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T H E R E Y K J A V Í K

# GRAPE VINE

ISSUE2 FRI27JUN-THU10JUL 2003



## THE RETURN OF THE PAGANS

**ODIN WORSHIP IN MODERN ICELAND**

THE REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE - ISSUE2 FRI27JUN - THU10JUL 2003

**IS WOMAN STILL THE  
NIGGER OF THE WORLD?**

**LOBSTER OF LOVE  
THE DAWN OF THE  
MUSIC REVOLUTION**

**ICELAND:  
THE SOAP OPERA**

**WHAT THE MEDIA  
ISN'T TELLING YOU**

**DAVID BOWIE:  
SOUND, VISION AND MONEY**

**COMPLETE CITY GUIDE | MUSIC | MOVIES | EVENTS | BOOKS | ICELAND FOR DUMMIES**

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Photo: Aldis

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# LETTERS

Feel like bitching about the weather or the prices, need reassurance but your friends won't talk to you, want to open your heart but even the drunks at your local bar won't listen, just can't stop raving about Grapevine or if there's anything at all we can do for you, you've always got a sympathetic ear here in the letters column (especially for the latter). Please send your mail to grapevine@strik.is, or just stick it in the mailbox addressed to:

The Reykjavík Grapevine, Blómvallagata 2, 101 Reykjavík.

Dear Grapevine,

Where are all the foreign cars in Iceland?

A week ago I brought my car to Iceland for the summer on the ferry from Shetland. Since arrival in Iceland I've not seen a single foreign registration. My theory is that there's a big hole somewhere that swallows foreign cars, and that I had better keep a sharp look-out!

My car seems to fascinate Icelanders. Frequently in car parks and garages I find Icelanders staring at my car, first at the GB sticker and the funny foreign number, then at the steering wheel on the right-hand side. When I parked my car for five minutes in Hveragerdi I returned to find a dozen children looking in the windows.

If you are driving a British registered car and you happen to see my British registered white Mercedes somewhere in Iceland, please do toot to say hello.

Graeme Davis  
United Kingdom

Dear Dr. Davis

Nice to get some response, your theory is indeed right, the Grapevine research department has led an expedition to confirm your suspicion. The research team managed to find out that this black hole you refer to is indeed in Snæfellsnes, simultaneously we have also managed to find scientific proof for Jules Vernes never before proven theory that there is a hole in Snæfellsjökull which leads to the centre of the earth. So what happens is that when driving you suddenly you begin to feel a little gravitational pull. Gradually you will end up in Snæfellsnes and your foreign car will be sent to the centre of the earth. Our centre of the earth correspondent Gregor T. Owen, says that is beginning to create a bit of a problem in the centre of the earth, the reason is that there are no roads there and cars are therefore useless. -RG



# TOURISTS OF THE DAY



Names:

Jonathan and Masaco Schwalbenitz  
**How do you like Iceland?** Love it! It's clean and friendly. Guides say that Icelanders are not too friendly unless they've had a couple of drinks, we find this totally incorrect, almost everybody is friendly, service is great no matter if it's in a restaurant or on day tour out of Reykjavik. We also like the mix of

old and new in Iceland, the houses and how technology and old traditions mix so smoothly.

**Where are you from?** We're from Hawaii and for us, Iceland is our exotic island.

**What in the name of Thor are you doing here?** We're on our Honeymoon, we just got married six months ago and decided to do something different to celebrate it. Iceland seemed like a good idea, and it has been.

**Have you been here long?** A week now, and we're planning to stay a week more.

**Have you tried any Icelandic delicacies?** Oh yes! Hákarl (shark), we bought some in Kolaportið, the flea market, it tasted BAD!

**Whaling: right or wrong?** Sure, with proper monitoring, we are from Hawaii

and we've seen that overfishing can do much harm. Communities, like here in Iceland and in Greenland should have the right to do their whaling like they've done for centuries, but all, of course, within sensible limits.

**Should North America be returned to its rightful owners, the Icelanders?** Coming from the States, we might just ask; shouldn't the Native Americans have more right to the land than the Icelanders? Still the Native Americans only want a little more land for themselves to build bigger casinos, they don't want the whole continent for themselves.

**Do you know who Davíð Oddsson is?** No!

**Do you know who Bubbi Morthens is?** No, not a clue!

**Do you know who Keiko is?** Yes...We know the movie he starred in, Free Willy.

# WULFMORGENTHALER



"Wulfmorgenthaler" is a comic strip made by two Danish humans, named Mikael Wulff and Anders Morgenthaler. They've got feet, pelvises, the faces of stupid angels and move like floating, feather-like dancers. Morgenthaler directs movies, does animation and in 2003 made two music videos, which were both shown on MTV. Wulff is a comedian, writer and called by some people "the cheese surgeon". For the past year these two men have produced this strip. One strip every day. Until now it's been published exclusively on the net on www.k10k.net and on their own site: www.wulfmorgenthaler.com, where it's also possible to check out other stuff. There's the

hideously honest diary of a creature called The Toucan Kid; a miserable being, that's 28% bird and way too emotional and triumphantly fragile. In the strips the tone shifts between the slightly surreal, the witty, the topical and something which is outright disgusting and involves a whole new depiction of human orifices. Morgenthaler, who does the drawing, was fed up with the tiresome meticulousness of drawing clothes on people so he just stopped doing it. Who cares about clothes in comic strips anyway? Now every character in the strip, no matter how mundane the setting, is naked. And that's it. It's not a message. It's not a call for flower power hysteria. "Wulfmorgenthaler" does

not in any way condone any form of nudity, non-conformist behaviour or spontaneous orgies in any public areas. No way! ... In the fall "Wulfmorgenthaler" plans to publish a heavy book full of strips and jokes. And in the future they'll work towards getting their work published in more printed media like those international magazines full of glamour and prestige. That way they'll get more successful and more people will be able to enjoy their work, which is fun and original. The Reykjavik GrapeVine will bring one Wulfmorgenthaler strip in every issue.

INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITORS



**In Iceland, the people are big and the horses are small. Sometimes, it feels as if someone is mocking us.**

We were just getting the paper into print when an acquaintance called and told me he had a party to go to, so hence could not see to the Swedes in his care who were due to go horseback riding that afternoon. He was calling to ask if I could take over. I had little experience in handling either horses or Swedes, so I wondered if he had the right number. He was working for Nordjobb, the internordic employment for young people program. I had been on it twice. In the first instance, they had gotten me a job in a vodka factory in the tiny town of Rajamaki, Finland, where everyone worked in the factory on weekdays and played pool and beat each other up on weekends. The second time, they had me cleaning cabins on the booze cruise ships between Stockholm and Helsinki, where you had one break of 15 minutes per day. But I had gotten laid once thanks to the program, so I felt like I owed them a favour.

I went home, got out my rubber boots and woolly jumper, fixed myself a Bloody Mary (for the nerves, you see), and headed downtown to herd the Swedes together. Everyone in place on the bus, we drove off towards Laxnes. Swedes being a literate as well as a literal minded people, they asked me if this was where the author Halldór Laxness (Nobel Prize winner, as locals rarely tire of pointing out) came from. This was indeed the case. He had grown up there as Halldór Guðjónsson, and later changed his name to Laxness after the place (adding an s for good measure). After he had come to prominence, the owner of Laxnes, the father of the current occupant, gave him a piece of land to build a house on, which he duly did.

Today, Laxnes, that part which was not given to the poet, is a horse rental. We got off the bus and were led to the horses, which looked just like horses do on TV, only smaller. Crash helmets were handed out, and Swedes were asked whether they had any experience with horses. They hadn't, and so were given the more subdued creatures. This left me, the local, with a vicious looking animal name Bófi, meaning crook. He had gotten his name due to a propensity for stealing cookies from the kitchen. The saddle was put in place, and I mounted the beast. This did not lift me any great distance from the ground.

Our horse guide showed us how matters worked. Apparently, you hold the reins and pull in whichever direction you want to go, backwards if you want to stop. If you want to go faster, you simply kick the thing. "Hott hott" said

the man, horsespeak for onwards. And onwards the horses went. I held on for dear life, even if the creature was still only in second gear. Icelandic horses, I was told, have 5 gears, unlike the more common 3 gear horses that are known in most other places. I also learnt that, in order to keep it that way, horses that leave Iceland can never return. Perhaps this is so that they won't learn foreign habits and start bringing them back. One wonders whether the same system should be adopted for British drivers.

As the horse gathered pace, I started shaking uncontrollably. The sensation of sitting on a horse is somewhat akin to traversing the countryside on the back of a giant vibrator. It certainly didn't seem to be doing my testicles any favours. I reflected that this was how my forefathers crisscrossed the island from one end to another. Perhaps the effect on your nuts is why Iceland was always sparsely populated.

When we didn't seem to be going any faster, I slowly let go of Bófi's neck, and held the reins firmly. This wasn't, in fact, too bad. I began to feel like John Wayne (even though his horses were considerably bigger) and waxed philosophical about life in the saddle. Riding a horse is just like dealing with a woman, you have to hold the reins tightly or else they...well, they stop to eat grass when you don't want them too. Bófi had come to a full stop, and seemed more interested in the local vegetation than keeping up with the Swedes. I didn't want to start our relationship on the wrong foot by kicking him, so I sat still hoping that once he had filled his belly, he would turn his attention to wherever it is we were going. The Swedes, who had for some reason assumed I was an expert horseman, didn't seem too impressed. I hoped Bófi was realising we were becoming something of a social embarrassment to Swedes and horses alike. He did not seem to mind, so I had no choice but to give him a good kick. This seemed to change his attitude towards things instantly, and he now decided to run to the front of the group. "Slow down, cowboy," said our handler, and scolded me for making all the other horses excited by my showing off.

We came to our resting place, where Bófi could finally eat grass to his hearts content. We got a nice view of Reykjavik, from a spot of some strategic importance, apparently, for the landscape was dotted with the remains of World War II defence posts built by the Americans to protect us from a German onslaught that never materialised.

We saddled up again and made our way back. The horses were eager to get back home. Bófi could probably sense the smell of cookies, for he once



A Swede.



A horse.

again took the lead. Our handler was on the mobile, so this time I led the group unchallenged. We crossed hills and rivers, Devil perhaps or perhaps not on our heels. As we came up to the farm I rode towards the door, when a lady came running up to me and directed me towards the stables instead. I dismounted and had a look inside the farmhouse. Pictures adorned the walls, and one of them caught my attention. On it was a picture of a pretty girl surrounded by a group of men with dorky haircuts. I had known the girl, but tragically, never slept with her, as is sadly so often the case. I asked the woman who these people were, and she told me they were musicians who had come there to go riding. On closer inspection, I realised that the musicians in question were actually the band Travis. I asked her whether there had been any other celebrities who had taken the tour, and she said that a short Englishman from some band had come. This was, of course, Damon Albarn, who apparently had done some riding here on horseback as well. She had been most impressed by a Danish actor though, who seemed to know his way about the saddle. Somehow it is reassuring to know that Aragon can actually ride a horse.

Swedes were herded back onto busses, and I was feeling ok about things. Now, if only my testicles would come back down...



REYKJAVIK CITY SHOT

The Grapevine concert listings are essential to liven up a quiet day.

Photo: Aldis

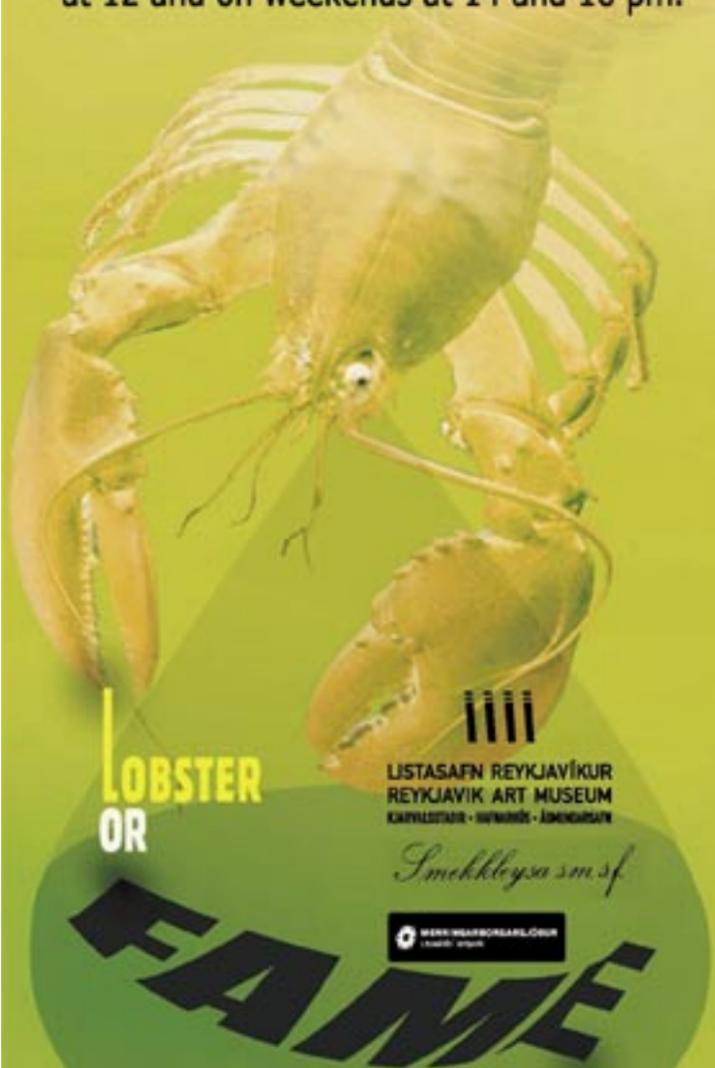
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## ANALYSIS

## IS WOMAN STILL THE NIGGER OF THE WORLD?

article BY

HARALDUR INGI  
PORLEIFSSON

On June 19th, 1915, Icelandic women were given the basic human right to vote. Some say that since then there have been enormous changes in our society while others argue that the progress has been much too slow. Are we getting close to equality or is John Lennon's tribute to the fight "Woman is the Nigger of the World" still as relevant today as it was thirty, ninety or even a thousand years ago?

"How much more respectable is the woman who earns her own bread by fulfilling any duty than the most accomplished beauty!" When an early British feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft, published her treatise "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" in 1792, her views on working women, as on everything else, were somewhat ahead of their time. But the past few decades have brought a dramatic change. Women started first to trickle, then to flood into the labour market, pushing up their share of the workforce. Within the Nordic region - where government supplied day-care is the norm - women are now almost half of the employed with Iceland ranking pretty high with an impressive 47% female workforce. In the first world, paid jobs for women have become the new norm.

At the beginning of the last century, few countries had universal suffrage for men, let alone women. By the early 1920s the Nordic countries, America and Germany among others had given their women the right to vote. Last Thursday, Icelandic women (and some men) celebrated the fact that on June nineteenth 1915 a constitution for Iceland was signed by Christian X, the king of Denmark giving women (over forty) the right to vote and run for parliament. Although they were not the first to get the right to vote, they certainly weren't the last. Their sisters in England waited until 1928, in France till 1944, Greece 1952 and amazingly the women of Portugal were kept out of the voting booths until 1978.

Is it better to be a woman now than 89 years ago? In many ways, the answer has to be yes. In the affluent part of the world, women have got the same legal rights as men; to vote, to work, to do

as they damn well please. They have equal access to education at all levels, and make full use of it (two thirds of the students that graduate at Iceland's biggest university are women). If they are working, they are protected up to a point by equal-pay and equal opportunities legislation. Sexual harassment at work may not have stopped dead, but it is being more effectively curtailed - if only because of the risk of legal fees and damages. Some of these changes may have been speeded up by feminism, however tedious that may have seemed at its height. But the most effective instrument for changing attitudes has been women's mass exodus from home to workplace. For most women in most of the richer countries, being "just a housewife" has become a thing of the past.

It's always lonely at the top, but if you are a woman it can be utterly desolate. Whether in politics, business, the professions or academia, the top layer everywhere is almost exclusively male. This may not come as a surprise in countries where few women work, but it is also largely true, and more baffling, in America and in the Nordic region, where nearly half the labour force is female. Even though discrimination has been systematically erased from our laws, women are still pretty far from catching up in a few profound ways. In the political arena for instance, women are clearly gaining ground but the equality line is still far off. Of the 63 recently elected members of the Icelandic parliament, only 19 (30%) are women - down from 22 after the last election. Within the EU the numbers are even worse, women make up only about 20% of national Parliaments in most member states. France and Greece

have the most pathetic gender ratio with 8,3% and 8,7% respectively. The Nordic countries are in a league of their own with Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland all boasting at least 37% female representation in their parliaments, way ahead of their central and southern European allies.

When it comes to national governments, the statistics rise slightly compared to parliament. Within the EU member countries, almost 25% are female with the Nordic countries again leading the pack. Sweden's ministers are fifty-fifty male and female, with Denmark Norway and Finland all heading in that direction. Compared to their Viking cousins the Icelandic situation is pretty striking - only two of twelve ministers (a sad 16%) in the government are women. It's only fair to note, though, that this will change slightly in fifteen months when there will be a reshuffle of the ministries, which will raise the number of female ministers to three or perhaps four, depending on how the dice rolls.

But even in the progressive north where the ministries are filling up with women, more often than not they get the "soft" jobs such as health, education, labour, social affairs and culture. The heavyweight portfolios such as foreign affairs, finance and justice almost invariably go to men - Iceland, for example, has never had a woman PM and of the two women ministers now in office, one is running the recently established and still fairly minuscule, environment ministry. Finland is the only country where at some point a woman has held every single portfolio. Finland's first female prime minister, Anneli Jaatteenmaki, has just resigned, however, after just two months in office following a scandal triggered by a presidential aide's admission that he had leaked government information to her at her request on talks about Iraq between her predecessor, Paavo Lipponen, and US president George Bush. Women prime ministers that actually sit out their term, such as Britain's notorious Margaret Thatcher, remain as rare as hen's teeth.

Although there has been progress in the political arena - albeit slow and perhaps disappointing - some say that since our society is increasingly being run by not politicians but businessmen the real focus should be on who's running the businesses. Perhaps surprisingly, there doesn't seem to be much of a

correlation between the number of women in politics and the number of women in high-level management posts. In Germany, for example, 30% of all MPs are women, but a recent survey of the 70,000 largest companies showed that women's share of top executive and board positions was only 1-3%. In America, which is generally thought to be a decade or more ahead of Europe on such matters, women hold about 10% of the board seats of Fortune 500 companies whereas in the House of Representatives women have a share of only 12.6% and in the Senate just 9% which is far behind most of their friends in old and new Europe. In Iceland, women CEO's are few and far between, and the bigger the business, the less likely you are to find a woman running the show. A quick look at the boards of the companies listed at the Icelandic stock exchange reveals that for every woman, you can find at least twenty men. In a society increasingly ruled by big business, women are still clearly out of the loop.

Does it matter who's in charge? Is there really still such a long way to go? As it turns out, the answers largely depend on whom you ask.

Most people would probably argue that gender biased decisions, are decisions that are based on arbitrary and illogical factors that can be linked directly to the sex of the person involved. In this sense, it's discrimination if and only if a person of either sex is rewarded or punished for something that can't be traced to something that explains and validates that decision. According to this view if women are, for instance, more likely to quit their jobs to raise children, then the employer is well within his rights if he decides to pick a male employee over an equally, or even better, qualified female one, since this is simply in the best interest of the company. This view is usually referred to as the difference approach to sexual discrimination.

But this approach has come under attack. Many equal rights advocates say that sexual discrimination is woven



In the future, the majority of these graduates might be women. Er...

into our social fabric. Because even if individuals had equal rights to pursue the roles they wanted (which they don't), this doesn't allow for the fact that these roles were predominantly defined and created by men - A reflection of their values and ideas. With this approach we are simply giving women the chance to compete as men. This approach has usually been referred to as the dominance approach to sexual equality.

A recent study by the Centre for Gender Equality in Iceland revealed that women get on average only about 70% of the salary of the typical male. The study also revealed that of the missing 30% about one third can be attributed to the fact that women simply get paid less for the same jobs as men (this is what the difference approach theorists want to rectify). The rest is accounted for by the fact that typical female professions pay less than the typical male professions. For some reason, the professions that men choose (finance, engineering, computer science) tend to be more valued by society than the typical female professions (teaching, nursing).

So what's the conclusion? As I said earlier, it depends: If you're a right wing "the market is always right" type, you would choose the difference approach and say that there's a fairly short way to go but rest assured, the invisible hand is working it's magic and the problem will soon rectify itself. If, on the other hand, you're a left wing "justice should prevail" kind of gal (or guy) then you opt for the more radical dominance approach and assert "screw this, where's the revolution?"

## NEWS IN BRIEF

The 17th of June was celebrated in predictably rainsoaked circumstances. Prime Minister Davíð Oddson made a speech about the need for a continued US military presence. Some protesters carrying placards were removed by police.

The value of the Icelandic króna has gone down, and this is being blamed on the insecurity over the debate regarding the continuing presence of the US Army in Keflavik.

The employee who embezzled funds from the telephone company Landsiminn took more money than had previously been thought. The current total is 250 million krónur. The investigation is still ongoing.

Iceland has stated that it will hunt some



250 whales in the next year for scientific purposes. The International whaling council has protested the decision.

Only 42.000 tons of herring remain to be fished out of a quota of 110.000 from the Norwegian-Icelandic herring fields.



Guðmundur Árni, of the political party Samfylking, currently one of three parties running Reykjavik, has said that his party should run on its own in the next elections, hence annoying the other coalition members. The debate rages on.

The naming commission has rejected the name Eliza spelt with a z, on grounds that there is no tradition for it. It rejected the spelling of Iris as Iris on the same grounds. Children can not be christened those names in this country. About 30 children with mental problems

await help, and the chairman of the Child psychiatry association says the situation is unacceptable. A committee has been set up to deal with the problem.

A teacher in a primary school somewhere in the countryside took matters into his own hands regarding the bad behaviour of his 13 year old students, and glued their mouths together with tape in order to get some peace and quiet. Police are investigating, and he could face up to three years in prison.

