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Grapevine readers, friends, enemies and staff do the choosin!  
By: the usual gang of idiots

Our annual BEST OF REYKJAVÍK LIST, 2K11 EDITION is finally here in all its listy listness. For the third year in a row, we've spent countless hours of what was supposed to be our free time compiling the thing [via your suggestions, e-mails, Facebook comments and bar-talk], and as always we are sure you are more than ready to contest and challenge every single entry in here.

And this is the point. We should strive to spend our time having conversations about stuff in our environment that contributes to our quality of life and sanity in general. We need to care about our surroundings, big-up the things we are thankful for and try to improve whatever entities we are not.

As we like to say (or lazily copy/paste) on this occasion: "We love the great city of Reykjavík. We really do. In fact, we love it so much, we named our magazine after it—and most of us choose to live here for extended periods at a time. It really is an excellent little city, all things considered. Of course it's lacking in many things a city will need. Decent public transport, actual neighbourhoods, a variety of ethnic eateries, clubs for late night partying on weekdays and about a million people, to name but a few. But we still swear by it, and if you're reading this, chances are you do too."

We do feel that these are some nice tips on some of what makes Reykjavík-life worthwhile, some good entries into a hopefully never-ending discussion. The primary purpose of this BEST OF REYKJAVÍK thing is celebration! It's about big-upping stuff, giving mad props to it and patting it on the shoulder. Sort of a print-version of the Facebook 'like' if you will.

Our list is of course by no means a scientific one, and it is certainly heavily contestable. It should be read as such.

It should be used as a starting point for a conversation of appreciation; something for you folks to read, verify, dispute, totally disagree with, argue over, send us angry rants about and generally enjoy.

Here's how we did it: Ever since spring 2009 we've been accepting readers' thoughts on what's BEST at bestof@grapevine.is, as well as conducting random polls on our Facebook, on the street and at the bar. Using your suggestions and arguments for guidance, we then assembled a couple of large panels of tasteful folks that represent pretty much every gender, income bracket and political affiliation to discuss. Below are the results. Enjoy, and remember to send your suggestions to bestof@grapevine.is for consideration in our 2012 edition.



### Best burger Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar

Heimilisfang 34, 105

G5

So Búllan takes BEST BURGER for the third year in a row. Like last year, their crown was contested; some people think "their meat is sort of odd", and others complain that only the original location is any good ("they are bad at franchising"), but once again their lovers are louder than the haters: "Friendly service, fire-grilled burgers and all the condiments you could hope for... please don't change, Búlla!"

Runners-up: American Style ("Hard to explain the appeal, but it exists"), Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("The vibe is kinda weird but the food is great [...] a bloody good burger"), Vitabar ("Always a classic...")

(2009: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar  
2010: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar)

### Best veggie burger Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar

Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar

A lot of places got votes in this category. Búllan got props for serving up veggie patties from everyone's favourite organic farm, Móður Jörð (also because "they feel greasy, not good for me, which I want in a burger, even if it's veggie"), while 2009 winners Drekkinn have their loyal following. However, Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar's option of allowing you to trade the meat from any one of their burgers with a Portobello mushroom seemed the most appealing to our resident veggies. "I like getting a 'Salsa burger' with Portobello... it's a taste sensation", remarked one of our correspondents.

(2009: Drekkinn  
2010: Saffran)

### Best 'specialty burger' Vitabar's 'Forget-me-not'

This used to be known as 'the best blue cheese burger' category. Then we decided that having such a category was useless, since Vitabar would take the prize every time. So we changed it into 'best specialty burger', which opened up the category for a lot of other contenders. Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar won last year due to their 'Lamburger', but Vitabar are back to reclaim the throne. According to pretty much everyone, "these blue cheese burgers are to die for, the atmosphere is unique and authentic, and they never fail!"

Runners-up: Kex ("it's a new place, but they serve SLIDERS!"), Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar ("a great selection of specialty burgers..."), Prikið ("Try Sul-tuborgarinn. You won't regret it").

(2009: Vitabar  
2010: Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar)

### Best slice Deli

Deli

Deli won this category in 2009. Then they won again in 2010. And guess what... they take the prize again now. We've heard they're open sporadically at night these days, which might make them a contender for the 'drunken slice' category, but sporadic opening hours prevent this from happening.

Why do Deli take the prize yet again? Probably because, as one mail-in remarked, "they do their slices New York-style, meaning that they don't keep them in heater boxes all day growing stale but throw them in the oven when you order. This means a slightly longer wait, and a much fresher slice". A Facebook commenter also remarked that "... they have some really novel toppings, not the usual pepperoni and sveppir you get everywhere".

