values in the nation and wants to bring morality back into the national debate.

In an interview with DV, Hannes stated that he counts himself as a representative of working people in Iceland. He has experience in a number of vocations, including carpentry, hotel work, food vending, and slaughterhouse work. As president he says he would safeguard the nation's interests.

THE DETECTIVE

Jón Lárússon has worked as a detective inspector on financial fraud investigations in Reykjavík since 2008. Jón is

apolitical and stands for democracy, favouring the people's vote over decisions made in parliament or by the president. Jón is against Iceland joining the European Union, stating that it is not in the national interest. He also opposes suggested constitutional changes to the president's power, arguing that while the powers have been abused, there is nothing wrong with the constitution itself.

In a Q&A with DV's readers Jón criticised Ólafur for getting too involved in the financial sector's interests. He stated: "the president should support the working economy but should also make demands towards it."

THE FIRECRACKER

S. Valentínus Vagnsson is a 72-year-old man who was arrested for planting a bomb at the government offices in Reykjavík. He intended to plant the bomb at Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir's house, but couldn't figure out where she lived (despite all of Icelandair's claims that she is listed in the phone book). He has not made an official announcement yet, but according to DV.is, he has collected over 2700 signatures of support outside the supermarket Bónus, amongst other places.

THE POLLS

The most recent poll conducted by the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland has Þóra leading with 49%, Ólafur in second with 35%, Ari Trausti 11.5%, Herdís 3%, and Ástþór, Jón and Hannes receiving under 1%. The media coverage has been heavily criticised, with candidates asking whether it will ultimately be the media or the public's decision who becomes the next president. What do you think? [?](#)

Words
Álfrún Gísladóttir

Photos
The internetz



WE'LL TAKE YOU THERE!

ALL THE MOST EXCITING PLACES IN ICELAND



Book now at your reception

Book now by calling 580 5450

Book now on www.re.is

GOLDEN CIRCLE TOURS

RE-04

The Golden Circle

All Year 09-17

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	GUIDANCE IN:
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	UK
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DE
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	FR
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	IT
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	ES

Guaranteed departures.

Included

Bus fare, guidance & admission to Geysir multimedia show. Pick up at hotels & guesthouses 30 minutes before departure.



PRICE 9800 ISK

RE-24

Gullfoss - Geysir Direct

All Year 12:30-18

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	GUIDANCE IN:
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	UK
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DE
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	FR
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	IT
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	ES

Guaranteed departures.

Included

Bus fare, guidance and admission to Geysir multimedia show. Pick up at hotels and guesthouses 30 minutes prior to departure.



PRICE 8600 ISK

SRE-74

The Golden Circle & Fontana Steam Bath

All Year 09-18

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	GUIDANCE IN:
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	UK

Guaranteed departures.

Included

Bus fare, guidance, admission to Geysir multimedia show, light refreshments & admission to the Laugarvatn Fontana. Pick up at hotels & guesthouses 30 minutes before departure.

Remember to bring a swimsuit and a towel.



SPECIAL OFFER

PRICE 12900 ISK
~~+4900 ISK~~

LF-01

Fontana Wellness & Þingvellir National Park

All Year 13-17

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	AUDIO GUIDANCE IN:
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	UK

Guaranteed departures.

Included

Return bus fare & admission to the Laugarvatn Fontana. Pick up at hotels & guesthouses 30 minutes before departure.

Remember to bring a swimsuit and a towel.



PRICE 5900 ISK

SRE-44

Gullfoss - Geysir & Langjökull Snowmobiling

All Year 09-19

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	GUIDANCE IN:
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	UK

Guaranteed departures.

Included

Bus fare, guidance & 1 hour snowmobile ride (2 people per vehicle; single person per vehicle at extra cost). Pick up at hotels & guesthouses 30 minutes before to departure.

A valid driver's licence is requested. This tour is not recommended for children under the age of 5.

PRICE 24500 ISK

Relax at the Blue Lagoon

Bus fare to the Blue Lagoon and admission

Duration: Flexible. Included: Return bus fare & admission to the Blue Lagoon. Pick up at hotels & guesthouses 30 minutes before departure. Guaranteed departures.

Adults

PRICE 8000 ISK

Children - bus fare and admission

Duration: Flexible. Included: Return bus fare & admission to the Blue Lagoon. Pick up at hotels & guesthouses 30 minutes before departure. Guaranteed departures.

0-11 years 12-13 years

FREE OF CHARGE PRICE 1600 ISK

14-15 years

PRICE 4000 ISK

From Keflavik Airport to Blue Lagoon

09:30, 11:45, 12:45 & 16:45

From Blue Lagoon to Keflavik Airport

12:00 & 14:15

From Reykjavik to Blue Lagoon

09:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 13:00, 14:00, 16:00, & 18:00

From Blue Lagoon to Reykjavik

11:15, 12:15, 13:15, 14:15, 15:15, 17:15, 19:00 & 21:00

FAST, FREQUENT & ON SCHEDULE EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK.

THE BUS YOU CAN'T MISS!

REYKJAVÍK CITY

Free WiFi Hotspot on board all Reykjavik Excursions coaches.

KEFLAVÍK AIRPORT

Book now: By calling 580 5400 • On www.flybus.is • At your reception



BSÍ Bus Terminal
101 Reykjavík
+354 580 5400
main@re.is • www.re.is
www.flybus.is



BACK TO THE FUTURE

The unrestricted spying of yesterday... and tomorrow?



“Good things happen slowly,” Björn Bjarnason, Iceland’s former Minister of Justice, wrote on his blog in March of last year when his successor in office, Minister of the Interior Ögmundur Jónasson, called for a press conference to announce that the police would soon be granted proactive investigative powers.

While Ögmundur and other Left Green MPs often criticised Björn for his aggressive efforts to increase police powers during the latter’s six years in office, he is now advocating for increased police powers as part of The State’s crusade against purported organised crime, which is believed to be predominantly manifested in a number of motorcycle gangs, including Hell’s Angels.

A bill that Ögmundur proposed to parliament last month does not contain the infinite investigative powers that the police have asked for, but it does allow them to investigate people suspected of planning acts that fall under organised crime and are punishable by at least a four year prison sentence.

Words

Snorri Páll Jónsson Úlfhildarson

Photography

Juli Vol

While the case is usually presented as the police’s struggle to gain greater justifiable investigative powers—in which they have supposedly not fully succeeded—the fact is that, from at least July 1999 to May 2011, the police had unrestricted authority to monitor whomever they wanted due to poorly defined regulations.

THE HEADLINE THAT NEVER WAS

“UNRESTRICTED SPYING WAS PERMITTED!” should have appeared as a major headline all over the Icelandic media last year. Yet it was strangely absent, despite an official acknowledgement from the Minister of the Interior that this was indeed the case that unrestricted spying on Icelandic citizens had been tolerated and allowed. The matter concerned Mark Kennedy, the British police spy whose seven-year long undercover operations were exposed and reported in the international media last year. Disguised as activist “Mark Stone,” he travelled through Europe collecting intelligence about anarchists, environmentalists and animal rights activists. He was for instance stationed in Iceland’s eastern highlands in 2005, where environmentalist network Saving Iceland was protesting the construction of the Kárahnjúkar dams.

In most of the countries where Mark Kennedy operated—short of Ireland and Germany—authorities have remained

silent about the matter. But a newly released report on police units providing intelligence in the UK, carried out by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), clearly outlines the aim of the National Police Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU) for which Kennedy worked: “the main objective of the NPOIU has been gathering intelligence,” such as “knowledge about the infiltrated protest groups, their aims and links with other groups, their plans and methods, and the people involved

“This simply means that until spring 2011, the police literally had a carte blanche regarding whom they could spy on for whatever reasons they chose. Unbeknownst to the public, these instructions allowed unrestricted espionage.”

in suspected serious crime.”

In other words, using proactive investigations to collect information in order to prevent possible action.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs Ösur Skarphéðinsson remarked during a parliamentary discussion about Mark Kennedy last year, the Icelandic police did not have such powers in 2005 and

still do not. That should have made any local co-operation with the British spy illegal, just as any other proactive spying initiative would have been.

SO MANY MEN, SO MANY MINDS

Following the exposé of Mark Kennedy, Ögmundur called for an investigation into Icelandic police authorities’ possible knowledge or collaboration with the British spy which resulted in a report by the National Commissioner’s National Security Unit (NSU). The report acknowledged that information about the protest camp at Kárahnjúkar, its organisers and participants, was passed to the Icelandic authorities. According to the report, this information then led to a “collaboration with foreign police authorities concerning protest groups abroad and the intended protests under the banner of Saving Iceland.”

“This is the big news,” Ögmundur declared on his blog in May 2011, after the report was published. “Espionage was employed with the Icelandic authorities’ knowledge and will.” He emphasised this point in parliament last March, stating: “The infiltrator [Kennedy] was able to operate at Kárahnjúkar because of very unclear regulations regarding the police’s investigation methods. Legislation was far from strong enough, and there were rules in force that never appeared publically.”

The rules he mentioned are instructions by the State Prosecutor from 1999. For some background: according to laws on criminal proceedings, the respective minister—Minister of Justice until 2010, Minister of the Interior since—should pass regulations regarding specific police protocols such as the use of informers and infiltrators. But these regulations did not exist until a year ago, following a request by the National Security Unit. Instead they were substituted by those State Prosecutor’s instructions which, due to their less formal status (compared with laws and regulations), were not published in a conspicuous manner but rather filed away in drawers and cabinets, so to speak.

Although these instructions are hard to come by they still are accessible and, according to the document, their purpose was simply to “prevent criminal activities,” for instance with the use of an informer “who supplies the police with information about criminal activities or people linked with criminal activities.” Most notably, the document’s eleven pages are free of a single definition of what criminal activities the instructions concern, unlike the regulations created last spring, which are confined to “well-founded suspicion” of acts or planned acts that are punish-

able by at least eight years of imprisonment.

THE PERMISSIONS TO COME

While admitting that he had not even seen the bill submitted by Ögmundur last month, Snorri Magnússon, Chairperson of the Police Federation of Iceland, still maintained to newspaper Fréttablaðið that the proposed permissions were too limited. Snorri explained that the police want permission similar to what their colleagues in Scandinavia work with which allow them, as he noted, to “lawfully monitor certain groups in society even though they are not necessarily about to commit crimes today or tomorrow, and collect intelligence on them, which then might lead to official cases.”

This is not part of Ögmundur’s bill, which states that in order to justify the use of proactive investigative powers, the police must know or suspect the planning of a violation of penal code article 175a, punishable with at least four years of imprisonment. Its execution has to be an operation of an “organised criminal association” defined as a “companionship of three or more persons with the main objective to systematically commit criminal acts, directly or indirectly for profit.”

The bill has only been briefly debated in parliament and has yet to go through second and third discussion before undergoing voting. But judging by the discussion in parliament last month, it will receive majority support—only members of The Movement have seriously criticised the proactive investigative powers.

One of them, Margrét Tryggvadóttir, recently pointed out that the police seem to have quite a decent overview of the given crime groups, even claiming to know their exact number of members. Along with recent admissions that for the last couple of years the police have received judicial permissions for wire-tapping in more than 99% of requested instances, this got her to question the real need for increased powers. Author and filmmaker Haukur Már Helgason echoed this criticism in a series of blog posts last year, nominating “the brand name Hell’s Angels” as “the biggest favour done to expansion-greedy police force.”

Nonetheless, the police and members of three parties who together make up two thirds of parliament are asking for more. In a parliamentary proposition submitted last year they ask the Minister of the Interior to prepare another bill, this time regarding the aforementioned Scandinavian investigation powers. The proposition is currently in the midst of parliamentary process and though Ögmundur might claim he doesn’t like it, it is questionable if he could actually resist such a majority will. Additionally, recent polls suggest that the right wing conservative Independence Party will gain a majority in the coming 2013 parliamentary elections, in which case it is certain that the police will not have to wait too long for the “good things” to happen.

Despite what has been presented by official police statements and through most media coverage, this would certainly not be indicative of a new period of increased investigation powers. It would be but a step backwards into an already realised future. ☹

able by at least eight years of imprisonment.

This simply means that until spring 2011, the police literally had a carte blanche regarding whom they could spy on for whatever reasons they chose. Unbeknownst to the public, these instructions allowed unrestricted espionage. These powers are now lost, partly



A Unique
Design and
Jewelry Store
in Downtown
Reykjavík

aurum

Bankastræti 4 | Reykjavík | Tel: 551 2770 | www.aurum.is



EXPECT
HANG
OVERS... 

NASA

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

Out Of Africa

Drilling for water, humanitarian work and bad politics in Kenya



Ragnar Sverrisson is an engineer and technician who has been active in the humanist movement for thirty years, both in Iceland and abroad. In recent years, Ragnar has devoted his time and money to humanitarian work in Kenya. "When I first went to Kenya, I instantly fell in love with the country and its people. I've been there five times since 2004, and in fact I met my wife there," Ragnar says.

Ragnar's affiliation with the country began when a young man from Kenya named Ken sent an inquiry to the international humanist movement website. The site administrator in New York was a friend of Ragnar's and the humanists' in Iceland, and he thought it might be a good idea to put Ken in touch with the Icelandic humanist sect. "Ken wanted to know if he could help out in his own homeland, so we started corresponding. Three of us visited him and that's how our humanitarian work in Kenya began. He was very ambitious but now, sadly, he's deceased," Ragnar says, adding that in Kenya, death is very much part of everyday life.

"It's completely different there; throughout my whole life I've known perhaps ten people that have died, but since I first went to Kenya I've known about twenty to thirty people that have died either from AIDS or in car crashes, which cause more deaths among children there than AIDS."

Words

Pórrur Ingi Jónsson

Photography

Alisa Kalyanova

BRINGING WATER AND ICE TO KENYA

Ragnar experienced the difficult way of life in Kenya firsthand when he tried renting land and growing vegetables. "It went well at first, but when the crops came there were these massive droughts and we had very little to show for it. During drought season two years ago, one third of the population suffered famine," Ragnar says.

Coming from a place where water is in abundance, namely Iceland, Ragnar has been working on a project to build water pumps in Kenya. There is a massive water shortage in Africa, and Eastern Africa in particular is experiencing some of the worst droughts in 60 years. "I wanted to use my knowledge of technology in helping out down there," he says.

He has also spent five years building a refrigeration system. "Basically, you can capture the heat from the sun and use it to freeze food and even cool houses. They have very primitive fishing methods in Kenya and they almost never refrigerate their food," Ragnar says. "To build this machine, we received a 10 million króna grant from the Rannís Technology Development Fund. We've finished all stages of development and the machine works. It might sound strange here in Iceland, but globally speaking, seventy percent of all the world's electric energy output is used for refrigeration."

In addition to using his technological expertise to work on refrigeration and water shortage problems in Kenya, Ragnar has been working on another pressing social concern. Due to AIDS, Kenyan society has an overwhelming problem of orphaned children. In a nation of about 50 million people, the number of orphans is estimated at five million, a staggering ten percent of the population.

"There are a lot of people who want to help by starting day care centres or supplying food, but they badly need money to fund these projects," Ragnar says. "After kids finish elementary school they have to start paying school fees, so a lot of kids drop out. I started thinking how I could help these older kids and came up with a project that could make them some money. The idea was to start a young people's co-op, where the profit would be used to pay their school fees."

LEARNING FROM KENYA IN RETURN

Along the way, Ragnar discovered that Kenyans have a very different way of thinking and dealing with things. "Their mentality is completely different and when I first went there, I thought I could teach them a lot, but as time passes I've realised that there is rather a lot they can teach us," he says. "We can bring the technology and the forward-thinking to them but they can help us with living our everyday lives in a happier fashion."

However, Ragnar thinks that one of the things that hamper progress in Kenya is the incredibly corrupt government, which often steals government funding allocated for bettering the community. Icelanders tend to complain about the situation here after the crisis and some are disillusioned with the Icelandic politicians and the current state of affairs. Compared to the problems of a developing country like Kenya though, these problems are miniscule.

"My friend Paul Ramses [Icelandic immigrant from Kenya] laughs at the crisis here in Iceland because they live in that situation every day. There is massive shortage of food and water, poverty, corruption, AIDS and not many natural resources," he says. ☺

Somewhere Between The Moon And The Arctic



All eyes were trained on Iceland during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's recent two-day sojourn. Many were particularly curious of the fact that Iceland was the first nation on Wen's European trade agenda. I mean, Iceland's hardly on the way to the Bundestag, is it?

Why then, would Wen be so interested in visiting this so-called bankrupt nation teetering on the edge of the Arctic Circle? And although Iceland's geothermal resources are certainly of interest to energy-starved China, would one think it necessary for the head of the Chinese Communist Party to make a personal visit?

The Chinese media seem keen to tell us that Wen's university education as a geologist is why he holds a special interest. Others are perhaps rightfully more wary.

The Stefansson Arctic Institute's Embla Eir Oddsdóttir told Reuters, "Given China's investment pattern around the globe, people have asked questions. Is there some ulterior motive? [...] For the next decade they are going to be battling some sort of suspicion as to their motive, because people have a tendency to link them to some type of regime."

What sort of a regime would that be, Embla Eir?

Mia Shanley of Reuters said: "China's interest in ties to resource rich lands is no secret. Its businesses have also been on the lookout for opportunities in a Europe weakened by financial crisis—a crisis felt nowhere more sharply than Iceland."

And the fact of the matter is that the polar cap is receding far quicker than may have been initially anticipated. Scientists say we could already face rising concerns as early as 2040. A free ice passage over the top of the world "could slash the journey time from Europe and the east coast of North America to Chinese and Japanese ports by well over a week..." (by all conservative estimates 6,400 km of sea voyage). "I wonder if under the surface the race is already there, to gain a foothold in the Arctic," Embla Eir says.

As Deutsche Welle was keen to point out, "around 46% of the Chinese gross national product is linked to shipping. China also imports 85% of its energy from abroad." A lion's share, of course, is currently imported from that bone-of-contention nation, Syria.

According to Taiwan's Taipei Times, "The Arctic's oil reserves were high on the agenda...during the high-powered delegation's visit to Iceland [despite the fact that Prime Minister Jóhanna] Sigurðardóttir touted the...deal as [nudge-nudge] 'research collaboration.'" So it's not just rocks that Mr. Wen is interested in, but the potential of Icelandic oil? "Es-

timates suggest around 13% of the world's undiscovered oil reserves and at least 30% of its gas are buried under arctic ice," says Deutsche Welle.

Or perhaps Chinese scientists have found a way to harness the power of the Aurora Borealis?

In an April 21 article in China's Xinhua News Agency, Iceland was touted as the untouched jewel of the North Atlantic: a premier destination for adventure-seeking nouveau-riche Chinese. Could it be that Chinese investor Huang Nubo's thwarted plans for purchasing a giant slab of Iceland's north were actually quite kosher? China Daily shows that "around 7,000 Chinese people visited Iceland in 2009 [and] the number is on the rise."

FYI, 7,000 Chinese isn't even an apartment complex in Shanghai.

Taiwan's China Post noted that the same Huang Nubo had recently urged the Chinese government to promote overseas Chinese firms and investments in the wake of Wen's visit to Europe. "Rising Chinese investment in Europe—hit by a sovereign debt crisis—has caused concern, although Wen earlier this year sought to allay fears, saying Beijing did not have the intention to 'buy Europe.'"

Whether we like it or not, China's foreign currency reserves are high; and they've got to do something with all that foreign capital aside from buying up mines in Africa. More recently the slowdown of China's domestic growth has been of growing concern, and it may well be that diversification of Chinese investments, and in particular investments abroad, are of greater interest. On April 19, China Daily said: "...Premier Wen stated earlier this month that the nation would...begin fine-tuning its policies to promote continued economic growth..." Which rather sounds like someone's in an investment mood.

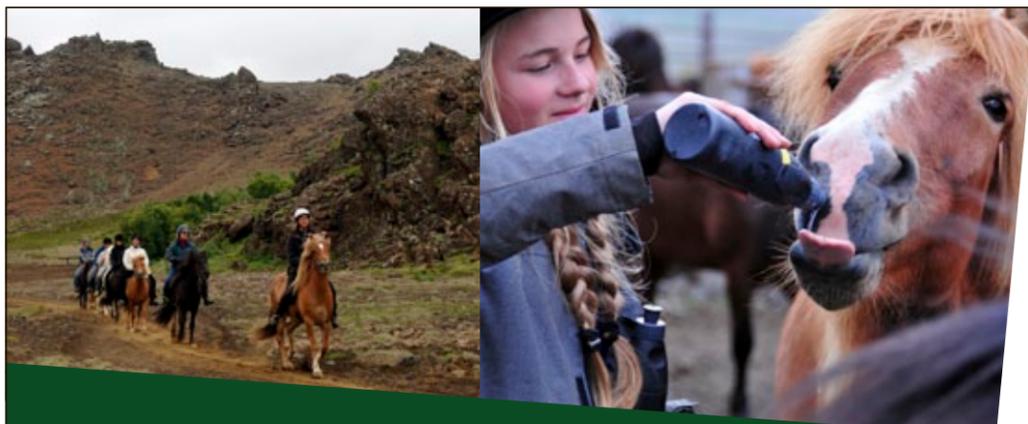
Shortly before leaving for Iceland, Wen called for a domestic crackdown on governmental corruption following the suspected murder of a British businessman by politician Bo Xilai's wife. Apparently Iceland-based Bloomberg journalist Ómar R. Valdimarsson got a right walloping from Wen's bodyguard for even broaching the subject.

A trip to Iceland is probably just what Wen needs to take his mind off things.

Cui Hongjian, head of the European department of the China Institute for International Studies, recently told reporters: "...China insists that the Arctic belongs to everyone just like the moon."

Insistence, of course, gets you everywhere—especially somewhere between the moon and the Arctic. Surely everyone needs an Aurora to light up these dark, Arctic times. ☺

MARC VINCENZ



For almost 30 years Íshestar has given people an opportunity to experience the Icelandic horse on long and short trips. Horses are our passion.

Come ride with us in the beautiful surroundings of our Íshestar Riding Centre. You get free transport from all major hotels and guesthouses in the capital area.

ISK 500.- discount!*

Name the magic word, "tölt", and you will get ISK 500.- discount on the Lava tour. Only valid when paid at our Riding Centre.

*Not valid with other offers.

Come ride with us



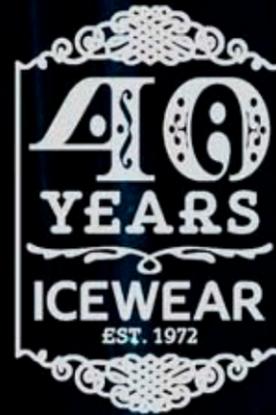
For further information check out our website www.ishestar.is, call +354 555 7000 or be our friend on Facebook.



www.ishestar.is

ICEWEAR are happy to announce
our recent acquisition of
Vík Wool knitting factory.

We now offer one of the widest
selections of knitwear in
Iceland.



www.icewear.is

REYKJAVÍK AREA:

Þingholtsstræti 2-4, 101 Reykjavík
Suðurhraun 12c, 210 Garðabær

VÍK Í MÝRDAL:

Víkurbjón, Austurvegi 21, 870 Vík
Products available in stores around Iceland

ICELAND AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

Part 1 – From colonial times to the present



For many centuries Iceland was a colony of Denmark. Due to its isolation, it was largely neglected until the nineteenth century when Danish cultural influence became overwhelming. Icelandic towns were essentially turning Danish; the merchant class was Danish and well off Icelanders started speaking their language. The cuisine became Danish, with heavy sauces and cabbage—to this day bakeries still sell Danish pastries. Icelanders read Danish magazines and knew all about the Danish Royal Family. Donald Duck even came to Iceland via Denmark; he is still called Andrés Ónd (meaning Anders the Duck) in Icelandic.

WHY WE LEARN DANISH

Iceland became independent from Denmark in 1944, but the Danish influence persisted. By now the bonds between the two nations have mostly disap-

Words

Egill Helgason

Photography

Inga María Brynjarsdóttir

peared; we are no longer familiar with Danish celebrities and Danish words have ceased infiltrating our language. Still, Danish is taught in school. It is a very unpopular subject, but the idea is that we should be able to communicate with people in the Nordic countries in a dialect close to our own. Of course there are also historical reasons.

Copenhagen used to be the second capital of Iceland. Up to World War II, almost every Icelander who sought a higher education studied there. Some kinship remains in this area, and Copenhagen is still the most popular destination for Icelanders who travel abroad.