Some faint tremors have been felt near Ólfus. Geologists say this might be the prelude to a bigger earthquake.

A coast guard helicopter picked two injured people up at sea, one from a Russian ship and the other one from a Bahaman one.



The biggest lobster ever caught in Iceland was recently caught in Skeiðarsdjúpið. The lobster was 81 mm.

A man fell to his death in Ísafjörður while hiking on a mountain. All available rescue services were called out to search for him, but it is believed he was killed instantaneously.

A poll into attitudes of people towards the church has revealed that a lot of people are not kindly disposed towards it. Bishop Karl Sigurbjörnsson has said that

if the church doesn't change and learn to speak the language of the present day, it might be in danger of dying out.

A 14 year old boy fell into a geyser outside of Hveragerði. He was picked up by a helicopter and is currently in hospital with burns to hands and feet.

A poll in the Guardian has named Iceland its favourite European destination. What is it about Brits and rainsoaked islands?

Eimskip shipping company has announced that it's moving its headquarters. Did Grapevine's expose last issue of the Swastika on their building have anything to do with this?



# Chinese



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COLUMNS

GIVE AND TAKE

I've been going to my Chinese doctor for a while now and I must admit that I was beginning to wonder if she remembered me. I put it down, foolishly, to the China thing, so many people coming and going in a busy practice and so on... More fool me.

So why does she remember me now? Well, I've always gone with a stomach problem, back tension, that kind of thing, but the time before last was a different story. She only speaks Chinese and so I explained to her translator that I would like her to treat me for a broken heart.

Now my doctor's always been perfunctory, brusque in fact, but this time I caught a look when the translator had siphoned my ailment. It was a momentary expression that crossed her face and transferred when she met my eyes, a look of feeling for me, gone as quick as it came and the perfunctory took over again.

Before I knew it she had me stripped naked (a first) and had more needles in me than a porcupine, busily setting things right in her cruelly-kind way.

She set something else straight in me. People have always commented that the Icelanders are standoffish in their weekday life outside of the pub. Some of my friends had commented at the exceptionally deadpan way in which their transactions have gone in Iceland, but now I'm clearer about how warmth really works, or should work at least. It's a bit like that childhood game "You Show Me Yours And I'll Show You Mine". What do we expect? To reveal nothing of ourselves but get a big psychological hug in return?

The truth is we expect people to be



Shopping in Iceland. Grumpy clerks not pictured.

Photo: Aldis

nice because we're doing business with them, which is a good enough reason in our service-orientated world, but wouldn't it be better put that we expect people to pretend to be nice? After all, they don't know us from Adam and the colour of our credit card can't change that.

I can speak up for the Icelanders, in fact I'd like to. I'm not just talking about my friends - the people that have easily earned the right to poke me in the eye without expecting a punch on the nose as their reward - although they spring quickest to mind. Straight after them come people like the midwife who crossed the main street when I was ready to pop my son, kind of squatted, looked me in the eye (most Icelanders need to squat to do that) and said, "Be Strong". Then there's the cab drivers

who engage me in conversation, not for the comedy value of listening to my flawed Icelandic, but because they are genuinely proud that I have bothered to learn their tongue. The list goes on... First impressions are as futile as they're cracked up to be. The Icelanders have big hearts. They don't come from a society permeated by a typically urban "f u" attitude spliced by disingenuous waffle. They won't say "How are you?" in a store if they have no interest in knowing and their small talk's, well, small. It may not make for the smoothest service industry the world has known, but let's face it, there are more important things than good service, and if you don't think so, I'll give you my doctor's number.

Jennifer McCormack

TRAFFIC

It's that time of year again in Iceland. Hundreds of statistics-obsessed nerds have spent long hours in deep windowless bunkers compiling and tabulated estimating and hypotising. Now finally all the Is have been dotted, all the figures counted and recounted. At last they are ready to enlighten the nation. We, the general public, have been waiting with baited breath for information that may change the very pattern of our lives.

Now you may be tempted to ask what in the name of Jesus, Mary, Joseph and Pat is this punch-drunk hack waffling on about? Well if, like me, you are a sad bastard with nothing better to do you can take yourself down to the central statistics office, there is a dazzling array of fact and figures for the year available for the asking - and fascinating reading it makes too. Did

For example the grunts came up with a truly bizarre figure that suggest that there are more cars in Iceland than driving licences. On first reading it does not sound that odd.

But think about it. There are currently around 159,000 registered vehicles but only 152,500 licences. Subtract from that the significant number of people in any country who



Icelanders place great emphasis on driving the latest cars.

The end result is a staggering proportion of people who own a second vehicle. Not for their wives or husbands, but for themselves.

you know that Icelanders consumed fourteen million six-hundred and fifty-seven pizzas last year, spent three million four-hundred and sixty-seven thousand dollars on pet food and made love a total of six hundred and seventy thousand times in one short year? Ok, I made the last one up but you get the idea, Statistics from the price of fish to the size of underwear and everything in between. Some of the stuff is thoroughly mind numbing and one would have thought irrelevant, but there are a few gems that reveal a lot about the Icelandic mentality

are licenced, but for various reasons, economic or otherwise, do not own a car. The end result is a staggering proportion of people who own a second vehicle. Not for their wives or husbands, but for themselves. Perhaps there are some amongst us with more money than sense, who like a different coloured model for each day of the week. Maybe they are following the lead of the Arab nation's oil sheiks. It is said that when these mindbogglingly wealthy men are driving in their stretch limos through the desert, sometimes the vehicle becomes plugged in the

sand. Instead of arranging a rescue, they merely transfer to their waiting spare model and carry on, abandoning their 100,000 dollar car to its fate. Come to think of it, I have on occasion seen cars abandoned in the snow at the side of the road. Perhaps that is where they remain. For anyone who has lived here for any length of time this statistic is not all that surprising. Icelanders are a people thoroughly in love with their cars. The idea that you don't or would not want to own a car is a totally alien one.

I have to say that I am one of those people who firmly believes in the old adage that there are lies, damn lies and then there are statistics. If you manipulate and massage the numbers you can make them say just about whatever you want.

But sometimes they really do hit the bullseye.

John Boyce

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## SHORT STORY

## MEDIUM RARE

story BY

TERESA  
DAVEY

**Teresa is half Irish and half English who now lives with her Irish husband at the foot of the beautiful Mountains of Mourne in Northern Ireland. She has also lived in England, Germany and Libya. When the weather is dry she loves to walk in the mountains with her labrador dog Charly. She has also run in the Boston and London Marathons. She has just finished her first novel and is looking for a publisher.**

'Sylvie, there's a medium I've heard about.'

'I don't believe in all that stuff.'

'Come this once.'

'We'll only be lining the pockets of some charlatan.'

Sylvie's son had been killed two years before and Maggie, her husband's sister, had visited her most days since.

'If you had evidence that Frank's spirit lived on, that one day you'd be together again, would it help?'

'Probably, but he's dead and I'm not going to pretend otherwise.'

'You're probably right. I mean, with a name like Antonio Mazotta, he's bound to be some creepy, bum-pinching Italian conman.'

'Antonio?'

'Yeah, Antonio Mazotta.'

'I bet he's a has-been gigolo selling comfort rather than sex to a bevy of desperate women with more money than sense. He's probably got a pasta-middle-aged-spread and a backside full of dimples.'

'Yuck! You're right. Forget it.'

That evening Sylvie phoned her sister-in-law. 'Let's give Antonio Mazotta a hard time.'

'Why?'

'It'll pass an hour.'

'Are you sure?'

'Yeah! But we'll not help him out. He can sweat for his money.'

'If he can afford to live here he's doing well', Sylvie said, two days later, knocking on the door of a luxury apartment.

The door opened on a young, good-looking man in his mid-thirties. He was adorned in smart casual clothes and smiled warmly as he held out his hand.

'Cold hands, warm heart' he said, before leading them inside.

That was trite, even if his Latin voice had reshaped the words, Sylvie thought. But his honeyed intonation was already curling its way into her soul. His apartment oozed style and smelt of mimosa. His person oozed charm and smelt expensive. He took their coats, seated them together on a comfortable couch and sat down in a chair opposite them.

'To business' he said.

'First of all, please answer only yes or no, otherwise later you will think I am a charlatan.'

The two women raised their eyebrows a smidgen.

'There is a young male standing at your side' Antonio said, looking at Sylvie. 'He says his name is Frank. Do you know a Frank who has passed over?'

'Yes.'

'He was only twenty when he passed two years ago. He's showing me a damaged motorbike. Was he killed in a motorbike accident?'

'Yes.'

'He says you didn't want him to have a motorbike. Is that right?'

'Yes.'

'You are his mother?'

Sylvie nodded.

'He says his father's name is Jack and that it makes him sad to see you both so unhappy.'

She closed her eyes to hide the pain.

'He says to acknowledge someone

whose name begins with P. I think it's Paddy?'

'Patty.'

'He's glad she wasn't badly hurt in the accident. He wants you to tell her to have a good life.'

On and on he continued.

An hour later, seated in a restaurant having coffee, Maggie listened to the words that flowed towards her in an unstoppable stream of thanksgiving, before at last they slowed down.

'I'm so pleased I went. Do you know what made me change my mind?'

'You fancied seeing a bit of Italian gone to seed.'

'No' Sylvie laughed. It was the name. I knew an Antonio once. I met him years ago on holiday in Italy.'

'Before you met Jack?'

'Not exactly, but before Jack and I became serious.'

'Did Jack know about him?'

'I didn't tell him. We wrote to each other a few times but I suppose it was going nowhere and he stopped writing. My mother liked Jack. Said he was real, not some dream boy. I still have his photograph tucked away somewhere.'

She had returned to Jack and Antonio had been relegated to the back of her mind, a beautiful memory, until two years

ago when her son's death had finally blotted him out.

'My God! You didn't think it could be him?'

'No, of course not, my Antonio's name wasn't Mazzotta, it was Berjoni. But I thought it was like a sign. If I was ever going to give a medium a try, this was it. Mind you, I didn't expect anything to come of it. And I was determined not to give anything away. I didn't, did I?'

'No, you didn't.'

Sylvie reached across to Maggie. 'Thank you so much for making me go.'

'I didn't make you.'

'Well then, for your suggestion.'

'I just want you and Jack to be happy again. To be free of torment. I know you've lost your son but you've years ahead of you. They can either be good or bad. I was beginning to fear you'd end up doing something stupid.'

'I might have. I won't say I hadn't thought of it. Today doesn't bring him back but at least I know he still exists, that he's

watching over us and we'll be together again one day. Now I want him to see his father and me happy again.'

'Good.'

After lunch, a travel shop window caught Sylvie's attention. Maggie encouraged her inside. Later, her credit card dented; there was some serious shopping to do.

They found Jack dozing in a chair.

'Did you buy something nice the pair of you?' he asked.

'Wait and see' Sylvie said hugging him as she pushed a Greek holiday into his hands. 'Look at that while I put the kettle on.'

'No. I'll make tea, you put on your new gear and give Jack a twirl' Maggie said. As Sylvie disappeared up the stairs with her purchases, Maggie embraced her brother.

'Daniel played his part well. I'd say he was worth every penny.'

'Thanks sis' he whispered. 'I knew the name Antonio would get her there.'

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## FEATURE ARTICLE

## THE RETURN OF THE PAGANS

article BY

VALUR  
GUNNARSSON

In Douglas Adams' novel "The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul," Odin dwells in an old folks home, inspecting the sheets on his bed rather than hordes of warriors, since no one believes in him any more. But it seems the old man might be coming out of retirement, for the old Norse religion seems to be going through something of a revival.

These days, it seems, no one outside of North America and the Middle East takes religion seriously. So perhaps it was inevitable that these areas would come into conflict. Icelanders rarely go to church outside of weddings and funerals. For the last three decades, however, there has been something of a revival in the worship of the Old Norse gods. Iceland became Christian in the year 1000, and it wasn't until 1973 that the old gods were once again granted official recognition. At the time, it was the only country where such recognition was granted, but Norway has since followed suit. The religion today numbers some 700 members in this country.

The order has become intertwined with the Viking festival, held in Hafnafjörður every year at solstice, where worshippers and other Viking aficionados gather together from all over the world. Among the attractions is a virtual fight between Christian and heathen Vikings. Sparks fly as blades clash, shields are battered and men are bruised, and the Christians are soundly beaten.



In Norse mythology, it was usually the women who learnt to use spells, as this was considered unmanly. But perhaps this is just plain old soup in the making.

At six o'clock the pagans march, in full Viking regalia of course, towards the stone gate by the harbour and raise their flags, coincidentally at the seat of the first Lutheran church in Iceland. Having witnessed this, Grapevine then goes on a boat trip on the Viking boat Íslendingur, which once sailed from Iceland to North America on a four month trip. The boat owner, Gunnar Marel Eggertson, a 33rd generation descendant of Leifur Eirikson, then intended to sail up the Mississippi and was to be sponsored for this by Swed-

**The announcer, having done his impression of Viking Elvis, speaks those two words every true Viking loves to hear: "Free beer."**

ish phone company Telia. Then September 11th hit, the company backed down, and Gunnar had no choice but to sail back to Iceland

Towards the end of the day, the Allsherjargoði, the head of the worshippers, consecrates the festival by lighting their symbol. After this



Photos by Aldís

the announcer, having done his impression of Viking Elvis, says those two words every Viking loves to hear, "Free beer," and every true

Viking then drinks himself into a stupor. Grapevine, of course, wanting to do its job thoroughly, has no choice but to participate. And they are generous with the beer, something the Church of Iceland might want to have a look at in order to get church attendance up.

The festival accommodates all sorts, from Englishmen primarily interested in the fighting styles, to more peaceful Swedes more interested in the storytelling aspect, to American true believers. A short, stocky man from Alaska tells me that he used to feel bad about his obesity, until he met Odin on a bridge, and since then has learned to feel better about himself. He later challenges Grapevine, who, it must be said, is somewhat annoying when drunk, to a duel. Grapevine declines the offer. Instead, it has a chat with Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson, the Allsherjargoði.

"Is that it?" I ask, of having seen the symbol set on fire?

"No," he says, now the Blót is just beginning. Eating and drinking are a part of the ceremony." Grapevine considers rethinking its religious beliefs, before continuing.

"Is this how they were performed back in the day?"

"It varied, people sang and recited poetry, and toasted the Gods into the night. Sometimes participants were showered in animal blood, but I decided to leave that part out, at least for now."

"Why is solstice celebrated?"

"We see time as a circular phenomenon, not linear from beginning to end. Hence we celebrate the shortest day and the longest, along with the spring and autumnal days when night and day are equally long. So we are celebrating the circle of life,

and everything that lives. In every end there is also a new beginning."

"So how long have you been a heathen?"

"Since I was 12 or 13, although officially only since I was 16, when I could legally change my religion."

"What is it that you find in this religion that attracts you to it, rather than others?"

"We're celebrating life, and we're not asking anyone else to shoulder our responsibility. Help is to be found within ourselves, and we also encourage each other to do the right

us."

"And what do you have to do to go there?"

"I'm sure that as with everything, you have to know the right people."

It seems that the Allsherjargoði manages to retain a sense of humour about his faith, and perhaps it would be a better, or at least a more peaceful world if all believers did so.



Íslendingur, the Viking ship that once sailed to North America, and is currently being built a home at a museum in Keflavík.

**When asked how to get to Valhalla, the head of the pagans says that, as with everything, you have to know the right people.**

thing."

"Unlike Christianity?"

"I feel it is stated clearer here, rather than talking around things. But we are not in competition with other faiths. We have very simple rules to life. People are free to join us if they want, but we're not missionaries."

"Do you have a favourite God?"

"There are different Gods for different occasions. But mostly I would say it's Odin, the God of chiefs and poets."

"Do you expect to go to Valhalla when this is over?"

"I expect to go somewhere good. There are good places for all of

**Stories about the Nordic Gods**

For those who want to learn more about Nordic mythology, but find the Edda's a bit intimidating to start with, a good place to begin might be the CD Stories about the Nordic Gods, by Swedish storyteller Jerker Fahlström. It tells the story of how the seas became salt and how Thor got his hammer, among others, and also has some violin and mouth harp music. It is available in both Swedish and English in Fjörúkráin, Hafnafjörður and in the leatherstore Kos in Reykjavík, Laugavegur 39.

## Twilight of the Old Gods, Dawn of the New

The Icelandic word for pagan is *heiðinn*, which is similar to the English word *heathen*. *Heiðin* also means hill, and the reason for this is arguably that urban dwellers became Christian earlier than rural ones; hence the phrase was coined as derogatory. The Nordic heathens, who were surrounded on all sides by Christians, were aware of this, but they quickly adopted the term for themselves, much like modern day gays often adopt insults directed against them in order to disarm their enemy.

Not much is known for certain about the heathen religion, since the art of writing books only came to the Nordic countries along with Christianity. The Gods are mentioned by Tacitus in the first century,

although they are given the Latin names of Gods worshipped by the Romans. The most comprehensive account available of Nordic religion are the Poetic Edda, and Prose Edda, written by Snorri Sturluson in the 13th Century, more than 200 years after Christianity became the official religion of Iceland. But Snorri was a considerable stylist, and it is sometimes hard to tell what is based on older myths and what sprang from his own fertile imagination. It is interesting to note that Snorra Edda as well as the sagas was written in Iceland rather than in the larger Nordic countries, and Icelandic Christians in the 13th century seemed remarkably tolerant of pagan beliefs and did their best to document them, whereas on the continent scholars as well as kings had been doing their best to eradicate these. One reason for this may have been that the other

countries, particularly Norway, became Christian after a series of civil wars, wherein almost anyone who attempted to stick to the old religion was executed. In Iceland, however, a peaceful solution was reached. In the year 1000, a *þing* was held at *Þingvellir*, and the adherents of the two religions met to resolve the matter, one way or another. It was decided that the man among them whom was considered the wisest, *Þorgeir Ljósvetningagoði*, would come to a judgement, and this would be obeyed by everyone. He wrapped himself up in a bearskin, and for three days and nights he deliberated. Finally he emerged again, and pronounced that Iceland should become Christian. His verdict was accepted, and civil war was avoided. It is surprising that the pagans surrendered their old beliefs so easily, as if religion was not of critical importance and then as well as now Icelanders have never seemed as religious as their cousins the Norwegians. In fact, some of the first settlers were atheists, who professed a mystical sort of belief in themselves.

After the conversion to Christianity it was written into law that anyone who so wished might still worship the old Gods, as long as no one found out about this. This rule was later omitted, but the fact that in Iceland transition to Christianity was peaceful might explain why some of the old traditions seem to have lived on here, even being reflected in superstitions today.



Grown men live out their boyhood fantasies.



The Allsherjargoði brings the proceedings to their climax.

## Who's who in Asgard?

The top five.

### 1. Odin (Óðinn)

The All-Father. King of the Gods. His weapon is the spear and he rides an 8 legged horse, Sleipnir. His other pets are wolves and the ravens Huginn and Muninn, meaning roughly mind and memory, which probably symbolise wisdom and knowledge. They fly around the world and report back to their master on the affairs of men. He sacrificed one eye for the sake of wisdom, and traverses the world in various guises. He is said to have some 170 names. He occupies much the same position as Zeus or Jupiter in Mediterranean mythology, but unlike his colleague, who took on different shapes to prowl the earth in search of young girls, Odin's quest was in search of knowledge, and he seems to have been mostly faithful to his wife,

Frigg (despite the fact that that her name sounds suspiciously similar to *frigid*).

### 2. Thor (Þór)

The God of Thunder and perhaps miserable weather in general. Son of Odin, but seems to have been considerably more popular in Iceland than his old man, as various place and people names clearly prove. He rides through the sky on a chariot pulled by two rams. When away from home, he kills and eats the rams, but if all their bones are returned to their hide and bound up, the rams appear good as new the day after. Thor had red hair and beard, unlike the Nazi poster boy of the Marvel Comics, and is the physically strongest of all the Gods, if not necessarily the brightest. His favourite possession is his hammer, *Mjölnir*, which always hits its target, and returns to whoever throws it. This was once stolen

by an unfriendly giant, who would only return it in exchange for Freyja, the most beautiful goddess. Thor dressed up in drag as the goddess, married the giant, got his hammer

## Freyja, the goddess of love, took her office seriously, and it was said there was not a single God or elf that she hadn't slept with.

back and killed everyone present at the wedding.

### 3. Freyr and Freyja

Fertility Gods. Brother and sister from another race of Gods, the Vanir, who had formerly been enemies of the *Æsir*, but were now friends. The Old Norse believed that everything calls forth a similar quality in something else, and hence human fertility was representative of the fertility of the land. Statues of Freyr are usually well hung. In Sweden, they even went so far as to have women have sex with Freyr statues to increase the yield of the crops. Freyr was very rich, and his favourite animals were pigs and horses, and among his possessions was a sword that could fight on its own, and a ship that could hold all the *Æsir*, but when not in use could be carried in a pouch. Freyja was the Goddess of love and seems to have taken her office seriously, at least if Loki is to be believed, who claimed there was not a single God or elf she hadn't slept with.

### 4. Loki

Part God, part demon and one of the more complex characters. A trickster and shape shifter who often gets the Gods into trouble, but through his cunning usually gets them out again. However, it has been foretold that at the end of the world, Ragnarök, he will lead the enemies of the *Æsir* against them.

He is the father of the Fenriswolf, the *Miðgarðs* Serpent, and the Goddess of death, Hel. He is also the mother of Sleipnir, Odin's 8 legged horse, having become impregnated

### 5. Baldur

Another son of Odin. The most fair of all the Gods. Perhaps a God of Law, for his son Forseti (meaning president) sits in judgement in the judgement hall, although Snorri claims that no ruling the father makes will take hold. Having a foreboding, Frigg takes a promise from all creatures in the world, animate and inanimate, not to harm him. All agreed, and as he could not be harmed by anything, the Gods relished in using him for target practice. However, Loki discovered that a mistletoe has not made the promise, so he got Hödur, the blind God, to shoot him with an arrow with the mistletoe attached, thus killing him. He was cremated along with his wife Nanna, and a dwarf who happened to be passing by and Thor kicked on the pyre for good luck.