Runners-up: Gamla smiðjan ("They have the best pizza, so why not the best slice?"), Express Pizza ("Slightly inconsistent, but different from the rest. Plus their dipping sauces rule!")

(2009: Deli  
2010: Deli)

### Best drunken slice Devitos Pizza

Devitos Pizza

'Best drunken slice' gets our crowd arguing every time. Even though folks mostly agree on what a 'drunken slice' needs to offer (grease), they are very divided on which place brings the goods in a consistent enough manner to deserve their bingeing money. At our BEST OF MEETING, a fight nearly broke out between supporters of Pizza King ("they have all the grease you need, plus they're right downtown")

and Devitos Pizza ("the originators of Reykjavík grease, and they're super consistent even if you need to walk a spell from whatever bar you were at"). So we decided to resolve it with a vote on our Facebook page. And Devitos won by a pretty hefty margin. Congratulations Devitos, you are awesome.

Runners-up: Pizza King, Express Pizza ("I just love it when I'm drunk!")

(2009: Devitos Pizza  
2010: Devitos Pizza/Pizza King TIE)



### Best pizza Gamla smiðjan

Gamla smiðjan

Just like last year, this one did not take long to figure out. One panellist remarked: "I used to live in Providence, RI, where there's a pretty heavy concentration of Italian Americans and some of the world's best pizza places. Gamla Smiðjan is comparable to any of Providence's top five". Like we said last year: "Gamla smiðjan seem to handle every single order with care, love and respect [...]. Now, while it's not the most charming place to eat out at, they do deliveries, and we've yet to receive a cold pizza from them".

Runners-up: HaPP ("a really novel and great pizza. The only thing that's cooked is the crust. I've had strawberries and mozzarella on my pizza and loved it), Eldsmiðjan ("it feels like they're making a comeback!"), Saffran ("love that pieceee!").

(2009: Devitos Pizza  
2010: Gamla Smiðjan)

### Best place to go for ice cream Ísbúðin Ísland

Ísbúðin Ísland

Last year Ísbúðin Ísland managed to scoop up (ha!) the 'best ice cream' award due to their inventive flavours and charming straight from the farm philosophy (it also helped that Ísbúð Vesturbæjar's newfound 'institution' status made way for new places). Not much has changed, so they take the prize again. However, there are new contenders on the horizon, so Ísland might want to watch it...

Runners-up: Ísgerðin ("they just opened up and I am quite enthralled. You make it yourself and then pay by weight"), Sandholt bakery ("their coconut ice cream deserves an award of its own").

(2009: Ísbúð Vesturbæjar  
2010: Ísbúðin Ísland)

### Best bakery Sandholt

Sandholt

A vote by our panel (and one on our Facebook page) determined that Sandholt is yet again the king of Reykjavík's bakeries (although only by a margin this time around, with 2009 winners Mosfellsbakarí polling closely behind). Sandholt might not be the cheapest bakery, but they always deliver some of the finest baked goods in a country with some fairly high baked-good standards. Extra marks for serving fresh stuff all day long.

(2009: Mosfellsbakarí  
2010: Sandholt)

### Best Indian food Austurlandahraðlestin

Austurlandahraðlestin

Let's be honest: there are not a lot of restaurants serving Indian food in Reykjavík, and one of them has already made 'institution' status (thereby rendering it ineligible). But the competition is still fierce, and our crew of advisors, commenters and emailers made some very reasonable arguments for why Shalimar ("a proper curry"), Indian Mango ("a real treat"), Kitchen ("not technically Indian, but very definitely delicious every time") and Austurlandahraðlestin ("the taste of Austur Indíafélagið for a portion of the price") deserved 'best of' status—and also why they should

not. In the end, Austurlandahraðlestin won the popular vote by a slim margin. (2009: Austur-Indía félagið  
2010: Shalimar)

### Best Thai food Ban Thai

Ban Thai

This one was no contest. Ban Thai is apparently Reykjavík's favourite Thai restaurant. Those polled cited several reasons (everything about the place, including its interior decorations, got mentioned—except for the service, which is reportedly "inconsistent"), but the main underlying reason for people's satisfaction with Ban Thai seems to be the food they serve ("always fresh made, always delicious") and its authenticity.

Runners-up: Krua Thai ("Thairific!"), Núðluhúsið ("great prices"), Na-Na Thai ("Ban Thai's take out service").