However, much of Danish culture is derived from Germany, so one could also say that Iceland was heavily influenced by Germany during the period of Danish rule. It is worth noting that Germans have for a long time been quite interested in Iceland—more so than the British, for example. The Germans were keen on the Sagas and the image of this savage Nordic country—and Germany is still by far the largest foreign market for Icelandic literature.

AMERICANIZATION

In many ways Iceland is also a very Americanized country. The island

straddles the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, with Europe on one side and America on the other. The greatest single revolution in Icelandic history happened when British and then American soldiers occupied the country during World War II. Occupied, yes—for no one asked them to come. Even so, Iceland was quite happy being under American dominion rather than the German yoke.

But this was quite decisive for our culture. Iceland at the beginning of the war was a poor, backward society. The Americans brought cars, films, music, Coca Cola—and lots of money. Suddenly there was ample employment and Icelanders became wealthy almost overnight. Some say that it was at this time that work ethics deteriorated with Icelandic workers learning to cheat their foreign employers. Unlike Scandinavians, Icelanders don't especially like playing by the rules.

The Americans stayed on after the war and founded a large military base in Keflavík, which was considered very strategically important during the Cold War. This was for decades the most divisive issue in Icelandic politics. Nationalists and socialists wanted to drive the Americans out and they went on long marches, singing songs and reciting poems about this affront to the newly founded republic. But the right wing was delighted—Iceland did its part in the fight against global Communism.

THE CULTURAL WARS

During this time cultural influence from the States pervaded. Icelanders aspired to drive American cars, the only tele-

vision station in the country was run by the US military, their radio stations pumped out Elvis Presley to rock hungry Icelandic youth. By comparison, the only Icelandic radio station allowed to operate at the time, which was state-run, only seemed to feature symphonies, folklore and long weather reports.

Guardians of Icelandic culture, mostly men who would nowadays be called patriarchs, were worried about this. They talked disparagingly about the impact of chewing gum, vulgar music and TV shows. Icelandic television finally saw the light of day in 1966, and soon after it was decided that the broadcasts from the US television station be limited to the Keflavík base. Thus ended this cultural war—maybe it is symbolic that one of those active in it, Kristján Eldjárn, the curator of the National Museum, was elected president at this time.

ALSO SOME SOVIET INFLUENCE

Paradoxically, Iceland had quite good relations with the Soviet Union at this time. This was due to the relative strength of the communist movement in Iceland and its surprisingly good relationship with the conservatives (both wanted to keep down the Social Democrats, the strongest political force in the other Nordic Countries). The Icelandic government made large trade agreements with Moscow, selling herring and wool products to the Soviets, and getting oil and cars instead.

“Copenhagen used to be the second capital of Iceland. Up to World War II, almost every Icelander who sought a higher education studied there.”

The Icelandic oil retailers, Shell, Esso and BP, all sold Soviet oil. So in the period between 1950 and 1980 you could have an alternative lifestyle in Iceland, driving around in Moskwitsch or Volga automobiles and viewing Soviet films exclusively.

At this time Icelanders gazed enviously at the Keflavík base where soldiers had access to various consumer goods and beer, which was not allowed in Iceland until 1989. In the eighties, the first shopping malls rose in Reyk-

javík, and Iceland finally became a fully fledged consumer society. Soon you had soldiers on leave coming to Reykjavík, eyeing things in shops they couldn't afford to buy. The allure of the base was gone, and when the Cold War finally ended, it didn't really arouse any passion. The Americans left in 2006—that was the end of an area.

Many old friends of America were very hurt by them leaving—and some members of the conservative Independence Party, notably ex-Prime Minister Davíð Oddsson, tried hard to get them to stay. Their ultimate reaction was a mixture of anger and dismay, which became clear during the collapse of the Icelandic economy in 2008. Davíð, who had become governor of the Central Bank, announced that the Russian government had offered a huge loan to rescue the economy. This loan would have made Iceland very beholden to the Russians—and many were reminded of famous words spoken by one of writer Halldór Laxness's heroines who was betrayed by her lover and marries a famous drunkard: “Rather the worst than the second best!”

LONDON BECOMES A SECOND CAPITAL

The second half of the 1990s ushered in what could be called 'the British age.' Well, Icelanders have long been keen on British music and football, but during this period London really started seeming like it was Iceland's second capital. Icelandic businessmen started flocking to the UK, picking up all the tricks of casino capitalism, takeovers and leveraging. Many of them settled in London and started buying companies like there was no tomorrow. For a while it was said that Icelanders were buying up the high streets of the UK. These high flyers started living like no Icelandic businessmen had done before, traveling in private jets and keeping yachts in the Caribbean. Before it had always been considered bad form in Iceland to flaunt your wealth.

But times had changed, the new business Vikings were actually admired. A 2004 poll showed that the person most Icelanders wanted resemble was the billionaire Björgólfur Thor Björgólfsson. He still lives in London and does most of his business in Eastern Europe, but now he is almost universally despised in Iceland for he is seen as one of the men who bankrupted the country in the crash of 2008.



KITCHEN
open to
10 pm

ONE OF THE HOTTEST SPOTS IN DOWNTOWN REYKJAVIK

A PLACE YOU MUST VISIT IN REYKJAVIK

OVER 50 **DISHES** ON OUR MENU
There is something for everyone.

START YOUR DAY WITH CAFÉ PARIS'
● **BREAKFAST MENU** DAILY FROM 9 AM to 11 AM

● **BRUNCH** EVERY DAY FROM 11 AM to 4 PM

● FOR **COFFEE** ENTHUSIASTS
GREAT SELECTION OF COFFEE

The nightlife in Reykjavik is colorful and so are our cocktails - Check them out...

CAFÉ PARIS
C A F É - R E S T A U R A N T
la vie est belle

Café Paris - Austurstræti 14 - Tel. 551 1020 - cafeparis@cafeparis.is - www.cafeparis.is



Live Music on weekends from 23:00

REYKJAVIK MUSIC MESS

www.reykjavikmusicmess.com

25 - 27 maí '12

.....
Kex Hostel ≠ Faktórý Bar
.....

Benni Hemm Hemm

Legend

Úlfur

Cheek Mountain Thief (UK/IS)

My Bubba & Mi (DK)

Jarse (FI)

Snorri Helgason

The Dandelion Seeds

Reykjavík!

+ more

Tickets on midi.is from May 4th

Exploring Icelandic Coffee Culture



It's hard to miss that Icelanders are big coffee drinkers. They drink a lot of coffee. In fact, the average Icelander consumes 8.3 kilograms of coffee beans per year, which makes them the world's fourth largest coffee consumers per capita.

With Iceland's lack of big commercial chains like Starbucks, smaller businesses have had a chance to flourish. Small coffee shops or cafés can be found on nearly every street corner in downtown Reykjavík. Not counting pubs and restaurants, there are seventeen places selling coffee in just a 700-metre radius around the downtown streets Laugavegur and Skólavörðustígur.

Not only do Icelanders drink a lot of coffee, but they also claim that it is amongst the best in the world. But are Icelanders just caffeine fiends and braggarts, or is the coffee really as good as they say it is? David Noble, who opened the organic coffee bar Litli Bóndabærinn in 2011, thinks that the top-notch coffee has to do with Iceland's small community. "Competition is very high and if one place offers high quality coffee, the other ones have to catch on," he tells me over a cup of the black stuff.

FROM BEANS TO ROASTERIES...

Of course there's nothing Icelandic about coffee itself. Most of the beans come from Columbia, Brazil, Indonesia, and other countries in the southern hemisphere. But the beans' origin cou-

pled with the local roasting methods can make or break a cup of coffee, and Iceland's baristas seem to have caught on to the fact.

Most cafés, if they don't happen to roast their own beans, get them from Iceland's two leading speciality roasteries, Te & Kaffi and Kaffitár, which began operating in Reykjavík and its surroundings, respectively in 1984 and 1990. They are, economically speaking, small compared to international standards—each operating around ten shops. This means that the focus is less on quantity and more on quality when it comes to beans and roasting tech-

"The average Icelander consumes 8.3 kilograms of coffee beans per year, which makes them the world's fourth largest coffee consumers per capita."

niques.

More recently, a third boutique roastery, Kaffismiðja Íslands, opened its doors in 2008 and is already making a name for itself through its cosy coffee shop vibe and its highly skilled baristas. Upon entering their shop you won't miss their lovely pink roaster, which they put to work every weekday.

Pálmar Þór Hlöðversson, a barista and trainer at Kaffismiðja Íslands, as well as two-time winner of the Icelandic Barista Championship, explains how roasting is one of the most important parts of making a good cup of coffee: "With every roasting, the coffee will taste a bit different," he says. For instance, Kaffismiðja does one of the lightest roasts in town, and thus the coffee even features a bit of a fruity flavour.

...TO PREPARATION TECHNIQUES

Once the roasted beans make it to the coffeeshop (unless you're at Kaffismiðjan), the importance shifts to the preparation techniques employed. This is confirmed by David of Litli Bóndabærinn, who acted as technical judge at this year's Icelandic Barista Championship.

Most Icelandic coffees are made according to Italian techniques, and are served as latté, cappuccino, macchiato and espresso. At Litli Bóndabærinn, the latté is the most popular drink. "Perhaps it has to do with the excellent taste of fresh Icelandic milk," David

David says. "The barista is more in control of the variables—the ways in which your coffee can change, for example making it strong or weak."

At Kaffismiðja they use an espresso machine and a normal automatic filter and—for those who want something more special—they also brew individual coffees manually by using the aero press or a siphon, which is a vacuum coffee maker.

Those manual techniques need skills and this is where a good barista makes the difference. As Pálmar says: "You will never get the same two cups of coffee from two different baristas." Just like the careful selection of beans and the roasting process, this plays a decisive role in the cup of coffee you will get.

COMPETITIVE COFFEE MAKING?

Baristas practice and show off their skills in making the perfect espresso, cappuccino, and freestyle coffee drinks at a number of coffee competitions organized by the Icelandic coffee guild, Kaffibarþjónafélag Íslands ("The Icelandic Barista Association"). It was founded in 2001 with the goal of increasing cooperation between coffee shop owners and baristas, to host competitions, and to enhance their skills and knowledge of coffee culture in general.

"The Board comes together at least once a month, sometimes more often, especially around big events," Pálmar says. "And we try every month to hold a smaller event, like a cupping of the Christmas blend in December, or sampling various Scandinavian coffees from Scandinavian roasters. We also have small latté art throw-downs, one-on-one latté art pouring matches [latté art is where the barista makes a nice shape or image, oftentimes a heart, in the froth of your latté], where the most

aesthetically pleasing latté prevails."

Ultimately, this small, tight-knit community is the reason good, ambitious coffee thrives in Iceland. As Pálmar concludes: "Although not all cafés offer championship level coffee, you can still say that all our cafés serve coffee that's at least above average." ☘

FUN CAFÉ FACTS

Most places offer free Wi-Fi

Some places offer free coffee refills

This often comes as a surprise to many tourists and newcomers. "This is a unique feature of Icelandic culture," Pálmar tells me.

Places that offer free refills:

- Te & Kaffi
- Tíu Dropar
- Kaffitár
- Kaffismiðja
- Babalú
- C is for Cookie
- Hemmi og Valdi

Almost no places offer decaf

There is simply not enough demand. "We would sell maybe one cup per week and with that amount we can't guarantee the quality and it is not sufficient to roast," Pálmar says. The two bigger coffee chains, Kaffitár and Te & Kaffi, offer decaf, but as the barista at Te & Kaffi tells me, "we sell maybe one or two cups a day, and normally it's either tourists or pregnant women that ask for it."

Places that offer decaf:

- Te & Kaffi
- Kaffitár
- Tíu Dropar

Words

Melanie Franz

Photography

Nanna Dís Jónsdóttir



The oldest house in Reykjavík holds many modern treasures.



The best of Icelandic design and delicious hand made chocolate.

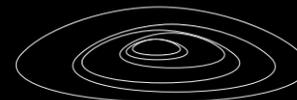


HR

HAFLÍÐI RAGNARSSON
CHOCOLATIER

Aðalstræti 10

Monday - Friday 9:00 - 18:00
Saturday - Sunday 12:00 - 17:00



Kraum
icelandic design

WE KNOW
THE FEELING



ISLENSKA SAJAS CIN 58620 02.2012

CINTAMANI BANKASTRÆTI 7
101 REYKJAVÍK, Tel. 533 3390

CINTAMANI AUSTURHRAUNI 3
210 GARÐABÆ, Tel. 533 3805

CINTAMANI SMÁRALIND
201 KÓPAVOGI, Tel. 533 3013

CINTAMANI KRINGLUNNI
103 REYKJAVÍK, Tel. 533 3003



CINTAMANI
WWW.CINTAMANI.IS



Friends W

What does Chin

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao came to Iceland last month. Arriving with an entourage of about 100 people, he was greeted by Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, and would later meet with many other government ministers. He was given a brief tour of the countryside and met with the president. While this would seem par for the course of any visiting world leader, Wen Jiabao did not just come to check out Gullfoss and Geysir—China and Iceland signed six agreements that could have a profound impact on Iceland's future, and also reflect China's growing interest in the polar region.

By Paul Fontaine

Many people speak of China and Iceland as if China's interest in Iceland is only a few years old. This belief is forgivable—most China/Iceland relations have been decidedly low-key, with two recent exceptions: former Chinese President Jiang Zemin's 2002 visit, during which members of Falun Gong—both visiting and local—were detained by police to prevent them from protesting his arrival, and more recently Chinese businessman Huang Nubo's interest in buying land in Iceland last year, which sparked much controversy amongst Icelanders.

In fact, relations between the two countries go back quite a ways—Iceland and China established diplomatic relations in 1971. "Before that there were no formal relations between the governments of the two countries," Magnús Björnsson, a lecturer at the University of Iceland who specializes in China studies, told *The Grapevine*. "The Icelandic Chinese Cultural Society (KÍM) was established in 1953, and through that a window was opened into China. Earlier contacts were only through personal connections including Icelandic missionaries going to China, beginning in the 1920s." So the two countries are not exactly strangers to each other.

Falun Gong, Amnesty International and others have taken issue with China's human rights record, and MP for The Movement Þór Saari made it a point to ask Foreign Minister Össur Skarphéðinsson in parliament if he planned to discuss human rights with the premier, to which the minister replied, "I consider it quite certain that at some point during the visit human rights will be discussed." But what has made many more Icelanders nervous about China's interest in Iceland has less to do with human rights than it does with China's presence in Iceland.

SUSPICIOUS MINDS

Icelanders' concerns over China's presence in Iceland became apparent in 2011, when Chinese businessman

Huang Nubo offered to pay 1 billion ISK for land in Grímsstaðir á Fjöllum. Encompassing 30,639 hectares in northeast Iceland, it is a place of natural beauty located near the mountain Herðubreið, and a popular camping spot. The fact that the area is naturally pristine and his intention was to build a luxury hotel and golf course on the land set off a great deal of public outrage. Matters weren't helped when it came to light that he had personal contacts with numerous members of the Social Democratic Party in Iceland, which leads Iceland's current coalition government.

Diligent Icelandic bloggers dug up some more dirt on Huang Nubo—in particular that one of his companies, Beijing Zhongdian Investment Corp, was in the business of cheating rural Chinese out of their land for use in tourism, and that his resume includes working within the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China. Ultimately, Huang Nubo was denied permission to buy land in Iceland, as The Ministry of the Interior pointed out that Icelandic law prohibits non-Scandinavians from buying land here. Only days ago, it was brought to light that municipalities of northern and eastern Iceland intend to create a shareholding company, buy a 70% share of the property, and then lease it to Huang Nubo over the next 40 years. He has already paid the full amount in advance.

As a result of this very recent controversy, many Icelanders regarded the arrival of Wen Jiabao with suspicion. What does China want with Iceland? And why is Iceland trying so hard to build a relationship with China?

"Iceland needs trading partners and China is a good one—providing all kinds of goods to Icelanders, most at agreeable prices," Magnús says. "In the future, China can also become one of the most important markets for Icelandic exports like fish and tourism. Iceland can be important to China by providing techniques for harnessing geothermal energy, which is abundant in China but has not been utilised to any degree so

far. This is very important as China is taking steps toward more green energy. China also needs Iceland as a strategic partner in the Arctic region when the Trans-Arctic shipping route becomes an option in transportation and for future utilisation of natural resources in the Arctic. In that field, the benefits should be for both parties."

This last point is an important one. China is the world's largest energy consumer, and the United States Geological Survey estimates that around 13% of the world's undiscovered oil reserves and at least 30% of its gas are buried under the Arctic Ocean. Also, around 46% of the Chinese gross national product is linked to shipping, according to the *Journal of Energy and Security*. Melting Arctic ice, and the opening of new shipping lanes, would be quite a boon to China.

But getting access to the region isn't easy—to get to the Arctic, China needs to get through the Arctic Council first.

The Arctic Council is an organisation comprised of Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Canada, Russia, and the US. Founded in 1996, the Arctic Council is the gatekeeper of the Arctic—its focus is primarily on environmental protection and sustainable development of the region. Any country that wants to do business in the region, whether exploring for oil or building bases of operations, must get the unanimous approval of the Arctic Council members.

With everything China has to gain in the Arctic—and every vote on the council needed for any kind of development in the region—it's small wonder China should be courting Iceland.

The Chinese embassy's political office responded to the *Grapevine* in predictably nebulous fashion, saying, "Iceland and China are good friends and partners. In the future we expect to enhance mutual trust, increase trade and promote people-to-people friendly contact. Both sides could enhance their cooperation in a number of fields, including: geothermal development both

With Benefits a want with Iceland, anyway?

in China and possibly to other areas; research in geo-sciences; environment protection of glacier [sic]; tourism; educational and cultural exchanges. Bilateral cooperation is on equality and will be mutually beneficial."

Interestingly, the Office of the Prime Minister responded in almost the same tone and fashion, saying, "Iceland and China have enjoyed diplomatic relations for 40 years, with enhanced cooperation over the past few years. China is a growing and upcoming economy, and an important trade partner to Iceland, and free trade negotiations have been in progress for the past few years. Several of the largest companies in Iceland have operations in China. Iceland and China have also increased their cooperation in other areas, such as research, renewable energy and geothermal cooperation in China."

SO WHAT DO THEY WANT?

Speaking in generalities about growing partnerships is all well and good, but what, exactly, did China and Iceland agree to during Wen Jiabao's visit?

The "willingness agreements," signed by Chinese and Icelandic officials at the Culture House, outline six points: the first two points state that the two countries will work more closely together on Arctic issues, primarily in the areas of scientific research and transportation. No surprises here. The third point welcomes Iceland to share its geothermal energy technology with China, but also that the two countries could work together to build up geothermal energy in developing countries; in particular, in east Africa.

The last three points, however, shift the focus more towards private industry. The company Chinese company BlueStar—which in 2011 bought Elkem in Norway, which owns an iron blending factory in Grundartangi—wants to build a silicon metals factory in Iceland. The partially government-funded company Promote Iceland and the China Development Bank intend to work more closely together to make it easier for

their respective countrymen to invest in each other's nations. Finally, Orka Energy Holding ehf.—an Icelandic geo-

Grapevine that "particular contents of discussions with foreign guests are not disclosed to a larger extent than was

"China also needs Iceland as a strategic partner in the Arctic region when the Trans-Arctic shipping route becomes an option in transportation and for future utilisation of natural resources in the Arctic. In that field, the benefits should be for both parties."

thermal energy company that, according to its website, has "the major components" of its operations in Asia—and China Petrochemical Corporation want to build upon the geothermal energy work they started in China in 2006, and to expand operations there.

While the initial points on cooperation in the Arctic regarding "transportation" and "research" might have been kept purposefully vague, it is obvious why the region is important to China.

BUSINESS FIRST, HUMAN RIGHTS SECOND

However rosy the relationship between China and Iceland may be, it's only as strong as the people who cast their votes for those who will run the country allow it to be. And it is clear that the aforementioned human rights concerns do matter to Icelanders. While Falun Gong members were able to publicly protest Wen Jiabao's visit without incident, they penned an open letter, published on Vísir.is, calling on the Icelandic government to uphold human rights while members of their organisation in China continue to be persecuted.

The Prime Minister's office confirmed that Jóhanna did discuss human rights with Wen Jiabao, telling The

stated in the press release of the PM's Office on Friday 20 April." The only mention of a human rights discussion in that particular press release states "the Prime Minister also discussed human rights issues, civil rights and international commitments. The Prime Minister and Premier agreed to enhance relations and cooperation on gender equality in the near future."

The local press also reported that journalists who tagged along for Wen Jiabao's tour of the country were not permitted to ask questions. When Bloomberg reporter Ómar R. Valdimarsson attempted to ask Wen Jiabao a question about Bo Xilai, a high-ranking official in China who was recently fired from his party, DV reported that one of Wen Jiabao bodyguards attempted to block Ómar from asking his question. When Ómar asked it anyway, the bodyguard pushed him. Ómar loudly exclaimed, "Don't touch me!" three times, and the bodyguard then backed off.

When asked about this apparent silencing of journalists, the Prime Minister's Office responded, "The programme of the visit did not include statements to the press or a press conference. The Prime Minister's Office did not prevent anyone from asking ques-

tions but at the same time, a foreign guest is not obliged to answer questions put to him, when that is not part of the programme that has been decided. The Prime Minister of Iceland gave interviews to the press, during and after the visit to local press."

The Political Office of the Chinese embassy also responded to the matter of journalists, albeit more cryptically, saying, "Prior to the meeting between the two Prime Ministers, as a normal international practice, the media is given a few minutes photo opportunity. The Icelandic media, like their Chinese counterparts, and everyone was on equal footing. The Icelandic media acted professionally."

A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE

Of course, as cynical as it may sound, it is a fact of life that democratic nations can and will do business with nations with very different ideas about human rights. It has been rightfully argued that it is nearly impossible to avoid "doing business" with China—so much of what we buy comes from China, after all. However, Iceland—like other Arctic countries—is now in the unique position of having something China wants, and being able to provide it, or deny it. The Icelandic government could bargain for sweeter business deals, which might be what it's doing. Or, as so many Icelandic voters appear to want, it could bargain for improvements in human rights in China. Or it could do both. Whichever way Iceland chooses to go, its relationship with China is arguably just as important for China as it is for Iceland. 🇮🇸

SO WHAT DID ICELAND SIGN ONTO WITH CHINA?

While no legal binding agreements were made, the Chinese and Icelandic officials signed six "willingness agreements" expressing a willingness to move forward with certain projects.

The agreements that Iceland and China signed are:

1. "Framework agreement between China and Iceland on Arctic cooperation." This is an agreement that Minister of Foreign Affairs Össur Skarphéðinsson has been working on since 2010. The wording of the agreement is vague, but it says that the agreement lays the foundation for future agreements regarding cooperation in the Arctic in the area of scientific research.

2. The Minister of Foreign Affairs also signed an agreement with China's Minister of Water Resources, which is similar to the first agreement, in terms of Icelandic and Chinese scientists focusing on the Arctic, but places special emphasis on the Arctic Ocean. Again, the wording of the agreement is a bit fuzzy; it doesn't say if they mean research on fish stocks or melting pack ice or something else altogether.

3. "Agreement of geothermal cooperation in developing countries." This was signed by the Foreign Minister and China's Minister of Land and Resources. This agreement states that Iceland and China will work together on the research and development of geothermal energy, for use in developing countries. One example specifically used is China working with Iceland and the World Bank to develop geothermal energy in east Africa.

4. "Joint willingness agreement between the Icelandic government and BlueStar." This was signed by the Minister of Industry and the director of BlueStar, an international metals company. This agreement centres on the building of a silicone metals factory in Iceland, which could produce 65,000 tonnes of material each year for the manufacturing of solar panels.

5. "Agreement between Invest Iceland and the China Development Bank on advising investors." In general terms, this agreement seeks to make it easier for Icelandic and Chinese investors to invest in each others' countries. Invest Iceland is a "public-private" company, partly owned by the Icelandic government, so you could say this agreement blends public and private interests.

6. Speaking of private interests, this agreement is between two private companies: Orka Energy Holding ehf., and the China Petrochemical Corporation (Sinopec Group). This one's a little complicated. You see, Sinopec has a subsidiary called Sinopec Star Petroleum Company Limited, which owns a 51% share of Shaanxi Green Energy Geothermal Development Co. Ltd. (SGE). Orka Energy—which acquired Geysir Green Energy and Reykjavik Energy Invest last year—owns the other 49%. Together, these two companies will expand the operations of SGE, to expand geothermal heating for homes and offices from 6 million square metres of building space to 30 million by 2015, and 100 million by 2020.