A Viking eats a traditional style meal.



A young Viking is despatched to Valhalla.

## HEALTHY LIVING

REYKJAVÍK OUTDOORS  
ASSORTED SUMMER STROLLS

article BY

HOPE  
KNÚTSSON

The following are short descriptions of 10 of the most beautiful areas for pleasant walks in and around the capital. Some of them are listed in tourist booklets but a few of them are off the beaten track, known and frequented mostly by the natives. These are the greenest, most lush areas and are wonderful places for strolling especially on long, bright, sunny summer evenings. There are other such places but these are my favorites.

**Grasagarður Reykjavíkur****The Reykjavik Botanical Garden**

In the heart of Reykjavik in a valley called Laugardalur is a glorious botanical garden called Grasagarður Reykjavíkur which opened in 1961. It is next door to a zoo and is a lush, verdant oasis which seems to expand and develop every year. At one end is a family park with some rides and other activities. At the other end is a set of outdoor museum posters explaining the fascinating history of the area where in times past the citizens of Reykjavik came with their dirty laundry in wheel barrows under extremely harsh conditions, even in the dark and cold of winter, and washed the family clothes and bedding in the hot water springs that ran through the valley. The remnants of the facilities have been refurbished and there are detailed descriptions with pictures of how things were done, including some tragic, fatal accidents. In the center of the botanical garden is a café inside a greenhouse, called Café Flóran which is open until late evening all summer long. Picnic tables and benches surround the café, as well as a charming gazebo and when the sun is shining the place is bustling with people both indoors and out. There are many secluded little areas

**Elliðaárdalur**

This huge open area in Reykjavik is a popular outdoor spot for walkers, joggers, bikers, fishermen, and picnickers. The valley is filled with trees and a salmon river runs right through it, replete with waterfalls. There are charming little footpaths with a variety of foot bridges that cross the river in several places. There are picnic tables and benches in several clearings. The scenery is so bucolic that it's a bit mind-boggling to realize you are still plunk in the middle of the capital city. One can stroll for many hours through varied terrain in this wide expanse.

**Heiðmörk**

is a 2800 hectare nature reserve immediately outside of Reykjavik. It has lush vegetation by Icelandic standards. There are 35 km. of footpaths and 45 signs with educational information and maps throughout the park. There are several lakes with trout in them. Many organizations plant trees in Heiðmörk on an annual basis. There are picnic areas with grills, and public toilets with running water. In late summer many people pick both blueberries and crowberries in Heiðmörk



Hafnafjörður, host to big Vikings and tiny trees.

in this park where you can sit and chat with a friend in a private atmosphere. The garden contains samples of most of the flora that grow in Iceland. It is a feast for the eyes and nose. Running from one end of the park to the other is a splendid esplanade with a thick row of trees on both sides. I believe this is the longest such esplanade in the nation.

**Hellisgerði in Hafnafjörður**

This is one of the most unusual and charming parks in Iceland. Located in the suburb Hafnafjörður, it is a cosy garden nestled on many levels in the lava, with lots of charming nooks and crannies to explore. Surprisingly, there is a collection of bonsai trees which was donated by a private horticulturist after many years of personal cultivation. This collection has the distinction of being the northernmost bonsai garden in the world and all of the trees were grown domestically.

**Öskjuhlíð hill – bottom and top**

The Pearl (Perlan) sits on top of the hill called Öskjuhlíð. During WWII this hill played a significant role when the British army used it for military installations. Now it is a favorite outdoor spot with richly forested areas, an artificial geyser, and dozens of walking paths. Among the trees you can still find traces of the army shelters and trenches. Since 1950, 176,000 trees have been planted on Öskjuhlíð. There are 135 different types of flora and 84 different bird species have been spotted there. If one is quiet and observant, it is possible to glimpse some of the many rabbits which make their home on or rather in the hill. After exploring the surroundings you can have a snack in the middle level cafeteria of The Pearl or go bowling (if you are so inclined) at the bowling center on the other side of the hill. From the observation deck of the Pearl one can see for literally hundreds of miles in all directions. At the bottom of the hill, close to the sea, there is



If you feel like going on a cruise but can't afford one, Viðey will have to do.

Photo: Aldis

a charming turf-roofed seashore café called Kaffi Nauthóll situated right next to the bicycle and jogging path. This cosy café is a hugely popular spot for joggers, cyclists, and people strolling with their baby carriages and dogs, who want a tranquil respite from the bustle of the city. There is a wooden deck where people sit and sip drinks and eat light meals on sunny days and nights. Across the road is a white sand beach (Nauthólsvík) in a sheltered cove where the seawater has been heated and a modern service building with showers and dressing rooms was opened a few years ago.

**Viðey**

is an island in the Faxa bay. It is only 1.7 square km in size. You have to take a

picnic tables and benches, enough for well over 100 people.

**The back alleys in Breiðholt II**

In the section of Reykjavik known as Breiðholt, the neighborhood called Seljahverfi, there is an utterly delightful and extensive network of alleys behind and between the many opulent private homes. Many of them lead to a charming man-made pond in a clearing in the center of the neighborhood. There are stepping stones in this pond, leading to a tiny island. There is a gazebo right near the pond and lots of flowers which all add to the charm of the area. Taking a walk here on a summer evening when the sky is crimson and lavender and reflected in the little pond, is just heavenly.

Fornirlundur is a small formal public garden which was created in 1991 to display the wares of a masonry company B.M Vallá which sells all kinds of stone slabs. The park is in the grounds of this company. The ornamental garden modeled on old European design was completed in 1999 and has many trees, flowers, fountains, gargoyles, and benches, beautifully laid out in order to give the public an idea of what can be done creatively with stone and good landscaping. It is a feast for one's senses and a true surprise considering where it is located. It is open from 8 a.m. to midnight every day of the week. There are even two apple trees growing in this "secret" garden which is a delightful spot for a short walk.



Perlan in Öskjuhlíð, one of several monuments to the reign of Davíð Oddson.

Photo: Aldis

small ferry to reach Viðey which takes less than 10 minutes and leaves from the Sundahöfn harbor. Iceland's second oldest church, from the 12th century, is on the island. There is also a posh restaurant in a second old historical building. There are 5 private dining rooms and conference facilities there. It's fun and interesting to explore the island, its beaches, and old graveyard. There are horses there as well. At one end of the island is a grill house which can be rented for parties. Reservations for that have to be made long in advance. There is a large outdoor grill and a very large building with a clear plastic roof which offers shelter from wind and rain. The building is filled with

**Fossvogsdalur**

is a 2.5 km long "link" in the chain of open areas running from downtown Reykjavik and the Öskjuhlíð area all the way to the Elliða lake and Heiðmörk at the edge of the city. It is home to lush vegetation and entirely surrounded by residential neighborhoods, one side being Kópavogur and the other side Reykjavik. There are playgrounds, vegetable gardens, school gardens, and sports areas.

**Fornilundur**

This amazing little gem is located at Breiðhöfða 3 in a commercial district on the way out of the city heading towards Grafarvogur and Mosfellsbær beyond.

**Kópavogsdalur**

This is a charming narrow valley around 2 km long running alongside Dalvegur in the Reykjavik suburb of Kópavogur. It runs from near Smáratorg at one end almost to the big intersection over Reykjanesbraut at the border of Breiðholt and Kópavogur. There is a winding brook which runs the length of the valley and paved paths with little footbridges that cross the stream here and there. There are street lamps along the paths so evening strolls in the twilight are quite charming. There are school gardens and quite varied foliage in this valley which lies between a commercial district on the Dalvegur side and large private homes on the other.



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MOVIES

IDENTITY

review BY

VALUR GUNNARSSON

You can never be quite sure where you are with this film. It starts off with the Tarantinoesque shtick of seeing different stories with different characters who are all connected in some way, which seemed innovative ten years ago (at least for those who had never seen Kubrick's The Killing), but has now become so overused that the impression created resembles hearing Stairway to Heaven in a guitar store.



However, the film soon snaps out of this, and we seem to enter familiar horror film territory. It's all here, a rain soaked motel, a serial killer on the loose, an Indian graveyard, a spooky kid and, of course, the obligatory whiners with gruesome deaths written all over them. But then the twists just keep on coming, yet this is neither Pet Cemetery meets Psycho, nor The Sixth Sense meets Pulp Fiction. It's more like a combination of the four.

dreadful. Rebecca De Mornay doesn't survive long, but Amanda Peet, after this and the excellent Changing Lanes, might turn out to be something more than just another pretty blonde. John Cusack is one of the most dependable actors of the last decade, and this might not be one of his highlights, but neither is it a disappointment. And director James Mangold makes the film he probably should have made right after Copland.

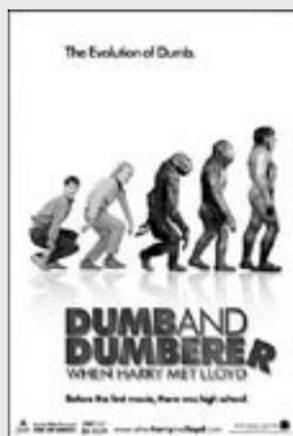
Ray Liotta seems, like his other co-stars from Goodfellas, to have boycotted good films since then, so it's refreshing to see him in something that isn't absolutely

Five minutes before the ending, I found myself really liking the film. The biggest plot twist of all turns out to be the idea that the clinically insane should not be executed, which is a somewhat

revolutionary idea in a Hollywood film. But then we get one plot twist too many, and of course said insane person, on his way to the hospital, starts killing people, giving you once more the tried and tested moral that the criminally insane should be killed off right away, preferably without trial, since any attempt to give them a second hearing will undoubtedly lead to slaughter. Disappointing, then, at the very end, but until then, considerably better than your average fare.



DUMB AND DUMBERER



There's a memorable scene from Mel Brooks The Producers that has Max Bialystock, a penniless Broadway producer, desperately searching for the worst play ever written. After days on the chaise lounge reading appalling plays, his eyes drop to a script entitled Springtime for Hitler - A Gay Romp With Eva and Adolph at Bertsgaden and he realises that he has finally found what he was looking for. "A solid gold, guaranteed to close in one night, beauty."

Now, it seems, in Dumb and Dumberer, I have at last found the cinematic equivalent of Springtime for Hitler, a towering monument to crassness and ineptitude but without the laughs. Let's face it; the prospects for this prequel, shorn, as it is, of those few elements that made the original watchable, were never very good. And as it turns out D&D is one of those films that should never have made it past the pitch-

board. In a ideal and sane world, when the original leads make it clear they would rather commit harakiri than get involved in such an ill conceived project, it would be quietly shelved or significantly redeveloped. Alas, this being Hollywood the obvious next step is to spend large sums of money finding suitable look-alikes. Judging from the surprising amount of myopic or stoned people who stumbled into the cinema under the misapprehension that Carrey was actually involved, it was probably money well spent. (Don't people read the posters anymore?). I can't imagine any grown adult with a fully developed frontal lobe entering under any other circumstances.

And so to the film itself, the gory details of which I have been busily avoiding. Well, Derek Richardson and someone called Eric Christian Olsen take us back to the high school days of our doltish duo where they first met and bonded into best buddies. Obviously

school funds. To achieve this worthy end our have-a-go heroes subject the audience to excruciating 89 minutes of low intensity torture. With truly appalling acting, a sub-literate script and a willingness to stoop to unheard of depths in search of cheap laughs, D&D makes American Pie look like the Battleship Potemkin. A running gag where chocolate is mistaken for shit



is an accurate indicator of the IQ on display.

For two very good reasons, I will resist the temptation to conclude, as others have done, by dismissing this film as merely mind-numbing muck to amuse bored teenagers. Firstly, as D&D plunges to depths where excrement is an accolade, it would be an insult to the fine mind-numbing muck of Hollywood. Secondly, I would suggest to parents that, to achieve the same affect as D&D, simply beat your teenager mercilessly about the head and save yourself a few thousand kr. on cinema tickets in the process.



inserted as an afterthought when some bookish scriptwriter suggested it might a help to have one, the plot sees the duo unwittingly expose their corrupt headmaster, who is busy embezzling

John Boyce



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OPDIRE 1995

# CINEMA LISTINGS

The following cinema listing is for date of publication (June 27th).  
Expect some changes in the next two weeks.

**SMÁRRA BIÓ**

4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 pm.      4, 6, 8 and 10 pm.

**Anger Management** 5:45, 8 and 10:30 pm.  
**Agent Cody Banks** 3:40, 5:50 and 8 pm.  
**XMen** 10:15 pm.  
**Charlie's Angels Full Throttle** Premiers July 4th.

Smáralind      phone: 564 0000      www.smarabio.is

**REGNBÖGINN**

4, 6, 8 and 10 pm.      4, 6, 8 and 10 pm.

**Identity** 6, 8 and 10 pm.  
**They** 6, 8 and 10 pm.

**Charlie's Angels Full Throttle** Premiers July 4th.

Hverfisgata 54      phone: 551 9000

**LAUGARÁS BIÓ** 553 2075

4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 pm.      premiers June 20th

**People I Know** Premiers June 27th.  
**Agent Cody Banks** 4 and 6 pm.  
**Anger Management** 8 and 10 pm.  
**Hulk** Premiers July 11th.

Laugarás      phone: 553 2075

## POPCORN AND CINEMATIC DEBATES DURING THE BREAK

You will hardly find an Icelander who is not a cinema buff. The reason for this is perhaps simple. In a country where it seems to be almost completely dark half the year, and the climate is not conducive to outdoor activities, there simply isn't much else to do. Hence films are often a good conversation

starter, and debates are rife (is Godfather Part I better than Part II, what was in that suitcase in Pulp Fiction, what the hell was George Lucas thinking when he made The Phantom Menace, etc). Long winter nights can be spent settling questions such as "did Anthony Hopkins deserve the Oscar for best

leading actor in Silence of the Lambs, even though he didn't get that much screen time?" with the aid of a stop watch (his performance comes in at just under half an hour in total).

There are a lot of cinemas in Reykjavik (per head, of course) and almost all of them have recently been renovated, so they usually have rather comfortable seats and good sound systems. However, as can be determined from a glance at the programs, the large majority of the films on offer

are American mainstream fare, and a lot are shown in multiple cinemas, so you have a considerable choice of viewing locations, and somewhat less choice in the films you watch. Fortunately, there are reasonably frequent film festivals which give you the chance to see films from farther afield.

One curiosity about cinemas here is the break. The reason for this is that it used to be necessary in order to change the reels. Long after longer

reels made this irrelevant, the break is still retained in this country. The reason for this is probably that it encourages popcorn sales, but it is also a nice opportunity to light up a fag and discuss the first half with the people you came with, although some people find that it ruins the flow of the film. Which of course is a cause for debate.

VG

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CITY GUIDE

# GRAPEVINE IN YOUR POCKET

THIS PULLOUT HAS ALL THE INFORMATION ONE MIGHT NEED, SO FOR A SAFER JOURNEY, PULL IT OUT AND PUT IT IN YOUR POCKET

## LEAVING THE CITY

If you're not going to hitchhike your way out of town and you haven't got a bike, there are three ways to do it.

### Rent a car

A comfortable way to if you can afford it, renting a car for 24 hours can cost anywhere from 6.900kr (89\$/83EU) with insurance and unlimited mileage. You can rent anything from a four wheeled aluminum tin can (usually a VW Polo) to a huge Motor home/VR, jeeps are also available. Car rentals are situated in most of Iceland's larger towns, e.g. Reykjavik, Akureyri, Ísafjörður, Selfoss and Egilsstaðir. You must be at least 20 years old, and you must have been licensed to drive for at least one year at the time of the rental. The rental company usually require payment by credit card..

### Taking the Bus

Reykjavik's main bus terminal is BSI (www.bsi.is). It opens at 7:30 (9:00 in weekends) and closes at 19:00. BSI's bus routes go all around Iceland, at a rather reasonable price.

The buses are accurate and usually on time, a big advantage, but the time between trips from one place can sometimes vary from a few hours to a couple of days, a disadvantage for the less patient.

You can also check out BSI's guided tours either at their website (www.dice.is), or simply contact the bus terminal.

### Get airborne

There are two airlines that handle Iceland's domestic flights, Flugfélag Íslands (Air Iceland) and the smaller islandsflug. We recommend you visit their websites for more info on their fares and so on. Both airlines are situated on Reykjavik airport in the center of Reykjavik. Flying to Akureyri, usually costs around 7.500kr (100\$/90EU) and flights to all destinations are frequent, often up to three times a day, but if you think you're going to be enjoying the view on your way, you will be disappointed.

[www.flugfelag.is](http://www.flugfelag.is)  
[www.islandsflug.is](http://www.islandsflug.is)

and of course you can always walk.

## SPOT THIS

**Reykjavik's flea market Kolaportíð Tryggvagötu 19 101 Reykjavik Downtown**



In the rather massive building of Iceland's Customs Office, facing the harbour, you will find Reykjavik's most famous and until recently only flea market, Kolaportíð.

The fish market and the cafeteria are among the things that never change in here, though every now and then the sellers of used junk, clothes, cd's, sunglasses and sweets change places, but you'll still usually see the same faces. Sadly, the price of used things is not all that low, but if you are stubborn you might get them to readjust it slightly.

As in all other flea markets you might always stumble across something unique, but you might have to spend a lot of time to find what you want.

The biggest surprise for visitors is perhaps the weekly Lutheran mass, the ceremony is held in the cafeteria and has all the speeches, the singing and the praying one could want from a decent service.

Open Saturdays and Sundays, 11:00 - 17:00

## café

**1. To og Kaffi**  
Laugavegur 27  
Because of it's small entrance, it easy to miss while walking by. Being not only a café, but also a gift shop, it is well worth the visit. It's Reykjavik's answer to Starbucks, with a large selection of coffees, teas and everything you need to consume your coffee at home. The café itself may not be the best place to sit down in, but does great takeaway.

**2. Ráðhúskaffi**  
City Hall  
With view over the city pond, Ráðhúskaffi is situated inside Reykjavik's City Hall. Coffee and great cakes as you enjoy the view. Free internet access for costumers and around the corner inside the City Hall, you'll find a big 80m2 model of Iceland.

**3. Grái Kötturrinn**  
Hverfisgata 16a  
Grái Kötturrinn is across the street from Iceland's National Theater and very small and very popular in the early hours of the day. A good place to start a day the British way, with eggs and bacon and other traditional breakfasts on the menu. The lunch menu is also inviting.

**4. Kaffitár**  
Bankastræti 8  
The colors of the Rainbow meet you when you enter this café on Bankastræti, new color on every wall. It's small but has good coffee and tasty side dishes. It's one of these places that make you want to sit down and watch daily life go by on one of downtown's busiest streets, or simply just to read the newspaper.

**5. Súfistinn**  
Laugavegur 18  
The only no smoking café in the centre and always crowded. Being inside Mál & Menning bookstore on Laugavegurinn is it's biggest advantage. You are allowed to pick up books, magazines and newspapers from the bookstore, and read them there over a cup of coffee and/or a snack.

**6. Mokka**  
Skólavörðustígur 3a  
An Icelandic tradition since 1958, Mokka is the oldest café in Reykjavik and the first one to make coffee with an espresso machine. Mokka celebrated its 45th birthday on May 24. The walls are covered with art for sale and seats usually filled by loyal costumers.

**7. Kaffivagninn**  
Grandagarður 10  
By the harbor where fishermen and sailors along with bus drivers and old badasses gather for lunch and a cup of coffee. If you want to try out traditional Icelandic food, pancakes or bread covered with smoked lamb this is the right place although you might feel slightly apprehensive about the tough old guys, don't worry! They're not going to be the last thing you see in this life.

**8. Café Paris**  
Austurstræti 14  
Situated in the heart of the city with view over Austurvöllur, its spacious, popular and usually full. Offers you light meals and the opportunity to sit outside when the weather is nice. Middle aged Icelanders on every other table, and tourists in between, the usual crowd, Café Paris is international like the city it's named after.

**9. Tíu Dropar**  
Laugavegur 27  
With the exception of Mokka café, Tíu Dropar is the oldest café in downtown Reykjavik. The place has a very special feel to it, the decor, the tables and the chairs, along with the service makes you feel very much at home, it's almost like your sitting down for a cup of coffee in your grandma's kitchen. The menu is limited, but has the advantage of constant changes, with new items every day.

## bar and bistro (most are cafés too)

**10. Café Victor**  
Hafnarstræti 1-3  
Spelt with a c rather than with the more traditional k in order to be more cosmopolitan. This play apparently seems to be working, as the bar has become something of a hangout for foreigners. The Viking ship sitting on top of the house might also add to the appeal. The crowd is very mixed, both of origin and age, and so is the music.

**11. Hverfisbar**  
Hverfisgata 20  
Very long queues to get in, and once there, you wonder what the fuss was about, or whether the queue was the best part. When it's four o'clock on a Sunday morning and you're still going strong, this might be the place you'll wind up, by which time you probably won't care that the same song seems to come on every half hour.

**12. Grand Rokk**  
Smiðustígur 6  
A place true to Rock 'n Roll, leather, long hair and bands that don't do covers. Well known and less known Icelandic bands play for free (three drinks for band members, need I say more?) usually no less than three bands a night, four nights a week. Grab a beer and rock on! During the day this is a hangout for chess players, challenging each other and anyone that might wander in here for a game. Some of them seem to have finally decided to abandon participation in the outside world in favour of the afternoon drinking and chess.

**13. Sólon**  
Bankastræti 7a  
One size fits all is what this place is going for, and it's usually a very crowded pick up place. Somewhat expensive, and whether it's because of this, an attempt at masculinity or just general despair, people have been known to jump from the second floor balcony. This is not recommended, as a broken leg is most often the result, and the girls remain duly unimpressed.

**14. Kráin**  
Laugavegi 73  
An atmospheric place, which has its regulars and is sadly only one of few places that has Kronenburg on tap. A rather quiet place to chat on the weekdays, and troubadour plays there every weekend. It also has occasional jazz piano concerts.



**15. Cafe 22**  
Laugavegur 22  
The price of a beer (500 kr) to get in after midnight, so it's a gamble whether you get your money's worth. Originally a gay hang out now it's a place where you can pass through all the stages without leaving the building, from chatting on the first floor, dancing on the second, to passing out on the third, where the atmosphere is more of an intimate late night one.