(2009: Ban Thai  
2010: Ban Thai)

### Best Kebab Habibi

Habibi

This is a new category, and it divided the crowd. Many professed a love for Alíbabá's delicious falafel while others are loyal to the originators of the 'Reykjavík kebab', Kebabhúsið. Though not in the fast food category, Eldhrímínir also got high commendations for their kebab ("it will last you the weekend, the thing is huge and delicious!"). However, Habibi won the popular vote, with a special nod to their shawarma sandwiches ("they do both the classic spice kebabs and a Syrian kebab", "subtle and fresh", "even though they messed up my last three orders, I love them").

Runners-up: Kebabhúsið, Eldhrímínir, Alíbabá

(New category)



### Best coffeehouse Kaffismiðjan

Kaffismiðjan

Last year, someone remarked: "Kaffismiðjan OWN Reykjavík coffee these days. Why are we even debating this?". This year though, Kaffismiðjan came under some fire: "They have uncomfortable seating", an email remarked. Then added: "... oh what am I thinking, their coffee is unparalleled! Yum!"

Runners-up: C is for Cookie, Babalú

(2009: Kaffismiðjan  
2010: Kaffismiðjan)

### Best coffee to-go Kaffifélagið

Kaffifélagið

Kaffifélagið on Skólavörðustígur seems to be the perfect place to step in for some take-away. Last year's winners, Café D'Haiti, got a lot of votes, but one commenter remarked that their coffee is just as good as the person making it, while Kaffifélagið have a sort of standard going for them. "Also, they always ask how much milk I want in my latté. This is important. They always cater to your specific needs".

Runner-up: Café D'Haiti

(2009: Kaffifélagið  
2010: Café d'Haiti)

### Best place for coffee and cakes Babalú

Babalú

Babalú is a local favourite, especially among expats and English-speakers since the atmosphere is very inclusive and they often serve as a nice introduction to the Icelandic-int'l community. But their winning trump, according to mail-ins, is the cakes and baked goods: "That's where I go for cake. It's all baked on the premises. Except the chocolate cake, that's baked by an old woman in Hafnarfjörður!"

Runner-up: Café Flóra ("the best place for cake, to be sure. Pity they are only open during summertime")

(New category)



## Best new coffeehouse

### C is for Cookie

We love C is for Cookie, and apparently so do our readers and friends. So we made up a category for them. They are new and they sort of rule. This one's for you, C is for Cookie. Stay strong! (New category)

## Best tea

### Te og kaffi

This is the first time we have done 'best tea'. But tea is pretty great and getting GOOD tea is often harder than one would think (making good tea does not sound like such a gruelling task, what with the portioned sacks and whatnot). Te og kaffi seem to be the popular pick here, as their baristas are trained at making tea and also because "they serve great mate, which is hard to come by in Iceland". However, Lítli Bóndabærinn reportedly have a British tea expert on staff, so they are definitely "one to watch". (New category)

## Best sushi

### suZushii

Picking 'best sushi' has never really been a problem, until now. See, we had a bunch of filmmakers sitting in on our 'discussion session', and it turns out that Icelandic filmmakers are really, really, really opinionated when it comes to the subject of sushi. They argued and argued and often contradicted themselves, but in the end both them and our write-ins agreed that suZushii in Kringlan offer the best sushi in Reykjavík today. Why? "suZushii are consistent, fresh and have everything you need. Even though you have to go to effing Kringlan to get it".

Runners-up: Sushibarinn ("a local favourite, and for a reason", "they offer a really nice selection of sake, better than what you get elsewhere"), Fiskmarkaðurinn ("good service, a perfect atmosphere... go there for lunch sushi").

(2009: Sushismiðjan  
2010: Sushibarinn)



## Best vegetarian

### Gló

Gló are "fresh, new, inventive AND reasonably priced. This is why my vote goes their way", remarked one vegetarian friend of the paper in a letter. The write-ins for Gló were so numerous this year we sorta wondered whether they had started a campaign to win. But then we went there for lunch. Congratulations, Gló. You are awesome.

Runners-up: Á næstu grösum ("the king of Reykjavík vegetarian"), Krúska ("I plain love it").

(2009: Á næstu grösum  
2010: Á næstu grösum)

## Best hangover meal

### The Truck at Grái Kötturinn

Last year, like the year before, we wound up hopelessly deadlocked, OJ trial-style, between the 'trucks' at Grái kötturinn and Prikið (for the uninitiated, 'a truck' usually entails bacon, eggs, pancakes and various other fried delicacies). Last year we went with Prikið, because they are a tad cheaper and they won the vote, but this year Grái Kötturinn reclaims the throne! Why? Because even though it comes with a price, "there is nothing like it. It's even pretty great when you're sober".