Haphazard Focus, Muck-Style

The proof is in the contradiction



"We saw the fish on Klappastigur and thought it was somehow posh and that made us laugh," Indriði Ingólfsson, guitarist and second vocalist for Reykjavík's Muck, tells me. **"Kalli Stállborn [lead vocals/guitar] took a picture of it and when the film had been developed it looked great to us—the fish is nicely dressed."** Bassist Loftur Einarsson adds: **"It's funny how the fish is fishing for fish."** We're of course discussing the cover art for their debut full-length 'Slaves,' which says a lot about the band's playfulness and intuition.

BORN OF CHAOS

The two lads indulge me as I attempt to articulate and reconcile how the band's recent transformation has hardcore enthusiasts, indie rockers and artsy types all along for the ride.

Most of what Muck seems to put together is haphazard, but at the same time meticulously thought-out. "We made a conscious decision not to stick to a single concept, idea, or sound; we didn't want strategize how 'Slaves' ought to sound," Loftur tells me. "The direction of the music was not planned. Everything was born during rehearsal. Maybe we brought a single riff or a lone beat, but never anything beyond that."

Indriði figures that to the outsider Muck's creations might seem haphazard and up in the air, but to them it's the "art of choosing," as he puts it.

Muck isn't complex arrangements-wise, musically or aesthetically. "We wanted to capture the raw elements.

Words

Birkir Fjalur Viðarsson

Photography

Alísa Kalyanova

Our compositions are not grand. It's because Muck happens at rehearsals. There's no time to ponder at home, fine-tune and tweak. Our music is born from chaos," he tells me. And I believe him. As a result Muck right now has and is becoming simpler than Muck of old. "There's constant noise but then something happens and we simultaneously recognise its potential and what it can become, we hone in on that and work it."

"Most of what Muck seems to put together is haphazard, but at the same time meticulously thought-out"

So it's haphazard after all? "Yeah, kinda," Loftur replies, "but to the extent that sometimes we're all tuned into the same band and during a jam sessions we're like 'let's do something similar to these guys.'"

But Indriði says it isn't always that easy. "There have been periods where weeks are spent trying to come up with something good. We're playing around with twenty riffs, jamming for two hours straight yet nothing works. That's because we're picky. We create a lot of stuff but the majority gets discarded."

NO SLAVES TO CONVENTION

Muck's music has changed dramatically since its inception in 2007. In fact Muck sound like a totally different band. Slow has been replaced with fast and moody has made way for rowdy. After 2009's 'Vultures,' Muck lost their original vocalist, and Kalli, and to some extent Indriði, took on the vocal duties, but this wasn't the main catalyst for the change. "Kalli and Ási's involvement with Manslaughter [a fast hardcore/grind band] rubbed off on the rest of

us," Indriði explains. "The speed of their songs, and the simplicity and quick song writing process made me jealous." Loftur adds: "They would be in that type of mode after Manslaughter rehearsals and transmit that over to Muck."

BEYOND THE MUNDANE

Muck has also recently incorporated visual and performance art into its on-line presence and live shows. Chalk it up to two of the members' enrolment in

the Iceland Academy of the Arts. A few voices have expressed resentment for these new additions suggesting pretentiousness and showboating.

Are they trying to change the band's image? "It's just boyish shenanigans, mostly," Loftur says. "A lot of the time friends that do art other than music ask us if we want to partake in their projects and we say yes." Indriði elaborates: "For us it's just a way to do even more band stuff together. It nourishes." Loftur explains that it enables the band to approach its creations and potential from a different angle. "We're inspired by our friends," he says. "We want to have fun. That's our main goal. And sometimes we want play outside the conventional box in hopes of a different experience for all involved. Simple as that. It's ridiculous that changing things up should have to be an artistic statement. It's simply a chance to look beyond the mundane." 🍷

Good Vibrations

Chick Corea and Gary Burton at Harpa



Chick Corea was only remotely familiar to me the moment I stepped into the dim glow of Harpa's Eldborg concert hall. He is a big name in the jazz universe and has played with canonical figures like Stan Getz and Miles Davis, led the seminal fusion group Return to Forever and was described by Los Angeles Times as "one of the major jazz piano voices to emerge in the post-John Coltrane era." Corea replaced Herbie Hancock in Miles Davis' band in 1968 and performed on such landmark albums as 'Bitches Brew' and 'In A Silent Way.' He also has 51 Grammy nominations under his belt, and is apparently a Scientologist. He was there with Gary Burton, a vibraphonist who has been his on-and-off collaborator for over forty years.

Jazz in this day and age has a reputation for being too mannered, cultivated and white, and the pair's polite introduction to their concert was certainly all that. Their playing on the other hand was not. They began with a piece composed by Chick and I was hypnotised from the first note.

EARDRUM MASSAGE

The decades of playing together showed off as the deep tones of the grand piano and high pitched timbres of the vibraphone bounced off each other in a gorgeous orgy of sounds. It felt like my eardrums were being softly and gently massaged by Chinese experts.

The second piece, also by Chick, was even better, starting with a lingering lullaby that gradually built in all sorts of unexpected directions. Melodies rose and faded in and out of the mist, textures from both instruments merged together and all of a sudden Chick took a break on the piano and Gary went wild on the vibraphone in an outlandish solo.

DECONSTRUCTING THE BEATLES

There is a tremendous joy in watching a virtuoso exercising his mastery over an instrument usually reserved for music

classes in elementary school. Holding two mallets in each hand, the vibraphonist's movements were so fast it was like watching a spider dancing ballet on hot lava. His playing was at times subtle and flashy, following or leading but always precisely on point. Chick Corea played the piano like an audience as his fingers ran up and down the keyboard. He hit it and it looked like a slap but sounded like a gentle stroke. What followed were beautiful arrangements of pieces by Art Blakey and other jazz giants, and after about fifty minutes they simply walked off stage without saying a thing during a thundering applause.

After the break they started with a low key Chick composition that wouldn't have sounded out of place on the 'Ame-lie' soundtrack. Shortly afterwards a high watermark of the concert reared its head in a sublime rendition of the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby". The duo deconstructed the core elements of the melody down to its atoms and then rearranged them in an orgasmic and highly creative fashion.

MOZART GOES TO A RAVE

A bluesy tune by Thelonius Monk followed, but "Mozart Goes Dancing" from the duo's last album raised the stakes. A jaunty and playful, but classically influenced piece it shifted through a lot of phases but always came out on top. Corea and Burton fed off each other in an Amazon of chords, scales and harmonies and if the film 'Amadeus' is any indication of how the real Mozart was like, he would have danced his ass off and begged for an encore. The audience felt that way anyway, as the duo received a standing ovation before they came back out to perform one of Chick's best known compositions, "La Fiesta." The whole evening was a fireworks display of enormous talent by two masters of their craft. 🍷

✍️ DAVÍÐ ROACH GUNNARSSON
📷 DANIELE MARCUCCI

Hemmi  Valdi

Laid back coffee house and all-night party place.

Laugavegur 21

THE NORDIC HOUSE INVITES YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS TO:

THE VATNSMÝRI FESTIVAL 2012

SATURDAY MAY 12 FROM 1-5 PM

The festival starts by opening of the New Nordic BBQ and some jazz.

During the day guests can experience number of outdoor activities and culture such as: horseriding, kite flying, knit café, soap-bubbles and games, music, get their portrait taken, take the guided tour to our current exhibition and more pleasant surprises...

...and bring your bike because we love bikes and at Vatnsmýri Festival we close our parking lot so your bike will have plenty of space. Dr. Bæk will be with us for the whole day and will check if you and your bike are ready for the summer.



www.boddydesign.com

Music | Reviews



Hljómsveitin Eg

Ímynd Fíflsins

gogoyoko.com/artist/eg

An angry idiot shouts at the clouds while listening to The Byrds...

(So you have no doubts about the meaning of Hljómsveitin Eg's fourth album, 'Ímynd fíflsins' ("The Image Of The Idiot"), singer Róbert Örn Hjálmtýsson adorns the cover with the most gormless, inbred, shit-eating-grin this side of a country horse festival.

Because this album is about us all being idiots—idiots that allow themselves to be dictated to by politicians, media, and the Vatican ('Sauðkindur'), idiots that ruin the earth ('Maðurinn'), and idiots that allow themselves to be swamped by crappy movies, porn, sugar and Ritalin ('Heimska'). Róbert himself is more than willing to play the idiot. Besides the front cover, he spells his name with a backwards R, sings "I admit that I am stupid myself" on 'Heimska', while "delaying" the mastering, "destroying" the photography, and "complicating" the production design, according to the credits.

But the mix of jokey irreverence and earnest seriousness is an uneasy alliance. As the album progresses, the lyrical tone begins to resemble that of Georg Bjarnfreðarson, ranting about US imperialism, and the evils of fluoride in the drinking water. He may be right, but when someone starts ranting with no underlying wit or sarcasm, people tend to stop listening. Indeed, Róbert's on much surer ground when he internalises his issues, in 'Hjálp,' for instance, or when he's light hearted in 'Hugleiða.'

And this railing at modern life isn't really backed up by the music. In a perfect example of "photocopier rock," Eg has produced a sound that could've come from any journeyman psychedelic rock band in 1969. Spongy bass, dampened drums and monofuzz guitars accompany throwaway melodies that sound dry and bereft of reverb. It may look and sound like the real deal, but there's no real depth or power. It's merely paper-thin. Add to this Róbert's voice has a grating quality, especially on the higher notes, which kind of puts you off pursuing any further meaning in the songs.

'Ímynd fíflsins' could've been an epic album of a man's inner rage at the stupidity he sees around him every day. If only they had better tunes to back it up.

✎ - BOB CLUNESS



Sigurður Sævarsson

Missa Pacis

www.sigurdursaevarsson.com

Restrained and lyrical beauty that moves the spirit

Composer Sigurður Sævarsson's new album out, 'Missa Pacis,' blossoms with harmonies for choir, organ, cello, and percussion. I heard 'Missa Pacis' in concert with the Hljómeyki choir during the 'Dark Music Days' festival earlier this year; the piece was performed at Nes Kirkja church under dimly-lit altar lights, rows of candles, and a perfectly-hushed audience.

Finally released as an album, the mystical mood of the live performance is faithfully recreated in recording. 'Missa Pacis,' or 'Mass of Peace,' is composed of minimalist gestures and haunting melodies, changing and growing from one movement to the next. 'Kyrie' begins the work, and is one of the most striking pieces on the album, a Requiem-like death march. The ending of the joyful 'Hosanna' movement sounds a little like Beethoven meets Stravinsky, executed as only an Icelander could do. The percussion often takes the place of a whole orchestra, using only large tympani and bells.

If there were one thing that was lacking in 'Missa Pacis' it is that the instruments don't get to show off their full potential; I wanted a solo movement for cello or some virtuosic playing for the organist. But being a work primarily for the choir, the instruments often provide splashes of colour that wake up a sombre chorus.

The highlight is the strikingly beautiful sections of vocal writing, carrying the torch of the Icelandic choir tradition that goes back centuries. The Latin text throughout the work is always clearly heard and understood—very rare among works for a larger ensemble. Sigurður invents moments for voices that shine like bells, chiming in and then fading out to a near-inaudible whisper. Best of all, there are surprisingly hummable melodies, especially in the 'Sanctus' and 'Miserere.' I found myself singing sections of 'Missa Pacis' as I took a walk outside, realizing that it's not too often that a Latin Mass gets stuck in my head on the way to 10-11.

Missa Pacis is performed by Hljómeyki chamber choir, Sigurður Halldórsson, cello, Steingrímur Þórhallsson, organ, and Frank Aarnink, percussion, conducted by Magnús Ragnarsson.

✎ - NATHAN HALL

1919

RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE





May we offer you something with ice?

Happy Hour Every Day
17:00-20:00

Make sure
it's Elding!



Elding
adventure at sea

Call us on +354 555 3565
or visit www.elding.is

ELDING WHALE WATCHING

from Reykjavík

Take part in an adventure at sea with an unforgettable trip into the world of whales and sea birds all year round.

Elding Whale Watching schedule – all year round

EL-01 / EL-02 / EL-03							
Jan-Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct-Dec
	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	
			10:00	10:00	10:00		
13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00
		14:00	14:00	14:00	14:00		
		17:00*	17:00	17:00	17:00	17:00*	
		20:30**	20:30	20:30**			

* From 15 May to 15 September
** From 15 June to 15 August

Other adventures at sea

Puffin Watching 15 May - 15 August at 9:30 and 15:00

Sea Angling 1 May - 30 September at 11:00










www.elding.is



Want to know what's going on in Reykjavík?

Want to let others know what's going on in Reykjavík?

www.listings.grapevine.is



Low Roar

Low Roar

gogoyoko.com/album/Low_Roar

Ephemeral cold beats of the soul

Ryan Joseph Karazija's self-recorded debut album as Low Roar details his struggles as an American to acclimatise to a new life in Iceland. It occupies that post-Radiohead world of cold introspection and societal melancholy, with delicately plucked acoustic guitars and solemnly paced electronica beats and clicks. On several occasions, Ryan even sounds like Thom Yorke as he sings his high-end mournful sighs. But despite this being a home recording, there's a huge amount of space in the music, with everything drenched in a foggy blanket of reverb. It feels like you're living in a cave of eternal sadness.

Listening to the album for the first time is a bit underwhelming. Some of the songs such as "Give Up" and "Rolling Over" aren't strong despite all the layered effects, while the pace of the album is often stuck at a slow, maudlin setting. But after repeated listening, there are moments when the album's components align perfectly. "Tonight, Tonight, Tonight" has a threatening, bleak edge with grinding cello, ambient synths and shuffling rhythms, while the track "Low Roar" manipulates Ryan's vocals to the point that they have an angelic floating feeling, similar to that of Julianna Barwick. Meanwhile, "Friends Make Garbage (Good Friends Take It Out)" just aches with longing and regret.

✎ - BOB CLUNESS



Intro Beats

Half Time

myspace.com/muckiceland

An album of two halves. BOOM BOOM!

One of the more interesting aspects of Möller Records is the way they seem to act as a refuge for hip hop beat merchants, offering them a sanctuary so that they can produce their work free from evil rap poachers after their ivory rhythms. First there was Steve Sampling and now we have Forgotten Lores producer Intro Beats entering the fray with his second solo album, 'Half Time.'

Containing a sampadelic array of styles and rhythms, the first half of the album is a hazy, although at times rather listless experience. Starting with a jazz-fusion intro track, it settles into the likes of "Let's Travel," which has an almost illegally blissful Balearic chillout vibe (the THC contact high from the CD alone will make you lose half an hour).

But halfway into listening, the album gives itself a metaphorical kick up the arse and the mood and tempo changes. "Hailien Alo," for example, is boisterous in its attitude, carving out a funky-lite beat and wobbling bass. The rest of the album continues at this level of energy, from the disco-funk of "Fry n' Chicken," to the samba-hardened punch of "Fjarðafönk." 'Half Time' does suffer a little from a lack of musical focus, but there's no denying that some of the tracks on here are pretty righteous affairs that shows Intro Beats' willingness to progress musically from his turntablist background.

✎ - BOB CLUNESS

Music | Charts

OF MONSTERS AND MEN: COLOUR US IMPRESSED

Artist	Album	Peak Billboard 200 position
Of Monsters And Men	'My Head Is An Animal'	6
Björk	'Biophilia'	27
Sigur Rós	'Með suð í eyrum...	15
Animal Collective	'Merriweather Post Pavilion'	13
Oasis	'Definitely Maybe'	58
Blur	'The Great Escape'	150

So we learned this week that Of Monsters and Men have sold over 100,000 copies of their debut album, 'My Head Is An Animal' (with a total of over 95,000 copies sold in North America and over 11,000 in Iceland). The LP famously charted at sixth place on the lauded Billboard Top 200 chart with a total of 55,000 copies sold in its first week of release. This must be a crazy sensation for the band, especially coming from a place where a decently successful alt. act would consider shifting even 3,000 copies of an album a Grand Success. For fun and pleasure, we thought we'd try comparing the OMM debut's peak Billboard position to that of some other records we love or thought would provide an interesting perspective.

It should be noted that the Billboard 200 only accounts for albums sold in the United States, and that 'My Head Is An Animal' is yet to be released in many nations where Björk and Sigur

Rós, for instance, sold extremely well (not to mention Oasis). And of course shifts in global record sales might mean that there are fewer copies behind a high chart position now than there were back when Oasis were really, really, really cool. Regardless, this is mighty impressive. Have they conquered America—a task majestically failed by both Oasis AND Blur (but sort of achieved by The Spice Girls)? Will they return to Iceland in a diamond encrusted helicopter fuelled by unicorn tears? Will they run for president of Iceland in 2012? Will Grapevine ever publish a review of their album?

Who knows! But it's exciting. It sure is. Congratulations, Of Monsters and Men. You're in for a heckuva ride.

✎ - HAUKUR S. MAGNÚSSON

GRILLED FISH, MEAT AND VEGETABLES.

GÚSTAV AXEL GUNNLAUGSSON, CHEF OF THE YEAR 2010, HAS OPENED A NEW RESTAURANT IN THE HEART OF REYKJAVÍK.



Quality coffee roasted on the premises

"We tried this place purely on the back of its excellent review on Tripadvisor and weren't disappointed."



CAFE HAITI by the Old Harbour
Geirsgata 7b, 101 Reykjavík
tel: 661 5621 / 588 8484
Opening hours: 8:00 – 23:00

Heavenly pizzas!



Home delivery
See our menu at www.gamlasmidjan.is

Opening hours:

mon-thu 11-23
fri 11-06
sat 12-06
& sun 12-23

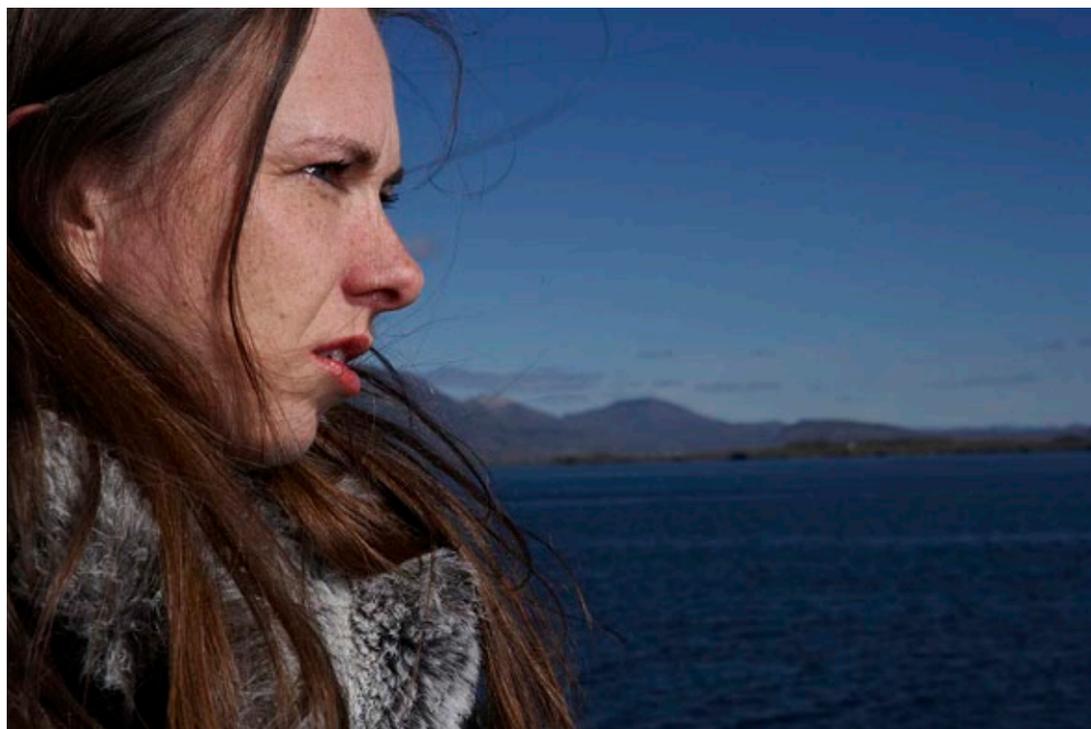


www.gamlasmidjan.is

tel. 578 8555

Lækjargata 8

What's So Great About Nordic Crime Fiction?



About a dozen years ago, a groundswell of interest in Nordic crime fiction began to gradually grow with appearance of Peter Høeg's intriguing tale of 'Miss Smilla's Feeling For Snow'. Around the same time a British publisher, who had clearly gone out of his way to find an Icelandic-speaking Englishman, contacted me with a request to comment on a book by an unknown quantity from Iceland. I produced a fairly favourable report on one of Arnaldur Indriðason's first novels, with the verdict that even if that particular one didn't suit them, this guy would be worth watching.

The publisher has been bringing out Arnaldur's books ever since.

GIMME FICTION, NORDIC FICTION

Nordic crime fiction has since become increasingly available in English, represented primarily by Swedish and Norwegian writers, with a handful of Danish, Finnish and Icelandic authors in the mix.

The word on the qualities of Nordic

Words

Quentin Bates

Photograph

Promotional

crime fiction is out in the open, gone mainstream with the arrival of Stieg Larsson's trilogy of blockbusters. But let's backtrack a decade or three. At

making its way to English from Sweden and Norway. Liza Marklund, Jo Nesbø, Camilla Läckberg and others are filling the shelves, while writers from Finland,

"The attraction of Nordic crime fiction is largely about touch and feel, the atmosphere of the Nordic countries is subtly different yet still familiar."

the end of the sixties, a series of exotic crime stories appeared in English. Written by Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö, the Martin Beck novels were a breath of fresh air and shone a bright new light on aspects of Scandinavian life that none of us had suspected existed. But then everything went quiet again, with their ten outstanding books relegated to odd corners of bookshops and libraries as an oddity that couldn't be easily pigeonholed—until now.

Today, English-language readers are spoilt for choice with a host of talented crime writers being hastily translated following Stieg Larsson's success, preceded by that other top-selling Swede, Henning Mankell, both of them launched into English by canny British publisher Christopher Macle hose who also set the ball rolling with Miss Smilla. Most of what we are seeing is

Denmark and Iceland are largely being pulled along with the flow—plus a few outsiders with the impertinence to set their work in Nordic countries.

From a dearth of Nordic crime a few years ago, there's now so much available that it would be practically a full-time job reading through it as it appears.

But it's worth remembering that what we're discovering now is only what readers in Germany have known for years. Let's face it, we native English speakers don't read much foreign stuff. Fiction in translation represents a tiny percentage of books published every year—making Stieg Larsson's grand arrival even more remarkable.

HOW DO THEY TRANSLATE?

While Arnaldur Indriðason and Yrsa Sigurðardóttir have made it into Eng-

lish, there are other fine Icelandic writers who haven't been able to follow, despite success in Germany. Even Denmark's king of crime fiction, Jussi Adler-Olsen, who sells by the truckload in Germany, is only just set to appear for the first time in English this year.

What has certainly helped Arnaldur and Yrsa is that their first books were translated by the mighty Bernard Scudder with a lightness of touch and a sensitivity that made them almost better in English. Such is the importance of the translator that a good translation can make a good book shine—but equally a poor translation can ruin a fine book in the transition from one language to another, and any writer is entirely at the mercy of his or her translator.

The attraction of Nordic crime fiction is largely about touch and feel, the atmosphere of the Nordic countries is subtly different yet still familiar. In spite of its ferocious winters, Scandinavia is perceived as being a safe and comfortable part of the world, so the portrayal of evil deeds in these cosy surroundings provides much the frisson that crime fiction demands.

Crime writing isn't so much about crime as location and character, the regular players as well as the transitory villains, and Nordic crime fiction's sleuths tend to be real, highly believable types—complete with flaws. Arnaldur's Erlendur and Yrsa's Þóra carry with them convincing baggage that takes the reader straight to Iceland.

But what is striking about Nordic crime fiction is the undeniable quality of the writing. This is good stuff, well written and paced, in a genre that has seen a shortage of good homegrown stuff in recent years. Is Nordic crime fiction (in English) here to stay—or is this a flash in a fashionable pan?