**16. Kaffibarinn**  
Bergstaðarstræti 1  
Kaffibarinn is cool Reykjavik, or at least tries to be. Reykjavik prides itself on having more artists per capita than any other capital in the world, and the crowd here seem to be trying to prove the point, with musicians, actors and writers, and a whole lot of wannabes. You can't say you've partied in Reykjavik unless you've partied here, although civilians might have a hard time getting in. Blur's Damon Albarn owns a piece of this one wisely figuring it was cheaper than paying for drinks.

**17. Sirkus**  
Klappartígur 30  
Weird inside out and the tropical forest painted on the outside gives you a hint of what's to come. It's Reykjavik's underground wildlife in a small cage, it's kinda like someone threw a party at

home, and things got a bit out of hand... months ago. It's as tiny as an apartment for two and the second floor looks just like someone's living room. Cramped, but the bathroom queue is a good place to meet people.

**18. Nelly's**  
Binghóltsstræti 2  
Not the most aesthetically pleasing bar in Reykjavik, dark and dirty, but the beer is cheap by Reykjavik standards, which makes it a worthwhile hangout. The crowd is a bit like the beer, and the beer is a bit like the interior.

**19. Glaumbar**  
Tryggvagata 20  
This American looking bar often feels like the Beverly Hills blues have come to downtown Reykjavik got drunk and ended up here. A classic pick up joint for those who've tried everything else and are running out of options.

**20. Vegamót**  
Vegamótastígur 4  
Wants to be the in-spot to be seen, and is just that. Dress up, flaunt it and enjoy the view as others do the same. It's a jungle in there, and the fittest, or at least the fittest looking, come out on top.

**21. Kaffibrennslan**  
Pósthússtræti 9  
On the sober side of town, but ironically with the largest selection of beers in Reykjavik, good coffee and even better service, (and imagine, we're not getting paid for saying this). One of these cafés/bars that should fit all, the editors admit they drink coffee more often than they should.

**22. Celtic Cross**  
Hverfisgata 26  
Arguably the bar in town that comes closest to deserving the title of Irish, even though the Dubliner tries harder. Except for the coffin in the back, it's very much alive. Live music almost every night and middle aged philosophers asking themselves questions about life during the day, over a pint of beer or a cup of coffee.

**23. Prikíó**  
Bankastræti 12  
Always a classic, no matter if it's early on a Monday morning or very late on a Saturday night, Prikíó makes your day (or night if that's your thing). Nice coffee, better music and remember to dance, if you can manage to take advantage of the very limited space



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Reykjavik has no trams, trains or subways, only buses. These yellow things can take you pretty much anywhere in Reykjavik's suburb areas. It's a slow system and you might have to change buses a couple of times to get where you want to though usually things run smoothly, and on time. The price of a single fare is 220kr, for an adult, (60kr for children under 12). If you are in town for more than a few days then 9 ticket package for 1500kr would be a better bet. Bus cards valid for two weeks a month or three months are also available. You have to pay as you step on board and it has to be the accurate amount, unless you want to

pay more for your ride. The driver can not change your money. For those of you used to the honesty system, this system is as honest, because if you don't pay, you don't ride. You can ask the driver for a free time limited exchange ticket, if you need two buses to complete your journey. The bus system is closed during the night, you can catch your first bus between 6:40 and 7:00 in the morning, and last

call is around 24:00. The main bus stops in Reykjavik are Hlemmur and Lækjartorg (see map), there you'll be able to get all the information you need.



# HOW TO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT



## restaurant

**31. Einar Ben**  
Veltusund 1  
Full of 19<sup>th</sup> century charm the restaurant Einar Ben is named after one of Iceland's finest poets, Einar Benediktsson. It is situated in the older section of Reykjavik's mid-town, close to the harbor. A fine menu features a contemporary version of the Icelandic international kitchen. The Menu is composed by Chef Bardur Brandsson, whose magic is outstanding. The food and the old Einar Ben. Atmosphere is something you can't miss. A visiting journalist has likened it to a Hollywood photo from Gloria Swanson's personal family album. Seriously!!

**32. Apotek**  
Austurstræti 16  
Formerly the central drugstore of Reykjavik, established in the late 18 hundreds, the Apotek is now a modern restaurant with Art Deco interior. You can still see the names of the chief managing pharmacists/owners on the wall of the bar. Today, this "drugstore" serves a different type of milkshake. Now look for a sizzling visual kitchen (behind a glass wall) with a Super Menu! Apotek is an eating experience not to be missed.

**33. La Primavera**  
Austurstræti 9  
Everybody laughed when we discovered a contemporary restaurant that has its most notable influences from Northern Italian cooking using local Icelandic produce. The unique menu that results from this combination features homemade pastas, risotto, gnocchi, polenta and a wide variety of the freshest vegetables, fish, poultry, meat and game. The menu, the atmosphere and a comprehensive, exclusively Italian wine list has made La Primavera a favorite among the locals. They laugh no more!

**34. Við Tjörnina**  
Templarasund 3  
The most novel fish restaurant in Iceland. The owner, Chef Runar Marvinnson, is known for innovative fish dishes made from a variety of rare fish and shellfish and related raw materials. Mr. Marvinnson is also a respected food and cooking personality, the author of several cookbooks. His respect for his raw materials is a tribute to fish and shellfish, showing off their natural goodness without artificiality. Chef Marvinnson is really a natural wonder and a particular favourite with Icelanders!

**35. Humarhúsið**  
Amtmannsstíg 1  
One of the most popular places in Reykjavik or should we say Iceland, - a gourmet restaurant in the heart of Reykjavik. The kitchen has a menu with various types of shellfish, lobster and the amazingly sweet and succulent langoustine (sometimes called Icelandic Lobster). The specialty of the house is a rich Cream of Lobster Soup has been hailed all over the world by international gourmet writer David Rosengarten, whose comments appear in the finest food magazines in Europe and in the States.

**36. Sommelier**  
Hverfisgata 46  
The Sommelier not only has an excellent menu - Icelandic cooking with delicate French Touch - but the Sommelier wine list is admired for its variety of specially selected wines. The service is impeccable and the waiters take time to discuss the qualities of each and every wine listed, if you wish. The wine list has two hundred entries! This is where you may just happen to meet stars of stage and television, if you're lucky!

**37. Hótel Holt**  
Bergstaðarstræti 37  
An exclusive hotel housing Iceland's Most Renowned Restaurant, the Gallery.  
An evening at The Gallery Restaurant remains an unforgettable experience, if your passion is good wine and food. The superb cuisine is inspired by French culinary tradition and includes a variety of Icelandic seafoods and organic lamb. The impressive selection of vintage wines is unique for lovers of the grape. This is where you will see original Icelandic art, without having to go to a gallery. The Holt has the largest privately owned art collection in Iceland.

**38. 3 Frakkar**  
Baldursgata 14  
This is a restaurant that cannot be ignored. A very small place with an atmosphere. Here you may enjoy the house specialties of Icelandic traditional dishes prepared in the good, old-fashioned manner, including catfish, shark, and whale steaks. And of course much more.  
If you're lucky, Chef Ulfar Eysteinnsson, the owner, may be present regaling the clientele with wild whaling tales. Don't forget to ask Chef Ulfar for dark Icelandic pumpernickel bread with pure Icelandic butter.  
Don't forget to make a reservation!

**39. Siggí Hall at Óðinsvé**  
Þórsgrata 1  
Ask Chef Della, the only Italian who is "Commandeur de la Commanderie de Cordons Bleu de France". Ask Chef Burmistrov at the Corithia Nevskij Palace in St. Petersburg. Ask Chef Jeff Tunks owner of the fabulous DC Coast in Washington DC. Ask anyone who is somebody in the culinary world, and they will tell you about Siggí Hall, Iceland's famous chef and television personality. Siggí Hall has presented Icelandic gourmet food all over the world. His television show is very popular and so are his cookbooks. The Siggí Hall restaurant at Hotel Odinsve is one of the 100 best new restaurants in the world according to Condé Nast Travel Magazine. Need we say more.

**40. Argentina**  
Barnsstígur 11a  
"A dark cavernous, off-beat restaurant called Argentina...""A steak house where the lamb has killed the beef..." and "a gastronomic delight..." are just few of the impressive compliments paid to this restaurant.  
David Rosengarten wrote in his American Newsletter not too long ago: "Lots of chefs in Reykjavik riff on local lamb, but if you want to see it in its most pristine form, you can dine at Argentina."  
There are few places in Reykjavik where you can simply sense the deep passion for simply prepared seasonal foods.

## USEFUL NUMBERS

**Car rentals**  
Budget 567-8300  
ALP 562-6060  
Avis 591-4000  
Europcar 591-4050  
Hertz 505-0600

**Internet Cafés**  
Ráðhúskaffi, City Hall 101 Rvk.  
BSI, Vatnsmyrarvegur 10 101 Rvk.  
Netkaffi, Kringlan mall 103 Rvk.  
Tourist information center, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk.  
Ground Zero, Ingólfstogi, 101 Rvk.

**Post offices**  
Central Post office, Pósthússtræti 5 101 Rvk.  
Post Office, Kringlan Mall 103 Rvk

**Laundry Services**  
Emla Laundry, Barónsstígur 3, 101 Rvk.

**Taxi services**  
Hreyfill 588-5522  
Borgarbilastöðin 552-2440  
BSR 561-0000

**Useful for emergencies**  
**Emergency phone 112**  
Information 118  
Dentist 575-0505  
Doctor 1770  
Pharmacies (find your closest) call 118

**Phone companies**  
Og Vodafone 599-9000  
Landssíminn 800-7000

**Rent a bike**  
Borgarhjól, Hverfisgata 50, 101 Rvk  
BSI, Vatnsmyrarvegur, 101 Rvk  
Tourist information center, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk.

**Useful Websites**  
www.icelandtourist.is  
www.visitreykjavik.is

**Select swimming pools**  
Laugardalslaug, Sundlaugavegur, 105 Rvk.  
Sundhöll Rvk. Barónsstígur, 101 Rvk.

**Embassies**  
**Germany**  
Laufásvegi 31, 101 Rvk. 530-1100  
**United States**  
Laufásvegi 21, 101 Rvk. 562-9100  
**United Kingdom**  
Laufásvegi 31, 101 Rvk. 550-5100  
**France**  
Túngötu 22, 101 Rvk. 551-7621  
**Denmark**  
Hverfisgötu 29, 101 Rvk. 575-0300  
**Canada**  
Túngötu 14, 101 Rvk. 575-6500  
**Norway**  
Fjölögötu 17, 101 Rvk. 520-0700

## REVIEWS BY

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Sonny Greco  
**Bars, clubs, bistros and cafés**  
The Editors  
**Map**  
Bjarki Þór Kjartansson



**24. Svartakaffi**  
Laugavegur 54  
Read the newspaper, have a cup of coffee, have a philosophical conversation with your cigarette and enjoy the speciality of the house, soup in a bread. Aim high, it's not on the ground floor.

**25. Kofi Tomasar Frænda (Uncle Toms Cabin)**  
Laugavegur  
Sit down and chat with your friends, or read newspapers and magazines. Its quiet even when things are getting out of hand everywhere else, so if you're not in the mood for action this is your place. Easy to miss but still well situated, now aim low, halfway below ground floor is where it's at.

**26. Kaffi Kúltur**  
Hverfisgötu 18  
For those who grow tired of seeing nothing but palefaces about town, Kaffi Kúltur might be a pleasant diversion. During the day it's something of a hangout for the actors from the National Theatre, just across the street, but in the evening it is populated by both new and older Icelanders. They have multiethnic food and frequent concerts. Wednesday night is tango night. Anyone can join in, but this is not a lesson.

## clubs

**27. Spotlight**  
Háfnarstræti 17  
With perhaps the exception of the Vatican, every self respecting city has at least one gay club, and this is Reykjavik's. Gay, bi or simply curious, are supported by a crowd that's there to dance rather than to make moves (if you know where I'm going). Cool happening club and likely to be entertaining unless you're particularly prudish.  
Crowd: 20+

**28. Gaukur á Stöng**  
Tryggvagata 22  
Iceland's oldest club is turning 20 this fall. During the day it's a pool pub and on weekend evenings there are often live rock concerts. On weekends there is usually a lot of action with cover bands playing everything from Britney to the Beatles. Without exception you'll be charged at least 1000kr for entrance in the evenings.  
Crowd: 20+

**29. Nasa**  
by Austurvöllur  
Used to be a theater, but is now a club. New in Reykjavik's nightlife and it seems that there was need for it. Great sound system and occasional live bands. Most come to dance and space out. Because of little competition it is perhaps the only super-club downtown.

**30. Leikhúskjallarinn**  
Hverfisgata 19  
Recently opened again and is gaining respect, it's a Restaurant during the day but a dance place during night (weekends of course). The crowd here is usually little more mature than in the other clubs. Talented DJs play with the drunken crowd.  
Crowd: 25+



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Austurstræti 16  
101 Reykjavik  
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www.veitingar.is  
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## VENUE FINDER

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Want to be seen in the listings? Send us a mail to grapevine@strik.is and your event will be announced in the next issue, and the best thing is that being in the listings is free!

## LISTINGS

The Culture House.  
All Year Exhibition.

Opened in 1909, and at that point it housed the National Library and Archives, as well as the National Museum and National History Museum, which is why it was called "the Museum House" by the public. All of the above have since moved elsewhere, but various items from them are on exhibit there. On the groundfloor is an exhibit of manuscripts preserving Iceland's medieval literature. Other collections include one dedicated to Hannes Hafstein, poet and first minister, and one dedicated to independence leader Jón Sigurðsson. On the top floor is an exhibition about the Vikings in the New World. The exhibitions are open daily from 11.00 to 17.00, and are free on Sundays.

Hafnarhvoll, Worms.  
Until June 29th

## The Worms Manifesto.

Worms live in the ground, they work there, they eat it and return it back fresher than it was. They are essential to vegetation. The plants grow wild, but the growth and the earth can move buildings.

We, the Worms push our creations up onto the surface into the exhibition halls (from the earth). There, the spectator can see our works, which grow out of us naturally. The main effect of the exhibition is the smell from our workshops, which is hidden from the public (fans).

Worms are all unique (asexual), and don't work in any documented direction. But from the title we can make a direction, "Wormism." Wormism is, put simply, working under the surface, in the ground. The work goes through the body, the intestines and out comes a fertile conclusion. From the conclusion grows the most beautiful (unique) flower.

In this exhibition we show works that are as varied as we are many. The body speaks, heaven in a bankvault, midget cowboys, mothers spider, the whale saved me, painted through the canvas, a tortured child, a painting on a table, a trunk of garbage, fish-troughs full of art, dexterous fingers, Iceland in soft form and the audience applauding.

## Friday, June 27

**Both Day and Night**  
**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Day**  
**Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum**, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals. First human specimen still awaited.  
**Hafnarborg Art Gallery**, Anniversary exhibition from the museum collection.

**Handverk og Hönnun**, -13:00 to 17:00-  
 Exhibition of contemporary and traditional Icelandic art and crafts.

**National and University Library**, Exhibition of Lára Sigurbjörnsdóttir, the founder of the city's documentation.

**National Gallery of Iceland**, Exhibition of selected works by Icelandic artists from the National Gallery's collection.

**Norræna Húsið, Nordic House**, -12:00 to 17:00- Exhibition; photos of people, culture and nature from Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands  
**Saga Museum**, -10:00 to 18:00- History face to face, historical figures and major events in Icelandic history from the settlers up to the Reformation presented in a unique way. Admission 800 krónur.

**Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum**, History of Reykjavík  
**Culture House**, Images of Iceland - milestones in cartography

**Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum**, Insight into international contemporary art in Iceland  
**Nýlistasafnið, The Living Art Museum**, Matthew Barney's Cremaster project. Photographic works, sculptures and films.

**Gerðuberg, Cultural Center**, Photographs of the bridges of Highway 1, which encircles the whole island.

**Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum**, Some of the works of painter Jóhannes Kjarval.

**Norræna húsið, Nordic House**, The Big Nordic Elephant Show. Children dressed up as elephants especially welcome.

**Reykjavík Museum of Photography**, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.

**Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum**, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, who believed sculpture should be part of the urban environment.

**Skemmtihúsið Theatre**, -starts 18:00- The Saga of Gudridur. A play about a Viking woman in America performed in English.

**Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum**, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor, whose works are partly based on Icelandic folklore.

**Hafnarhvoll**, -14:00 to 18:00- WORMS Art exhibition

**Night**  
**Grand Rokk**, 3 man band Buff entertain with songs like "Who Put Broken Glass in the Vaseline?"

**Gaukur á Stöng**, Cover band "Menn í svörtum fötum." Name means "Men in Black" but the singer is usually not wearing black, if he's wearing anything at all.

**Celtic Cross**, Cover band 3Some and Troubadour Ómar Hlynsson play.

**Dillon**, Dj Andrea Jónsdóttir.

**Hverfisbar**, Dj Atli partycop

**Café 22**, Dj Bjóssi.

**Amsterdam**, Dj Fúsi, 80's music.

**Coffee shop 11**, Dj Guðni.

**Leikhúskjallarinn**, Dj Johnny D

**Vegamót**, Dj Sóley.

**Café Sólón**, Dj Svali one of the hosts of Iceland's only Music TV station.

**Thorvaldsen bar**, DJ's Hlynur & Daddi Diskó

**Café Victor**, DJ's of the house, 80's and 90's music

**Little Central**, Jazz band Steypa. 500kr entrance fee includes a free beer.

**Prikið**, Surprise event.

**Víðalín**, The pop/rock band Chernobyl performs.

**Kránín 73**, Troubadour Þór Óskar (one of the best).

## Saturday, June 28

**Both Day and Night**  
**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Café Sólón**, Exhibition - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

**Day**  
**Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum**, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals. First human specimen still awaited.  
**Hafnarborg Art Gallery**, Anniversary exhibition from the museum collection.

**Handverk og Hönnun**, -13:00 to 17:00-  
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**Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum**, The

"Probably the best PIZZA in town!?"



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LISTINGS

MORE MUSIC,  
MORE FISH

Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundar Sveinsson, who believed sculpture should be part of the urban environment.

**Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum**, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor, whose works are partly based on Icelandic folklore.  
**Hafnarhvoll**, -14:00 to 18:00- WORMS Art exhibition

**Night**  
**Celtic Cross**, Cover band 3Some and Troubadour Ómar Hlynsson play.

**Café 22**, Diabolicals.  
**Dillon**, DJ Andrea Jónsdóttir.  
**Hverfisbar**, DJ Atli partycop.  
**Kaffibarinn**, DJ Árni Sveins.  
**Coffee shop 11**, DJ Frosti from the rock group Minus.

**Amsterdam**, DJ Fúsi, 80's music.  
**Prikið**, DJ Kári.  
**Vegamót**, DJ's Balli & Árni E.  
**Leikhúskjallarinn**, DJ's Gullfoss & Geysir.  
**Thorvaldsen bar**, DJ's Hlynur & Daddi Diskó  
**Café Victor**, DJ's of the house, 80's and 90's music

**Café Victor**, Gunni DJ.  
**Little Central**, Jazz band Steypa. 500kr entrance fee includes a free beer.

**Gaukur á Stöng**, Moonboots: 80's Cover band.  
**Grand Rokk**, Rock band Dikta plays its own material.

**Vidalin**, Rock band Fjandakornið.  
**Kráin 73**, Troubadour Þór Óskar (one of the best).

Sunday, June 29

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**Café Sólon**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

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**Saga Museum**, -10:00 to 18:00- History face to face, historical figures and major events in Icelandic history from the settlers up to the Reformation presented in a unique way. Admission 800 krónur.

**Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum**, History of Reykjavik  
**Culture House**, Images of Iceland - milestones in cartography

**Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavik Art Museum**, Insight into international contemporary art in Iceland  
**Nýlistasafnið, The Living Art Museum**, Matthew Barney's Cremaster project. Photographic works, sculptures and films.

**Gerðuberg, Cultural Center**, Photographs of the bridges of Highway 1, which encircles the whole island.

**Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum**, Some of the works of painter Jóhannes Kjarval.

**Norræna húsið, Nordic House**, The Big Nordic Elephant Show. Children dressed up as elephants especially welcome.

**Reykjavik Museum of Photography**, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.

**Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum**, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundar Sveinsson, who believed sculpture should be part of the urban environment.

**Skemmtihúsið Theatre**, -starts 18:00- The Saga of Gudridur. A play about a Viking woman in America performed in English.

**Skemmtihúsið Theatre**, -starts 20:30- The Saga of Gudridur. A play about a Viking woman in America performed in English.

**Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum**, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor, whose works are partly based on Icelandic folklore.

**Hafnarhvoll**, -14:00 to 18:00- WORMS Art exhibition

Monday, June 30

**Both Day and Night**  
**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Café Sólon**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

**Day**  
**Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum**, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals. First human specimen still awaited.  
**Hafnarborg Art Gallery**, Anniversary exhibition from the museum collection.

**National and University Library**, Exhibition of Lárus Sigurbjörnsson, the founder of the city's documentation.

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**Gerðuberg, Cultural Center**, Photographs of the bridges of Highway 1, which encircles the whole island.

**Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum**, Some of the works of painter Jóhannes Kjarval.

**Norræna húsið, Nordic House**, The Big Nordic Elephant Show. Children dressed up as elephants

Borgarleikhúsið, City Theatre. Grease.

Opens June 26th.



This is the second time in only a few years this has been produced. It is one of the only summer productions, and stars Birgitta Haukdal, one of the country's brightest pop stars and recent contender in Eurovision, who takes over the role from Selma Björnsdóttir, another former Eurovision participant. This time the story is set in Iceland, although one wonders about the need to stage it so soon again.

Reykjavík museum of photography.

The Five Elements Travel Journals by Claire Xuan

May 24th - Sept. 1st



This exhibition is based on the travel journals of the french-vietnamese artist Claire Xuan and features a collection of artistic photography and reproductions of original etchings. The photographs are processed as lithographs and on paper made from natural materials. Between the sheets are thin sheets of paper (papyrus), printed with special features and written characters of different countries.