(2009: The Truck at Grái kötturinn  
2010: The Truck at Prikið)

## Best soup

### The soups at Kryddlegin Hjörta

Kryddlegin Hjörta not only offer what some claim to be "the best view in Reykjavík", their soups are also hearty,

inventive and "always delicious".

(2009: Lobster soup at Sægreifinn  
2010: Most soups at Súpubarinn)

## Best place for a fancy meal

### Dill

People running fancy restaurants in Reykjavík: don't be sad that Dill takes the prize once again. Even though the rest of you are absolutely lovely (we firmly believe that the people of Reykjavík are spoiled when it comes to fine-dining choices), Dill is still a step beyond the rest. Is it their "location that will make you happy to live in Reykjavík for once"? Is it the "organic, fresh and novel ingredients"? Maybe, but mostly, "the sheer quality of Dill's dining experience" makes them the top contender.

Runners-up: Fish Company ("service can be a trip, but the food is always superior"), Fiskmarkaðurinn ("head chef Hrefna is the shining star of Icelandic culinaria"), Primavera ("the superior Italian").

(2009: Gallery Restaurant at Hótel Holt  
2010: Dill)

## Best place to go for a date

### Ítalia

Popular vote and mail-ins ensured that Ítalia reclaimed their title from Pisa after a year in the dark. That's not to say that Pisa has gotten any worse, just that Ítalia's decorations, service and atmosphere touched enough folks this year to place them a bar above the rest. "Candles, smooth music, relatively private seating... if I ever start dating again, my first date will be at Ítalia."

(2009: Ítalia  
2010: Pisa)

## Best newcomer restaurant

### Sjávargrillið

Everyone is in love with Sjávargrillið right now. And why wouldn't it be? They offer tasty and thought out authentic-style dishes inspired by and made out of the best ingredients Iceland has to offer (shop local!) at a fair price. Emailers agree that "while their menu isn't that far removed from what other Reykjavík seafood restaurants offer, they still manage to take it a notch further", noting that "while the service is often dangerously krútt-like, that's maybe why their prices are tolerable."

(2009: Saffran  
2010: Noodle Station)

## Best goddamn restaurant

### Ban Thai

This one posed a huge problem. On the one hand, we felt that there really wasn't a restaurant out there that fit our qualifications for 'best goddamn restaurant' (i.e. 'on the cheaper side', 'consistent', 'tasty' and 'available'). On the other, both restaurants we have awarded this prize have somehow gone under (Segurmo) or noticeably decreased in quality (Saffran, likely due to the fact that "they are running franchises all over town now and don't have oversight over their cooking" as one reader put it), so we are sort of hesitant to award this prize to anyone (last year we wrote: "Frankly, we were afraid to even include this category, seeing as our 'BEST GODDAMN RESTAURANT OF 2009,' closed down pretty much right after we picked 'em. We're afraid it might be a jinx-category...")

Then our restaurant mail-ins, when perused closely, started forming a coherent message. That message read, in various shapes, sizes and forms: "restaurants come and go, but Ban Thai has not faltered for so many years". Whether the category was best cheap restaurant, best place to grab a bite, best Thai restaurant or best goddamn restaurant, Ban Thai grabbed votes in every category... lots of them. "They're cheap for a sit-down meal, and they're super authentic," wrote one friend while another remarked "it's properly spicy, which for 'ethnic foods' in Iceland is almost an anomaly".

So we thought: since they've been

good for so long and since our readers and associates like them so much, they can't possibly be jinxed by this prize. So here's to you, Ban Thai. Don't go opening up any (more) franchises, please!

(2009: Segurmo at Boston  
2010: Saffran)



## Best family restaurant

### Laundromat Café

"Grapevine, I swear if Laundromat aren't picked as best family restaurant, I WILL NEVER READ YOU AGAIN OR BELIEVE ANYTHING YOU SAY! HAVE YOU BEEN TO THEIR BASEMENT AREA? HAVE YOU?"

Runner-up: Lauga-Ás ("it's where I take my family, food for everyone and a relaxed atmosphere").

(2009: Hornið  
2010: Piri-Piri)

## Best place to grab a bite

### Mamma Steina

Surprisingly enough, Mamma Steina's 'authentic Icelandic home-cooking' got many, many votes for this category (because, really, 'authentic, Icelandic home-cooking'? ). It is true, they are cheap and tasty and some of that old-school Icelandic stuff tastes pretty good. "it's probably not very good for you, but it's tasty and it's cheap. Your grandma might be serving this, in a good way!" Maybe those ancient Icelanders had something going for them?