Stieg Larsson is bound to be followed by a host of imitations in the same way that Harry Potter spawned a brood of youthful magical lookalikes. So what's next? My guess is that Nordic crime is here to stay once the Stieg Larsson brouhaha has died away. But, crime buffs, watch out for Mediterranean Noir with its sharp smell of garlic, pastis and sun-baked machismo—and as good fiction tends to spring from turmoil, watch out for the Irish. There's a band of writers in the Emerald Isle with plenty to prove. Don't forget you heard it here first. ✚

It's A Bit Like Blood On White Snow

Best selling crime writer
Yrsa Sigurðardóttir
interviewed

Yrsa Sigurðardóttir, who began her writing career in children's fiction, wrote her first crime fiction novel in 2005. She has since then become one of Iceland's best-selling contemporary authors and is now working on her eighth crime novel. Between writing, working as a civil engineer, and caring for a family, Yrsa fielded a few questions for us...

Iceland probably has one of the lowest crime rates in the world. What is it about the crime fiction genre that thrives here?

I think the appeal of crime fiction is very different from actual crime. If you're interested in crime, you read the newspapers. Fiction is more about the feelings of the people involved, what drives characters to murder and how others respond to it. So it's more about the mystery and the drama involved.

The main character of your crime novels is attorney Þóra Guðmundsdóttir, a smart, single mother of two. Does her character embody the Icelandic female?

Yes, she's supposed to be a typical Icelandic female—not that they are typically single mothers—but juggling family life and work is something that most Icelandic females will do when they become mothers.

As a mother of two, and an engineer by day, how do you find time to write?

I don't watch very much TV. It's not as hard as it somehow sounds. A lot of Icelandic writers have fulltime jobs, but perhaps it's the fact that mine is technical that makes it unusual.

Your novels have been translated into more than thirty languages and sold in more than 100 countries. What do you think it is about them that most appeals to the world?

It's probably something similar to what makes Scandinavian crime fiction popular. Nordic societies are looked upon as being very kind and sheltered; it's a bit like blood on white snow. Nobody is interested in murder in a war zone.

Nordic crime fiction also tends to focus more on social issues than your average crime fiction. The close-knit ties that people have here with their friends and family is very much part of the characters and the development of the story. Lastly, I think the gloomy nature and dark nights here are fertile grounds for crime fiction.

ANNA ANDERSEN

SCHEDULE

Whale-Watching Tour

Duration: 3 hours

The tour includes a stop by Puffin Island 15th May - 20th August

	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV-MAR
08:55	08:55	08:55	08:55	08:55	08:55			
12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55	12:55
		16:55	16:55	16:55				

ADULTS: 47€ / 7.500 ISK
CHILDREN: 7-15 22€ / 3.500 ISK
CHILDREN: 0-6 FREE

Other Tours

Puffin Island Tours Duration: 1-1,5 hours

15th May - 20th August Every day
10:00 | 12:00 | 14:00

ADULTS: 3.800 ISK • CHILDREN: 1.900 ISK • CHILDREN: 0-6 FREE

Sea Angling and Grill Duration: 3 hours

May - September Every day
17:00

ADULTS: 10.500 ISK • CHILDREN: 5.000 ISK • CHILDREN: 0-6 FREE

Whale Watching

FROM REYKJAVIK

LIFE OF WHALES

- ✓ More comfort
- ✓ More space
- ✓ Bigger windows



Need to advertise your stuff? Your services? Your opinions?
Or do you need to buy stuff? Services? Opinions?

We have a classifieds site for that. **AND IT IS FREE!**

classifieds.grapevine.is



Taste the best of Iceland
in one amazing meal

Ice Landic Gourmet Fiest

Our famous Icelandic menu
includes Brennivín
and 7 delicious tapas

Starts with a shot of the infamous
Icelandic spirit Brennivín

Smoked puffin with blueberry
"brennivín" sauce

Icelandic sea-trout with peppers-salsa

Lobster tails baked in garlic

Pan-fried monkfish with lobster sauce

Grilled Icelandic lamb Samfaina

Minke Whale with cranberry-sauce

White chocolate "Skr" mousse
with passion coulis

5.890 ikr.



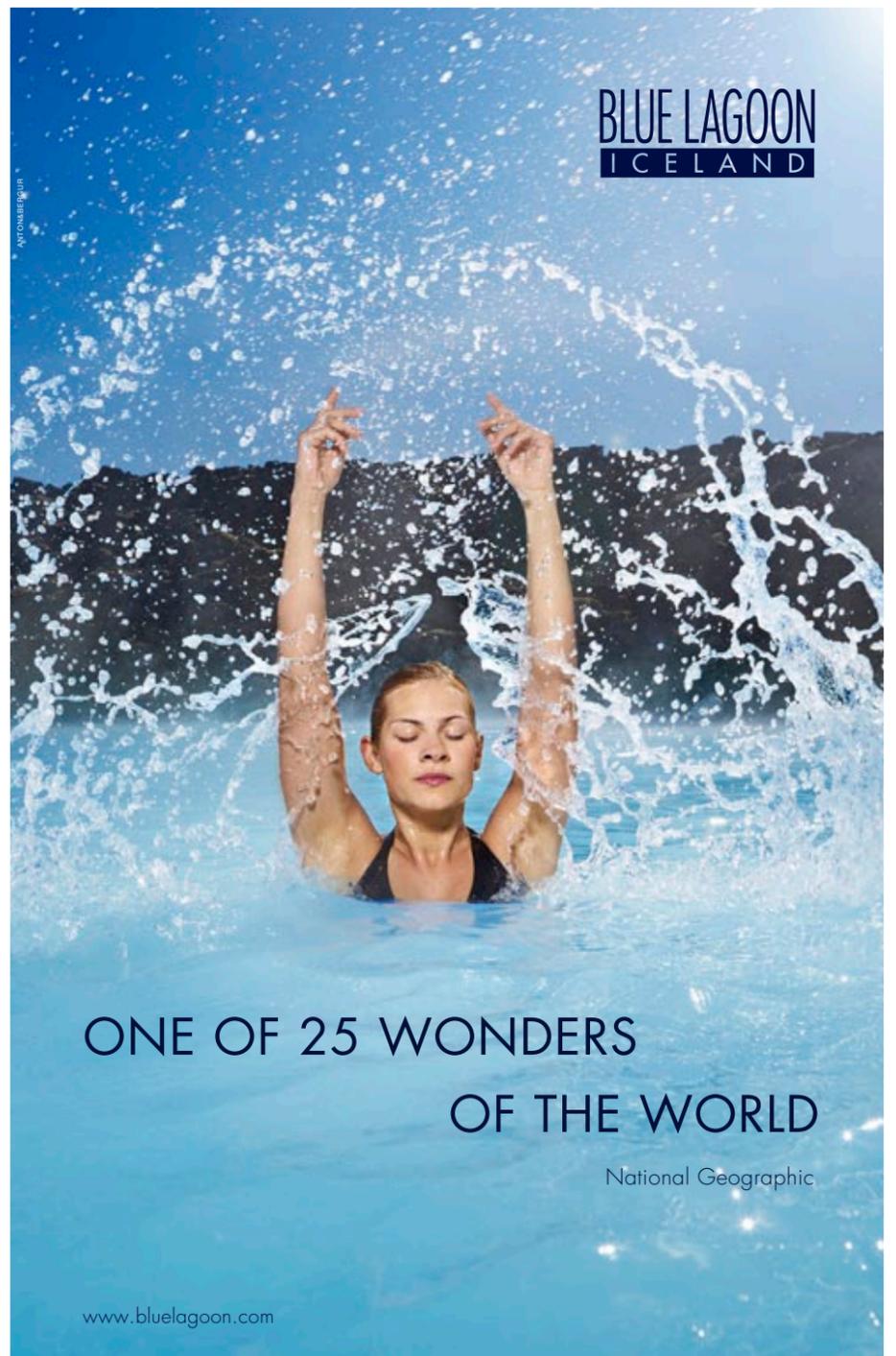
The only kitchen
in Reykjavík open

to **23:30** on weekdays
and **01:00** on weekends



RESTAURANT- BAR

Vesturgata 3B | 101 Reykjavík | Tel: 551 2344 | www.tapas.is



BLUE LAGOON
ICELAND

ONE OF 25 WONDERS
OF THE WORLD

National Geographic

www.bluelagoon.com

Mudbricks In The Desert

Artist *Elín Hansdóttir* went to the Marrakech Biennale



"I worked with eight local men, who understandably were all a little sceptical of the project in the beginning. I speak a little French, and so do they, but we obviously also had to invent another way of communicating. Since we only had ten days to finish the construction, we had to make very quick decisions together based on their expertise and my experience. Both the team and people passing by kept asking questions like "What is it and what is it for?" I don't believe there is an answer to that question, other than "What do you think?" It seems that the question as such is the greatest importance, not necessarily the answer. But after a rabbit had been sacrificed for lunch once and cooked in a tagine inside the spiral, the friendship had become grounded enough to forgive any kind of nonsense."

Artist Elín Hansdóttir is describing her work on a project for the Fourth Marrakech Biennale in Morocco, which started in late February and will still be on view until early June. Elín tells me

Words

Ásgeir H. Ingólfsson

Photography

Elín Hansdóttir

she received an invitation and an artist's residency grant at Dar Al-Ma'mun, about 14 km outside of the city of Marrakech. "Since I arrived in Morocco in December," she says, "I had been questioning the meaning and purpose of an arts biennale in North-Africa. I decided that it made more sense to me to develop something with locals out in the field in the village next to where I live, rather than showing something in the offered exhibition space downtown."

THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION

She tells me more about how the growth of biennials and art fairs all over the world is obvious evidence that globalisation has had an immense impact on contemporary art practice in the past twenty years. "This has led to a kind of 'international style' of works which, despite their differing quality, simply appear to be the same in any kind of location," she explains. "In response to this, many biennials have recently sought to encourage a direct 'engagement' with the 'cultural specifics' of each location, which can be tricky in a post-colonial era. From my perspective creating a large-scale site-specific work that costs the equivalent of an average Moroccan worker's two year salary is a huge responsibility. The stakes are high for experimentation in a country where most people strive for food."

When she got to the site she became interested in the traditional

Berber mudbricks (made from earth, water and straw), which most buildings in the village are built from. "What fascinated me was the fact that unlike us in the West, they hardly use tools during construction, instead they mainly employ manpower and imagination on site," she says. "Furthermore, it is interesting that they use the soil of the construction site to produce the building material. This results in whole villages almost seeming to mutate out of the landscape."

That was something Elín could re-

MOROCCAN SPRING?

Neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt have been in the news over the last year and a half, due to the Arab uprising. Morocco has stayed in the shadows, yet reports of human rights abuses have been many. But does Elín feel the winds of the Arab spring are reaching Morocco? "The protests in Morocco were quite peaceful in comparison to other Arab countries, although there were casualties," she says. "Morocco's King Mohammad VI proposed the writing of a new constitution, with the aim

organised a philosophical banquet in the village next to Mud Brick Spiral, where Driss Ksikes, a controversial Moroccan journalist and playwright, talked about art in public space which then opened up to a public discussion. It was very touching to see people of all ages who have never been asked their opinion take the microphone. Dar Al-Ma'mun's team wants to organise similar events every month in the future, which hopefully will encourage people to share their knowledge and discuss relevant issues. I always intended for Mud Brick Spiral to be an excuse for random encounters, functioning as a kind of magnet or meeting point for other things. If the public space around the piece, which before was an empty dusty field, is being used for events like the before mentioned banquet, then I believe there is hope for art in public space."

Finally I cannot resist asking her about 'Nói albnói,' the film most of us saw her in first. She played Elín, Nói's girlfriend, and has very good memories of the project—but hasn't acted since. "I have never thought of pursuing an acting career, there are too many incredibly talented professional actors out there. But if I would someday be invited to be a fly on the wall in an interesting movie, I might accept the offer, out of curiosity. Film sets are fascinating places." 🍷

"The stakes are high for experimentation in a country where most people strive for food."

late to: "An element of a site is altered and sometimes reproduced to create a different context. In the end we built a large scale spiral-like structure using mudbricks and attached mirrors that divide the viewers' movements into separate and distinct moments, as they walk past."

What will happen to the structure after the biennale ends? "The bricks will be distributed and re-used by the team that helped me build the structure. The mirrors will also be given away to the families in the village. The piece will disappear but the material will just be shifted to another setting."

of increasing the power of the elected government, gender equality and to improve civil liberties. But since the security services, cabinet positions and religious appointments remain under the control of the king, it is questionable whether these reforms go far enough, for a country that has been accused of human rights abuse in the past. Despite all the changes, Morocco remains a very corrupt country, but it will certainly be interesting to follow the reaction of the younger generation on a long-term basis."

She didn't discuss the political situation much with the men with whom she was working. "But Dar Al-Ma'mun

Pioneer in delivering organic products for 25 years

If you want to
shop organic in Iceland
Yggdrasill is the place to go

Yggdrasill offers a wide range of premium quality, certified organic products, including a variety of organic fruits and vegetables. We are located down town, next to "Hlemmur", one of the two main bus terminals in Reykjavík.



Yggdrasill • Rauðarárstíg 10
Phone: 562 4082 • Fax: 561 9299
e-mail: shop@yggdrasill.is

PINGHOLT BAR



2 FOR 1

ON ALL DRINKS
EVERY DAY
17:00-19:00
PINGHOLTSTRÆTI 3

CENTERHOTEL
PLAZA

CENTERHOTEL
ARNARHVOLL

CENTERHOTEL
KLÖPP

CENTERHOTEL
SKJALDBREIÐ

CENTERHOTEL
PINGHOLT



www.centerhotels.com | Tel.: 595 8500 | reservations@centerhotels.com

PLAN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH US



INFORMATION AND BOOKING CENTER
Icelandic Travel Market
Bankastræti 2 - Downtown
Scan QR code to locate ITM
Tel: +354 522 4979
itm@itm.is - www.itm.is
Open 9 - 19



**Tax Free
Refund**

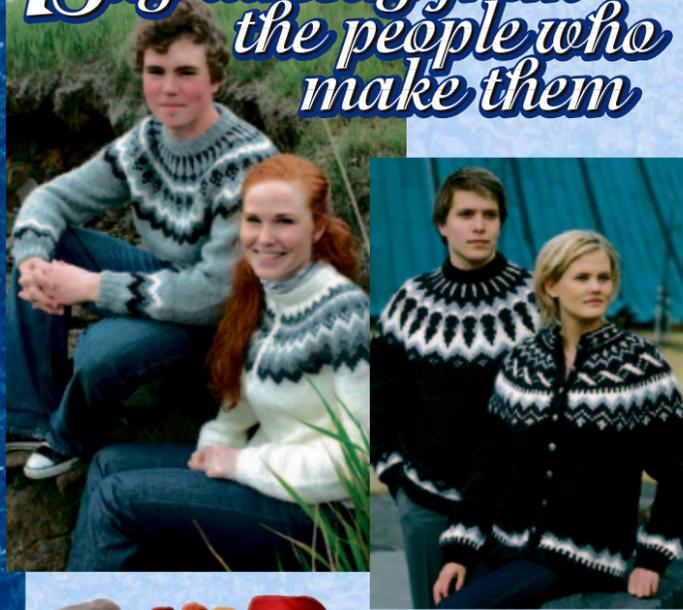
**FREE
INFORMATION
AND BOOKING OFFICE**



BOOK YOUR TOUR HERE



Buy directly from the people who make them



...or knit them yourself
All you need in one place



Handknitting Association of Iceland

- Skólavörðustígur 19
tel.: (+354) 552 1890
- Radisson Blu, Hótel SAGA
tel.: (+354) 562 4788
- Laugavegur 64
tel.: (+354) 562 1890

www.handknit.is

TAX FREE

PURE NEW WOOL



TIMI
Time Tours

Private Tours
Day Tours
Groups Tours
Coach Service
Guide Service
Tavel Agency

Taking the **Time** to experience...

Golden Circle daytour

South Coast daytour

Time Tours - Kópavogur - Iceland
Tel. +(354) 578 7111 - info@timetours.is
www.timetours.is

Reykjavik Shorts&Docs Festival:

Bigger, Better, More International!

Noted cultural event Reykjavik Shorts&Docs celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. We spoke to new festival director Heather Millard, who says she hopes to transform the local film fest—which until now focused on Nordic films—into an internationally recognised and respected one that will serve as a platform for Icelandic filmmakers in years to come.

"This year we have more films, from more countries, and many more international guests visiting in order represent their films or discuss distribution methods," Heather tells me. In fact, over 75 films from over 20 countries will be screened during the four day festival, which takes place from May 6 to 9.

The festival has something for everyone: short humorous films, animations, documentaries on lighter subjects, and hard hitting docs on serious issues. Each evening's screenings are preceded by a themed event corresponding with the evening's films. There will also be workshops, masters classes, panel discussions, and various competitions.

Heather says the festival is strategically positioned so that it is in line with the international film festival circuit. "It falls directly after Hot Docs [in Toronto] and just before Cannes," she tells me, "and with Iceland being positioned where it is, people are able to get here easily from North America as they are

on their way to Europe. So it's a good bridge for people on the film circuit."

Could Reykjavik really become a hot spot for international film? "Absolutely!" Heather says. "Reykjavik is a great city and it's manageable for international guests to get around in. There is a very strong creative industry here with a surprising amount of films being produced each year, both in the short film and documentary categories. That combined with the natural beauty of Iceland makes us sure that guests will be inspired to return year after year for the festival."

CAN'T CHOOSE? HERE ARE SOME PICKS

- Not Such a Beautiful Landscape - Dir. Emiliano Monaco - documentary
- Yugo - Dir. Mina Djukic - short documentary
- Afterglow - Dir. Ali Silverstein - documentary
- Being Bradford Dillman - dir. Emma Burch - short film
- We Are Weather - Dir. Maria Kjartans - short film
- Reykjavik Revolution - Director Ísöld Uggadóttir - short film

WOMEN IN FILM

This year's festival patron is filmmaker Kim Longinotto. She has been making films for the last 35 years, often tackling controversial subjects and featuring intimate portraits of women around the world.

She received a Peabody Award and two Cannes Film Festival Awards for her film 'Sisters In Law,' which will incidentally screen at this year's festival. She will host a Q&A after several of the screenings and as an added bonus she will teach a master class for filmmakers, students, and others interested.

As part of this year's special women-in-film section UN Women will host a panel discussion after the screening of 'Sarabah,' a film which centres on female genital mutilation in Senegal and one woman's grass-roots campaign to end the practice. Stúgamót, Iceland's rape crisis centre, will host a panel discussion after the powerful documentary 'The Price of Sex,' which sheds light on the issue of human trafficking.



From Kosovo To Cannes (Via Reykjavík)

Jasmine Rexhepi tells us about his 'Forgotten Monique'

In a small country like Iceland even the successful artists are often struggling ones, so there's always a decent chance the person serving you coffee is a part-time musician, a struggling poet or an aspiring filmmaker. The bearded, wiry waiter at Hressó is a good example. His name is Jasmine Rexhepi and he moved to Iceland from Kosovo four years ago. And he'll be going to the world's most prestigious film festival with his short film this spring.

Jasmine was born 28 years ago in Gnjilane, a small town between the Serbian and Macedonian borders of Kosovo. His teens were spent during the civil war, but he plays it down. "Things were much worse in other parts of Kosovo." He studied journalism in Pristina and worked as a journalist there for four years, before moving to Iceland. He had grown weary of the Balkans and isn't eager to dwell on the past there. "I needed something like Iceland and now I consider Iceland my country," he says.

THE FORGOTTEN MONIQUE

However, the film he's taking to the Cannes Film Festival feels neither Icelandic nor Balkan. It's all in French and we don't learn the title or see the main character until midway through the seven-minute film. It starts with a long montage of various people on Christmas Eve, spending the holiday in very different ways. Then, midway through, we find the chain-smoking Monique, the title character of 'The Forgotten Monique' ("La Monique Oubliée"). She's alone for Christmas and is texting her friends, asking them to pay her a visit. "It actually happened to me once," Jasmine says. "I'd just gotten back and wrote to my friends, only later I learned that they had changed their numbers. But everybody has his or her own stories and I found it interesting to create

the character of Monique—a selfish prima donna who knows that she's beautiful. She only cares for herself, but everyone is sensitive in those moments."

But why French? "I just like the French style of moviemaking. This Mediterranean style... I could understand it. I like to make colourful movies. But I'm still on that level where I'm trying to find my style," he says.

The movie has no actual dialogue between characters, just voiceover and music. It's a rather eccentric voiceover reminiscent of 'Amelie'. "I like [Amelie Director] Jean-Pierre Jeunet," he says. "I like that style. And yes, it's in French, it has voiceover, it's colourful and there are a lot of dolly shots. But all of that is simply something I like; in all my scripts I use a lot of voiceover, and the time we had was limited and I wasn't sure I'd get professional actors."

As he goes on I realise that one of his strengths is what a practical filmmaker he is; he realises the limitations, his limited experience and lack of budget and manages to turn them into a virtue, simply by finding out what can work best given the limitations. "I had a few projects in mind and I wanted to shoot the movie inside, with only interior scenes. I was afraid of using locations that might ruin my scenes," he says. "So I skipped the dialogue and the background sound and used voiceover and music instead, and in that way it could look very professional, given the conditions it was made under."

He's been studying at the Icelandic film school recently, but film is an old love. "I have been trying to get into the movie business for a long time," he tells me. "After I finished my degree in journalism in Kosovo I've been writing all the time, including some documentaries. But then I applied to Kvíkmyn-daskólinn [The Icelandic Film School]. I think it was a good solution, even though it's a bit expensive it could be worth it if I use it well. I find studying there interesting, I don't speak Icelan-

dic well yet but they helped me a lot, gave me transcripts in English, gave me extra hours and were always willing to help. It's not the best school in the world, but in every school in the world the principle is the same: if you want to gain something, you will do it yourself, rather than wait for the teacher."

And he found his Monique at the film school's acting department. "She's called Vanessa Andrea Terrazas and I think she is a really talented actress. And the others I found from my world, through work, friends... there are a few Kosovo guys helping me. Ervin Shala who played the doctor has worked with me a lot and the editor [Dukagjin Idrizi] is also Kosovar."

THE FRENCH REYKJAVÍK

The film may be in French but in fact the voiceover is the only thing that is really French. "Some people have asked me: 'Did you shoot in France?'" Jasmin says of the film, which was shot entirely in Reykjavík. "It helped it was all shot inside; you can fool people better that way, it's easier to play with. The main stage, where we shot Monique's scenes, was at my house. I decorated it myself; found ten packs of really artistic looking playing cards at work and that made the wallpaper very colourful and good looking. Then I bought a lot of props in Kolaportið and Góði hirðirinn; it doesn't matter if they are cheap or expensive—if they look good people are not going to think about how much they cost."

So what lies ahead after Cannes? "I'm working on some five projects," he says. "It may not sound good to juggle so many things at once, but I'm trying to gain more experience in short films for one more year or so... we'll see what the future brings. We'll work hard and it will pay off." ☺

ASGEIR H. INGÓLFSSON
STILLS



THE VIKING
FAMILY BUSINESS FOR 50 YEARS

THE VIKING : INFO
Langvegur 1 • Reykjavík • 581 1250
Hafnarstræti 3 • Reykjavík • 551 1250
Hafnarstræti 104 • Akureyri • 461 5551
Aðalstræti 27 • Ísafjörður • 456 5552
email: info@theviking.is
www.theviking.is

SOUVENIR SHOP

WHALE WATCHING EXPRESS

„That was marvellous! We saw many whales and dolphins. Fantastic.“
-Samantha

Make the most of your day!

Spend more time whale watching and less time waiting.

Takes only 2-2½ hours

We offer free pick-up in the Reykjavik area!

WHALE WATCHING TOURS

APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OKT
10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00
	14:00	14:00	14:00	14:00	14:00	
		18:00	18:00	18:00		

SPECIAL TOURS

HOW TO BOOK

Call us +354 892 0099 or book online specialtours.is

Laugardalur: Not Just Home To A Swimming Pool

How Reykjavík got to be what it is, part VI



Laugardalur—“hot spring valley”—was so-named due to the prevalence of, yes, hot springs in the area. Some people even say that the name Reykjavík—“Smoky Bay”—derives from the hot steam that rose from these springs. For centuries people went there to bathe and swim, but mostly it was women doing laundry. Things changed, however, in 1928-1930 when hot water was piped to a number of buildings in Reykjavík. This was the beginning of a massive operation to heat every house in Reykjavík with geothermal water—which also caused the hot springs in the area to reduce tremendously.