The unification of the five fundamental elements in Asia is the source of Claire's inspiration for the concept of her travel journals, which span the past six years of her career in five different countries; Vietnam, Paris (France), Morocco, Madagascar and Iceland. On her travels around the globe, Claire seeks out different aspects of the five natural elements; wood, fire, earth, metal and water and photographs them.

Although Claire Xuan's photographs clearly comprise the majority of her work, they should not be considered alone as the most significant work of the exhibition; the presentation display box in itself is equally important.

The concepts of binomial and diptych were primarily considered when selecting the works for this exhibition. Seen from that perspective, the photographs illustrate surprising common features, which may be observed in the same elements in different conditions and in different places in the world.



Reykjavik's flea market Kolaportið can surprise you in a number of ways, first of all the prices, which might seem upmarket by most standards but are actually quite cheap by Icelandic ones. And then there's the sheer variety of stuff that people will acquire at some point in their lives, and then attempt to pass on. There is not only lots of nice old junk found there, but fresh fish, fresh meat and not so fresh candy. All kinds of people can be found there, all ages, all classes and backgrounds, from the needy to the eccentric to the downright cheap. I stumbled across an old man selling fish in one of the "básar". I accidentally started a conversation with him, which somehow kept on going and continued for quite a

while, the man having a past, and also quite a present.

His name is Einar Magnússon, a perfectly good name for an Icelander, he's 79 years old and is originally from a fishing village in the north west fjords of Iceland, named Ísafjörður which translates to Icyfjord. He has, like most Icelanders his age, worked a lot in his day, both at sea and on land spending a few years here and a few years there. A tough old man, as he makes no secret of, he told me he worked for more than twenty years for one of the biggest fish companies in Iceland, without every missing a day of work. Not showing up for work simply wasn't his thing, no matter what.

Now in his old age, his heart and soul belongs to music. He plays the "munnharpa" (harmonica) and has recorded several albums, one of them even produced by the legendary Jón Ólafsson, keyboardist of one of Iceland's most beloved pop band, Nýdönsk. He showed me a couple of his albums and tried to sell them to me, at a reasonable price I might add. One of them was a recording of him doing covers of traditional Icelandic songs with his friends, a band rightfully named "Vinabandið" (the Friends Band) and also his solo album, "Ungir í anda" or "Young at Heart". I probably would have bought one of them if my very empty wallet hadn't disagreed.

His love of music keeps him rather occupied and he and his friends sometimes do up to 3 gigs a day, not bad for a band of ...erm, middle aged guys. I bet even the Rolling Stones wouldn't be up to such a rough schedule, though nothing seems to be able to keep Mick and Keith down for long.

I bid the old man farewell and wandered off to try to find something I might like, I did, but my wallet was as empty as before.

Jónði



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Apartments situated in the center of Reykjavík

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## EVENTS

## LOBSTER OF LOVE

"World domination or death" was the Bad Taste motto. Björk opted for the former; for the others, the result was somewhere in between. Still, it must be said that Bad Taste and the people associated with it managed to put not only Icelandic music but also Iceland itself on the map. Before them, the only bands who had come anywhere close to international success were Thor's Hammer, who released an English language album that was widely ignored at the time but has since become something of a collector's item, and the jazz-pop instrumental group Mezzoforte, who had a Top 20 UK hit with the song Garden Party. As one frustrated pretender, Herbert Guðmundsson, put it so heartbreakingly, "When you say you're from Iceland, people just laugh." After Björk however, anything is possible.

The exhibition, currently in Hafnarhúsið, documents this revolution. Naturally the main focus is on Björk and the Sugarcubes, whose members were formerly in various notable underground bands such as Tappi Tíkarrass, Purkur Pillnikk, Þeyr and Kukl. They would play at various events around the city, usually for no money, and try to sell their self produced albums on street corners while being ignored by passers by. Then in 1987 Birthday became single of the week in NME, and nothing would ever be the same. World domination seemed possible, even probable. Björk might have been the only one of the first wave who actually went on to achieve this, but at the exhibition we get to meet various other bands who could have, should have, might have, and even some who might still. And then of course, there's Sigur Rós, the first band since the Cubes themselves to have managed a bone fide breakout.

The exhibition consists mostly of old pictures and posters, along with some odd items on display. One of these is the Regina doll seen in the video, another is the mock national costume designed by Bad Taste for the 50th Independence Anniversary in 1994. We also get to see a dress worn by Björk in concert, and the suits of the surf band Brim. Some of the events on the posters make you



The band Brim, Iceland's Beach Boys, sadly starved for sun.

Photo: Aldis

regret you weren't there, such as a collaboration between Iceland's greatest lyricist, Megas, and Kukl, featuring a young Björk. Another interesting event advertised is a blasphemy exhibition, featuring a poster of a priest sodomizing a cat. Perhaps this is something the Reykjavik Art Museum should look into reviving. The most surprising piece is a framed front page of Morgunblaðið showing the war criminals Ariel Sharon and Halldór Ásgrímsson shaking hands. The exhibition as such is not very

extensive but for those with plenty of time there is a constant loop of great Bad Taste related material on television, all subtitled and nicely placed in front of a couch.

The exhibition shows you what can be achieved by young people with big dreams in obscure places, even when demanding to do things on their own terms. But perhaps it is time for a new revolution to displace the old.

The second floor of the Museum holds an exhibition of the works of Erró, a painter from Ólafsvík who has lived most of his working life in France. This shows some of his war themed works, and is very timely. Most of the paintings are from 73-74, and show a brave and talented artist. There is a painting illustrating the coup in Chile which portrays a general riding a swastika bedecked axe, and millstones being placed around people's necks so they can no longer walk upright. Another one shows an Israeli junta planning further wars of conquest, while a soldier greedily suckles a breast marked with a dollar sign. But Erró's criticism works both ways, from a painting called CIA-KGB illustrating the similarities between the methods of the superpowers, to some newer work from the 1991 Persian Gulf War showing Iraqis being bombarded with consumerism, while Saddam Hussein wipes his ass on a UN resolution. Sadly, some of the conflicts Erró deals with are still ongoing, so the exhibition plays an important role in demonstrating to us how art can put things into perspective, sometimes more than we may feel entirely comfortable with.

The third exhibition is a collection of modern art, which is not something Grapevine pretends to understand.

Vladur



Erró has his say on the state of the world.

## LISTINGS

## Árbæjarsafn Folk Museum.

June 1st to August 31st.



## A Day in the Life of Reykvikians. The 50's.

The exhibition follows a day in the life of 6 Reykvikians of different ages in the years between 1950 and 1960. Visitors get to follow them from morning to evening, and also to visit the home of a six person family in 1958, where the atmosphere has been authentically reproduced. There is also an exhibition about Lárus Sigurbjörnsson, the man who built the museum.

Museum opening hours:

In June, July and August the museum is open Tuesday to Friday 10:00 to 17:00, and 10:00 to 18:00 at weekends. On Mondays the farm and church of Árbær on the museum site are open 11:00 to 16:00. At other times of year the museum is open by arrangement. Outside the summer season, guided tours of the museum are scheduled on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 13:00.

Guided tours for groups by arrangement.

## Grandrokk, Dikta.

Saturday night June 28th

Dikta is a four piece rock group that has been playing together for years, their singer joined in 1999, and a year later they made it to the final round in the Icelandic music experiments competition (held every spring). Little was heard from them after that, but the reappeared by releasing the record Andartak (Just a moment) late last year. The album was recorded with help from the founders of the band Ensimi, and has received rather good review here in Iceland. After the release the band has used most opportunities to perform.

Members are:

Jón Bjarni Pétursson - guitar  
Jón Þór Sigurðsson - drums  
Skúli Gestsson - bass guitar  
Haukur Heiðar Hauksson - guitar & vocals

## Leikhúskjallarinn.

Saturday, June 28th

DJ's Gullfoss and Geysir name themselves after Iceland's most popular tourist sights. Travellers on a journey through Reykjavik's nightlife often find themselves dancing wherever the DJ twins are playing, since these two are probably the city's most popular disc jockeys. They have a way of playing with the crowd like no others and you'll seldom find them playing anything you don't want to hear. Whatever they decide to play, and they'll play whatever, quite simply seems to fit the mood of the moment. Admission 500 kr,-

especially welcome.

**Reykjavik Museum of Photography**, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.

**Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum**, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, who believed sculpture should be part of the urban environment.

**Skemmthúsið Theatre**, -18:00- The Saga of Guðrður. A play about a Viking woman in America performed in English.

**Skemmthúsið Theatre**, -starts 20:30- The Saga of Guðrður. A play about a Viking woman in America performed in English.

**Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum**, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor, whose works are partly based on Icelandic folklore.

## Tuesday, July 1

## Both Day and Night

**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Café Sólun**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

## Day

**Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum**, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals. First human specimen still awaited.

**Hafnarborg Art Gallery**, Anniversary exhibition from the museum collection.

**National and University Library**, Exhibition of Lárus Sigurbjörnsson, the founder of the city's documentation.

**National Gallery of Iceland**, Exhibition of selected works by Icelandic artists from the National Gallery's collection.

**Norræna Húsið, Nordic House**, -12:00 to 17:00- Exhibition; photos of people, culture and nature from Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands

**Saga Museum**, -10:00 to 18:00- History face to face, historical figures and major events in Icelandic history from the settlers up to the Reformation presented in a unique way. Admission 800 krónur.

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**Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavik Art Museum**, Insight into international contemporary art in Iceland

**Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum**, Some of the works of painter Jóhannes Kjarval.

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**Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum**, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor, whose works are partly based on Icelandic folklore.

## Night

**Kráin 73**, Grand opening. Arnþór Hreinsson shows his work (paintings).

## Wednesday, July 2

## Both Day and Night

**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Café Sólun**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

## Day

**Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum**, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals. First human specimen still awaited.

**Hafnarborg Art Gallery**, Anniversary exhibition from the museum collection.

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## Night

**Gaukur á Stöng**, Lubricant: Heavy metal band.

**Kaffbarinn**, Wednesday Red Wine Evening, free cheese and bread. DJ of the evening challenges someone to DJ the next time.

## Thursday, July 3

## Both Day and Night

**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Café Sólun**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

## Day

**Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum**, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals. First human specimen still awaited.

**Hafnarborg Art Gallery**, Anniversary exhibition from the museum collection.

**Handverk og Hönnun**, -13:00 to 17:00-

MUSIC

LISTINGS

Exhibition of contemporary and traditional Icelandic art and crafts.

**National and University Library**, Exhibition of Lárus Sigurbjörnsson, the founder of the city's documentation.

**National Gallery of Iceland**, Exhibition of selected works by Icelandic artists from the National Gallery's collection.

**Norræna Húsið, Nordic House**, -12:00 to 17:00- Exhibition; photos of people, culture and nature from Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands

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**Culture House**, Images of Iceland - milestones in cartography

**Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavik Art Museum**, Insight into international contemporary art in Iceland

**Hallgrímskirkja Church**, -12:00- Lunch time concerts, Guðrún S. Birgisdóttir flute. Kjartan Sigurjónsson organ.

**Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum**, Some of the works of painter Jóhannes Kjarval.

**Norræna húsið, Nordic House**, The Big Nordic Elephant Show. Children dressed up as elephants especially welcome.

**Reykjavik Museum of Photography**, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.

**Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum**, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, who believed sculpture should be part of the urban environment.

**Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum**, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor, whose works are partly based on Icelandic folklore.

**Night**

**Grand Rokk**, Band SIGN play 80's style rock music.

**Hverfisbar**, Bítillarnir 60's band.

**Amsterdam**, Dj Andrés House music.

**Café Sólón**, Dj Andrés House music.

**Prikió**, DJ's Snake 'n Tiger.

**Sirkus**, Mike Pollock, guitarist of early 80's punk band Utangarðsmenn (Outsiders) plays guitar and sings. (Where are the Bodies?)

**Kaffi List**, Roots! Rock! Reggae Explosion! Jamaican music and food. Many DJ's imported especially for the occasion.

**Gaukur á Stöng**, The band Leaves performs.

**Friday, July 4**

**Both Day and Night**

**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Café Sólón**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

**Day**

**Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum**, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals. First human specimen still awaited.

**Hafnarborg Art Gallery**, Anniversary exhibition from the museum collection.

**Handverk og Hönnun**, -13:00 to 17:00- Exhibition of contemporary and traditional Icelandic art and crafts.

**National and University Library**, Exhibition of Lárus Sigurbjörnsson, the founder of the city's documentation.

**National Gallery of Iceland**, Exhibition of selected works by Icelandic artists from the National Gallery's collection.

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**Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavik Art Museum**, Insight into international contemporary art in Iceland

**Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum**, Some of the works of painter Jóhannes Kjarval.

**Norræna húsið, Nordic House**, The Big Nordic Elephant Show. Children dressed up as elephants especially welcome.

**Reykjavik Museum of Photography**, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.

**Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum**, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, who believed sculpture should be part of the urban environment.

**Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum**, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor, whose works are partly based on Icelandic folklore.

**Night**

**Leikhúskjallarinn**, Johnny D

**Kráin 73**, 4th of July celebration American Burbon specials troubadour Ingi Valur plays some music.

**Celtic Cross**, Band Spilafíklar and Troubadour Garðar Garðarsson play.

**Hverfisbar**, DJ Benni

**Café Sólón**, Dj Próstur 3000. Not to be missed.

**Thorvaldsen bar**, DJ's Hlynur & Daddi Diskó.

**Café Victor**, DJ's of the house, 80's and 90's music.

**Gaukur á Stöng**, One of Iceland's most popular pop bands Sálin play their hits.

**Prikió**, Raggi and Heiðar from the band Botnleðja do some Dj'ing.

**Kaffi List**, Roots! Rock! Reggae Explosion! Jamaican music and food. Many DJ's imported especially for the occasion.

**Amsterdam**, Stóri Björn (Big Bear) Cover band

**Café 22**, Thule Music's Þórhallur is tonight's DJ.

**Saturday, July 5**

**Both Day and Night**

**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Café Sólón**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

**Day**

**Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum**, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals. First human specimen still awaited.

The Icelandic Phallogical Museum.

all year exhibition



The museum houses over 150 penises of all known Icelandic mammals except, sadly, Homo Sapiens. This, however, awaits remedy as a gift token has been received by the museum from an honorary member promising his honorary member upon his demise. The country eagerly awaits this newest addition, as the items in question are usually only displayed privately, unless the owner is severely inebriated, and hence the exhibition might be in somewhat less than pristine condition. The exhibition ranges from the impressive blue whale, to the somewhat less impressive hamster, and a special section even deals with rarely seen creatures such as elves and trolls, which is quite a coup as these species are usually unwilling to part with the parts on display. You can also see other theme related memorabilia. You can also, in fact, get married there, and the first wedding was conducted there on the first of April 2003. Whether this improved the confidence of the groom or gave the wife cause to doubt her decision goes unreported. The curator is usually up for a chat, and his day job consists of teaching in a secondary school. Rumour has it he uses a dried whale's penis to point at the blackboard, but whether this is an urban legend cannot be unsubstantiated by this publication. In any case, it is his feeling that phallogology has been neglected except as a borderline field in other disciplines. This reporter can corroborate that not a single University teaches the subject as a major, or else his career might conceivably have taken a different turn. In any case, the museum is an important contribution in the direction of bringing the study out into the open. Open Tuesday-Friday, 14.00-17.00. Entrance is 400kr.

Various Places Around the Countryside.

First weekend in July



It has long been a tradition among Icelanders to go out into the countryside during the summer, put up a tent, grill some hamburgers, and then get roaring drunk. The biggest event for this is the first weekend of August, but the first weekend of July is the warmup for this. Perhaps the reason for this occasion is that on the 1st of July, students get their first wages from their summer jobs. Þórsmörk is one of the hottest places to go, although to get there you need a jeep or a bus, since some river crossing is involved.

Founded in 1980 **Þeyr**, or **Theyr** for those who don't like Icelandic letters, released a number of records, EP's and LP's over their short lifespan of 3 years. Members were **Hilmar Örn Agnarsson (bs/txt)**, **Magnus Guðmundsson (voc)**, **Þorsteinn Magnússon (guitar)**, **Guðlaugur Óttarson (guitar)** and **Sigtryggur Baldursson (drums)**.

Hilmar Örn Hilmarsson, now the leader of the Nordic pagan religion in Iceland, managed the band and acted as a sort of ideological guide adding his occult influence to the lyrics and stage performances of the band. Drummer Sigtryggur later founded the Sugarcubes, Björk's pre-world fame group. Þeyr was the most promising band to rise from the Icelandic punk wave in the early eighties, the most experimental group of them all, and the one that had the best musicians on board. The band toured England under the name Thule on a quest for a record deal, but with little luck. The band still released one English language album titled *As Above*, the album was also released in Iceland, under the name "Mjötviður Mær". The album "Mjötviður til Fóta" is a digitally remastered reissue of that album and another album titled "lður til Fóta." Both albums were recorded at the same time, in the same studio with the same engineer, so patching them together like this does no harm,

**Drummer Sigtryggur later founded the Sugarcubes, Björk's pre-world fame group. Þeyr was the most promising band to rise from the Icelandic punk wave in the early eighties, the most experimental group of them all, and the one that had the best musicians on board.**

"Mjötviður til Fóta" kicks out punk-funk jams in the apocalyptic style of the Fall and the Killing Joke, dark guitar work also shows strong traces of Bauhaus



An album cover

and Joy Division, while there's more than a hint of the Resident's art-rock terrorism in the weirdly distorted, declamatory vocals and the idiosyncratic songwriting. The album is lunatic with screams and

often obscured by the band's inspired musical turbulence, and are, though in Icelandic, hard to understand even for Icelanders.

The band broke up in 1983 and their swansong was three tracks recorded with Jaz Coleman of the Killing Joke, under the name "Lunaire." The tracks remain unreleased but are said to be, by the few that have had the chance to listen to them, the most interesting work of the band and some even dare to state it as the most interesting recordings ever made in Iceland. Personally I can't wait to hear them!

Jónði

WHO WILL LOVE A LAD INSANE?

David Bowie is one of the most interesting, innovative artists of the rock era. He's also a money grabbing business venture and a one man stock company. In the early 90's, his catalogue was re-released on CD with additional photographs and bonus tracks. Some of his best songs, such as *Conversation Piece*, *Sweet Head* and his version of *Brel's Amsterdam* were first made widely available on these issues, and they were rare instances of CD's that were actually worth buying even if you had the albums. The rich got richer, but for once the punters weren't being shafted more than felt necessary. However, in the past few years the albums have been re-released yet again, this time in their "original packaging," that is too say, without additional photos or bonus tracks. This feels like a huge loss to the Bowie catalogue, as the aforementioned gems were again lost. But, on the 30th anniversary of the release of *Ziggy Stardust*, punters got the opportunity to buy the album yet again, this time with extensive liner notes and a whole CD of bonus material. The album in question being one of the best by anyone anywhere, the idea of a whole new CD of material seemed mouth-watering. Until, of course, you take the wrapping off and find that the bonus tracks are exactly the same ones as previously available on older reissues of the early 70's albums. The only new material is a few seconds of dialogue preceding *Sweet Head*, and a remix of *Moonage Daydream*, which is actually better than the original, but hardly worth the price of admission. At least Amsterdam is

available again, but no *Conversation Piece*, unless, of course, you buy the special edition of *Heathen* which features a rerecording. This year, on its 30th Anniversary, *Aladdin Sane* has also received a birthday makeover. Again, the bonus CD is not all one could have hoped for. We get two versions each of *John, I'm Only Dancing* and *The Jean Genie*, and most of the other tracks are annoying single edits. The two worthwhile additions are the previously unreleased Bowie studio version of the classic *All the Young Dudes*, and a live acoustic *Drive-In Saturday*, seemingly fresh off the pen.

Still, for those who don't have the album itself, the package is more than worthwhile. Bowie's string of albums between 1969 and 1974 are of a quality rarely matched in rock music. *Aladdin Sane* has often been thought of as *Ziggy Stardust* in America, and in fact most of the songs are dedicated to cities there. But it holds up comfortably next to its illustrious predecessor. The highlights are the perverse Weimar cabaret feel of songs such as *Time*, *Lady Grinning Soul* and the title cut (can you actually do that on the piano?), and the raw sexuality of *Cracked Actor*



Another album cover

and *Let's Spend the Night Together*, easily surpassing the Stones. Jagger gets another nod on the beautiful *Drive-In Saturday*, but whether they were actually sleeping together at the time is still open to speculation. In any case Jagger at this time was already in decline, and Bowie was just peaking, but would rarely get this good again. Whether it was the drugs, the greed or just age that did them in artistically we may never know.

VG

## NIGHTLIFE

ICELAND:  
THE SOAP OPERA

The darkness is smothering the last rays of the sun, and the air is still grey and damp after the day's rain. The scent of food from the neighbour's house tickles my nose as I sneak out and carefully close the door behind me. Cautiously I look around and hope, no doubt in vain, that no one has noticed. For here, the walls have ears.

On a bench in a nearby park I sit down and pick up a book that I casually leaf through. I discern a soft thump as someone sits down next to me. Slowly and deliberately I put the book down before I look up. Next to me sits Jón, schoolmate and latest flame, but no one can know of the latter, at least not yet. This is the first time we've been out together since we met at a club 13 hours ago. He gets up, and I walk exactly 9 paces behind him until we are in what seems a fairly secure area. We then embrace and stare lovingly into each other's eyes as the sun slides into the sea.

But this ridiculously romantic moment is disturbed by a desperate cry. We turn around, and see that there stands Gunna. She is my niece's best friend and Jóns ex, whom he broke up with 14 hours earlier. She is also the neighbour of my former boyfriend Siggí, whom I broke up with two days after I discovered that he slept with my best friend Disa's stepmother on my birthday. Disa, as it happens, is also Jón's half sister.

This is episode 1.129 of the soap opera The Icelandic and the Beautiful, which I, and all other Icelanders, are starring in.