(2009: Santa María  
2010: Deli)

## Best cheap meal

### Noodle Station

The soups at Noodle Stations are filled with noodly goodness, meat, veggies and various other stuff we're not sure of. Apparently, it's so good, "you can even drink the broth!". And it's on the cheap side: "it's under 1000 krónur and it leaves you satisfied and full for a long, long time. It's maybe not a miracle, but it's still awesome value for money!"

Runners-up: Subway ("they've left 101, and their price has gone up, but their monthly offers are still excellent value for money!"), Balkanika ("why is everyone not eating there all the time?")

(2010: 'Sub of the month' at Subway)

## Best brunch

### Vox

It's a little pricey, but Vox's brunch buffet is definitely worth it on account of having everything you'll ever want to brunch on, in unlimited quantities. Remarkable comment: "going there makes me ashamed of ever attempting homemade brunch".

(2009: Vox  
2010: Nitjanda)

## Best restaurant chain

### Serrano

Serrano specialize in huge and tasty burritos that come in all sorts of flavours, and they're supposedly rather healthy, too. Much like last year, and the year before, everyone agrees that "Serrano is home-grown, cheap, lovely and wonderful if you're hung-over!".

(2009: Serrano  
2010: Serrano)

## Best seafood

### Við Tjörnina

Við Tjörnina know how to handle their seafood, and the atmosphere is of the 'classic Icelandic' variety in such a way that we had more than one email saying that something amounting to "if I had foreign guests stopping over for a single day, this is the place I'd take them", with one writer adding: "I'd make them get the steinbítur".

Runners-up: Fishmarket are lots of people's "personal favourite", as are Fish Company and Icelandic Fish and

Chips.

(2010: Fish Company)

## Best place to go with a group of friends

### Tapas Bar

A moderate pricing policy, a late night kitchen and an atmosphere that ensures you'll be in no hurry to leave even after you've ordered seconds on your seconds keeps Tapas Bar at the top of this game yet another year.

(2010: Tapas Bar)

## Best all-day hangout

### Hressó

Because the location is awesome, because you can sit outside or inside, because you can drink coffee or get drunk, because the specials are often special and just because, Hressó remains Reykjavík's designated all-day hangout.

(2009: Hressó  
2010: Hressó)

## Best must try dining experience

### The svið at Fjót og Gott, BSÍ

"Leaving Iceland without feasting on seared sheep heads seems like a waste of air travel". Also, we can't recommend the 'Moby Dick on a Stick' at Sea Baron anymore because whale lovers might get upset. Fortunately, nobody cares about sheep (in fact, "sheep lover" sounds fairly criminal).

(2009: Bæjarins Bestu  
2010: Moby Dick on a Stick at Sægreifinn)



## Best tourist one-stop-shop

### Kolaportið

At Kolaportið (an institution to be sure, but you know, it's really big), you can try every crazy Icelandic dish in a uniquely Icelandic environment. And then you can shop for used DVDs and Linkin Park t-shirts. What's not to love?

(2010: Kaffi Loki)



## Best pool (all-round)

### Neslaugin, Seltjarnarnes

For the good people of Reykjavík, pool-going is as about close to a 'religion' as you'll get with this bunch of atheists. Everyone has their favourite, so picking 'the best one in town' is always a hard task. After a long and heated debate, we decided to bend the rules a tad so the non-Reykjavík based Neslaugin swimming pool could reap the benefits of all the points and mail-in votes it got on account of it being really charming and nice (Seltjarnarnes is practically in Reykjavík anyway). To sum up the arguments: Neslaugin has everything needed for a satisfying pool experience. It's small but never too crowded, you can properly stretch out in the hot-tub, it's great for tanning, they use saltwater instead of chlorine, there's a proper water-slide for kids and, according to several tips, it's the cleanest pool in the city.

(2009: Laugardalslaug  
2010: Laugardalslaug)

## Best pool (for hot tubbing, lounging)

### Laugardalslaug

Laugardalslaug wins this category due to its diversity. As one reader puts it: "Laugardalslaug is the Tivoli of hot-tubs". Need we say more?

(2009: Sundhöll Reykjavíkur  
2010: Sundhöll Reykjavíkur)

## Best art museum

### Einar Jónsson museum and sculpture garden

Einar Jónsson was Iceland's leading sculptor and his museum on Skólavörðuholt is the first of its kind in Iceland. So it's very understandable that it holds a special place in the hearts of the people of Reykjavík and their visitors. The sculptures also look awesome. "It's a dramatic experience. The outside garden with the impressive sculptures is breathtaking. The architecture is groundbreaking. The exhibition inspiring. Einar Jónsson's museum has it all in one package", remarked one email. We won't argue with that.