When people think of Laugardalur today, they most likely think of its swimming pool, Laugardalslaug, which was built in 1968. However, there is a whole lot more to the neighbourhood...

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Laugardalur was mostly grass and bedrock. One of the farms, which dates back to the first settlement around 870, was located on Laugarnes, a peninsula that is today preserved by The Archaeological Heritage Agency of Iceland. It was home to Hallgerður

to eleven-floor, Le Corbusier influenced apartment-buildings to spacious private modernist houses built in the '60s—buildings that were a design breakthrough in Reykjavík at the time they were constructed.

A FINANCIAL DISTRICT IS BORN

Although most of the houses date from 1945 to 1960, newer and older houses can also be found in the neighbourhood. Reykjavík's 'financial district,' Borgartún, is home to the newest buildings. This district grew fast in the 2000s and reached a peak in 2008, just before the economic collapse. Today you can still find many banks located in the district along with other businesses and offices, like some of the City of Reykjavík's departments.

In Borgartún you will also find one of the city's oldest houses, Höfði. It was built in 1909 for a French consul and has served a series of residents—famous artists, politicians, and the mysterious Höfði Ghost. In 1958, the city of Reykjavík bought it and restored it to its original glory. Höfði secured its status as the most famous house in Reykjavík when Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan met there for The Reykjavík Summit meeting in October of 1986.



“You will find everything from imported ready-made wooden houses from Sweden or Finland to eleven-floor, Le Corbusier influenced apartment-buildings to spacious private modernist houses built in the '60s”

Langbrók, the notorious femme fatale of the Icelandic sagas. Not only will you find her grave there, but you will also find the only natural seashore on the north coast of Reykjavík.

A MENTAL HOSPITAL LEADS THE WAY

Iceland's first mental hospital, Kleppur, was built near Laugarnes in 1907. It was originally far away from the city centre, but after Reykjavík's population increased dramatically during World War II, the demand for land could no longer be ignored. As the city had already built roads and sewage systems and implemented a bus system in the area, it made sense to construct around this existing infrastructure rather than build everything from scratch.

This policy caused the city to grow in an isolated neighbourhood outside the city centre. Residents felt like the neighbourhood was so far away in 1947 that they believed they should have their own spokesperson in the city council, according to an article published in the newspaper *Heimskringla* at the time. Residents were very worried about being forgotten and left out when it came to council matters.

IMPORTED HOUSES TO '60S MANSIONS

Laugardalur did not remain isolated for long. The demand for housing was greater than most had anticipated, and the area was mostly built over two decades, from the end of the World War II to 1960.

If you're into architecture from this era, Laugardalur is the prime Reykjavík place to explore it. You will find everything from imported ready-made wooden houses from Sweden or Finland

ICELAND'S PROTESTOR

In addition to being home to a famous house, Laugardalur is home to Iceland's most famous protestor, Helgi Hóseason, who lived in the neighbourhood and dedicated much of his life to protesting there until he died in 2009. He was given the informal title, "Iceland's protestor," after a documentary was produced about him and his views in 2003.

Helgi's protest started in 1962 when the church would not invalidate his baptism and confirmation like he wished, but his protests weren't exclusively against the church. He also protested against the inequality promoted by the Icelandic government and, in his last years, the Icelandic governmental support of the Iraq war. A statue of Helgi can be found on the corner of Langhóltsvegur and Hóltsvegur, where he often stood carrying message bearing signs.

LAUGARDALUR PARK

The neighbourhood shares its name with a big green park in the area, but the park and the name are not as old as you might think. A couple of years after Central Park opened in New York City in 1871, Sigurður Guðmundsson—a designer of the Icelandic National Costume and a specialist in Icelandic culture and history—suggested that Laugardalur be made a park for the residents of Reykjavík. He saw the spot as a perfect place for walks and picnicking. The idea took 72 years to be realised, but today it has become the park Sigurður foresaw. There you can find the aforementioned swimming pool, camping facilities, a gym, an ice-skating rink, an amusement park, a zoo and botanical gardens.

Thus Laugardalur has attractions of all sorts, including a rich history, interesting architecture, and great possibilities for outdoor activities. There is even something that attracted 17 owls to take up residence in the park—a rare find in Reykjavík, as owls are fairly new settlers in Iceland. 🦉

Words

Gerður Jónsdóttir

Photography

Alísa Kalyanova





Disclaimer: This is The Grapevine's **BAD ADVICE** column. It's where **Nanna Árnadóttir** answers questions from our readers about traversing the Icelandic cultural jungle. She is usually nice, but really rather bad at giving advice...

Dear Nanna,
I've been in Iceland about a month now; I'm not here long term or anything, only a year. I met a local girl at a party two weeks back and we went home together. I've met her maybe two or three times since then, always random in bars and we slept together every time. Anyway, I figured we were just casual, after all we've only slept together like a handful of times, but I'm beginning to get the impression that she thinks we're more serious? Like in a relationship. Is that normal?
Best,
Confused and Casual

Dear Confused and Casual,
Holy shit, you slept with the same Icelandic girl three times in a row? You guys are basically married now, are you sure she's not pregnant? Only joking—Icelandic people wait three months before they knock each other up.

In Iceland, girls and boys like to test drive the merchandise before they make an informed decision about whether or not they are genuinely interested in you. This is why the world calls Icelandic girls (never boys) sluts, because often girls and boys here sleep with you before they decide if they can stand you. Is it normal? It is to us.

If you have found yourself in a situation where you've slept with an Icelandic person three times, chances are you are now in a relationship. This is because Icelanders don't really date. We skip the courtship and go straight to the relationship, but before you start hyperventilating, you can just dump her. You see it works both ways, you can get together easily but you can break up easily too. I mean really, let's be perfectly honest, she'll be fine without you. Who do you think you are? Someone hot? Can I have your number? I promise I won't call (lie).

Dear Nanna,
I'm going on holiday with my family to Iceland in July, I'm queer and I want to visit a gay club with all those beautiful Icelandic girls I hear so much about. Where should I go and is there a chance Icelandic lesbians will like a butch girl like me?
Küsse
Butch in Berlin

Dear Butch in Berlin,
Hell yeah Icelandic lesbians love butch German girls, what's not to love? I am a little disconcerted that you are visiting Iceland with your family. You're not 14 are you? Oh who am I kidding, who in Iceland wasn't eating pussy at 14? Provided you are the age of consent, I recommend you check out Gay46 on Hverfisgata. It's a warm and welcoming place, I recommend it. Did you know that lesbians have an STD transmission rate of like 0.1%? True story! And

an excellent reason to drown yourself in Icelandic lady juice I add. We taste like chicken. No only joking, we taste like pussy.
Kisses!
Nanna

Who should I book with for the The Golden Circle tour? - J Cox

Dear Cox,
I don't know. Google it.
Nanna

Hi Nanna
What's the best time of year to visit Iceland, why, and what's the music like there at the moment?
Maybe Tourist,
Brisbane, Australia

Dear Maybe Tourist,

The best time to come to Iceland is at the end of January because that way you avoid the boring and obvious stuff, like the midnight sun, New Year's Eve and Iceland Airwaves.

Some might tell you that going to Iceland in January is a mistake but don't listen. Airfare is cheaper, hotels aren't overbooked, and the locals are lonelier and looking to fill the empty hole inside them with rampant bug-gery. Is there next to no sunlight? Yes. Is it as cold and grey as a dead polar bear's asshole? Also yes. Is it the period in which the highest numbers of tourists die from getting lost in the Icelandic wilderness? I don't know, I don't have the statistics to back that up, but if I were to guess I would say maybe.

As for music, hands down the best in Iceland right now is the totally straight Garðar Thór Cortes who has squeezed out emotionally charged turds songs like "Hunting High and Low" or "Sacrificial Love" and then there's always Geir Ólafsson.

Have fun,
Nanna

Got a question for Nanna and need some bad advice? Email nanna.arnadottir@gmail.com and you might get an answer published in a future issue.

BEZT Í HEIMI* LOBSTER SOUP
1100.- kr

SEA-AGRA SOUP
850.- kr

MOBY DICK ON A STICK

PURTRIFED SHARK
marinated in Icelandic schnapps

HARD FISH

SÆGREIFINN

Verbúð 8 / tel.553 1500 / Geirsqata

— OPENING HOURS : 11³⁰-23⁰⁰ —

Dear Traveller
We would like to welcome you to Iceland. While we were waiting for you to visit, we manufactured with great care a range of woolen garments. We would be honored if you could come and take a look. The staff of Vik's woolen factory/specialty shop.

TAX FREE

ICELAND
Reykjavík

Vikurprjón Ltd
Knitting factory
Located in Vik
www.vikurprjon.is

Viðey Island

Viðey is an island situated just few minutes from Reykjavík city by ferry. The island is the perfect place for individuals, friends and families wanting to enjoy a relaxing but also adventurous getaway from the city life.

Ferry schedule

Summer (daily from 15 May to 15 Sept.)								
From Skarfabakki to Viðey	11:15	12:15	13:15	14:15	15:15	16:15	17:15	
From Viðey to Skarfabakki	11:30	12:30	13:30	14:30	15:30	16:30	17:30	18:30
From Reykjavík Old Harbour to Viðey			12:00					
From Viðey to Reykjavík Old Harbour					15:30			
Winter (on Sat. and Sun. from 16 Sept. to 14 May)								
From Skarfabakki to Viðey			13:15	14:15	15:15			
From Viðey to Skarfabakki			13:30	14:30	15:30	16:30		

Only 7 minutes away from the city

- History, art and nature
- Restaurant / Café
- Horse rental
- Tel. (+354) 533 5055

Full programm on www.videy.com

Elding
adventure at sea

FRESH ICELANDIC SPECIALITIES

GEYSIR
Bistro

Aðalstræti 2
101 Reykjavík
Tel 517 4300

www.geysirbistro.is



At the Grill Market the seasons are in control of the menu with all the freshest ingredients available - from the sea, heaths, lakes, rivers and farms. In our cooking methods we go for the origin of the ingredient and use fire, smoke, wood and charcoal to achieve deep, rich, earthy flavors that we balance out with freshness. The result is an unexpected cuisine where Icelandic tradition and modern times come together.

GRILLMARKAÐURINN

Mon – Wed: 11:30-14:00, 17:00-22:30

Thurs – Fri: 11:30-14:00, 17:00-23:30

Sat: 17:00 – 23:30 | Sun: 17:00-22:30

LÆKJARGATA 2A | 571 7777 | GRILLMARKADURINN.IS



Fashion | Interview

Accessorised Fantasy Worlds

We Snoop Around at Hildur Yeoman's

Hildur Björk Yeoman is a Reykjavík-based fashion designer and illustrator. We were taken by her show at this year's Reykjavík Fashion Festival (RFF) where she created a fantasy world from illustrative works that were colourful, adventurous and playful. So we visited her studio to learn a bit more.

HOW DID YOU LIKE THE RFF THIS YEAR?

I loved my show. I had an amazing team working with me, like choreographer Sigga Soffía, singer Daniel Ágúst and great models that brought my whole illustrated world to life, with singing, dancing and a great party atmosphere!

We wanted to show the audience the fun side of fashion, and I believe we accomplished that. Fashion is more than just a product meant for mass consumption, it's an art form and a way of life.

Coco Chanel said it best: "Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street, fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening."

WOULD YOU DEFINE YOURSELF AS A FASHION DESIGNER, THEN?

I have always considered myself to be a visual poet. I create my own worlds and stories. In addition to designing clothes, I also design accessories and

create fashion illustrations ultimately bringing forth my own creative world. As a child I drew a lot, both clothes and figures, without even realising what I was creating. I created a whole concept of a world with my drawings; I loved fantasy from the beginning.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD, WHAT INSPIRED YOU?

A lot of my work is inspired by things from my childhood, such as movies,

that. Elsa has a free spirit; she has never hesitated singing and dancing on the streets, which has been super inspiring to a prude like myself.

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR DESIGN, WHERE CAN WE FIND IT?

I make the clothing on special request basis, usually for performers of some sort or for people who can afford to buy a one-of-a-kind piece. I'm not into

"I have always considered myself to be a visual poet. I create my own worlds and stories. In addition to designing clothes, I also design accessories and create fashion illustrations ultimately bringing forth my own creative world."

stories and music. I started to be inspired by the concept of fashion quite early, but didn't of course understand the meaning of it. Firstly I watched music videos from the likes of George Michael and Madonna. Then I watched Fashion TV with Jeanne Beker on RÚV, where I saw fashion shows from the late '80s and early '90s where the supermodels walked the catwalk. I feel like the models had a better chance of embracing their characteristics at that time, which I love.

As for creatives in the family that inspired me, I would say they come from my father's side. My aunt Elsa and her mother, my grandmother, are both fashion divas that didn't care about classical behaviour if you can call it

restricting myself to making clothing that works for mass manufacturing. But on the other hand I create prints and illustrations for brands that are in the manufacturing business. And you can buy my accessories at kronkron.com and at labouroflove.co.uk.

WHAT NEXT?

My dream now is to move abroad to expand my horizon. ☺

Words

Ása Baldursdóttir

Photo

Nanna Dís Jónsdóttir

Trivia question answer from page 6:

It was the Spaniards! They spent 15.222 ISK on their family per person at the liquor store during their 2011 visit, according to a MMR poll published in January 2012 by the Icelandic Tourist Board.

A delicious 4 course menu
AROUND ICELAND
Join the Chefs of the Fishcompany for a trip around Iceland. The best and freshest ingredients from all over the island will tantalize your tastebuds in a trip sure to live long in your memory

Vestmannaeyjar
Borgarnes
Húsavík
Egilsstaðir

We also serve really good sushi for lunch!

Fish Company
Vesturgötu 2a, Gröfartorg
101 Reykjavík, Iceland
+354 552 5300
info@fishcompany.is
www.fishcompany.is

sushi
samba



A unique experience



Our kitchen is open
17.00-23.00 sun.-thu.
17.00-24.00 fri.-sat.

Icelandic Feast

Amazing 6 course menu which combines Iceland's best produce with Japanese, Peruvian and Brazilian cuisine.

Starts with a shot of Icelandic national spirit "Brennivín"

Place Ceviche

Dried maize, sweet potato, coriander, chili, passion sauce

Minke whale tataki

Fig jam, wakame, mushrooms, soy glaze

Icelandic Salmon roll

Salmon, avocado, asparagus, jalapeno mayo

Spotted cat fish "mojito style"

Grilled spotted cat fish, pea purée, bacon, mojito foam

Lamb ribs

Chili crumble, "Skyr" mint sauce, celeriac fries

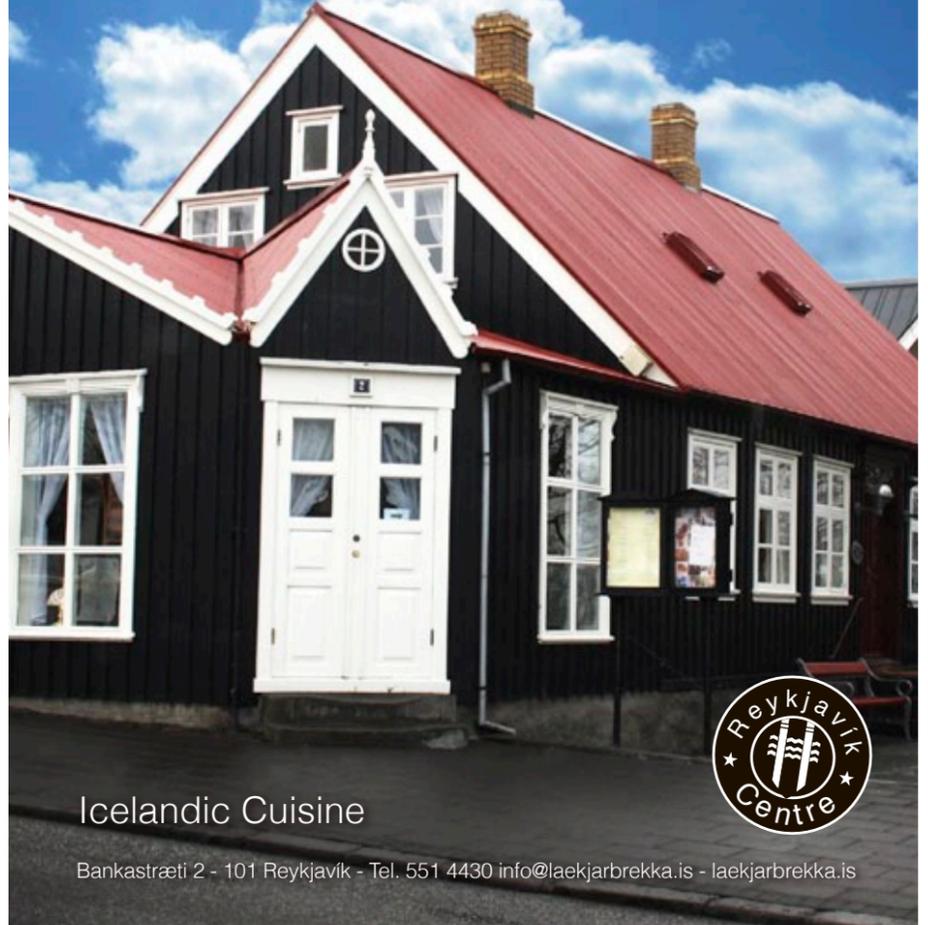
Icelandic Skyr "Flan"

5.990 kr.

sushisamba
Þingholtsstræti 5 • 101 Reykjavík
Tel 568 6600 • sushisamba.is

Laekjarbrekka

Restaurant for over 30 years



Icelandic Cuisine

Bankastræti 2 - 101 Reykjavík - Tel. 551 4430 info@laekjarbrekka.is - laekjarbrekka.is

Europcar



ENJOY FREEDOM OF MOBILITY

Feel free for less • Great rates and large variety of new and well equipped four-wheel-drive cars • Simply call and we pick you up!
Europcar Reykjavik Reservations: +(354) 568 6915 • holdur@holdur.is • www.holdur.is • Reliable customer service at 15 Rental locations around Iceland.





Exploring A Small Volcanic Island Off The Coast Of A Slightly Larger Volcanic Island

Two windy days on Vestmannaeyjar



As the ferry Herjolfur enters the narrow opening into the harbour of Heimaey at night, the sight of Ystiklettur and Heimaklettur cliffs leave you awe-struck. They were formed by volcanic eruptions during the last ice age, around ten to twelve thousand years ago. The moment you step out of the small ferry house, the island greets you with an intense smell of fish. Luckily, it only pervades the harbour.

Vestmannaeyjar ("Westman Islands") were born out of subaquatic volcanic eruptions along a 30 km long fissure. They were named after the Irish slaves that were brought to Iceland by the first settlers who believed Ireland to be the westernmost island before discovering Iceland. The slaves fled mainland Iceland to Vestmannaeyjar, about seven kilometres off the south shore of Iceland, after killing their owner, Hjörleifur Hróðmarsson, brother-in-law of Iceland's first settler Ingólfur Arnarson. Heimaey, which is seven by four kilometres, is the largest island of Vestmannaeyjar. Home to about 4.200 people, it's also the only one of the Westman Islands that is inhabited.

WARMING UP ON AN ACTIVE VOLCANO

Our guide suggests a hike up Eldfell, a volcano that erupted in January 1973 and forced the entire population of Heimaey to evacuate the island. During the five-month eruption, Heimaey grew by 2,2 square kilometres and buried large parts of the town under four metres of lava and ash. To save the harbour, tonnes and tonnes of seawater were pumped on the moving hot lava.

Now, the east part of the island is covered in black lava. Signs point out which street lies 16 metres beneath you and whose house is buried there. Currently, some houses are being excavated; this archaeological site is referred to as 'the Pompeii of the North.' As we walk across the lava field, I keep thinking that I am walking on buried houses and streets that were once full of life.

The hike up Eldfell is not too steep and all the way up we stop for the amazing view; it's a clear day and even the Reynisdrangar sea stacks off the coast of Vík are visible. At the top, beautiful lava rock formations amaze us all over. And again, the geological forces underneath us are just inconceivable. We dig into the lava stones, and just a few centimetres underground we are already able

to warm up our fingers. One metre beneath us, the volcano still has a temperature of 470°C.

During the summer, Ruth Zohlen, who runs the lovely Hreiðrið Guesthouse, likes to bake bread in the volcano; it only takes 20 minutes she tells us. She even prepared bread for Hillary Clinton once, and you can read her thank you letter in her kitchen. A visit to Ruth and her lovely pet puffin will be worth your while.

WINDS AT 29 M/S WILL BRING YOU DOWN

The next recommended stop is a lava cave south of Eldfell. During our lunch break, the sky darkened and a strong wind picked up to 29 m/s. We have a hard time finding the place, and as soon as we step on some ice patches, the wind knocks us to the ground. All in all it is a pretty adventurous hike that leads us around the crater of the sleeping Helgafell volcano.

We try going to the cave again the next day when the snow has melted and the sun is out. It's a dark grey lava tube one can walk through with a very thin rooftop that has a hole in it. The porous lava doesn't look too stable, but what is life without taking risks?

BEFORE ELDFELL AND AFTER ELDFELL

While most of Iceland seems to label recent years as "Before Crash" and "After Crash," the people on Heimaey still mostly speak about "Before Eldfell" and "After Eldfell." The eruption has changed the lives of many islanders, as 1700 inhabitants never returned after the horrifying events of the night of January 23.

If you enter the gates to the cemetery, you can find a 2,5 metre tall statuette of a white angel standing atop the grave of Theódóra Þ. Jónsdóttir. Imagine this beautiful sculpture being buried in ash up to its hands, and you will realise how much the islanders had to work to make their home homely again. 🐾

✍️ LYNN KLEIN
📷 LYNN KLEIN

AIR ICELAND
FLUGFÉLAG ÍSLANDS



OUR VERY BEST PRICE IS ALWAYS ON
HIGHLY SEDUCTIVE OFFERS TO ALL OUR DESTINATIONS
ICELAND, GREENLAND or THE FAROE ISLANDS



Tales Of Whales And Birds

Húsavík is a great big tourist hub



“Welcome to Húsavík, there is lots to see here,” our pilot announced after touching down on Húsavík airport’s single landing strip. After a 45-minute flight from Reykjavík it is only a fifteen-minute drive from the airport to Húsavík, a small town on the shores of Skjálfandi Bay.

Húsavík is known as the whale watching capital of Iceland. On the way to the harbour where the obligatory whale watching boat awaits us our bus driver tells us that, “Húsavík was the first place in Iceland settled by a Norse man, Garðar Svavars-son, who stayed there for one winter in 870 A.D.” It only became an official town in the nineteenth century. “In 1907 the church was built with 400 seats but there were not enough inhabitants to fill them. We’ve come a long way since then, now hosting a population of more than 2.200,” he says.

OUT TO SEA

Our boat takes off and gradually picks up speed, while heading out to sea toward Víknafjöll and Kinnarfjöll, the mountain ranges on the other side of Skjálfandi bay. The 1.200 metre high, snow-covered mountaintops offer a picturesque view

and are also a go-to area for ice climbing and hiking. We are accompanied by bright and almost warming sunshine as our boat steers into the blue splashing waves.

All wrapped up in warm coveralls, the group on board listens to the tour guide, who tells us that the water temperature is one to two degrees Celsius right now and that during summer it rises to six to ten. Be sure to know whether you have a tendency to get seasick (there is always a first time) before going on board, as jumping overboard during the trip to alleviate the nausea is not an option, as tempting as it may seem. You’ll have to suffer until you reach land again, so bear that in mind.

Even though the bay has good conditions for whale watching, there is no guarantee that you’ll spot the majestic creatures. Our guide explains that the bay’s optimal whale-watching conditions are due to the two streams that run into the bay—Skjálfandafliót, a glacier river, and Laxá, a freshwater river coming from Lake Mývatn (which is famous for the salmon from which its name is derived). “The water temperature, the streams and the rivers’ fauna, create the feeding ground for whales,” she says.

While we learn about different kinds of whales that come into the bay, everyone keeps staring at the water in hopes of spotting a fin or a tail. “The whales are where the fish are,” she explains. And some people are indeed able to get a glimpse of a harbour porpoise, which is one of the smallest whales in the world at 1,5 metres in length. “Many whales—mainly minke whales, some fin whales, dolphins, as well as porpoises that like to stay close to the coast—don’t migrate south for the winter,” she says.