The Icelandic and the Beautiful is a Reality TV program of sorts that I found

**To become a celebrity in Iceland it is enough to work in a fashionable nightclub or clothes store, or better yet, become a petty criminal or a bum always seen in the same spot,**

myself cast into without remembering having ever auditioned and have, without so far realising it, been participating in since birth. The theme is typical of the genre. The place, in this case, is Iceland, a small community where everyone knows each other. On the face of it everything is as it should be, and everyone is a friend to each other. But underneath the surface there are shady goings-on just as in the foreign prototypes, and just as in the prototypes, friendships don't always run deep.

Here, everyone knows one another and everyone is famous. To become a celebrity in Iceland it is enough to work in a fashionable nightclub or clothes store, or better yet, become a petty criminal or a bum always seen in the same spot, which is the surest way to become a Reykjavik Personality.

The reason is simple, it is a small community and we're all one big family after having married our cousins for hundreds of years. The first thing an Icelander will ask another when making initial contact is who the other's parents are or which school he went to, so he can be accurately placed in the part he's

playing on the set of the Opera. You can always find some connection between two people, even if they've never met before; for example they may have both gotten drunk with the same person on different occasions, or they both went to the same kindergarten together. In all probability, one will be the father of the child of the other's wife, or at least the best friend of the man who is.

In Iceland, the fact that everyone has slept with everyone else might be more a reflection of a small population rather than promiscuity, although alcohol consumption does play a part. It is not uncommon to see girls limping home on broken heels or guys sneaking back in their rumpled suits the morning after the night before. These individuals often look despondent rather than proud of the previous evening's conquests, knowing that within half an hour their secret will no longer be a secret. This is the greatest downside of the Reykjavik nightlife. If, due to despair, inebriation or temporary insanity, you happen to bed someone you wish you hadn't, you can't just sit back and hope you'll never meet them again. You know you will, be it at the mall, on a bus, in a bar or, perhaps inevitably, at a family gathering. In any case, whoever the person in question, it's bound to be a cousin, nephew, niece, brother, sister, mom, dad, or even grandparent of one of your friends. And as long as you're a player in the soap, the stories will keep

by the state of the world and his own despair. He shakes his head hopelessly while sipping his change out of a coffee cup, and remains in place as long as the pretty waitress, unaware of his angst, keeps giving him free refills.

Much work has been put into the costumes of The Icelandic and the Beautiful and high praise should be reserved for the costume designers. Most actors, in large and small roles alike, are very tastefully, not to mention expensively dressed. Great care has been made to select the appropriate uniform for each personality type, whether they wear Armani or trenchcoats, usually available in the same shops and at similar prices. Those who do not dress appropriately are unlikely to get the bigger roles, or indeed speaking parts at all. Even international viewers comment on the attention paid to dress regardless of natural obstacles, and this is a source of considerable pride to cast members, as this proves it is indeed the greatest show on Earth (per head, of course).

The Icelandic and the Beautiful looks set to run for quite a few seasons still, despite some people's claims of lack of variety. It has gone from modest beginnings as word-of-mouth stories and gossip, to books from calf skin to print, and finally on to that greatest media of them all, television. Today, hardly anything happens that isn't photographed, printed, published or televised. There are no secrets here, where everyone is friends with each other (or at least cousins), here, where the walls have ears.

The actors in the show are at present 288.471 (last counted on December 31st), and the size of each one's role varies, although most people get to take centre stage at some point. The leading actress in recent episodes has been the charming Ingibjörg Sólrún, former Mayor and recent contender for the post of Prime Minister, who plays a mysterious woman driven perhaps by idealism, or perhaps just raw ambition. Opposite her is the manly and somewhat despotic Davíð Oddson, current Prime Minister. Can he still be redeemed, or is he hopelessly corrupted by power? Their love/hate relationship has been watched closely, and people can't wait to see how things develop, whether they will continue to be competitors or whether other emotions will spring to the surface and a tearstained ending will be in store. In other leading roles you will find the businessmen who carry the whole country bulging out of their back

pockets, and who have played the bad guy parts quite convincingly. Every now and then, one of them is exposed and moved from centre stage to keep the crowd content, their role instantly being filled by a new face but similar character. The audience, of course, roots for the poor, frustrated artist who, however, as this is an ongoing series, never seems to win. Instead he spends his days at a coffeeshop, tormented and broken



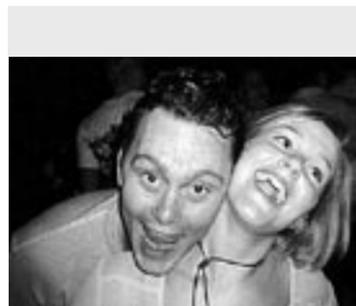
Will Davíð and Solla finally express their true feelings for one another, or will they keep bickering?

by the state of the world and his own despair. He shakes his head hopelessly while sipping his change out of a coffee cup, and remains in place as long as the pretty waitress, unaware of his angst, keeps giving him free refills.

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**Bergþóra Snæbjörnsdóttir**



Scenes from next episode of Iceland: The Soap Opera



## LISTINGS

Grandrokk, Ensími.  
Saturday night July 5th

Ensimi was formed in 1996 by Jon Orn Arnarson and Hrafn Thoroddsen. The debut album "Kafbatamusik" was released in October 1998 by Dennis Records. The following year Ensími was voted Best Newcomer and "Atari" the Song of the Year at the Icelandic Music Awards. In 1999 Steve Albini, who's best known for his work with Nirvana and The Pixies, expressed his interest in working with the band. As a result Albini came to Iceland and engineered and recorded half of Ensími's second album "BMX" which came out in the fall of 1999.

Ensimi recently signed a new deal with Hitt Records and released a new album titled "Ensimi" in the fall of 2002. The album was produced and recorded by the band in the newly built Ensími studio. Ensími has been performing in Iceland, Scandinavia and the U.S and has played with bands such as: Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Sparta and Ian Brown. The band has been on a full-scale tour since its 2002 release.

Reykjavík art museum, Kjarvalsstaðir,  
New times in Icelandic Photography  
June 20th - August 17th

Last year, a joint project of the Reykjavík Art Museum, The National Museum of Iceland and the Moscow House of Photography resulted in an exhibition entitled Icelandic Photography - Retrospective that was presented in Moscow in November 2002. The exhibition showed on the one hand, life in Iceland around 1900 through a selection of the most treasured photographs of the Department of Photography and Prints in the National Museum in Iceland, and on the other it presented an overview of what is happening in Icelandic photography today. A selection of some of the best contemporary Icelandic photography was chosen for this and in all, works by 28 photographers and artists were selected for this presentation, showing almost 130 photographs. It was decided that this selection should also be made available to a museum audience in Iceland; thus, these works form the core of this exhibition at Kjarvalsstaðir.

It is the objective of this exhibition not to limit the medium but to show works that are extremely different in both style and perspective. Here you find works of photographers that have renewed the old imagery of the landscape tradition, reflecting the land and light with a knowledgeable sensitivity, but there are also others that handle nature in a more sombre and poetic way.

**Hafnarborg Art Gallery**, Anniversary exhibition from the museum collection.

**Handverk og Hönnun**, -13:00 to 17:00- Exhibition of contemporary and traditional Icelandic art and crafts.

**National and University Library**, Exhibition of Lárus Sigurbjörnsson, the founder of the city's documentation.

**National Gallery of Iceland**, Exhibition of selected works by Icelandic artists from the National Gallery's collection.

**Norræna Húsið, Nordic House**, -12:00 to 17:00- Exhibition; photos of people, culture and nature from Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands

**Saga Museum**, -10:00 to 18:00- History face to face, historical figures and major events in Icelandic history from the settlers up to the Reformation presented in a unique way. Admission 800 krónur.

**Árbjarsáfn, Folk Museum**, History of Reykjavík

**Culture House**, Images of Iceland - milestones in cartography

**Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum**, Insight into international contemporary art in Iceland

**Hallgrímskirkja Church**, -12:00- Lunch time concert, Martein H. Friðriksson organ.

**Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum**, Some of the works of painter Jóhannes Kjarval.

**Norræna húsið, Nordic House**, The Big Nordic Elephant Show. Children dressed up as elephants especially welcome.

**Reykjavík Museum of Photography**, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.

**Ásmundarsáfn, Sculpture museum**, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, who believed sculpture should be part of the urban environment.

**Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum**, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor, whose works are partly based on Icelandic folklore.

**Night**

**Leikhúskjallarinn**, DJ's Gullfoss & Geysir.

**Celtic Cross**, Band Spilafíklar and Troubadour Garðar Garðarsson play.

**Coffee shop 11**, DJ Andri Karate.

**Hverfisbar**, DJ Benni.

**Café 22**, DJ Bjóssi.

**Kaffibarinn**, DJ KGB.

**Prikið**, DJ Þórhallur.

**Café Sólun**, DJ Þróstur 3000. Not to be missed.

**Thorvaldsen bar**, DJ's Hlynur & Daddi Diskó.

**Café Victor**, DJ's of the house, 80's and 90's music.

**Amsterdam**, Stóri Björn (Big Bear) Cover band

**Gaukur á Stöng**, The pop group Írafar, Iceland's eurovision contest contribution, performs.

**Grand Rokk**, The rock band Ensími plays.

**Kráin 73**, Troubadour Ingi Valur

**Sunday, July 6**

**Both Day and Night**

**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Café Sólun**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

**Day**

**Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum**, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals. First human specimen still awaited.

**Hafnarborg Art Gallery**, Anniversary exhibition from the museum collection.

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**Norræna Húsið, Nordic House**, -12:00 to 17:00- Exhibition; photos of people, culture and nature

# LISTINGS

# SPORÐURINN (THE FISHTAIL)

from Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands  
**Saga Museum**, -10:00 to 18:00- History face to face, historical figures and major events in Icelandic history from the settlers up to the Reformation presented in a unique way. Admission 800 krónur.  
**Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum**, History of Reykjavik  
**Culture House**, Images of Iceland - milestones in cartography  
**Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavik Art Museum**, Insight into international contemporary art in Iceland  
**Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum**, Some of the works of painter Jóhannes Kjarval.  
**Norræna húsið, Nordic House**, The Big Nordic Elephant Show. Children dressed up as elephants especially welcome.  
**Reykjavik Museum of Photography**, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.  
**Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum**, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson, who believed sculpture should be part of the urban environment.  
**Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum**, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor, whose works are partly based on Icelandic folklore.

## Tuesday, July 8

### Both Day and Night

**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Café Sólon**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

### Day

**Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum**, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals. First human specimen still awaited.

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## Wednesday, July 9

### Both Day and Night

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**Café Sólon**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

### Day

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### Night

**Gaukur á Stöng**, Charity concert: Geir Ólafsson, Buff and more...

**Kaffibarinn**, Wednesday Red Wine Evening, free cheese and bread. DJ of the evening challenges someone to DJ next time.

## Thursday, July 10

### Both Day and Night

**Austurvöllur out door exhibition**, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

**Café Sólon**, Exhibiton - Mosaic mirrors by Rósa.

### Day

## Kaffi List, Roots! Rock! Reggae Explosion!

Weekend July 3-4

A taste of the Caribbean in Reykjavik The new owners of Kaffi List are starting off well with a reggae weekend, importing DJ's and offering Jamaican lunch and dinner menus, theme nights like these are a fresh breeze to Reykjavik's sometimes standardized nightlife. Here's the schedule:

### July 3-4th

Jamaican lunch and Dinner, tropical fruit juices and Reggae Music gallor.

### July 4th

Bob Marley buffet (variety of spiced foods and vegetables). And after eight in the evening:

DJ Chris (Jamaica)

MC Blessed (London)

DJ Skinny T (Dance Hall)

DJ Sir Charles Dee (pure veggie)

Open Floor: Rub a dub contest, open mic. Have fun!

## Skemmtihúsið Theatre, the Saga of Guðriður.

from 13th of June

Skemmtihúsið Theatre performs in English the Saga of Guðriður. A woman's tremendously courageous voyage to Vinland (America) during the Viking era.

Information and tickets available at the Tourist Information Centre, Aðalstæti 2, 101 Reykjavik.

Performances in English:

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays at 20:

30 and Fridays at 18:00

Performances in German:

Sundays and Tuesdays at 18:00

# LISTINGS CONTINUED

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The chefs Jóhann and Jóhann

Photo: Aldis

## HAPPINESS IS A CHEF CALLED JOHANN!

When it comes to a restaurant for a quick lunch, good quality and moderate prices, one can say that SPORÐURINN (The Fishtail) is still the best kept secret in Reykjavik.

Hidden in the basement, behind the cheese display at the end of a small delicatessen shop (Ostabúðin), you'll find a small hole in the wall with tables and chairs for perhaps 20 guests. Believe me it is worth looking for.

Sometimes you get a feeling that there is no fast food restaurant in Reykjavik with decently prepared meals other than the three P Icelandic essentials: Pizzas, Pylsur (Frankfurters) and Pop-



Fish on a plate

## Hidden in the basement, behind the cheese display at the end of a small delicatessen shop (Ostabúðin), you'll find a small hole in the wall with tables and chairs for perhaps 20 guests. Believe me it is worth looking for.

corn! Not true! SPORÐURINN has just what you need for a quick meal at noon. And you don't have to spend too much, neither time nor money.

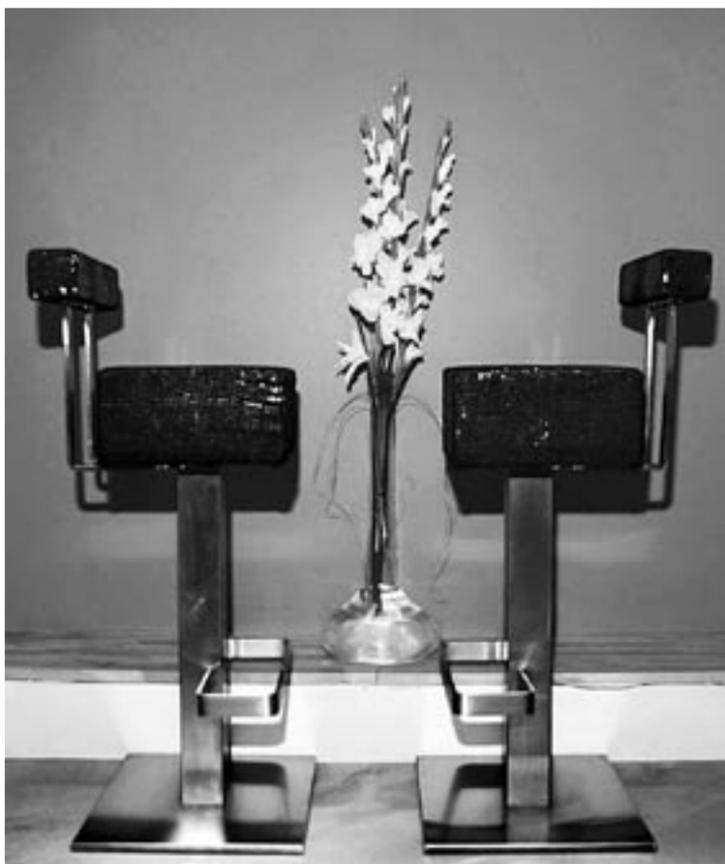
are definitely in fashion – while the Salad with smoked salmon, olives and greek feta is perhaps more popular with the more grown-up suburbanites in town for a fitting at nearby Eggert the Furrier.

that more established restaurants would have as a special feature on their menu. The Fish of the Day is a fine portion for a mere 890 krónur (the most expensive dish on the Menu).

In the few days since the opening of SPORÐURINN this mini restaurant has become a favorite among the young mid-towners whose orders of Warm Salad with Wild Goose Hearts and Balsamic

The Menu is short and to the point. In addition to very well composed salads, such as those mentioned before, there is a Creamy Fish soup available, a soup

For an ultra quick bite you can order a regular Bruschetta with tomatoes, mozzarella and Parma Ham, a delicacy that makes my mouth water for the few minutes I had to wait to be served. I am not a Spaghetti man myself, but the lady dining at the next table was very (and loudly) pleased with her Spaghetti served with Anchovies, Chili and a big helping of Parmesan.



Nice chairs

The two principals at Sporðurinn are both named Johann. Either one of them will be more than pleased to assist you, if you need any information about the dishes on the Menu. Like the lady at the next table said: "Over here "Happiness is a guy called Joe!" quoting an old song from the Rosemary Clooney Songbook.

SPORÐURINN (The fishtail) is located in Skóluvörðustígur 8. Open from 11 AM until 14:30 PM. Closed on Sundays.

Sonny Greco

## BOOKS

## NÝHIL ON TOUR

THE NEW NIHILISTIC ART SOCIETY TAKES ON THE COUNTRY SIDE

On a sunny Friday afternoon I sat down at Austurvöllur waiting for one of the founding members of the group Nýhil (pronounced nee-hil). I noticed the group last September on account of the massive amount of underground work published and the monthly poetry nights at Grand Rock Bar. I was confused about the name, since it clearly indicates Nihilism but has a troubling spelling error, which could not just be a mistake.

After a short while Haukur Már Hauksson came and sat down with me and told me the facts about the group that has in under a year added an essential flavour to the poetry scene.

Nýhil is a group of young artists and poets who started this art society after Eiríkur Nordal published a book of poetry in the autumn of 2002. He and Haukur Már were living in Berlin, Germany at the time and were bursting with creativity like often happens to Icelanders while living abroad (probably coming from the surge of increased possibilities when realising that you are not on a far away island). Instead of forming the mandatory "society-of-Icelanders-having-a-home-away-from-home" they rented a small venue with a DJ and had their friends come

over, drink heavily and read each others poems, both in Icelandic and German.

At the same time in Iceland other friends started doing the same thing every month. The nights here in Iceland were a bit different from the ones in Germany because Icelanders tend to let everything go completely, while living in a foreign country so when they were drinking and rioting on booze and poetry, we were just having serious poetry nights with silence and applause in the right places.

Nihilism and the Icelandic word for "new" (nýtt... hence the "ý") make the name Nýhil. Haukur Már told me that they decided on this name because they had the goal of following the theories of Nihilism to some extent. To destroy everything that could possibly be destroyed. If they didn't succeed then they could at least say that were doing something new. Although these kinds of art societies have been formed before around the world they were doing it in a different style; a less serious approach compared to similar poetry-bashes.

In the interview, Haukur Már admitted that at present, they have become more like Post-Modernists, questioning all borders and barriers between styles,

tradition, language and nationalities. One of those borders would be between the wanna-be bohemian Reykjavík lifestyle and the bread-earning everyday lifestyle in the countryside. The idea of poetry only happening in the city will be attacked with poetry when six or seven Nýhil members will go on a bus and tour the country, rock and roll style.

It has been a popular activity amongst some Icelandic cover bands, to tour the country and gain recognition by playing at fish factory dances. These bands are generally frowned upon by those who write poetry and "Poetry-Parties" on tour, can be understood as a mix between the high art and low art if there is such distinction.

This is what Nýhil is doing right now. They will tour about 6-7 places in two separate trips. Although the readings will mainly be in Icelandic it can be enjoyable for everyone since they have a DJ to go with the verses and they urge everybody to do some massive drinking.

Aðalsteinn Jörundsson

## The schedule:

July 5<sup>th</sup>, Skaftfell, Seyðisfjörður, 22:00  
 July 6<sup>th</sup>, Gamla Búð, Höfn í Hornafirði, 17:00  
 July 10<sup>th</sup>, Gallerí Undirheimar, Mosfellsbær, 22:00  
 July 18<sup>th</sup>, Deiglan, Akureyri, 21:00  
 July 19<sup>th</sup>, Kaffi Krókur, Sauðárkrókur, 22:00  
 July 20<sup>th</sup>, Kaffi Ísafjörður, Ísafjörður, 22:00  
 July 24<sup>th</sup>, Grand Rokk, Reykjavík, 22:00



## COMIC BOOKS IN ICELAND

The Icelandic comic scene up until recently has been as legless as a drunken worm.

Mostly, the comic book culture here has consisted of importing series aimed at children. During World War II some action titles started to seep in with the soldiers and much later efforts were made to translate those titles, which was unfortunate in many respects, since these were often poorly translated. In the 70's we started to publish most of the big Belgian/French childrens titles, such as Tintin and Asterix, not to mention Donald Duck who has always enjoyed a strong following here. But through all this there was no major activity among the natives. It's enough to drive a man to drink.

But now it's time to put aside the bottle, because the situation has been rectifying itself for the past few years. It has even come to the point where Edda miðlun, the largest publishing house in Iceland is turning out at least one graphic novel come autumn, called Kárasaga (more about that below). We have enjoyed visits from western comic luminaries like Warren Ellis and Grant Morrison who, as well as being big selling authors, have enjoyed much critical acclaim and have both contributed a lot to the battle for public acceptance. Things are improving all over. As Morrison pointed out in his speech held at the downtown City Library (Borgarbókasa-

fnið), the geeks are taking over. With Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, Matrix and Star Wars crazes sweeping everywhere, not to mention the endless comic book adaptations, it's becoming harder to shun the medium where a lot has been going on for the past 15 years. Comic books for mature readers with elaborate and powerful scripts and meticulous artwork are more commonplace now than ever and Iceland can only benefit from that. We are lucky to have a comic store, Nexus, that concentrates on carrying the more cutting edge, quality work with less emphasis on the more soapy superhero titles. Aside from that we have The City library that carries over 2000 comics and graphic novels in English, the majority of them aimed exclusively at adults, as well as a few hundred titles in Icelandic and the other Scandinavian languages. This was formally opened in the year 2000 and has consistently been one of the most popular sections of the library.

Things are looking up. Something is in the air, maybe it's just smell of money...but quite possibly we will be seeing young Icelandic talent, influenced by the new scene, crawling onto the world stage in the coming years. You will know when we do - It'll be swell.

## ICELAND: RECENT COMICS AND WORKS IN PROGRESS

Kárasaga (Saga of Kári) by Ingólfur

Örn Björgvinsson and Embla Ýr Bárudóttir, based on the old Icelandic Brennun-jálssaga, should be seeing light this fall. Like most of the titles referred to here it will only be available in Icelandic, at least for the time being. Kárasaga sounds like a focused, energetic piece that should avoid the mistake of the last project of this kind, the Egilssaga comic adaptation. Egilssaga was a beautiful piece of work that regrettably tried to cover too much ground and ended up a little muddled. Kárasaga, on the other hand, sounds very promising and something to keep an eye out for.