(2009: Einar Jónsson museum and sculpture garden  
2010: Listasafn Reykjavíkur)

## Best gallery

### i8 Gallery

At the risk of repeating ourselves (ha ha ha), i8 win this one again, "for being consistently great".

(2009: Gallery Kling og Bang  
2010: i8 Gallery)

## Best museum

### Icelandic National Museum

Anyone interested in Icelandic history will enjoy the highly ambitious exhibition at the National Museum, which offers an adventurous insight into Iceland's history and heritage, where the past meets the future. The museum shop on the ground floor is also the best one in town, where you'll find quality Icelandic design as well as objects related to the exhibitions on display.

(2010: Þjóðmenningarhús)

## Best place to spend a rainy day

### Bíó Paradís

Hot-tubs are still awesome, rain or shine, but there's a new chill-out in town that outdoes the rest on a rainy day. With its selection of alternative films, shorts and old Icelandic classics—and a nice café where you can sit down with a beer before or after the show, Bíó Paradís is simply put "exactly what Reykjavík has been missing!" Also, their popcorn portions are gigantic!

(2009: Borgarbókasafnið  
2010: A hot tub)

## Best place to rent a movie

### Aðalvídeóleigan

Laugarásvídeó are still strong, but two years without Aðalvídeóleigan and its expert staff/excellent selection getting a nod is TOO DAMN LONG.

(2009: Laugarásvídeó  
2010: Laugarásvídeó)

## Best biking tour

### Harpa-Laugarnes

The way from the old harbour along Sæbraut all the way to Laugarnes is an ideal biking route for many reasons. There is a marked biking path and the coastline view on a sunny day is just magnificent. Please take a minute or two to admire our brand-new concert hall Harpa before you bike along, after all, we spent millions of billions on it—you might as well enjoy it!

(2009: Grandi-Nauthólsvík  
2010: Ægisíða-Elliðaárdalur)

## Best place to go for a walk

### Kringlan

You've been through Laugardalur, paying special attention to the botanical gardens and the swimming pool. Then you strolled through Þingholt, greeting the cats and taking extra care not to step into any vomit left there



by partying suburbanites over the preceding weekend. Now it's time to try something new, to meet and greet THE PEOPLE OF ICELAND. So it's time to go to the mall. PS: if you buy something, it doesn't count as a walk. (2009: Laugardalur 2010: Þingholt)



### Best romantic walk Grasagarðurinn

"Lovers and flowers, how can you go wrong?" one of our romantic experts commented. And we have to agree. Although Reykjavik can be a really romantic city given the chance, strolling lazily hand-in-hand through the Botanical Garden while breathing in the scent of pretty flowers, trees and plants, can't fail to add some magic to the air.

Runner-up: Hljómskálagarðurinn scored some points here too, mostly because the garden is empty most of the time, and there are plenty of hidden corners for snogging.

(2009: Öskjuhlíð 2010: Sæbraut)

### Best place to go for a jog Laugardalur:

Laugardalur has some very nice routes in a peaceful and beautiful area, and is one of few spots in Reykjavik where the wind barely blows (what counts for 'barely blows' in Iceland anyway). A huge bonus is the Laugardalslaug pool and its hot-dog stand, where one can relax ones muscles in the hot-tub and satisfy a hungry stomach after a hearty jog.

Runner-up: Only the most hardcore joggers will battle the hills of Mt. Esja but anyone with a pair of runners on can at least sprint down and feel awesome afterwards!

(2009: Elliðaárdalur 2010: Laugardalur)

### Best place to go fishing Reykjavik harbour

You might wanna think twice before sending out the dinner invites, but Reykjavik harbour is definitely "the most fun and scenic fishing spots to be found" in the area. You might also meet some fairly interesting characters while dipping your bait in the water.

(2009: Elliðaárdalur 2010: Reykjavik harbour)



### Best place to enjoy a Zen moment Húsdýragarðurinn

Stare a seal, pig or sheep straight in the eye. Focus. Ahhh.

(2009: Reykjavik Botanical Gardens 2010: Alþingi)

### Best place to cheer up Swimming in Nauthólsvík

Stripping down to your underwear and running into the freezing-cold North-Atlantic might not sound very uplifting, but we promise you, "the heroic battle with the ocean will get rid of any negative thoughts in a heartbeat" (seriously, your heart will skip a beat).

Not convinced? After the swim, relaxing in the hot-tub with some free lukewarm coffee will surely lift your spirit.

(2009: Húsdýragarðurinn 2010: Húsdýragarðurinn)



### Best place to drink like a pro Kaffi Grand

Drinking like a pro. It's all about sort of disappearing into the void, slowly blacking out from existence while pondering your purported ill fortune. Or just getting shitfaced by yourself. You choose.