BACK ON LAND

The Húsavík Whale Museum is located next to the harbour. Established in 1997, it is the only informational and educational centre on whales in Iceland. Along with the many species of whales that may show up in Skjálfandi bay, you can also find buzzing bird life. For those who have good sea legs, you can take a boat to nearby Flatey Island, or to Grímsey, also known as “Puffin Island” that lies on the Arctic Circle.

Húsavík is the central starting point for day excursions and travels to many of the most famous places in north Iceland. From horseback riding to

super jeep and geological tours to the Diamond Circle, a 215 km circular route that takes you from Húsavík to Ásbyrgi, Dettifoss and Mývatn. The possibilities are endless.

We ended the day at Sigurgeir’s Bird Museum, which holds the largest private bird collection in Iceland with stuffed specimens of almost all Icelandic breeding birds. If you are a bird lover you can even get a glimpse of bird life from the museum’s observation points or on guided tours around the lake area. It is home to a large variety of ducks and other winged species, paddling and flying around after they arrive back in Iceland around May from their winter holiday in the southern hemisphere.

Although it is impossible to cover everything in the Mývatn area in a single day, this gave us a taste for more. 🇮🇸

MELANIE FRANZ
ALÍSA KALYANOVA

LINE.

AIRICELAND.IS



Icelandic Yoga, Al Fresco Style, With Gooseflesh

Exploring 'naked yoga'. Huh?



A series of coincidences and a lady from Reykjavík took Tony Prower from southern England to Iceland, where he picked up a camera—an antique Olympus—and spent many of the nighttime hours of his first winter in Iceland watching and capturing the Northern Lights through its lens.

Tony was captivated by Iceland, its landscape and photography. After a few years of juggling working at a hostel for people with severe disabilities with his newfound passion, he moved on to set up a thriving business, taking travellers armed with some serious digital hardware around the country to get fantastic pictures in the unlikeliest locations, as well as the obvious ones.

HOW EXACTLY DID THIS HAPPEN?

'The Icelandic Naked Yoga Project' grew from this blend of photography, landscape and an interest in yoga, kick-

ing off when he set his camera up on a tripod on the eerie shore of Jökulsárlón to capture the ice and early morning sunshine, but decided that something more was needed for the composition. So he stripped off, struck a tree pose standing in the icy water and waited for the self-timer to do its thing. The germ of an idea grew as he towelled the feeling back into his toes.

'The Icelandic Naked Yoga Project' is a simple enough idea. A book of pictures of naked people in yoga poses with the Icelandic landscape as a backdrop. The pictures are taken by Tony and by Hanna Birna Geirmundsdóttir, who collaborated on the two-year project.

What is striking, and what really makes the Icelandic Naked Yoga Project a breath of fresh air, is that this isn't about aloof stick-thin young women with perfect teeth and blow-dried hair showing off their airbrushed booty al fresco.

Although it was initially difficult to find sitters who were not suspicious of the whole concept, once a few people had bravely stripped off and stood in the snow, a stream of willing models began to form as the word was passed around.

STRETCHMARKS, SPARE TYRES, TODGERS... YUM!

The models who sat for Tony and Hanna Birna's cameras aren't walking cartoons, but real people—and it's a pleasure to see. There are women and men, young and old, big and small. There are stretchmarks, spare tyres, todgers, a few flabby bellies and skinny legs, as well as gooseflesh. The goose bumps are an integral part of the scenery as the photos in the book aren't all cosy summer pictures; some were taken with snow on the ground and enough of it to give you a chill just looking at the wind whipping up the Kleifarvatn wave tops.

It shows a reality that isn't generally seen, both Iceland itself and the band of commendably courageous models. It's not easy to strip off and stand still when the ground is cold enough to make your feet sting. It's also not easy to find a location for a shoot that's free enough of extremely curious passers-by, especially with only a few scarce hours of daylight in the depths of winter.

STONES AND SKIN

The reasons for people to strip down to their birthday suits and sit for Tony and Hanna Birna's cameras are as various as the people involved. One of the women sitters is an immigrant from a country where nudity of any kind would never be possible and wanted to celebrate this new freedom. Another wanted a reminder of her looks to take with her as she grows older. One of the young men involved was there for the simplest reason of all: his girlfriend told

him to.

The other star of the book is the landscape and alongside the waterfalls that everyone snaps a photo of, there are a good few of the magnificent locations that Tony's work as a photography guide has taken him to. The stones are just as much the star of the book as the skin.

It's a great book, and a fine effort that doesn't take itself over-seriously. But I can already hear the artistic establishment's sneers, and the book does have its shortcomings. It has some rough edges that are part of the whole and which add to rather than detract from the honesty of 'The Icelandic Naked Yoga Project'. 🍷

✍️ QUENTIN BATES
📷 TONY PROWER



MILLENNIUM
Icelandic art through the ages. Phase one.



MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS – Eddas and Sagas
The ancient vellums on display.



CHILD OF HOPE – Youth and Jón Sigurðsson
Tribute to the leader of the independence movement.

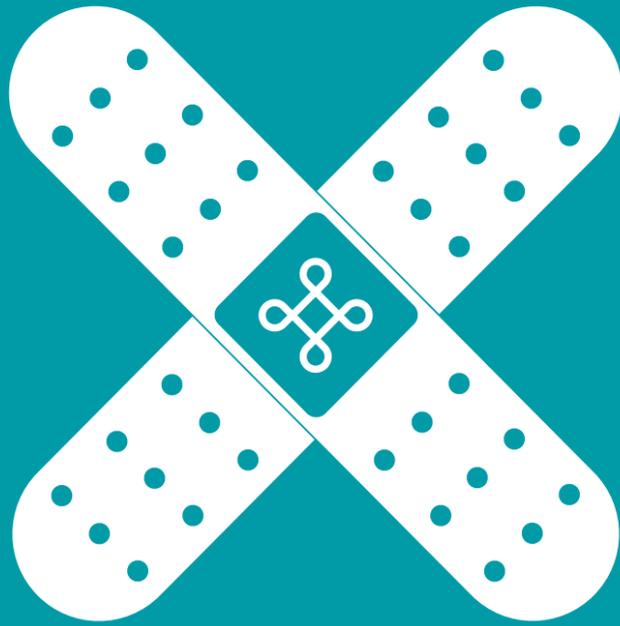


EXHIBITIONS - GUIDED TOURS
CAFETERIA - CULTURE SHOP

The Culture House – Þjóðmenningarhúsið
National Centre for Cultural Heritage
Hverfisgata 15 · 101 Reykjavík (City Centre)
Tel: 545 1400 · thjodmenning.is · kultur.is

Open daily between 11 am and 5 pm
Free guided tour of THE MEDIEVAL
MANUSCRIPTS weekdays at 3 pm,
except Wednesdays.





Healing the world, one Mac at a time.



580 7500



Klapparstígur 30



verslun@macland.is



macland

www.macland.is

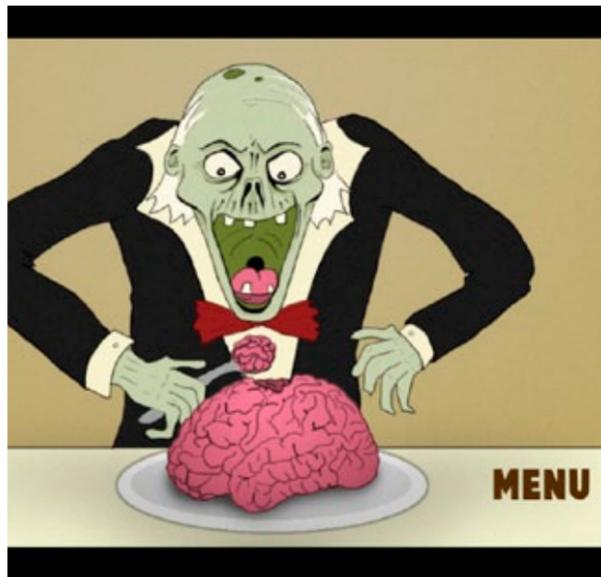


© H.N. Markaðsáæðing / SIA

ZOMBIES | In your phone!

Training To Survive The Icelandic Zombie Apocalypse? There's An App For That

Zombie Iceland author Nanna Árnadóttir chats with Mindgames CEO Deepa Iyengar about '28 Spoons Later'



Software developers at Iceland-based Mindgames have created an iOS game that uses your brainwaves to play. Yes, your brainwaves. The premise of the game is as follows: A zombie is hankering for some human flesh, which is not unusual for the walking dead. Only this zombie is sophisticated and eats his brains with a spoon, so the player must bend a never-ending supply of spoons to fend him off.

To learn more about '28 Spoons Later,' a title that is almost certainly homage to the epic zombie flick '28 Days Later,' I've decided to pick the brains of CEO Deepa Iyengar, an entrepreneur and neuroscientist living in Iceland.

WHICH CAME FIRST, THE ZOMBIE OR THE SPOON?

The spoons came first. We included a scene in our earlier game, 'W.I.L.D.' in which the player has to concentrate to bend a spoon to get it into a bowl of food. Then, in the next scene, feed a

Words

Nanna Árnadóttir

Illustrations

Mindgames

hungry baby alien by relaxing to float the spoon across the room into its mouth.

We noticed that players really liked bending the spoon. Maybe not surprising, since psychic spoon-bending is an old meme from the '70s and '80s, thanks to Uri Geller. So we wanted to centre our next game on spoon-bending.

Most good videogames need a story. Why is it so important to bend as many spoons as possible? Well, staying alive is a good motivation for many things. What is cool and can kill you? Aliens, yeah, but these days it's all about ZOMBIES.

NOW, "THE GENTLEMAN ZOMBIE" IS CONFUSING TO ME BECAUSE ZOMBIES ARE AS A RULE THOUGHTLESS EATING MACHINES. EXPLAIN YOUR DEPARTURE FROM COMMON ZOMBIE LORE.

Our zombie is a gentleman zombie. He has a passion for gracious living and believes that eating with spoons, instead of tearing brains apart with your hands, adds meaning to life. So, as long as you can keep ruining his spoons, he won't be able to use one to dig into your brains.

If he weren't so polite, it wouldn't matter whether or not you bent the spoons—he'd eat your brains right

away! This was a clever solution by our programmer Pétur Orri Ragnarsson. Anyway, don't be so racist against zombies.

...SO IS THIS GAME AIMED AT ZOMBIE NUTS LIKE ME?

All of our games are meant to give the player a fun way to become good at controlling his ability to concentrate

"Our zombie is a gentleman zombie. He has a passion for gracious living and believes that eating with spoons, instead of tearing brains apart with your hands, adds meaning to life. So, as long as you can keep ruining his spoons, he won't be able to use one to dig into your brains"

and relax. But each one targets a different sort of player.

This game, '28 Spoons Later,' is the most conventional one we've made so far; it's for gamers who want to earn points to see their progress and compare how good they are with how good they were yesterday or how good their friends are.

You never finish the game because the spoons just keep getting more and

more difficult—you can just get better at not dying early.

I READ THAT MINDGAMES IS THE FIRST IN THE WORLD TO SELL AN IOS APP CONTROLLED BY THE USER'S BRAINWAVES. IS THAT TRUE AND HOW DOES THAT FEEL?

As far as we are aware, yes, we are the first company to sell a brainwave-con-

trolled iOS app. Our first release, Tug of Mind, came out in late December 2010, but we had actually finished it back in March 2010—we just had to wait for the brainwave headset to be released!

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO DEVELOP SOMETHING LIKE THIS IN ICELAND AS OPPOSED TO ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD?

Iceland is the best place to make the kind of games we want to make—games with innovative gameplay and aesthetic. As you know, Reykjavík is bursting with talent in music and design, and we are lucky to have two of the best as our cofounders and designers: Ragnar Már Nikulásson, who did the graphics animation and composed the music for '28 Spoons Later' and Katla Rós Völudóttir.

NOW, WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY THIS GAME? BECAUSE AS IT IS, I COMMAND MY IPHONE TO DO THINGS WITH MY MIND AND NOTHING HAPPENS.

Uhm, Our games are all available on the iPhone/iPad App Store. The XWave sells for US\$99 at www.plxwave.com. There is also a new headset coming out in March, the NeuroSky MindWave Mobile, which unlike the XWave will be wireless (bluetooth). We have a prototype in the office and it's comfortable and easy to use. I don't yet know what the price will be, but I don't expect it to be more than US\$150.. ☺

THE NUMBER 1 MUSIC STORE
IN EUROPE ACCORDING TO
LONELY PLANET

12 Tónar

SKÓLAVÖRÐUSTÍG 15, 101 REYKJAVÍK AND HARPA CONCERT HALL



Barbour®



KORMÁKS & SKJALDAR

Clothing and Accessories for Gentlemen



*You will find us in the basement at Kjörgarður - Laugavegi 59 - tel. 511 1817
Opening hours: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday - Saturday*

PAGE 10

“However, when Gillz tells you you’re disgusting you just think, “yeaaaaah right, a beefy Páll Óskar is trying to intimidate me...” He didn’t manage to portray a volatile psycho more realistically than that, unfortunately.”

Is Black’s Game a realistic depiction of Iceland’s underworld? We get a knowledgeable team to tell us...

PAGE 32

“This year we have more films, from more countries, and many more international guests visiting in order represent their films or discuss distribution methods”

Director Heather Millard tells us what to expect at the tenth annual Reykjavík Shorts&Docs Festival

PAGE 20

“The average Icelander consumes 8.3 kilograms of coffee beans per year, which makes them the world’s fourth largest coffee consumers per capita.”

Icelanders sure do like their coffee.

PAGE 18

“Icelanders aspired to drive American cars, the only television station in the country was run by the US military, their radio stations pumped out Elvis Presley to rock hungry Icelandic youth. By comparison, the only Icelandic radio station allowed to operate at the time, which was state-run, only seemed to feature symphonies, folklore and long weather reports.”

Egill Helgason explores Iceland’s relationship with the outside world...

PAGE 40

“There are women and men, young and old, big and small. There are stretch-marks, spare tyres, todgers, a few flabby bellies and skinny legs, as well as gooseflesh. The goose bumps are an integral part of the scenery as the photos in the book aren’t all cosy summer pictures; some were taken with snow on the ground and enough of it to give you a chill just looking at the wind whipping up the Kleifarvatn wave tops.”

How about some nude yoga?

River Rafting on Hvítá River from 9.990 ISK

Nature is the Adventure!



Arctic Rafting offers rafting trips on the Hvítá River, only 10 minutes from the Geysir area. The trips start at 9.990 ISK and a variety of combination tours are available every day.

We can also pick you up from your hotel or hostel in Reykjavík. Call us on +354-571-2200, meet us at Laugavegur 11 at Fjallakofinn outdoor store or ask for us at your hotel or nearest tourist information center.



www.arcticrafting.com | info@arcticrafting.is | +354-571-2200 | Downtown Reykjavík Sales Office at Laugavegur 11

ICELANDIC Fish, Lamb & Chicken in original PAKISTANI curries

www.shalimar.is

SHALIMAR
PAKISTANI CUISINE

AUSTURSTRÆTI 4, 101 REYKJAVÍK ☎ 551 0 292

Tandoori dishes & Nan breads
Kebabs, Samosas & Vegetarian specialities



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE LISTINGS



G Music, Art, Films and Events Listings + Eating, Drinking and Shopping + Map

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL AND
ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue 5 - 2012

www.grapevine.is

GusGus

DEVOUR NASA FOR THE LAST TIME

Sniff. We feel sort of sentimental typing this. We have been covering GusGus shows at NASA ever since... well ever since there was a NASA (GusGus have been around a bit longer). And it's been so fun! So liberating! So engaging! Such a big part of our rapidly aging youth culture! It's meant something, it really has. And now it's gone. Or going in any case. Splash on some make up for one last time, dance your pain away and just let go. We'll see you there, with a tear in our beer and a warmth in our heart.

May 11 and 12 entrance 3900 ISK

[RUB23]

RESTAURANT

FISH - MEAT - SUSHI

Ice fresh seafood
– to satisfy your senses

LUNCH
OPEN FROM
11:30 - 14:00
Mon. - Fri.

DINNER
OPEN EVERY DAY FROM
17:30



RUB23 | Aðalstræti 2 | 101 Reykjavík
Phone: +354 553 5323 | reykjavik@rub23.is

RUB23 | Kaupvangsstræti 6 | 600 Akureyri
Phone: +354 462 2223 | rub23@rub23.is

www.rub23.is

www.harpa.is

▼ THE BEETHOVEN CYCLES
 ▼ ELVIS COSTELLO
 ▼ UNDERCURRENT CONCERT SERIES
 ▼ POPTECH
 ▼ THE REYKJAVÍK ARTS FESTIVAL
 ▼ JETHRO TULL
 ▼ HOW TO BECOME AN ICELANDER
 ▼ STOPOVER SERIES
 ▼ THE ICELANDIC SYMPHONY
 ▼ THE ICELANDIC OPERA
 ▼ IAN ANDERSON
 ▼ REYKJAVÍK MIDSUMMER MUSIC

VISIT HARPA. Take a guided tour of the building and peak behind the scenes. Enjoy the glass facade, elegant halls and different floors of genius design.

Harpa is definitely a must-see on any Iceland travel agenda.

REGULAR GUIDED TOURS - DAILY

Weekdays at 15.30.
Price 1500 ISK (Around 10 Euros)
Weekends at 11.00 and 15.30.
Price 1500 ISK (Around 10 Euros)

GUIDED TOURS PACKAGES

Book a tour package for small or large groups
All tours can be booked at the box office desk,
at tours@harpa.is
or via telephone +354 528 5009



SOUNDDESIGN.NET/09/12

MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN MAY

PRESCRIBING MUSIC
WITH LOVE FOR YOUR
LIVE EXPERIENCE

How to use the listings
Venues are listed alphabetically by day.
For complete listings and detailed information
on venues visit www.listings.grapevine.is
Add your listings: www.listings.grapevine.is

04 FRI

Austur
23.30 Danni Deluxe

Bar 11
21:00 Live DJ

Dillon
21:00 Andrea Jónsdóttir

Dubliner
22:00 Ingi Valur and Eiki Hafdal

Esja
21:00 Dj Hlynur/DJ Bogi

Faktorý
23:00 DJ Atli Kanill

Hemmi og Valdi
22:00 DJ Benson Is Fantastic

Hressó
22:00 Live Blues concert DJ Frigor

Café Rósenberg
21:00 GRM Gylfi - Rúnar - Megas

Prikið
22:00 Addi Intro

05 SAT

Bar 11
21:00 Retrobot + Live DJ

Dillon
21:00 Andrea Jónsdóttir

Dubliner
22:00 Biggi og Signy and Disko Night

Esja
21:00 DJ Hlynur/DJ Bogi

Faktorý
23:00 DJ Major Disco and Commander funk and It is Magic

Gamli Gaukurinn
21:00 Berndsen & Þórunn Antónía

Hemmi og Valdi
22:00 DJ Viktor Birgiss

Hressó



Prostate Cancer Sucks Blues And Whiskey Don't

May 3 - 6, 21:00

Dubliner

1.000 ISK for a day, 3000 ISK for a 4-day ticket.

If you're reading this paper hot off the press, go to Dubliner for the last two days of the Blues for the Blue Nail festival! Blues musicians from Buddha the Blues Ensemble, to BB and the Bluebirds, Strákarnir hans Sævars, and Blússveit Pollíar will perform at the festival to raise awareness and collect money for prostate cancer. All the proceeds from 'Blues for the Blue Nail,' as well as the sale of Ballatine's whisky, will go to this good cause.

For those who can't make it to the festival, a wrap-up party free of charge will take place on Sunday night. So get your blues shoes on, have a whiskey on the rocks and enjoy blues for a great cause!

22:00 Silfur and VJ Fúzi

Nordic House
16:00 Múlinn Jazz Club: Tómas R. Einarsson - Quadrant - Strengur

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Ekkert mega Kukl

Prikið
22:00 Egill

06 SUN

Dubliner
22:00 Siggí Þorbergs

Esja
21:00 DJ Hlynur

Faktorý
9:30 Live Jazz

07 MON

Dubliner
22:00 Palmi G.

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Margrét Dórothea & Strengjasveit Tónlistarskóla Seltjarnarness

Prikið
22:00 DJ the Third

08 TUE

Dubliner
22:00 Ingvar Valgeirs

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Rikki & vinir

Prikið
22:00 House DJ

09 WED

Dubliner
22:00 Tryggvi Vilmundarson

Faktorý
21:00 Tilbury listening party

Hressó
22:00 Live Jazz

Nordic House
21:00 Múlinn Jazz Club: Bítlajazz (Beatle Jazz)

Prikið
22:00 DJ Cyppie

Café Rósenberg
21:00 Live Music

10 THU

Bar 11
21:00 Live DJ

Dubliner
22:00 Palmi G. and Open Mic

Edrúhöllin
20:00 Kaffi, kökur & rokk & ról

Esja
21:00 Partyzone lounge session

Faktorý
22:00 Dj Danni Deluxe



Coffee, Cake And Rock 'n' Roll

May 10, 20:00 - 22:00

Edrúhöllin, Efstaleiti 7

500 ISK

Fancy some coffee, cake and rock 'n' roll for a small sum of 500 ISK? The Coffee, Cake & Rock & Roll concerts take place every second week at Edrúhöllin, which is also home to SÁÁ, the drug and alcohol treatment centre of Iceland. So if you're also tired of drunken Icelanders and spilt beer, it's a drug and alcohol free space for people of all ages to enjoy live music.

Arnar Eggert Thoroddsen, chief music writer for the daily newspaper Morgunblaðið, curates the concert series, which sees two bands take the stage per evening. On May 10, the three-piece folk pop band 1860 and Faroese singer/songwriter Eivör Pálsdóttir will entertain the crowd. 1860 are not as old as their name may suggest. The band started off as a side project in 2009, gradually making a name for themselves with songs that range from cheesy ballads to lush jazz/rock compositions, even incorporating a folk/pop element. The second act of the night, Eivör Pálsdóttir, is going to enchant the audience with her distinct voice. Her roots lie in the Faroese ballads, but the singer combines them with rock, jazz, folk, pop, and European classical music.

So go down there for a very relaxed and calm concert atmosphere that involves sipping coffee and eating cake! Follow "Kaffi, kökur & rokk & ról" on Facebook for news on upcoming gigs.

Hemmi og Valdi
21:00 Lockerbie live
Hressó
22:00 Snorri Helgason
Café Rósenberg
21:00 Halli Reynis
Hressó
21:00 Agent Fresco (Gogo Yoko Concert)
Prikið
22:00 Gay Latino Man

11 FRI

Austur
23:00 Danni Deluxe
Bar 11
21:00 Prins Polo + Live DJ
Dillon
21:00 Andrea Jónsdóttir
Dubliner
22:00 Biggi Saevars and Duettin Pub-lick
Esja
21:00 Dj Hlynur/Dj Bogi
Faktorý
23:00 Introbeats
Gamli Gaukurinn
21:00 Próflokadjamm
Café Haíti
21:00 Jussanam - Brazilian Jazz
Hemmi og Valdi
22:00 Captain Fufanu DJ set
Hressó
21:00 Gunni Óla úr Skímó and DJ Frigor
Prikið
22:00 Krúsi

12 SAT

Bar 11
21:00 Agent Fresco + Live DJ
Dillon
21:00 Andrea Jónsdóttir
Dubliner
22:00 Kjartan Arnalds
Esja
21:00 DJ Hlynur/DJ Bogi
Faktorý
23:00 DJ Stef
Hemmi og Valdi
22:00 Rvk Soundsystem's Reggae Nights #21
Hressó
22:00 Spútnik (live band) VJ Fúzi
NASA
21:00 GusGus
Prikið
22:00 Benni
Café Rósenberg
21:00 Svavar Knútur

13 SUN

Dubliner
22:00 Siggi Þorbergs
Esja
21:00 DJ Hlynur
Faktorý
21:30 Live Jazz
Prikið
21:00 Hangover cinema



Celebrate Diversity In Reykjavík!

May 12, 13:00

Hallgrímskirkja and Reykjavík City Hall

Free

Reykjavík's Multi-cultural Day takes place Saturday, May 12. The Festivities will begin at Hallgrímskirkja at 13:00 with an address from Mayor Jón Gnarr followed by a parade, which will make its way down Skólavörðustígur, ending at City Hall.