Bjarni Hinriksson's Stafrænar fjaðrir (Digital Feathers) and Aukablaðið by Dónald both came out a couple of months ago. The two are unlike in content as the former is a take on modern culture done in a progressive art style, while the latter springs from the vein of editorial cartoons nibbling at the heels of the nations leaders. But both are tasty and available in book form in Nexus (the only comic book vendor in Iceland - and the best in the universe, per head, at least.)

Elskið Okkur by Huggleikur (whose name means Mindgames) is another single panel funny like Aukablaðið. This grand, majestic story, matched only by Moby Dick and possibly The Bible in its epic sweep, attacks the Icelandic national soul where it's at its weakest.

Sweeping strokes of Swiftian satire leaves the reader grabbing his epiglottis and coughing up praise (and blood) for the boy-genius author. This really, really, really good book will be out in translation as "Love Us" so everyone can get really happy.

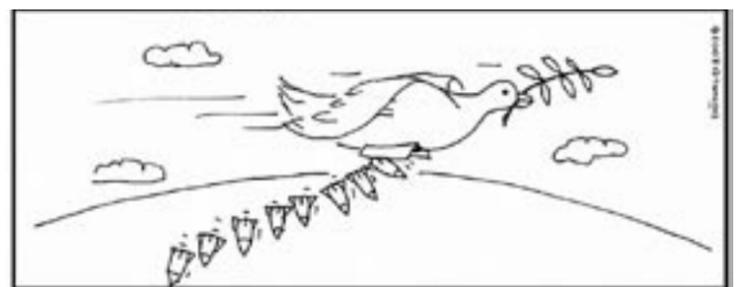
Besides the English translation of his previous work, Huggleikur will later this year bring us a new dose of forbidden love and social awkwardness with his sequel "Drepið Okkur" or "Kill Us". Not to mention the very hush, hush collaboration with poet Sjón (whose last partnership with Björk Guðmundsdóttir almost bagged him an Oscar).

Blek, along with Gisp, is the largest and longest running comic book anthology in Iceland (neither has been running much longer than 8 issues which says a lot about the state of the Icelandic comic

community). Both have been instrumental in giving young comic writers and artists a platform to showcase their work. Blek recently published a gorgeous hardcover book that collects all previous issues to date as well as putting out a new issue.

Finally there is an illustrated novel in progress, which has yet to be named, by two young men, Theodór Lindal Helgason and Steinar Kristinn Sigurðsson. It sounds like it could be a very enjoyable little, sci-fi romp and it is always encouraging to hear tremors from underground. And there are likely many young comic-creators-in-the-making like them out there and they should not hesitate to contact us to tell us about it. A proper comic community is long overdue.

Ragnar Egilsson



The comic "Pax Americana" from Aukablaðið (www.aukabladid.is) by Dónald. "A majestic story, matched possibly only by The Bible in its epic sweep," apparently.

## FUNNY MONEY

Icelanders are stubborn, independent and extremely proud of their history, which is fine. Iceland's currency reflects these things being both colorful, and full of history. The bills have pictures of historically famous or important people, while the coins have carvings of various types of fish (reflecting Iceland's biggest industry). Still, you probably haven't got a clue who these people are, or what type of fish are on the coins, and if you simply don't care, don't read any further than this.

The purple 1000 króna note is a little bit wider than the red 500 króna note, the difference is so little (5mm) that it is hard to notice. On the front is a picture of Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson (1605-1675), who served 30 years as a Bishop at Skálholt and, among other things, rebuilt the cathedral there. More famous in later times was his daughter Ragnheiður, her short, difficult life, and her death driven by grief has been an inspiration for many Icelandic songwriters and poets, among them Megas. Ragnheiður had a secret lover and her father made her swear to give her virginity to the church in front

of a large crowd of priests and other church related people, but ironically, 9 months later she bore a child. Megas

suggested in one of his songs that Brynjólfur himself was the father. On the back, among other less important

things, is a picture of the aforementioned cathedral.

## What's it worth?

A decent lunch in one of Reykjavík's bistros is not much more than a 1000 krónas, the purple note would also easily cover the infamous price of a beer at the same bistro or buy you a six-pack in a liquor store. Enjoy those purple ones while you can, in Iceland they don't last long.



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# THE MEDIA

article **BY**

**JOHN  
BOYCE**

**The advent of mass advertising has destroyed the independence of the media, which in market societies is responsible to the advertisers in the same way that state run media is responsible to the government in dictatorships, argues John Boyce. Of course, none of this applies to Grapevine, which firmly believes in the kindness and commitment to truth of its sponsors (do I get my check now?).**



Did you ever hear the one about the politician, the actress and the White House dog? Well, the year was 1992, the location Washington. Casper, the politician, was being indicted for pissing all over the constitution, a scandal officially known as Irangate. Candice, the actress, was starring in the now long forgotten Murphy Brown and achieved the ultimate accolade of celebrity when her single mother character was criticised by the high-minded if illiterate Dan Quayle. And then there's Millie the dog, not just any old mutt but famed canine companion to the Bushes George and Barbara, whose collected capers was making itself at home in the upper reaches of the New York Times best seller list.

Our intrepid trio were duly put to the public recognition test with predictably hilarious results. When asked to identify the personalities, a whopping 89% of those surveyed eyeballed the sitcom star. Weinberger will have been relieved to find that a secretary of defence indicted in the biggest political scandal since Watergate jogged the memories of less than 17% of the nation while (yes you've guessed it) a scary 86% correctly identified the dog.

Of course recent American history is littered with weird and wacky examples of a TV nation gone mad. Enduring media myths from the Reagan era, trees cause pollution, welfare costs more than the military etc., became gospel truths for millions of Americans and provided hours of amusement for the rest of us.

Hilarious as these misconceptions may be, they inevitably raise more serious questions about how well

our media serve us and their ability, and indeed, willingness, to act in the interest of the public. To accusations of trivialisation of news, misinformation and good old-fashioned barefaced lies, your average world-weary media watchdog may reply: Was it ever thus! An equally pertinent question, as we enter the new millennium, might be; was it always this bad? Does the 21st century herald a truly altered fourth estate so tainted as to be barely worthy of the name? It is certainly a puzzling paradox that in an era where the quantity of news and

## Of course, recent American history is littered with examples of a TV nation gone mad.

information is unprecedented, access to genuinely independent sources are ever harder to find and the public, as the survey suggests, seems more ignorant and uninformed than ever.

### Follow the money

Like any business or social entity this loose conglomeration of information outlets that we like to call the media has evolved dramatically since its infancy in the 16th century, when the advent of the printing press made a star of one Martin Luther and helped provoke the biggest religious rumpus of the century. Today the media is, of course, a multimillion-dollar industry employing huge numbers around the world. To see what makes it tick we simply take a tip from our overpaid Premier League footballers and follow the money, to discover just who owns what in media-land.

In the U.S. and most other western democracies, where the term free press is still invoked without irony, ownership and control of the media industry have undergone a revolution in the last 50 years or so. At the end of the Second World War, the printed word and radio were the principal sources of information for the average citizen. For all its faults the mainstream media could be considered reasonably independent if only through its diversity of ownership. In the U.S., for example, while corporate chains absorbed an increasing number of dailies, 75% of newspapers were still independently owned, often by a single individual or run as a family business.

The corporate invasion of radio broadcasting had certainly begun but had yet to extend its tentacles into local and provincial networks. This process accelerated startlingly in the fifties in all areas of the media and a fast-forward to the new millennium reveals a very different story.

At last count, courtesy of Ben Bagdikian's The Media Monopoly, there were in the U.S. 1787 daily newspapers, 11000 magazines, 9000 radio stations, 1000 TV stations, 2500 book publishers and 7 major movie studios. About 25,000 thousand media entities in all. When the often labyrinthine task of tracing each individual newspaper, radio or TV station to its ultimate corporate parent is completed, a startling, not to say disturbing, fact emerges. About 16 or 17 supremely wealthy multinational corporations (give or take a corporate merger or two) own and ultimately control almost the entire media network in the most powerful country in the world. While the U.S. certainly represents the most extreme case, a similar pattern is discernable across the western democracies from Italy to

reporting on any issue from military spending and industrial relations to tax reform and poverty from media outlets whose owners and powerful clients have a vested interest in framing the debate on these very same issues? Who does the corporate media ultimately serve, its paymasters or the truth?

Of course it would be absurd to sug-



gest that corporate kingpins on the likes of General Electric take a direct personal interest in the editorial line of the Wisconsin Sentinel or the Rhode Island Record. The process is a subtler and more tacit one. The ability to withdraw a big advertising order can act as an unspoken but powerful censor. A simple case of he who pays for advertising calls the tune. Under tacit pressure from corporate bosses and large advertisers, producers and editors quickly learn what to pursue and what to ignore. Take the issue of tobacco. In the U.S.A cigarettes kill on average about 500'000 people a year while crack cocaine takes about 3000 lives annually. While major networks never tire, it seems, of running sensationalist stories about the menace of illegal drugs, stories focusing on the considerably greater menace of a legal one are a rarity. A situation that suits Laurence Tisch, tobacco magnet and owner of C.B.S. just fine and one not entirely unrelated to the hundreds of millions of dollars the major networks receive from tobacco companies each year.

### If it bleeds it leads

In the modern corporate media no aspect of output is sacred. The news has to pay its way in terms of ratings and ultimately advertising revenue just like Frasier, Friends and Monday night football. In recent years TV producers have found real life violence packaged as entertainment to be a ratings winner and dirt cheap to boot. Absurd and obscene series like Greatest Ever Police Chases or World's Most Amazing Videos only increase the pressure to produce news as entertainment. In an atmosphere of such cutthroat competition, high-minded ideals about journalistic integrity and editorial responsibility are, as they say in Brooklyn, strictly for the birds.

The result is a news media often obsessed with violence, sex, celebrity and above all trivia. All of which ultimately leads to the Millie syndrome. Less a case of outright censorship and more what Jeff Cohen, founder of F.A.I.R., describes as "selective misinformation". It produces a viewing public, almost 90% of whom can identify a dumb celebrity mutt but where less than two in ten recognised the politician who sold stolen arms to an oppressive fundamentalist Muslim state to fund a covert illegal terrorist war.

The archaic age, gender and racial profile of the industry plus a glaring absence of any mildly left of even centrist opinion in terms of representation on

popular current affairs programmes, helps to muddy the journalistic water still further. Basic facts fed through these WASPish filters emerge on the other side in a form that often reinforces rather than questions the worldview as defined by the powerful establishment groups and upon whose hegemony the fourth estate could reasonably be expected to act as an important constraint.

### Never reveal today what can be concealed until tomorrow

Were hoary old colonialist Napoleon alive today, he would be truly impressed by his prescience with regard to the workings of the modern corporate press. Bonaparte would have made a fine media guru or spin-doctor long before such terms were invented. In answer to a question regarding the prospect of hushing up some inconvenient facts from the French public, Napoleon once remarked that it was not always necessary to suppress the news, merely to delay it until it didn't matter anymore.

From the early days of Vietnam to the recently conducted Gulf conflict this tactic has, in collusion with governments and their militaries, been the corporate medias stock-in-trade. Manipulation of news output takes the form of distorting and delaying facts, suppressing information and sometimes, if needs be, telling plain old porkies. The full facts, or in the case of a complete fabrication, the real story, trickles out months or even years later. A supreme example of this tactic was the recently fought gulf war. Before the war the major TV networks, especially those whose parent company stood to gain directly from conflict, were happy to parrot the official but baseless Bush line "That pesky Saddam I just know he's got them there weapons hidden somewhere around here, I just know it" or words to that effect. A genuinely combative and probing press might have gone to the trouble of investigating and reporting the wealth of evidence suggesting that Saddam, no longer at least, possessed MWDs. This our mainstream media with a few honourable exceptions conspicuously failed to do. Sensational evidence like the coalitions most prized defector, one of Hussein's estranged sons-in-law, claim that Iraq's biological weapons programme had been terminated was downplayed and ignored until after the war had begun. Equally scurrilous was the constant linking of Bin Laden and Hussein, transparent scare mongering by the bush administration eagerly lapped up by a compliant press when all available evidence showed they shared nothing but mutual hatred. In these and other deceptions, many so called respectable and recognised journalists willingly connived; for betrayal of journalistic integrity in the propaganda service of the military industrial complex is rewarded, not punished, in corporate media culture.

An excellent case in point is Dan Rather airing of phoney reports from Afghanistan in the eighties, appears not to have impeded his steady rise through the ranks of CBS. A successful career built largely on slavish adherence to the official line. On the other hand journalists who dare to buck that line can find it detrimental to their job prospects.

As part of their ongoing military and financial support of the Salvadorian death-squad dictatorship in the 80s, the U.S. military, as well as supplying money and arms, undertook training of local militias. In 1982 a massacre of hundreds of women and children by one of these U.S trained battalions was reported by Ray Bonner a New York Times reporter based in El Salvador.

### Iceland inc.

In 1991 the U.N. World Report revealed that 347 spectacularly wealthy individuals owned more than the poorest 47% of the world's population, a modest 2.8 billion people. In a country the size of Iceland, however, about a dozen or families own everything worth owning on the island. Often referred to as the Icelandic mafia or the Octopus, this cosy cabal has recently and grudgingly admitted two new members; Johannes Jonsson, founder and owner of Bonus, Iceland's hugely successful discount supermarket chain and Jon Olafsson whose ownership of radio stations, cinemas and several subscription based TV channels confirms his position as a leading media mogul.

Along with these pay-to-view channels there is the national, state sponsored channel Sjonvarpid and, of course, our newest arrival Skjar Einn a free, solely advertising funded station. Bargain basement broadcasting and run on a shoestring, it's the television equivalent of K-Mart and like K-Mart, largely filled with cheap American produce. Icelandic demographics being what they are, the broadcasting business is a risky one and all channels save the national one are deeply in debt.

we really expect honest and balanced

A familiar, oft repeated formula for sidelining journalists who persist in raising embarrassing facts was quickly employed. After angry denials from Washington and a smear campaign in the national press, the reporter was withdrawn from El Salvador. Bonners

Henry Kissenger. The root cause brings us back to this insidious notion of conflict of interest. Take General Electric for instance, a U.S. owned, multi-national corporation and one of the largest companies in the world. Among its assets are two of America's biggest news networks

expensive contracts with the Pentagon, another arm of the same company was reporting the war on television. Needless to say, both networks were enthusiastic supporters of the slaughter, obediently accepting dubious official reports and even outright suppression of facts and events damaging to the popularity of a lucrative war. When NBC reporter Jon Alpert unearthed video footage of civilian devastation in Basra caused by massive bombing in residential areas, the NBC news president Michael Gartner promptly suppressed the footage and banned Alpert from ever working for NBC again. As ever the Allies' deliberate campaign of disinformation and wholesale lies is now a matter of public record. It was exposed belatedly by the same news media who accepted it unquestioningly in the first place, but of course much too late to do any good. Such considerations mattered little to corporate news media and the allied governments whose agendas were mutually served. Bush and Thatcher, for domestic political reasons, wanted war, the likes of General Electric, profits. The human price? About 700,000 largely innocent lives, a statistic that you won't be hearing on NBC, CBS or Sky News any time soon.

#### The public strikes back?

In the face of such corporate and official media domination, how can we reassert our right to independent, accurate news and reporting? How can the average citizen get behind the news and past the headlines to find the real story? Not simply the right or the left view but the 27 other angles any event worth investigat-

#### No TV please, we're Icelandic

While Icelandic television has recently begun to take on the formulaic structures of free market television this is a fairly recent phenomenon. From 1966 when Iceland's national channel came on the air for the first time until the mid eighties, Icelandic govt policy with regard to television was somewhere to the left of Ho Chi Minh. From the outset strict regulatory laws were introduced to protect a vulnerable population from the dangers of excessive exposure to the box. These included the compulsory closedown of the national channel every Thursday. As well as being a catchy slogan "no telly on Thursday" this ensured that the nations children created their own fun at least once a week. The solitary national station also shut for the entire month of July. The government of the day, in their wisdom, decided that the population should be forced to do something better with their month of 24 hour daylight than sit in a drape-drawn room watching re-runs of Starksy and Hutch. Nowadays, in the face of rampant free-market ideology and endless choice for-the-sake-of-it, such benign Stalinism is of course no longer possible. In any case there's the reasonable argument that adults being treated as such should be left to make up their own minds and when all else fails there is always the off button.

ing will surely have, A task that seasoned media watchers find difficult, never mind an average citizen, trying to hold down a job, raise a family and still find time to make sense of the world around him. This was one of the issues I raised with Robert Crenshaw, author of Media Watch, a comprehensive analysis of bias in mainstream broadcasting.

He responded that although the growing emasculation of diverse and fearless independence in reporting is a grave threat to our basic freedoms, the average citizen is still left with a choice, to lazily accept the official source or the corporately framed view or to strive to find those alternative and untainted sources that still exist. Crenshaw cites examples like the Internet, alternative bookshops, independent publishers and organisations like F.A.I.R., Oxfam and Human Rights Watch who avoid corporate

and interest vested sponsorship.

Martin Luther King was just one of many great twentieth century leaders who considered full and frank reporting not only a right but also a duty in the sense that citizens cannot afford to be passive agents but must struggle to assert this vital freedom. It is a clear if depressing example of Kings prescience that in the age of the military/industrial/Media Complex this responsibility has become an ever more onerous and daunting one.

## Whom does the corporate media ultimately serve, its paymasters or the truth?

report was later fully confirmed by the U.N. Truth Commission who exhumed the mass graves. Throughout Reagan's Latin American adventures, had news media spent less time slavishly cheerleading Washington and the Pentagon and more time actually investigating the full truth about Washington sponsored terror, many of the most brutal crimes against civilians, paid for by the U.S. taxpayer, might have been prevented.

#### Lies, damn lies and news media

In terms of sustained and deliberate manipulation of the facts, the 1991 Gulf War could well become the model for media complicity in government's deception of the public, so successful was its practice. The first fully televised war and one that made a household name of CNN, it heralded the advent of the embedded journalists, round the clock coverage and satellite technology to ensure on the spot reporting and instant live feeds. Yet western medias portrayal of the war was one of the greatest works of jingoistic fiction since the memoirs of

ABC and NBC. To this conglomerates formidable portfolio we can also add a



whole chain of arms factories, supplying parts for patriot missiles and other weapons used in Iraq. This all worked out quite neatly for ol' G.E.; while one arm of this corporate giant was literally making a killing from the war through

# WE'RE ON A MISSION FROM GOD

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Reykjavík

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Smiðjustíg 6, p: 551-5522

## WONDERINGS

## STATUES IN REYKJAVÍK

SOME THINGS YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE SIGHTS OF REYKJAVÍK

## Ingólfur Arnarsson

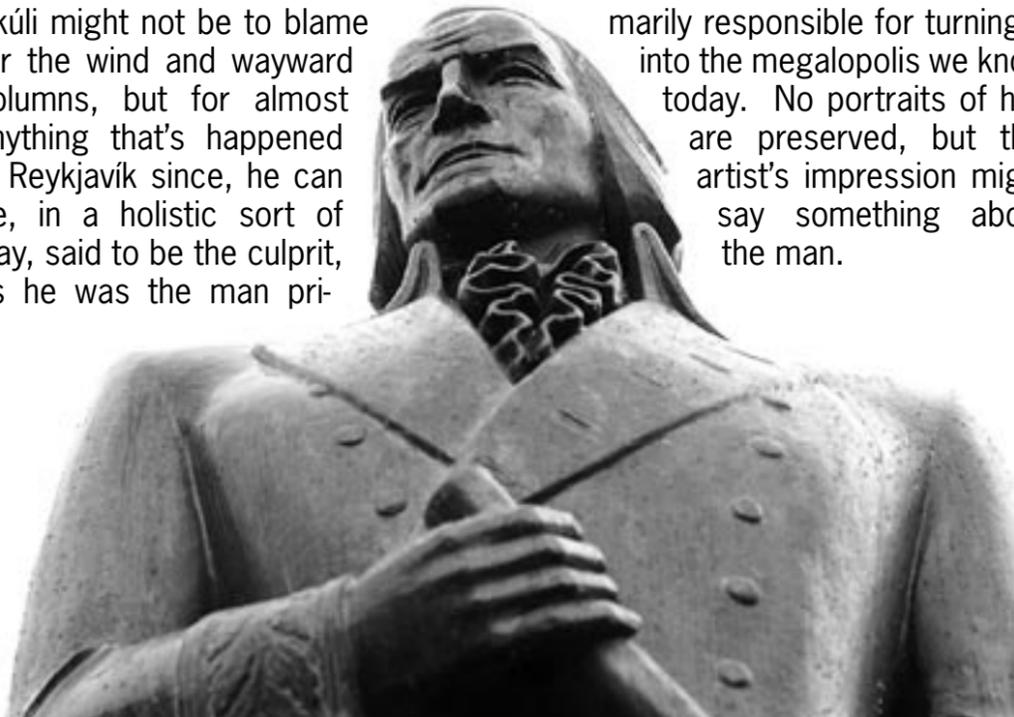
If you need someone to blame for your being in Reykjavík at this very moment, and take causality back far enough, then this is the man you should be pelting. He is the first man to come here and actually decide to stay. Hence, he is the first true Icelander, probably in more than one sense. Legend has it that he threw columns from his boat into the sea, and decided to set up camp wherever it was they came ashore. The wind and the tides blew them ashore right here, and they've been battering his descendants ever since.



## Skúli Fógeti

Skúli might not be to blame for the wind and wayward columns, but for almost anything that's happened in Reykjavík since, he can be, in a holistic sort of way, said to be the culprit, as he was the man pri-

marily responsible for turning it into the megalopolis we know today. No portraits of him are preserved, but this artist's impression might say something about the man.