A pattern seems to be forming with this category. We pick a place, it goes out of business. Why is this? Maybe because our readers and friends like to nominate places that serve dirt-cheap alcohol and you are not likely to meet anyone you know? Because drinking like a pro means drinking a lot on an empty pocket, and drinking alone. This is why Grand Rokk won in 2009 and this is why Live Pub won in 2010. And this is why Kaffi Grand wins in 2011. Hopefully they'll stay strong. Because we need a place to get shitfaced every now and then.

(2009: Grand Rokk 2010: Live Pub)

### Best mainstreamer bar English Pub

Austur took the prize for 'mainstreamer bar' last year, but we've come to realise (through countless emails and Facebook tips) that while Austur is maybe the place mainstreamer heroes and celebs go to get fucked up (the older of that crowd apparently go to B5), English Pub is where the mainstreamers themselves go. Even with its LEVEL FIVE TROUBADOUR ALERT, "English Pub is a fun place for any Icelander or friend of Icelanders". Why? Because "people are there to get drunk and talk to one another", that's why. There is zero posing, and lots of unadulterated fun (plus: unadulterated adultery!).

(2010: Austur)

### Best place to start the night Nýlenduðórvörzslun Hemma & Valda

Still a staff favourite, still a reader favourite; H&V's "cosy atmosphere", "friendly service" and "nicely eclectic selection of background music" have kept them on top, right where we left them. Pop by for a drink, wind up somewhere with your underpants on your head—it's all in the game.

(2010: Nýlenduðórvörzslun Hemma & Valda)

### Best cheap bar Den Danske Kro

This is tricky, because Den Danske Kro's list price is pretty average (and they also rank very high on the TROUBADOUR ALERT scale). However, their daily 'happy hour' is both very easy on the wallet and it draws a nice and mixed crowd of everyone you'd like to meet (plus some people you don't at all want to meet, but then that's life).

(2009: Hemmi og Valdi)

### Best all-round Bar Bakkus

Wow. This was a strange trip. It seems like not one commenter really 'wanted' to pick Bakkus ("they've gone downhill", "why is it filled with children and hnakki-types?", "what happened to the... what happened to it?"), yet they all did because... it's "still the best thing going" (and: "it's where I go to meet my friends", "the weekday programme is great" and "the only place to hear decent new music", and

"their concerts are often legendary" and "it still fucking rules, man. It's a bar nice bar in a town of not so many nice bars, people go there, what do you expect?"). So you win again, Bakkus! Stay fun!

Runners-up: Barbara/Trúnó ("as a complex, it will provide the best, most diverse times around", "like a mall complex of nightlife fun!"), Boston ("not for everyone, but for those who dig it, it's the best").

(2009: Karamba 2010: Bakkus)

### Best club NASA

There is not a lot of competition in this category, but even if there were, NASA would probably take still the prize every time because it regularly plays host to some legendary concerts and club nights, and "the architecture of the place seems to breed sheer insanity and fun!" "BUT," as one FB friend remarked, "STAY AWAY FROM THE BATHROOMS!"

(2009: Jacobsen 2010: NASA)

### Best newcomer bar Faktóry

Last year, we made up this category and called it 'most welcome nightlife initiative' in an attempt to heed all those folks that had written in urging us to celebrate what was then Reykjavik's only live rock music venue. We still love Sódóma, but a new rock venue has since opened its doors, and it's pretty damn great too. Faktóry isn't quite Grand Rokk (then again, Grand Rokk was a very unique establishment), but their live shows are usually top notch, and it also functions fairly well as a bar too. We are thankful for anyone willing to put up with the city's rock bands and their followers, and so we are thankful for Faktóry. Welcome!

(2010: Sódóma Reykjavik).

### Best place to watch sports over a beer Hvíta perlan

A fine and basic menu (the burgers are quite good), some nice happy hour offers and a unique 3D sportswatching experience (!) ensure Hvíta Perlan retains its place. 3D is so cool.

(2009: Bjarni Fel 2010: Hvíta Perlan)



### Best place to shop for touristy stuff Geysir

If you need to stock up on Icelandic souvenirs, Reykjavik's centre unfortunately now has way too many tourist shops. Our readers agree that the Geysir shop on Skólavörðustígur is the most tasteful option because "it offers way more exciting stuff than you'll find in any puffin-shop around". This nicely laid out shop offers plenty of unique Icelandic objects and memorabilia that will put a smile on any tourist face.

Runner-up: Last year's winner, Handprjónasambandið, still deserves two thumbs up for providing Icelanders and their visitors with unique and reasonably priced hand-knitted woollen sweaters of highest quality for decades.