Handcrafts, design, music, and food will be on display at an International Market Place. There'll be entertainment for young and old! Tjarnarbíó is going to host an interesting program including a rock violin show, theatre performances, salsa, break, and Mexican dance styles, a circus and a choir performance from 14:00 until 18:00.

Those wishing to reserve a booth at the International Marketplace can contact Jóna at jvk@reykjavik.is or at 411-4153. Those wishing to take part in the parade can contact Ragnar at ragnar06@gmail.com or 696-3810.



Caribbean Beats At Hemmi Og Valdi

May 12, 22:00

Hemmi og Valdi

Free

So, Reykjavík is not exactly the Reggae-capital of the world. It sometimes leaves you yearning for sunshine, palm trees and hanging around in a hammock on the beach. But there is hope: Rvk Soundsystem might help boost your spirits. On Saturday May 12 they'll put on their monthly reggae performance at Hemmi og Valdi. This is your opportunity to escape the relatively consistent greyish tone of the Icelandic sky, at least for a while.

Join the Soundsystem for some Caribbean tunes including reggae, dancehall, dub and roots while drinking beer and enjoying a welcome change from the electropop tunes you can find everywhere else. Gnúsi Yones, DJ Kári and Arnjóttur are just a few of the DJs performing that night. The shenanigans start at 22:00 and if that's not enough reggae for you, head to Gamla Bíó beforehand, where Icelandic reggae band Hjálmar will be playing at 21:00. The sun is shining, the weather is sweet...

Icelandic Seafood Tapas

With over different 80 courses to choose from, you can get acquainted with all the best fish in one night at the Tapashouse. We are located by the old harbour and have a splendid view of the sea with the mountains in the background.

Lunch is now on the menu!
OPENING HOURS THU-SAT 11:30-1:00 SUN-WED 11:30-24:00

The Tapashouse
By the old harbour in Reykjavík

Tapashúsið - Egisgarður 2 - Sólfellshúsið - 101 Reykjavík
+354 512 81 81 - info@tapashouse.is - www.tapashouse.is

Come and enjoy!
Icelandic food and beer
in a historic atmosphere

3 Course traditional menu

- Wild paté with mountain grass
- Cod and tomato samba
- Skyr-cheesecake with berries

Happy hour
From 16-18

Price kr. 3950.-

BORGARTÚN
BISTRO & BAR

BORGARTÚN 16 BORGARTUN.IS TEL: 517 0123

HOME COOKING
KR. 1500

BUFFET STYLE RESTAURANT
MEET THE LOCALS

Kalli Kokkur.is

OPEN WEEKDAYS FROM 11:30 - 14:00

BORGARTÚN 6 KALLIKOKKUR.IS TEL: 517 0102

ESJA

FOR
TALKING

FOR
DANCING

CELEBRATE THE RISING SUN..

ESJA LOUNGE/CLUB
ALL DRINKS AT ½ PRICE*
SUN-THU: 20-22
FRI-SAT: 17-19

.. AND SUMMER WILL COME

*APPLIES TO DRINKS SERVED INSIDE

laUNDROMAT
New York
 w/ sauerkraut and fries
 steak sandwich Bearnaise
 jor gonna
lovitt!

www.thelaundromatcafe.com



laUNDROMAT
life's
too short
for bad
burgers!

www.thelaundromatcafe.com

MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN MAY



Angry And Lawless Metal Vibes At NASA

May 16, 22:00

NASA

3000 ISK, tickets available at midi.is

Icelandic metal band Skálmöld has been busy in the recording studio, working on their second album 'Börn Loka'. They've made steady progress since they formed in August 2009 and the band, now boasting six members, will celebrate the finished recording of their second album at NASA on May 16.

Bootlegs and Skurk, two bands that were very prominent in the Icelandic heavy metal scene in the nineties, will act as their support and prepare the stage. After years of hibernation they are back to haunt you.

This will probably also be one of the last concerts in this legendary concert venue, and although this metal concert is on a Wednesday night, no early closing hours apply, so you can bang your head like it's the weekend!

14 MON

Dubliner

22:00 Palmi G.

Prikið

22:00 DJ Bob

Café Rósenberg

21:00 Pub Quiz

15 TUE

Dubliner

22:00 Ingvar Valgeirs

Hemmi og Valdi

21:00 Svavar Knutur and more

Prikið

22:00 House DJ

Café Rósenberg

21:00 Vor – Kristmundur & co

16 WED

Austur

23:00 Maggi

Dubliner

22:00 Þorbergs Siggí

Faktorý

23:00 DJ Atli Kanill and 90s DJ set

Hressó

21:00 Láka Band and VJ Fúzi

Nordic House

21:00 Múlinn Jazz Club: Sigmar

Þór Quintet

Reykjavík Backpackers

19:30 Sleep Walkerstation

Café Rósenberg

21:00 Trío Glóðir

17 THU

Dubliner

22:00 Palmi G. and Open Mic

Esja

21:00 Partyzone lounge session

Faktorý

22:00 Ojba Rasta

Hemmi og Valdi

21:00 Þoka and Dusty Miller live

Hressó

21:00 For A Minor Reflection

(Gogo Yoko Concert)

Café Rósenberg

21:00 Live Music



Shake Your Hips To Beatle Jazz

The Nordic House

May 9, 21:00

1500 ISK

Múlinn Jazz Club strikes again! The ongoing jazz concert series dedicated to the legendary radio presenter Jón Múli Árnason, who is known for making jazz music popular on the radio from 1946 to the 80s, is inviting you to shake your hips to Bítaljazz (Beatle Jazz) on May 9. Bítaljazz consists of a six piece ensemble which will make sure you have a good time!

This is the second to last Jazz concert at the Nordic House. They presented an ambitious and diverse programme, hereby contributing to stirring up the Icelandic jazz scene. One of your last chances to catch some quality Jazz live! So put on your jazz shoes and enjoy the vibe. For the detailed programme and a list of upcoming musicians go to <http://mulinn.is/>.

Numismatic Museum



The Central Bank and National Museum of Iceland jointly operate a numismatic collection that consists of Icelandic notes and coins, foreign money from earlier times, especially if mentioned in Icelandic sources, and more recent currency from Iceland's main trading partner countries. A selection from the numismatic collection is on display in showcases on the ground floor of the Central Bank's main building.

Situated in the Central Bank's main building in Kalkofnsvegur 1, Reykjavík.
 Open Mon.-Fri. 13:30-15:30. Free admittance.



People And Portraits For Art Without Borders

The Nordic House

Runs until May 13; Tuesday – Sunday 12.00 – 17.00

Free

The annual Art Without Borders festival, which is already in full swing, presents Fólk í Mynd (People in focus). The exhibitions will last until May 13, presenting the works of eleven artists and their different approaches to the tradition of portrait painting. As a challenge, the artists work from different angles with different technologies and mediums, but all are based on the same subject, which will be celebrities. As a result you get a variety of portraits from traditional paintings, to sculpture and video.

During the weekend this family event will give you the chance to create your own portraits with the help of a supervising artist. For this hands-on experience the focus will turn to us; how we see each other and how we use words to describe ourselves. Perhaps you discover more about yourself by giving this a try.

ART IN MAY

COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

How to use the listings: Venues are listed alphabetically by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit www.grapevine.is. Send us your listings: listings@grapevine.is

OPENINGS

Lækningaminjasafnið (The Medical History Museum), Seltjarnarnes

May 4

Final Graduate exhibition by students from three departments of the Icelandic Institute of Arts (Sculpture, Textile and Drawing). Opening May 4 at 17.00. The exhibition is open weekdays from 14.00 to 18.00 and on weekends from midday to 18.00.

Runs until May 13

Skaftfell, Seyðisfjörður

May 12

Re-opening of The Collection Centre

In collaboration with the Icelandic Centre for Ethnology and Folklore, Skaftfell will be showing a collection of short videos. The purpose of this is to collect narratives from all the inhabitants of Seyðisfjörður in 2011 and 2012 to give a bigger picture of the community.

ONGOING

ASÍ Art Museum

Friction

An exhibition curated by Einar Garibaldi, Kristinn Hrafnsson and Ólafur Gíslason. Numerous Icelandic artists are exhibiting their various artworks.

The Culture House

Islande - Israel

Exhibition by French artist Anne Her-

zog as part of the art exhibition series at the café and shop.

Runs until May 29

Medieval Manuscripts Eddas and Sagas

It includes principal medieval manuscripts, such as Codices Regii of the Poetic Edda and Prose Edda, and law codices and Christian works, not to forget the Sagas of Icelanders.

On permanent view

Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurósson

Exploring the life of Icelandic national hero Jón Sigurjónsson, made especially accessible to children, families, and school groups.

On permanent view

Medieval Manuscripts - Eddas and Sagas

Some of Iceland's medieval manuscripts on display. Guided tour in English on Mondays & Fridays at 15:00.

On permanent view

Millennium - phase one

Selection of pieces from the collection

Den Danske Kro

* Mondays *

Shot's night - all shots ISK 400,-

* Tuesdays *

Live music and Beer Bingo night

* Wednesdays *

POP-QUIZ night (special offer on drinks) & Live music

* Thursdays *

Live Music / Scandinavian nights

* Fridays *

Live music / Sing-along nights

* Saturdays *

Live music / Sing-along nights

* Sundays *

Hangover & Live music night Really good prices on drinks



Ingólfsstræti 3 · 101 · Reyk.
www.danskis.is

by the sea
and a delicious lobster
at Fjörubordid 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

Fosshotel

Welcomes you all year

www.fosshotel.is

WE ARE
READY FOR
YOUR VISIT

Book now at www.fosshotel.is

FOSSHOTEL / SIGTÚN 38 / 105 REYKJAVÍK
ICELAND / TEL.: +354 562 4000 / FAX: +354 562 4001
E-MAIL: sales@fosshotel.is

FOSSHOTEL
AROUND ICELAND

ALL T-SHIRTS

3 for 2



HAFNARSTRÆTI 5 & SKÓLAVÖRÐUSTÍGUR 10

A

Café Loki in front of Hallgrímskirkja

Icelandic traditional homemade food



Open 10-18 Mon - Sat
Open 11-17 Sundays

B

HORNIÐ

Restaurant - Pizzeria



Hornið opened in 1979 was the first restaurant of its kind in Iceland, a restaurant with a true Italian atmosphere. Hornið is known for good food made out of fresh raw materials, good pizzas baked in front of the guests, good coffee and comfortable service.

Lunch offers every day.

Open every day from 11.00 to 23.30

For reservations call 551-3340

Restaurant Hornið - Hafnarstræti 15, 101 Reykjavík

C

MAP

Places We Like

1 Hressó

Austurstræti 20

You know, Hressó is basically the only place I go for coffee. Why? Their coffee is decent to excellent, but their forte is surely their wonderful patio, where you can enjoy the spring breeze in the sun, wrap yourself in a blanket beneath an electric heater in January and at all times: smoke.

2 Laundromat Café

Austurstræti 9

At the Laundromat Cafe you can do laundry, drink a beer and have a grandma read to your children all under one roof. This kid-friendly restaurant opened last spring in Reykjavík and prides itself on its full menu, cool concept, 5,000 books (that you can buy or trade), board games, and up-to-date newspapers and magazines (including a WALL OF GRAPEVINES).

3 Sægreifinn

Geirsgötu 8

Down by the Reykjavík harbour, Sægreifinn fish shop and restaurant is a pretty unique establishment. The menu features various fish dishes (including most of the "crazy Icelandic food" you'll want to tell your friends you had) and a rich portion of some pretty good lobster soup. Good food and a welcoming service make this place a must-try.

4 Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a

Super relaxed and cosy diner/café below street level. This place makes the best hangover breakfast ever (the truck!) and any-other-day breakfast as well. It's a nice and relaxing place to eat and increase your caffeine intake and chill with friends or with some reading material.

5 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Weekends are somewhat overrated at Kaffibarinn if you ask me. Don't get me wrong, they can be brilliant if you're completely pissed, the DJs fresh and the crowd is full-blooded, still the weekdays are better. You should always expect to get caught in some shenanigan, whether it's a crazy Monday bender or a wacko Tuesday...well... bender.

6 Café d'Haiti

Geirsgata 7b/Verbúð 2

Now in a spacious new location, Café d'Haiti is surely one of Reykjavík's best cafés (and this is no mean feat, as the city has some nice coffee on offer). Go there for an excellent cup whenever you feel like it, or indulge in beer and low-key concerts at night.

Useful numbers

Emergency number: **112**

Medical help: **1770**

Dental emergency: **575 0505**

Information: **118**

Taxi: Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir: **588 5522**

BSR: **561 0000**

Tax Free Refund

Iceland Refund, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 564 6400

Tourist information

Arctic Adventures, Laugavegur 11,

tel: 562 7000

City Centre, Aðalstræti 2, tel: 590 1550

Iceland Excursions - Grayline Iceland,



7 Austur

Austurstræti 7

Sleek and shiny, this new restaurant and bar is a straight-up boutique hot spot for stylish kids and trendy professionals alike. Appropriate for formal business meetings but casual enough for the roll-out-bed-at-5pm crowd, they serve up ample, satisfying, modern dishes at reasonable prices. This is also one of the rare places to get a full breakfast all day long!

Hafnarstræti 20, tel: 540 1313

The Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2, tel: 522 4979

Trip, Laugavegur 54, tel: 433 8747

Pharmacies

Lyf og heilsa, Egilsgata 3, tel: 563 1020

Lyfja, Laugavegur 16, tel: 552 4045 and Lágmúla 5, tel: 533-2300

Coach terminal

BSÍ, Vatnsmýrarvegur 10, tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Domestic airlines

Air Iceland, Reykjavíkflugvöllur, tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is

Eagle Air, Hótel Loftleiðir, tel: 562-4200

8 Reykjavík Backpackers

Laugavegur 28

Mingle with internationals and enjoy free wifi at this convenient hangout right in the middle of the action. Reykjavík Backpackers is an inexpensive hostel with a cool downtown vibe. They serve up sandwiches, cakes and coffee during the day, and offer live entertainment, beer and drink specials at night.

Public transport

The only public transport available in Reykjavík is the bus. Most buses run every 20-30 minutes (the wait may be longer on weekends) and the price per fare is 350 ISK for adults and children. Multiple day passes are available for purchase at select locations. Complete route map available at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Buses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends. Main terminals are: Hlemmur and Lækjartorg

Opening Hours

Bars and clubs: According to regulations, bars can stay open until 01:00 on weekdays and 05:30 on weekends.

Shops: Mon.-Fri. 10:00-18:00, Sat.

9 Nikita

Laugavegur 56

The Icelandic skate design brand Nikita now has a flagship store in Reykjavík and girl, it is awesome! The hot pink exterior is only the beginning; inside you'll be treated to some of the coolest and most comfortable ladies street and skate wear on the market.

10:00-16:00, Sun. closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

Swimming pools: Weekdays 06:30-22:00 and weekends 09:00-17:00, although each pool varies plus or minus a few hours. **Banks** in the centre are open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-16:00.

Post Offices

Post offices are located around the city. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5, open Mon.-Fri. 09:00-18:00. Stamps are also sold at bookstores, gas stations, tourist shops and some grocery stores.

Raggi from the band Árstíðir is the unstoppable...

HUMAN JUKEBOX

Playing every
wednesday night
from ten o'clock

Live music - every night
Live soccer
Special beer offers
And our infamous Wheel of Fortune

THE ENGLISH PUB

Austurvelli & Hafnarfirði



E



LEGEND

EATING # DRINKING # SHOPPING # ADS

For a map of outside downtown Reykjavik visit www.grapevine.is or the Icelandic phonebook website www.ja.is

13 NEW IN TOWN

Lebowski Bar
Laugavegur 18
The new Coen-Brothers-themed Lebowski Bar features music from the 60s and 70s, a great dance floor and plenty of cozy seating upstairs. It is actually the only bar in town where you can Twist the Night Away! You can also pop into The Lebowski for a burger and shake during the day or get your drink and dance on at night. Don't forget to try a white Russian while you're there. But that's just our opinion, man.



A Day In The Life
Pálmar Þór Hlödversson – Barista and Trainer at Kaffismiðjan

What's up, Pálmar Þór?
Hi, Grapevine! Well, I'm ALL about coffee. I've been working in the Icelandic coffee industry for some years now and am currently working at Kaffismiðjan on Kárástigur. Most of my friends also work in the coffee industry. Hence the reason why most of my daily routine revolves around the stuff!

EARLY MORNING >

An average, non-working day for me would involve getting up bright and early and heading up to Kaffismiðjan, which happens to be my favourite coffee house, as well as my work place, for a cinnamon scone and a 'tvíhleypa,' which is a cappuccino with a single espresso on the side. There I might get some paperwork done for my business importing the AeroPress, a great little device for brewing coffee.

LUNCH >

By the time I'm done with paper work, I usually feel peckish again, so I make my way down to my boyfriend's café, Litli Bóndabærinn, on Laugavegur. It's basically an organic espresso bar but it also sells delicious, freshly baked goodies, all prepared on the premises. I usually go for the peach and prosciutto panini and maybe an organic espresso to keep me going through the day.

AFTERNOON >

I have quite a few errands to run in the afternoon, both for my business and for the Barista Association of Iceland (Kaffibarþjónafélagið), but it's always nice to drop in on my friends at the various other cafés in downtown Reykjavik.

HEAT OF THE NIGHT >

When I'm done running around town, I pop home for a bite to eat and to chill for a few hours before heading out to Íslenski Barinn to meet my friends and sample some of their great selection of beers. After that, things can get a little hazy, but I make my way home and crawl into bed, ready for the next day of coffee-related fun and frolics!

Now offering catering service!

sushibarinn
Laugavegur 2 101 Reykjavík tel: 552 4444

HOTEL KEILIR

Best located downtown hotel in Keflavik
5 min from the airport

Special summer offers

contact us now
tel: +354-4209800
www.airporthotel.is

check out

listings.grapevine.is

10 66° North
Bankastræti 5

Highly fashionable and highly practical, 66° Norður is a classic outdoors store in Iceland for everybody. Nearly every Icelander has a 66° sweater or two. Their quality apparel is made to last and keeps the elements out. You may also find their products in high-end stores around the world.

Public phones

There aren't many public payphones in the city centre. The tourist information centre at Aðalstræti 2, City Hall, Kolaportíð, entrance at Landsbankinn and in Lækjargata. Prepaid international phone cards are recommended for int'l callers.

Internet Access

Most cafés offer free wireless internet access. Computers with internet connections are available to use at:
Ráðhúskaffi City Hall, Tjarnargata 11
Ground Zero, Frakkastigur 8, near Laugavegur 45
The Reykjavik City Library, Tryggvagata 15

11 ÁTVR (Liquor store)
Austurstræti 10a

In Iceland, alcohol isn't sold in the grocery shops (that stuff in the shops that looks like beer—it isn't beer. Trust us). You can buy alcohol in the state-owned liquor stores named ÁTVR, usually referred to as Ríkið ("The State"). One store is located in the city centre. Opening hours for the downtown one are: Mon.–Thu. 11:00–18:00, Fri. 11:00–19:00, Sat. 11:00–18:00.

The National and University Library, Arngrímsgata 3
Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstræti 2
Icelandic Travel Market, Bankastræti 2
Reykjavik Backpackers, Laugavegur 28

Swimming Pools

There are several swimming pools in Reykjavik. The one in 101 Reykjavik, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur, is an indoor one, located at Barónsstígur. That pool features a nice sunbathing area and some outdoor hot tubs. Opening hours: Monday to Thursday from 06:30–22:00, Friday from 06:30–20:00, Saturday from 08:00–16:00, and Sunday from 10:00–18:00.

12 Eymundsson Bookstore
Skólavörðustígur 11

Eymundsson is a chain with several outlets but the one on Skólavörðustígur is the best in town. The premises are equipped with a coffee shop, tables and sofas to lounge in and the all-glass exterior lets in a lot of light, which is good for reading real books, not Facebooks.

Public Toilets

Public toilets in the centre can be found inside the green poster covered towers located, for example, at Hlemmur, Ingólfs-tortorg, by Hallgrímskirkja, by Reykjavik Art Museum, Lækjargata and by Eymundsson on Skólavörðustígur. Toilets can also be found inside the Reykjavik City Hall and the Reykjavik Library.

NAUTHÓLL Bistro

we are #10 of 120 restaurants in Reykjavik

www.nautholl.is | www.facebook.com/nautholl | nautholl@nautholl.is | tel.: 599 6660

i8

i8 Gallery
Tryggvagata 16
101 Reykjavík
Iceland
info@i8.is

T: +354 551 3666
www.i8.is



i8 was founded in 1995 and represents an eclectic mix of Icelandic and international contemporary artists.

BIRGIR ANDRÉSSON	FINNBOGI PÉTURSSON
ÓLAFUR ELÍASSON	RAGNA RÓBERTSDÓTTIR
HREINN FRÍÐFINNSSON	EGILL SÆBJÖRNSSON
KRISTJÁN GUÐMUNDSSON	KARIN SANDER
SIGURÐUR GUÐMUNDSSON	HRAFNKELL SIGURÐSSON
ELÍN HANSDÓTTIR	IGNACIO URIARTE
RONI HORN	ÍVAR VALGARÐSSON
RAGNAR KJARTANSSON	ÞÓR VALGARGSSON
EGGERT PÉTURSSON	LAWRENCE WEINER

Opening hours: Tuesday - Friday, 11-5pm, Saturday, 1-5pm.
Join our mailing list on www.i8.is or join us on Facebook.

ART IN MAY

of the National Gallery displaying a variety of works by Icelandic artists in the last two centuries.

On permanent view

The Library Room

The old reading room of the National Library. Displaying books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th century to the present. Works include oldest published versions of the Sagas, Eddic Poems, and more.

On permanent view

The Einar Jónsson Museum

Einar Jónsson

The museum contains close to 300 art works spanning a 60 year career: carvings from the artist's youth, sculptures, paintings and drawings. A beautiful tree-clad garden adorned with 26 bronze casts of the artist's works is located behind the museum.

On permanent view

Gerðuberg

Stone, scissors, paper and the keys to heaven

The exhibition Steinn, skæri, pappír og lykklar að himnaríki features Icelandic stones, scissors of various shapes and sizes, paper (in the form of biblical pictures and bibles) and keys, some of which (who knows?) may unlock the doors of heaven itself.

Runs until June 22

Gullkúnnst Helgu

Is Life Salted Fish?

Salome Fannberg is known for using unusual materials for her work, especially Icelandic seaweed and wool. This exhibition shows her dreams and hopes during her journey of the last 4 years. The artwork is her way of showing the Icelandic way of life, a raw image of the little island in the north.

Runs until May 28

Hafnarborg

Hrafnkell Sigurðsson

Exhibition of new work by Hrafnkell Sigurðsson, mostly from 2011 and 2012, displaying photography, video and wall mounted sculptures.

Runs until May 28

Hafnarhús

Iceland Academy of the Arts - Graduation Exhibition 2012

Students from the Iceland Academy of the Arts in the Fine Arts, Design and Architecture Departments show their final projects.

Runs until May 6

i8 Gallery

Ívar Valgarðsson

In his solo show at i8 Gallery conceptual artist Ívar Valgarðsson will show new works in various media.

Runs until May 12

Kjarvalsstaðir (Reykjavík Art Museum)

Tàpies - Image, Body, Pathos

Exhibition of Catalan artist Antoni Tàpies' oeuvre. Paintings on canvas and wood from 1958 to present.

Runs until May 20

Knitting Iceland

Come and knit at Laugavegur 25, 3rd floor, every Thursday, 14:00 - 18:00

On permanent view



Heroic Cliffhanger Rescues

National Museum of Iceland

Runs until September

1200 ISK (600 ISK for senior citizens and students)

The National Museum of Iceland has opened a new exhibition of stunning photographs from the 1940s, presenting the story of Dhoon, a British fishing boat that ran aground just off the Látrabjarg cliffs in the Westfjords of Iceland in 1947. In appalling conditions, a team of local volunteers were able to rescue 12 of the shipwrecked men. A year later, Óskar Gíslason was commissioned to have the team re-enact the rescue for a film.

As the team was filming, news of another shipwreck in nearby Patreksfjörður reached them, so they took the opportunity to save six of the surviving sailors, and document the rescue again.

The exhibition thus documents the re-enactment of the first rescue, as well as the genuine rescue of the Sargon crew in 1948. Fascinating photographs show the heroic men, but also the violent beauty of the Westfjords and its nature. The film will be shown at the museum every Sunday at 15:00 throughout the summer.