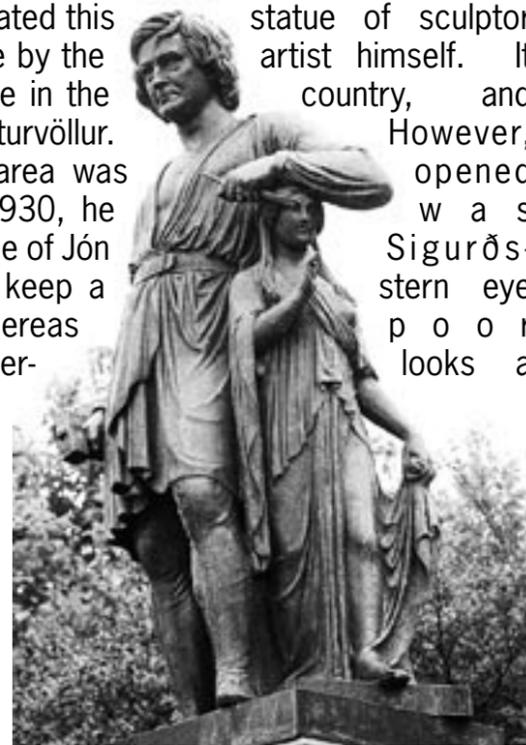
## Jón Sigurðsson

Iceland's national hero is a lawyer who spent most of his time in Copenhagen, but then, for a country with no army and the only person who sacrificed his life in the cause of independence a farmer who caught pneumonia and died after protesting outside the sheriff's office, the list of war heroes is bound to be short. This statue was originally placed outside the seat of government (Stjórnarráðshúsið) in 1911, but moved here in 1931.



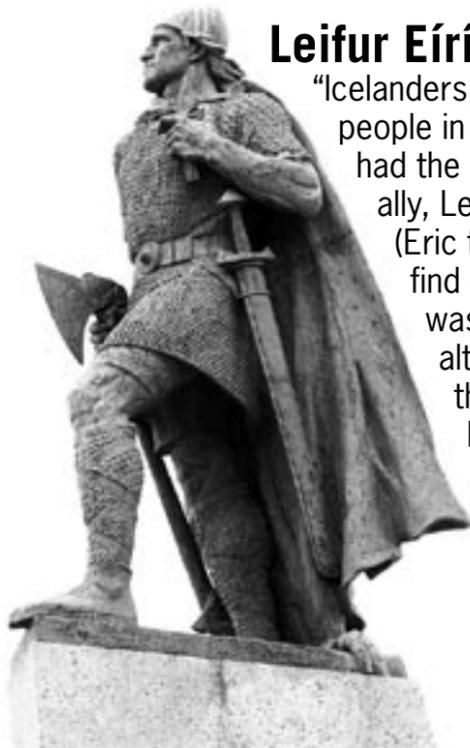
## Bertel Porvaldssen

Denmark gave Iceland its first constitution in 1874, but their generosity did not end there, for in the same year they also donated this statue of sculptor artist himself. It was the first statue in the country, and was placed on Austurvöllur. However, a year after the area was opened to the public in 1930, he replaced by a statue of Jónson, who gets to keep a on parliament, whereas Bertel currently over-pond.



## Leifur Eiríksson

"Icelanders," goes the saying, "are the smartest people in the world. They found America and had the good sense to loose it again." Actually, Leifur was going to visit his old man (Eric the Red) in Greenland, and couldn't find it, discovering America instead. He was since known as Leif the Lucky, although whether this was because of the quality of his new continent or just because his dad really had it in for him goes unreported. The statue was given to the people of Iceland by the United States in 1930.



## French Statue

Say what you will of the Americans, but at least they give good statue. What the hell is this? The Yanks get the Statue of Liberty, we get the finger. It's enough to put you in the mood for a hamburger and liberty fries, and to turn you off all notions of the European Union. Well, almost.

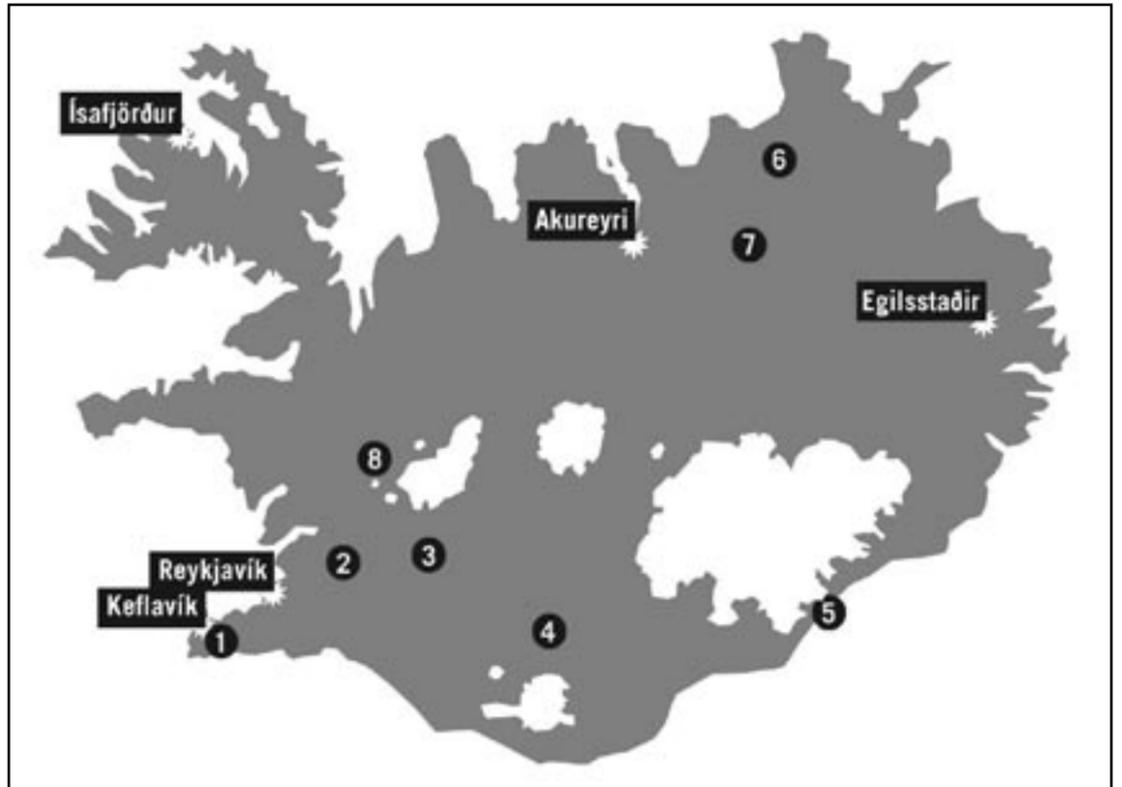


# ICELAND FOR DUMMIES

An essential part of travelling these days are the photo ops. Taking tigerhides back, or in this case, the fur of baby seals, is not exactly PC, so the pictures will be the trophies you'll be bringing home, that is, unless you can afford those pricey woolly jumpers and minature vikings. Your mom, grandma or kids will probably want to see (or, if they really care about you, at least will pretend that they do) what wonders of nature you discovered on your extremely difficult and dangerous trip to the uncivilized Eskimo island, full of igloos, volcanoes, trolls and elves. Well, first of all, you probably aren't going to see any igloos or elves, and if you do, you probably picked the wrong mushrooms. What you are going to see are hot springs, waterfalls, glaciers and a lot of landscape. Some people assume that Greenland's green and Iceland icy, others have heard it's actually the other way around. As far as Iceland is concerned, it's actually neither particularly green or icy, despite a few large glaciers. Most of it is, in fact, barren desert. The US astronauts came here to practice before going to the moon, as Iceland was the country that was considered to reproduce lunar conditions most accurately.

Here is a brief guide to what will probably be some of the most scenic photo ops. To make sure you won't miss the most important places, the Grapevine's research team has made this simple list of beautiful wonders of nature to check out, in order of their importance. Now pray to god that the weather will be your friend and enjoy your trip.

Before you leave the city it is a good idea to look at the travel information from the Public Roads Administration at [www.vegagerdin.is](http://www.vegagerdin.is).



## 1. THE BLUE LAGOON

One of the first stops for any visitor, and situated very close to Keflavik's international airport. The lagoons' mud is believed to have healing powers, especially for people suffering from psoriasis or other skin diseases. The distinctive blue colour is due to the warmth and the high level of silicone in the water. Sadly, there's no evidence that this increases cleavage size.

## 2. ÞINGVELLIR

In 930 a.d. the Vikings decided they needed to find a way to settle their disagreements, so they founded a parliament, and called it Alþingi. Today, although relocated, it is the oldest (sometimes) functioning parliament in the world. The Vikings, when not busy hacking limbs of one another, were quite aware of the beauty of nature and picked this breathtaking spot to meet. The American and European continental plates meet precisely here.

## 3. GULLFOSS & GEYSIR

Usually these two are mentioned together, partly because of geographic proximity, partly because they both start with the letter G. Geysir is the geysir from which all geysirs derive their name. Sadly, it rarely erupts these days, the family business having been taken over by heir Strokkur. Gullfoss is generally thought to be Iceland's most beautiful waterfall, hence the name, meaning "Golden Waterfall."

## 4. LANDMANNALAUGAR

Probably one of the most popular jeep excursions tours is a round trip from Reykjavik to Landmannalaugar. Not surprising since Landmannalaugar is actually a natural swimming pool in the middle of Iceland's highland desert. Don't bring shampoo or soap because this pool is so natural that we wouldn't want to spoil it would we? If you're up to a 12 hour journey, most the time inside a huge jeep, it is usually worth it.

## Other places worth looking at:

### Snæfellsjökull

The glacier which was the entrance point to the centre of the earth in Jules Verne's story, and thought by some to be an alien tourist attraction (although the aliens are reputedly invisible), which should be good enough for us humans.

### Hallormsstaður

The only forest in Iceland with trees taller than two feet. Man made, of course.

### Vestmannaeyjar

A volcano erupted in 1973, destroying most of the town and forcing the occupants to flee. Most of them resettled on the islands as soon as the lava cooled down.

### Dettifoss

Europe's most powerful waterfall, which makes you feel insignificant next to the forces of nature etc.

### Kjölur

Simply a gravel road across the highlands.

### Dyrhólaey

A big hole in a huge rock. Lives up to its name of "doorhillisland."

### Laugarvatn

On your way to Geysir, check out the food 'n fun duet here, the natural sauna and next to it, restaurant Lindin for good grub.

Ask in your nearest tourist info for more info on tours and traveling tips.

## 5. JÖKULSÁRLÓN

If it's good enough for 007, it's good enough for you. Ian Fleming's master spy has a tendency to pop up here every now and then, first as Roger Moore, and later as Pierce Brosnan. Even without Bond skating across it being chased by helicopters, it's still quite a view (to a kill, even), with a glacier, and a lake full of icebergs and lost camera equipment. Truly beautiful, especially during the summer months (though that's not cool enough for Mr Bond)

## 6. ÁSBYRGI

If you had a 8 legged horse called Sleipnir were a god of all gods called Odinn, went out for a spin and by accident stepped onto the face of the earth, Asbergi might be the result. A 3.5 km long hoof shaped canyon with up 100m tall walls. Naturally unique and if you've got the time, stop there on your way to Mývatn. Ásbyrgi is only 65km away from Húsavík.

## 7. MÝVATN

Mývatn is an oasis with nothing but strangely color desert surrounding it. Get lost in the lava labyrinth of Dimmuborgir (who have given name to a Norwegian black metal band) and fall in love with the unique landscape. Geothermal and geologically very active, there are a lot of warm springs and bubbling cauldrons in the area. After a busy day rent a room in a decent hotel and relax in the natural bath of Bjarnarlaug.

## 8. HÚSAFELL

Only about two hours drive from Reykjavik city, Húsafell is a place which has a lot to offer but is still mostly visited by Icelandic tourists. The area is basically a large camping site surrounded by summer cottages and beautiful landscape. Service offers anything a normal person needs for a shorter or a longer period of time, including a swimming pool, gas station and a golf course.

## OUTSIDE THE CITY

**Beware,**  
the countryside might look harmless, but there are things out there out to get you!

### Sheep

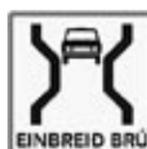
Cute and suitable for cooking if you're hungry and haven't got a clue where you are, look both funny and kind of innocent and are usually both, until they get in your way on the highway. Making a whole lot of sheep ketchup on your bumper and windshield can quickly wipe the innocence and beauty away. Blowing the horn does not disturb sheep at all. They don't care so slow down if you don't want to make more lamb chops. Sheep are suicidal, and they're eager to take some humans with them to the afterlife.



Photo: Aldis

### Single-lane bridges

Most of these are in the east part of Iceland, and you will see countless numbers of them if you're on your way to e.g. Egilsstaðir. Suddenly they'll jump at you just on the other side of the next hill, and its strictly one car at a time don't try to cross one if there's a slightest change of you not being the only vehicle on it. If that does happen, you'll probably be enjoying the view from your hospital window.



### Gravel roads

Gravel roads and single-lane bridges are long time mates, and unfortunately for you they do like to hang out together. Some parts of Iceland's circular highway (a.k.a. nr 1) is gravel, and you'll find gravel roads on your trips more often than you'll like. Vestfirðir, (north west Iceland), is an extremely good example of bad roads, so stay away or at least drive very slowly if you'd like to keep the paint on your car.



### Weather

If you're waiting for the right weather to go on a trip, you might have to wait forever. Most of the pictures you've seen in magazines and brochures about Iceland, were all taken the same day four years ago, the last time there was a clear sky. The weather can and will change without a warning and sometimes give you all kinds at the same time. Getting a tan in the Icelandic rain while struggling to stay on your feet in all the wind not an uncommon occurrence. That said, the weather last winter was uncommonly mild, and one can only hope that it will remain so this summer. But don't count on it.



## FOLK SAGAS

## THE CAT FROM VÍKINGAVATN

by Björk Bjarnadóttir

Iceland is said to be the land of fire and ice, pure nature and magnificent landscape. But what many people don't know is that Iceland is also the land of monsters, elves, trolls, ghosts and little people. When the first settlers came to Iceland about 1000 years ago, every hill and rock was said to have been alive with all kinds of creatures. Folklorists have traced the roots of these Icelandic creatures to Scandinavian and European folk beliefs. However, in Iceland these creatures have taken their own distinctive shape, a shape that is not to be found anywhere else in the world. This uniqueness comes from the inner mind of Icelandic people and is heavily influenced by the nature that surrounds the people and the creatures. Folktales and legends are not always built on reality, however, through the tales one can read the attitude to morality and the faith people had back then. Icelandic nature plays a big role in the Icelandic folktales. The harsh environment and the unpredictability of nature shaped many of the stories along with the fear people have of the unknown. As time passed the stories were collected and moved from oral tradition to large written collections of Icelandic folktales. First published around the mid 19th century these books continue to be in great demand and I dare say that there is not a person in Iceland that has not read some of them at one time or another. The creatures of the tales differ greatly some of them have been known to be very helpful to the Icelandic people, but beware, they can also be vengeful and dangerous if proper care and respect is not shown in their presence or in their habitat. When you travel around Iceland, keep in mind that trolls inhabit the mountains and most small hills are the homes of the hidden people or elves. The lakes and the sea are home to various mythical beasts like mermen, sea horses, sea monsters and giant worms.

If you were to ask an Icelander today if he believes that hidden people, trolls or ghost really do exist, you are unlikely to receive a straight



Cover image of the book *Myths and Monsters in Icelandic Folktales*  
Illustration by Guðrún Tryggvadóttir.

**If you were to ask an Icelander today if he believes that hidden people, trolls or ghosts really do exist, you are unlikely to receive a straight answer.**

answer. An Icelander will very likely say something like "I believe that there is something, I can't say for sure because I have never seen one but people talk about these creatures so who am I to say that they don't exist?" People in Iceland do not necessarily believe that these creatures exist but they are very unlikely to deny their existence either as such a denial might anger the ones that cannot be seen. There are many people in Iceland that do believe that, some if not all, of these creatures still live in Iceland.

The modern era it has not been an

easy one for some of these creatures, for like other things that belong to nature, Man is constantly demanding more space for his houses, factories and infrastructure, which drive the beings of nature to seek peace and quiet somewhere else.

So please, when on your travels around Iceland, take care not to drive off the road and show respect to the country, because you never know if you might be in the presence of trolls, ghosts or hidden people. Angering these creatures of old might well incur their wrath and then nothing can save

you aside from some very old magic formulas that are known to precious few living Icelandic people.

**The Cat From Vikingavatn**

Once, a long, long time ago, a cat was to be put down at the farm of Vikingavatn in the Kelduhverfi district. One of the household took the cat and threw it into a deep ravine thinking that would surely finish it off. Three years passed. Then one day a monstrous cat crawled across the living room floor of the farm at Reykjahlið near Lake Mývatn. The cat was the size of a calf and its eyes as big as saucers. A member of the household happened to have seen the Vikingavatn cat and recognised this as one and the same. It had travelled all the way from Kelduhverfi in a tunnel and had found therein such nutritious food that it had grown prodigiously. It was said the eyes had grown so large in order to see in the dark

The book *Myths and Monsters in Icelandic Folktales* shows you the other side of Iceland: that aspect of the Folk-tales that acquaints you with the mythical beasts that inhabit and protect Iceland. These stories have been specially retold by Björk Bjarnadóttir and illustrated by Guðrún Tryggvadóttir. This book is for the whole family and gives a perfect insight into the mythical hidden world that exists in Iceland. Also in available in German, *Fabelwesen aus isländischen Sagen*.



The cat with the big eyes  
Illustration by Guðrún Tryggvadóttir.

## Classified advertisements in the Reykjavik Grapevine

Classified ads can be a way to get what you want, get rid of what you don't want and acquire stuff you might later need to get rid of. Nobody likes empty boxes, especially not editors with space to fill, so for the second issue of the Grapevine only, we offer the classifieds for free!

# Place your ad for free!!!

**ITEMS**

Stuff Wanted  
Stuff Desperately Needed  
Stuff Given Away  
Stuff for Sale

**JOBBS**

Jobseekers  
Help Wanted  
Will Work For Food

**REAL ESTATE**

Flats offered  
Flats wanted  
Flatmates wanted

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Throwing a party and no one wants to come?  
Tired of streaking when no one is looking?

**PERSONALS**

Men seeking women  
Women seeking men  
Men seeking men  
Women seeking women  
Men seeking small animals

Or just whatever you can think of

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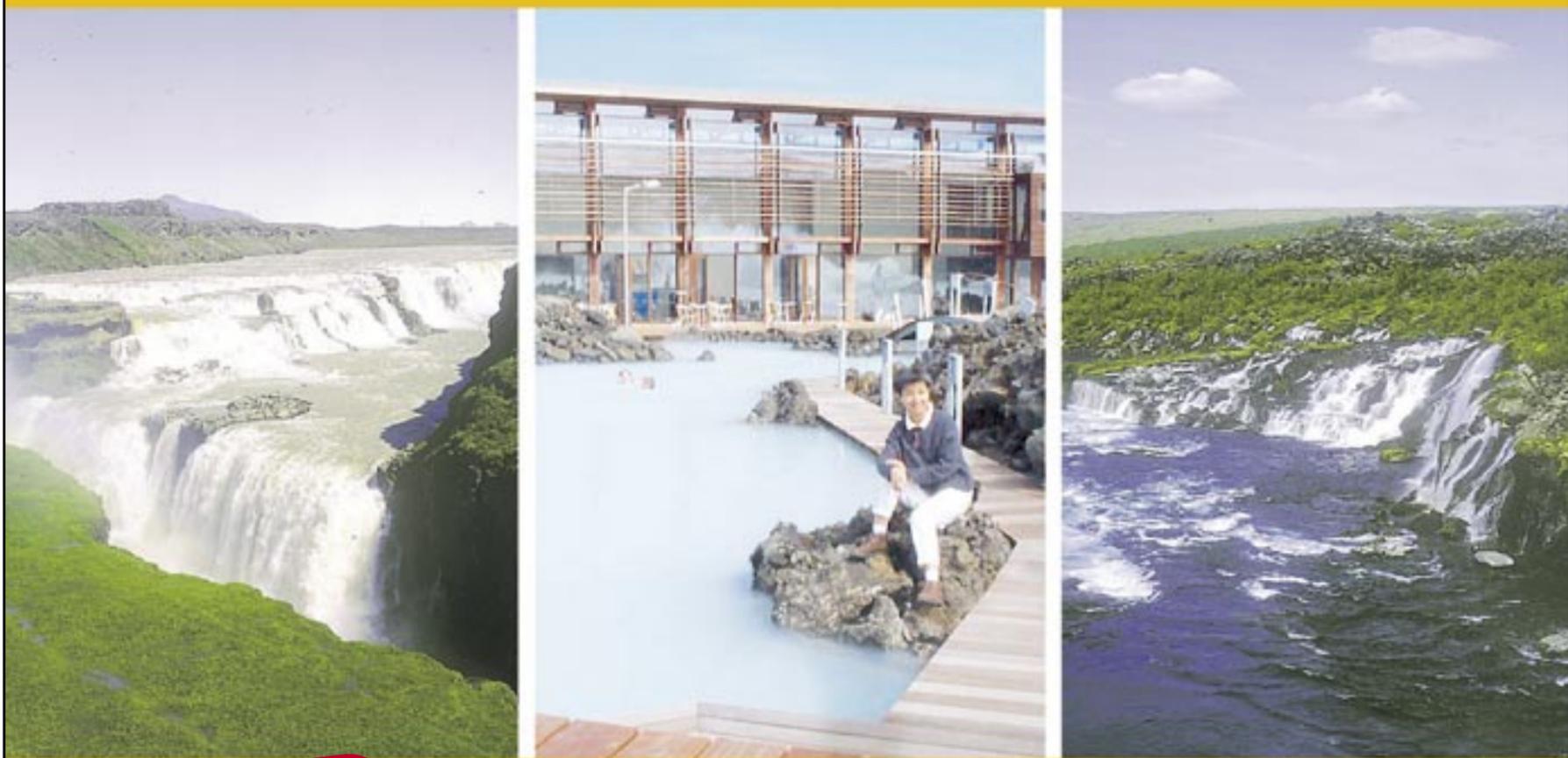
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