(2009: Handprjónasambandið 2010: Handprjónasambandið)

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### Best place to get a trendy haircut

**Barber Theater**  
Sit down with hairstylist Anna Sigga and ask her to do “just do her thing”, and you will most certainly walk out with a trendy new look. Barber Theater got the most votes this year because Anna Sigga “has a unique take on hairstyling” and “designs her own hair trends that will always stand out”. (2010: Rauðhetta og úlfurinn)

such items. It comes with a price, but then so does eating Euroshopper for every meal.

Runner-up: Yggdrasil is still the best downtown choice, and Jurta-  
apótekið is a lovely wonderland.



### Most welcome addition

**Jet Korine**  
Jet’s environmental take on design won her the most points here. In her shop on Skólavörðustígur her unique creations continue to grab the attention because “the clothes are not only beautiful but they are all made from organic fabrics and she only uses natural colours”. As an alternative to the environmentally-unfriendly consumer culture in the vein of greats like Aftur, Jette’s shop is a very welcome addition (and yet another proof that Reykjavik is infinitely enriched by each and every new útlendingur that decides to make it home). (2010: Fiskmarkaðurinn við gömlu höfnina)

### Best shop to stock up on local design

**Kraum**  
For an overall local design experience, Kraum boasts the largest selection by far. “It’s more like a design gallery than a shop” one reader commented; you’ll find stationery, books, handbags, clothing and an array of pretty little things by household names in the local design industry. (2010: Kraum)

### Best shop to stock up on local fashion design

**Kiosk**  
Run by a collective of young Icelandic fashion designers, Kiosk is such a welcoming addition we felt the shop deserves its own category. Kiosk is a co-op shop and serves as a first step for young local designers to sell their creations. It’s not only the cool designer wear and accessories that make the shop a great pick, but since the designers take shifts behind the counter you can always guarantee to meet a young new talent.

Runner-up: Keep your eyes open for the many Pop-up stores where well known as well as newly established local designers sell their designs in random bars and back gardens. (new category)

### Best second hand shop

**The Salvation Army store**  
Nothing has changed in this category since last year. When it comes to second-hand shopping, The Salvation Army store still offers the best bargains. The shop continues to be a local favourite because “it’s free of pretentiousness, usually stocks some true gems, and most importantly, still respect the second-hand price-tag!” It can be a bit of a hit and miss but it’s cheap, and that’s why we love it. (2010: The Salvation Army store)

### Best shop for ‘high fashion’

**KronKron**  
KronKron keeps right on ruling this category, and the reason is simple: “There’s no real competition. KronKron is the only shop left with a decent selection”. Selling high-end fashion labels such as Mark Jacobs, Sonia Rykiel, Vivienne Westwood, not to forget Icelandic label Kron by KronKron, this shop is the local fusionist’s candy-store, and is priced accordingly. But if you’re into that whole ‘Tax-Free’ rebate thing, we’re told that the clothing is cheaper than in most European cities.

### Most fun shop

**Kisan**  
Our readers agree here, shopping in Kisan is always super fun. “It’s a shop with a unique character. You can find some unbelievable items in here and they all look so pretty!” Carefully selected pieces from around the world, one often comes across items that can’t be found anywhere else in Reykjavik. From clothing and accessories to stationery, CDs and books and funky odds and ends for the home. BUT WE STILL MISS HAVARÍ, DAMN IT! (2010: Havarí/Útúrdúr)



### Best haberdashery

**Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar**  
There’s no real competition here either. Herrafataverzlunin continues its trend of being all awesome and stylish, the perfect place to “poke around for hours on end, admiring the stylish staff and fashionable items”. Cool clothes, friendly staff, plus, we hear that loyal regulars get free whiskey (not that we’ve ever gotten any...grrrr). Well, they’re still a winner! (2010: Herrafataverzlun Kormáks & Skjaldar)

### Best place to shop organic

**Frú Lauga**  
Straight from the farm, right in the heart of Laugardalur, Frú Lauga has won our hearts over with their nifty selection of organic veggies and other

### Best bookstore

**Eymundsson, Austurstræti**  
Eymundsson’s outlet on Austurstræti won this time, because of its outside patio. “It’s the perfect spot to linger for an afternoon, with an iced-coffee and a stack of magazines and books. It’s one of the best kept secrets in the city centre” (SO WHY ARE WE TELLING EVERYONE!?!).

Runner-up: Although Útúrdúr doesn’t have the biggest book selection, it’s still the most interesting bookshop in town, where you can get your hands on some rare collectibles and inspiring coffee-table books.

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