Latin Dance Studio, Faxafen 12

Guided Practica - Argentine tango, Sundays from 17:30-19:30

Register by phone 821 6929 or email tangoadventure@gmail.com, 500 ISK for students, 800 ISK for others. Six week courses are also available

Gallery Kling & Bang

33

Looking the Devil in the Eye, an exhibition by visual artist Sigga Björg Sigurðardóttir. *Runs until May 6*

Museum of Design - Hönnunarsafn Íslands

LOOP LANGUAGE

An exhibition of new works by six Icelandic designers who all express themselves through knitting. The works

exhibited are made within a certain framework and testify to the designers' full artistic freedom for expression which does not stoop to perceived laws of market and fashion. Curated by designer Steinunn Sigurðardóttir. *Runs until May 20*

National Gallery of Iceland

Rúri - Retrospective

Retrospective of Rúri's major works over the last four decades. *Runs until May 6*

The National Museum

The Making of a Nation - Heritage and History in Iceland

This exhibition is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

On permanent view.

The Nordic House

National Purist Routes

The project National Purist Routes explores the intersecting fields of hydro and thermal energy, tourism, and natural landscapes. It is a proposed network of hydrogen filling stations for rental cars developed as destinations across Iceland, suggesting possible symbiotic energies between the expanding energy and tourism industries. *Runs until May 15*

The Library

The collection centres on new Nordic literature, both fiction and non-fiction. The library lends out novels, academic publications, audio books and more.

On permanent view

Hafnarhús

Erró- Drawings

The exhibition consists of 180 drawings Erró has done since 1944 until the present day. *Runs until August 26*

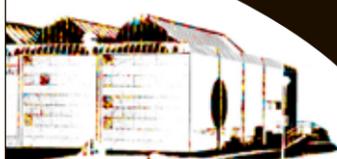
Reykjavík City Museum - Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

The Settlement Exhibition

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 10:00-17:00, 600 ISK per adult, 300 ISK for children (children under 12, free) and 450 ISK per person in groups (10+).

On permanent view

Experience Icelandic Art and Design



Kópavogur Art Museum- Gerðarsafn

Hamraborg 4, Kópavogur
Tel. +354 570 0440
Open 11-17
Closed on Mondays
www.gerdarsafn.is

Thoughts on drawings
Collection of drawings by Icelandic artists



Hönnunarsafn Íslands Museum of Design and Applied Art

Garðatorg 1, Garðabær
Tel. +354 512 1525
Open 12-17
Closed on Mondays
www.honnunarsafn.is

Humble Objects
Objects in our daily life

Hafnarborg The Hafnarfjörður Centre of Culture and Fine Art

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður
Tel. +354 585 5790
Open 12-17
Thursdays 12-21
Closed on Tuesdays
www.hafnarborg.is

Port City
Hrafnkell Sigurðsson
Exhibition

To the Blue Lagoon



Porcelain, Wool and Linen Galore

Medical History Museum, Seltjarnarnes

Runs until May 13

Free

The Institute of Arts' graduates are exhibiting their final work at the Medical History Museum in Seltjarnarnes and the opening blast is on May 4 at 17:00! Students of three departments (Textile, Drawing and Sculpture) are going to show us what they have been up to in the last two years. It'll be an eclectic exhibition involving all kinds of materials: porcelain, linen and wool. Join the students in the final celebration of their hard labour! If you can't make the opening, the exhibition will run until May 13, and is open weekdays from 14.00 to 18.00 and on weekends from midday to 18.00.

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

From Poverty to Abundance

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century.

On permanent view

The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history and the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour.

On permanent view

The Call of Sagas

A exhibition from Finland about a adventurous voyage in an open boat from Finland to Iceland, honoring the old viking shipping routes.

On permanent view

The Watercolours of Ólafur Thorlacius

Ólafur Þór worked with the Icelandic Coast Guard for many years as a mapmaker. He is now retired and paints beautiful watercolors in his free time.

On permanent view

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Echo

Charlotta Hauksdóttir & Sonja Thomsen look at time and the reproduction of the past.

Runs until May 6

Calendar Breaking Christians

Christian Scheirbeck's photos from the early 1900's capture moments in the lives of local people during work and play.

Runs until May 6

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum Milestones: Sigurjón Ólafsson's Key Sculptures

Exhibition with some of Sigurjón Ólafsson's key works from different periods of his prolific career as a sculptor. The earliest work on the exhibition is a newly acquired relief of two sisters which he made at his first year at the Royal



Musicians Have a Heart

May 10 and May 17

Hressó

Free, donations appreciated

GogoYoko kicked off their charity concerts at Hresso series two weeks ago. Each free concert features a new band playing for the charity of their choice. On May 10 Agent Fresco will rock the house for a good cause. Arnor Dan, the lead singer, says that the band's choice of charity, Krabbameinsfélagið, (The Icelandic Cancer Foundation) "was really a no-brainer." He lost his father to cancer in 2001 and the band's newest album is based around that event and the aftermath. For a Minor Reflection continues the good will by playing for UNICEF on May 17. Grapevine thinks showing up to a free concert to listen to awesome bands to help worthy charities is really a no-brainer.

Academy of Art in Copenhagen. This relief has not been exhibited in Iceland before.

Runs until: Oct 1

Spark Design Space

A Salon show is being prepared at Spark containing selected projects from the past as well as a few new things we can not resist.

Spark is open during the transformation.

Skaffell, Seyðisfjörður

Check www.skaffell.is for latest shows

Slátturhúsið, Egilsstaðir

Check www.slatturhusid.is for latest shows



An Intimate Peek Into Icelandic Culture

Alliance Française

Runs until June 21

Free

An exhibition called 'A journey in Iceland-Les Climats' recently opened at Alliance Française. Between September 2007 and September 2009, French photographer Lola Reboud toured Iceland to take pictures. This exhibition gathers her work, which was shortlisted for the prestigious HSBC prize for photography in 2011. Photographing a country and essentially trying to grasp a culture is challenging. Reboud, however, does a remarkable job. Her photographs include beautiful shots of Icelandic landscapes, but also delve into small communities of local fishing villages and other more intimate portraits of Icelandic culture such as pictures of family dinners. Go check it out!



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




The country's largest museum of cultural history featuring a permanent exhibition on Iceland's extraordinary history from settlement to present day.

National Museum of Iceland

OPENING HOURS:

Summer
(May 1st – September 15th)
Daily 10–17

Winter
(September 16th – April 30th)
Daily except Mondays 11–17



Suðurgata 41 · 101 Reykjavík · Tel. +354 530-2200 · www.natmus.is



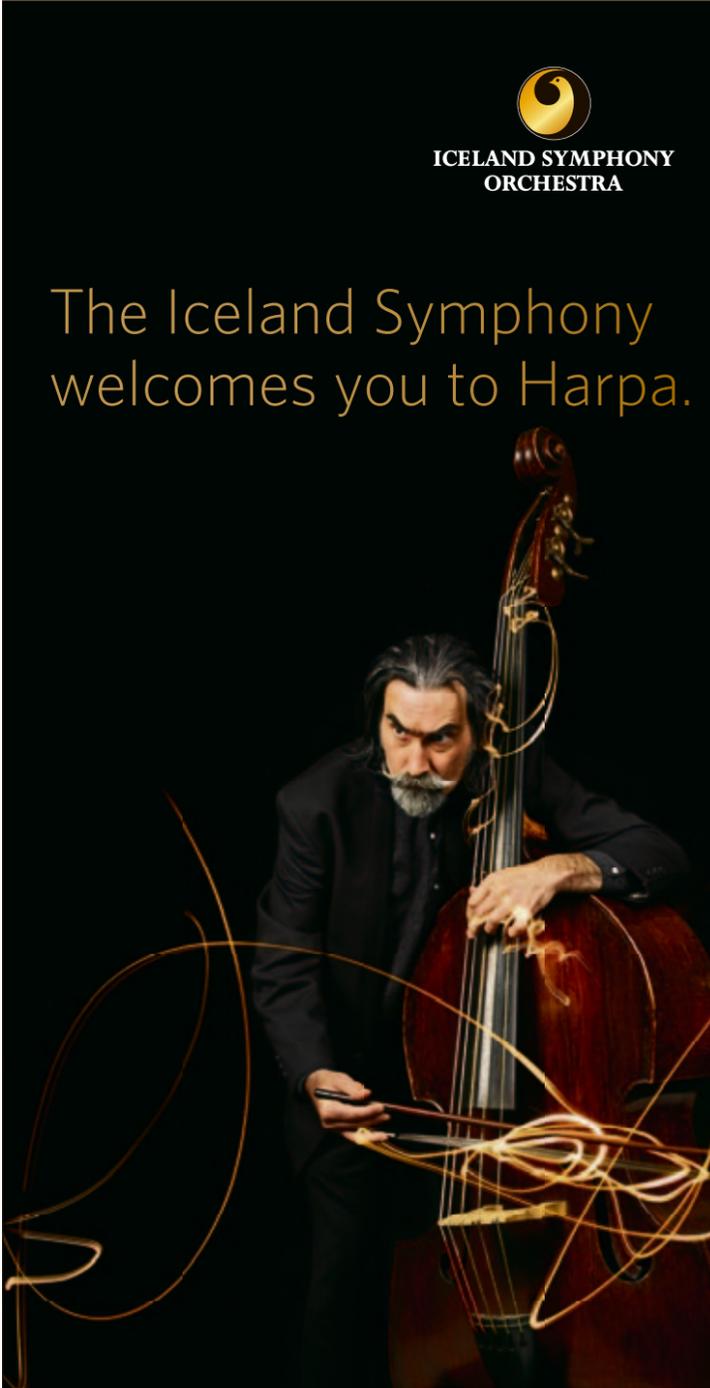
Reykjavik Museum of Photography

Exhibitions all year round
ADMISSION FREE



LJÓSMYNDASAFN REYKJAVÍKUR
Reykjavik Museum of Photography

GRÓFARHÚS 6th floor
Tryggvagata 15, 101 Reykjavík
Opening hours:
12–19 mon–fri, 13–17 weekends
www.photomuseum.is



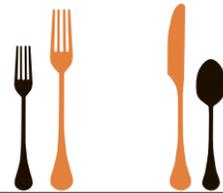

ICELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Iceland Symphony welcomes you to Harpa.

Box office » 528 5050 » www.sinfonia.is » www.harpa.is

F O O D

FOR YOUR MIND, BODY AND SOUL



One of the city's best restaurant
Quality from start to finish

ARGENTINA

Barónsstígur 11a • 101 Reykjavík • Tel 551 9555 • www.argentina.is



RESTAURANT - BAR

BOSTON



delicious
PIZZA
+
small menu

Sunny
terrace!

LAUGAVEGUR 28B, ABOVE SPUUTNIK SECOND HAND SHOP



icelandic
FISH & CHIPS

Organic bistro

Creating a tradition

Tryggvgata 8/Geirsgata, 101 Rvk
Tel: 511-1118
Open: mon-sat 11:30-21:00/sun 17:00-21:00



ນາເຣະໄທ

Frakkstígur 12 • 101 Reykjavík
Sími / tel 552 9944 • www.nareethai.is

ນາເຣະໄທ
THAI RESTAURANT



Meet Iceland's Award-Winning Raw Food Chef

Raw Food pioneer and restaurateur Solla Eiríks interviewed

Sólveig Eiríksdóttir, better known as Solla, was recently voted “Favourite Raw Gourmet Chef” and “Favourite Raw Simple Chef” in the annual Best of Raw contest, which accepts nominations and votes through their website bestofrawfoods.com. We got Solla to tell us a little bit about the Raw Food movement in Iceland and the key to her success—which is certainly not a top-secret book of recipes because she happily shares her favourite recipe for all of you to enjoy...

WHEN DID THE RAW FOOD CONCEPT TAKE OFF IN ICELAND? AND HOW DID YOU GET INTO IT?

In 1950, the first Raw book, ‘Lifandi Fæða,’ by Kristine Nolfi, a Danish MD who cured herself of cancer, was published in Reykjavík. Kristine’s book sold out, and she came to Reykjavík to give a lecture. But, interest more or less faded by the seventies.

I changed my diet in 1980 when I learned about Macrobiotic and started to eat their way. I first heard about Raw Food from a friend in 1996. It sounded interesting so I took the next flight to Puerto Rico to learn more. I loved the food and its influence on my body and I went raw over night.

At that time, there were no active people here. Little by little, however, people have become more interested in the movement. I encouraged people to go to Puerto Rico to check it out, and I started to offer a lot of food prep classes. By 2004, I think it has been a fast growing movement.

WAS YOUR RESTAURANT GLÓ AN INSTANT SUCCESS?

My husband and I took over Gló in January 2010, and it was an instant success. Not only is it a growing trend,

but also a number of people like to eat at least partially Raw. They see it as a healthy way to turn raw veggies into a meal.

WHAT SEPARATES YOU FROM OTHERS IN THE RAW FOOD BUSINESS? YOUR SECRET?

I think that my strength is that I work in the kitchen at Gló every day, starting early morning. So I get a lot of practise and I have to be constantly thinking of new ideas to keep my customers happy.

Well, if I have a secret, it is probably that I go to Los Angeles twice a year to meet with all of the wonderful Raw trendsetters. I give a food demo there in front of thousands of people and each time I have to present something new so I have to stay imaginative and creative.

WILL YOU SHARE YOUR FAVOURITE RECIPE WITH US?

I love Kelp noodles and this recipe is very popular at Gló:

THAI STYLE KELP NOODLES

- 1 bag Kelp Noodles
- 1 green zucchini, made into noodles with a spiral slicer
- 1/2 cup green cabbage, 1/2 cup red cabbage, very thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup green onions, thinly sliced
- 1/3 bunch of each: fresh basil, cilantro, mint

The sauce:

- 1 1/2 cup thick homemade almond-milk
- 1/2 cup sesame oil
- 2 Tbsp of each: fresh basil, cilantro, mint
- 4 lime leaves
- 1 stalk lemon grass
- 1-2 clove garlic, minced
- 1-2 Tbsp peeled, grated ginger
- 2 Tbsp lemon or lime juice
- 2 Tbsp lime zest, grated
- 1-2 Tbsp agave syrup or other sweetener
- 1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp Himalayan crystal salt
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper, optional

Toppings:

Wild jungle peanuts, chopped, avocado in cubes, pineapple in bite size pieces, 1 tsp of each chopped herbs: cilantro, mint, basil, 1 Tbsp dulce.

Instructions:

Soak and rinse the kelp noodles in fresh water, strain, pat dry and place them into a beautiful bowl. Using a spiral slicer, peel the zucchini down to the core of seeds on all sides, forming “spaghetti” and place these noodles into the bowl with the kelp noodles. Cut the green and red cabbage very thinly and add to the bowl. Finely mince the fresh herbs and place 1/3 bunch of each. For the sauce: Put everything into a blender and blend until smooth. Toss the noodles with the sauce and sprinkle with the toppings. Enjoy! 🍴

Words
Anna Andersen

Photography
Alisa Kalyanova



I Can See Clearly Now

A closer look into the production of Icelandic vodka

You may have noticed that Icelanders enjoy a drink or two. Or three or four, and keep drinking 'til they hit the floor. And if you're a vodka drinker, you may have noticed Iceland's own Reyka vodka nestled in amongst the more well-known names.

The vodka has been distilled in Iceland since 2005, and uses some of the country's unique assets in its production. Always keen for a scoop (and a drink or two), The Grapevine went with a group of fellow vodka fiends to the Reyka Vodka distillery in Borgarnes to find out more.

After an hour-long journey from downtown Reykjavík we are ushered into a nondescript building and enter a room dominated by a giant copper apparatus. It's about two stories high and although I know it's what produces the vodka, I don't know what the hell it is. Master distiller Kristmar Ólafsson introduces himself and duly lifts my veil of ignorance; it's a Carter-Head Still,

one of six in existence and the only one used to distil vodka; the rest are used for whiskey production.

Reyka was founded and developed by William Grant and Sons, a company known mostly for their whisky production (Glenfiddich, Tullamore Dew, etc), so it's not entirely surprising that they use a Carter-Head. And Kristmar reckons that a Carter-Head is the best choice for the job because the internal maze of pipes and plates makes it more efficient at getting rid of impurities.

Even so, Reyka doesn't use all of the alcohol that passes through the Carter-Head. Kristmar informs us that the alcohol produced in the middle of the process is the purest, so only this alcohol winds up being used. And to make certain that the vodka is even purer, it is then filtered through lava rocks, much as Icelandic water is purified, before it is mixed with water from the nearby Grábrók spring. This final stage brings the vodka down to 80 proof (40%), making it ready for consumption.

Last year Reyka was awarded The International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC) Vodka Trophy, a prestigious award based on a blind tasting. But beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so why don't you try it and see for yourself? We certainly did! ♡

Words
Clyde Bradford

Photography
Alisa Kalyanova

3 X ICECREAM

1 ÍSBÚÐ VESTURBÆJAR

The undisputed master of Icelandic ice cream, Ísbúð Vesturbæjar beckons the people of Reykjavík to queue in the wind and rain, cold and less cold for a taste of the old and new soft serve with toppings and sauces of their choosing. Delish!

Hagamel 67, 107 Reykjavík

2 THE KIOSK IN INGÓLFSTORG

It's your ice cream fix in the heart of 101. The bonus feature of this place is that you can order your ice cream to look like a smiley face... ya know, if you're into that.

Ingólfstorg

3 10/11

Okay, so it's not nice fresh soft serve, but 10/11 on Austurstræti stocks a rather impressive freezer case of ice cream in more flavours than you'll find at the parlours.

Austurstræti 17

3 X FISH

1 MELABÚÐIN

Isn't it nice to walk up to a counter at a grocery store and there is somebody on the other side to serve you an assortment of fresh fish. It's reasonably priced, too.

Hagamelur 39

2 KOLAPORTID

Reykjavík's weekly flea market boasts an extensive fish and meat section. Often some of the mongers are offering 2 for 1 on fillets of frozen fish. Sweet deal!

Tryggvagata 19

3 FISKBÚÐIN FREYJUGÖTU

This quintessential Icelandic fish store offers up a fresh catch of the day as well as pre-made fish dishes that just need to be tossed in the oven.

Freyjugata 1

3 X AMERICAN BREAKFAST

1 GRÁI KÖTTURINN

The Truck is the very embodiment of the all-American breakfast – larger than life and gluttonous to the extreme. Grái Kötturinn does the dish right, with fluffy pancakes, eggs done the way you like 'em, bacon, toast and home fries stacked high, and served with complimentary coffee. If you wake up dying of hunger, you know where to go.

Hverfisgata 16a

2 PRIKID

Not to be outdone, Prikið's got a Truck of its own – bacon, eggs, pancakes, potatoes, toast – to stop hunger in its tracks. For those of the British persuasion, the Station Wagon has your hankering for baked beans covered.

Bankastræti 12

3 HRESSÓ

While the big-breakfast item on Hressó's menu is called "English Breakfast" it's the menu that counts where American breakfasts are concerned and this is big enough to get the job done. Bacon, eggs, toast, satisfaction.

Austurstræti 20

Iceland's Restaurant of the year 2009 & 2010
by the Nordic Prize

DILL restaurant

Nordic House Sturlugata 5 101 Reykjavík tel. +354 552 1522 www.dillrestaurant.is
Open for lunch every day from 11.30 and for dinner wednesday to sunday from 19.00.

www.boddydesign.com

10% Discount

If you bring this printout we give you 10% discount

Gandhi Indian restaurant
Pósthússtræti 17; 101 Reykjavík
ICELAND - Tel.: (+354) 511 1991
www.gandhi.is e-mail: gandhi@gandhi.is

Example from our menu:

Indverskt ævintýri – Indian adventure

Let our chefs surprise you with fish, chicken and vegetarian courses accompanied with nan bread and raitha. Indverskur eftirréttur – Indian dessert

ISK 4.900 - 10% = ISK 4.410

gandhi RESTAURANT

the best thai food year 2009, 2010 and 2011
Best goddamn restaurant 2011
1 of 10 The Best Restaurant in Iceland

BANTHAI
Laugavegur 130

OPEN HOURS 18.00 - 22.00 EVERY DAY

Laugavegur 130 ofan við Hlemm
tel : 55-22-444, 692-0564
www.banthai.name

Ban Thai is simply the finest Thai restaurant in Iceland
www.yummy.is

Also Try : YUMMI YUMMI

thai fusion food
Hverfisgata 123 Tel : 588-2121
www.yummiyummi.net
one price 1000 kr.

there are a lot of positive reviews about.....BanThai

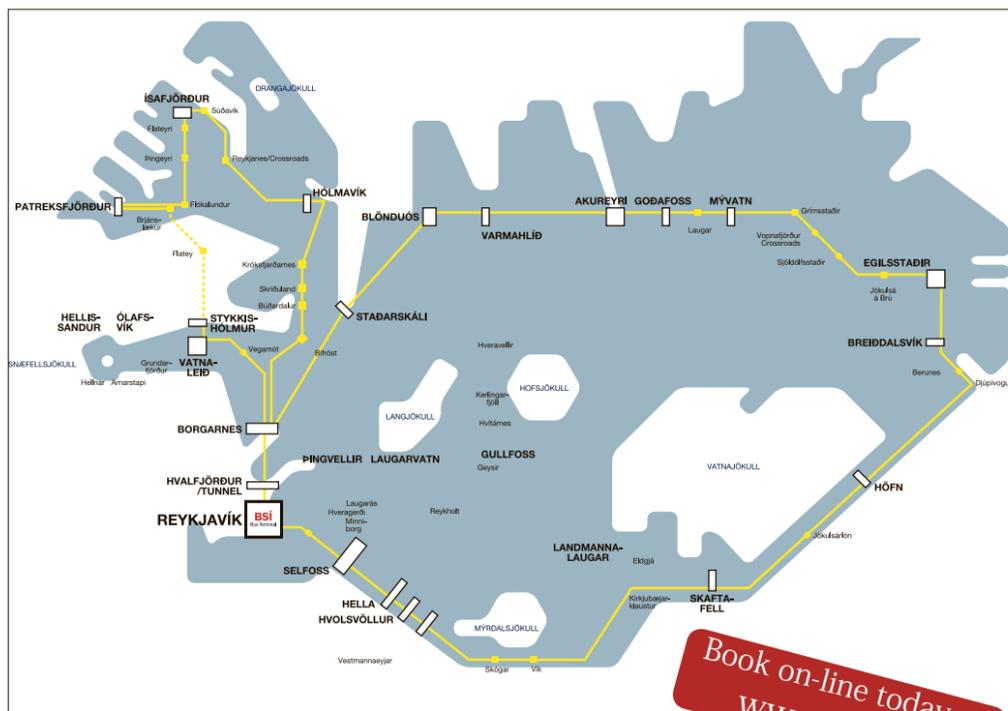
HAMBORGARA Bullan

b5 Bar - Bistro

Bankastræti 5

Behind the bar

Enjoy Freedom and Flexibility With our Bus Passports



Book on-line today at
www.sterna.is

Full Circle and the Westfjords Passport

Price 59 000 isk
(ca 350 euros)
1st of June 2012
until the
31st of August 2012
Book on-line at
www.sterna.is
or at our ticket desks

The Full Circle and the Westfjords Passport is the same as the Full Circle Passport with the addition of the Breiðafjörður area and the Westfjords of Iceland. You will take a ferry across the beautiful Breiðafjörður. The mostly shallow fjord is dotted with more than 3000 islands of all sizes and shapes, the most famous of which is the second largest; Flatey. The Westfjords are a unique part of Iceland. Mostly narrow with steep

mountain sides down to the ocean. The population has been dwindling the last decades mostly because of how isolated the area is during the winter. But it is this isolation that makes the area so magical. The calm fjords can make even the most restless of people stoic. This being said, there is no shortage of life and excitement in the villages along the coast of the Westfjords during the summer. Festivals of all sorts, markets and exhibitions take place every week. Last and not least this passports connects with tours to the amazing Hornstrandir; once inhabited by farmers and fishermen but now deserted, a triumph of nature.

New and unique Day Tours



Single tickets

Bus passports

Day tours



Ticket Desk Reykjavík
BSÍ
101 Reykjavík
+354 551 1166

Ticket Desk Akureyri
Hafnarstræti 77
600 Akureyri
+354 551 1166

Book on-line at
www.sterna.is
sterna@sterna.is
We are on Facebook