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Still the King of Icelandic Art

the **REYKJAVÍK** **GRAPEVINE**



the REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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LETTERS

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Regarding the latest issue of Grapevine, I want to thank you for printing the thought-provoking article on the decline of the Icelandic art community. Even though I probably fit in the category of people and ideas criticized in the article, I found it right on and, above all, extremely well written. I myself have had foul thoughts towards belonging to this group of people and am looking forward to moving abroad soon with my band to explore a different scene, a scene where we hopefully get ignored and a scene that forces us to do better to grab the attention of our listeners. After seeing the "Screaming Masterpiece" doc, I realized all the clichés and stereotypes of the Icelandic art world. We've been brought up so well that we obey what we should be rejecting, this is an art scene that favours capitalism above idea exchanging and a scene that fears the idea of taking a stand or creating something that hasn't already been created.

Gylfi
(Member of Kímono and local concert promoter.)

Thanks. Haukur Már wrote it. I just extorted it from him. And didn't pay him well. Please, if you see him and you like his piece, buy him a beer. If you see him and you didn't like his piece, buy him some food.

Dear Editor,
I am an avid fan of your English newspaper. In reference to your September 2004 issue featuring 'Outside Reykjavik' BORGARNES: DEAD BALD GUYS AND A SURPRISE APPEARANCE BY BUSH article. I was so annoyed the last paragraph of that article, the charcoal painting of W. Bush. Just want to make clarification for that matter; that none of the waitresses there at Dussa Bar in Borgarnes owns a charcoal painting hanging in the said Filipino restaurant. The painter of that charcoal painting was Rey P. Gines, a Filipino cook in Hotel Borgarnes who loves to waste his free time painting. In fact, he is currently finishing his Davíð Oddsson charcoal painting. Being a Filipina, I was just wondering where that Filipina waitress got the courage and virtue to boast and lie when we were taught back home that 'Honesty is the best policy'. Wasn't she ever taught by her mother that all liars will go to hell? Thanks a lot, more power to GRAPEVINE!

advocates against liars

I'm a little unclear about who did wrong, but you seem passionate about this, so I'm running the letter. As for the "all liars go to hell" business... is that true? Man, I've got to think about my life.

Wow, I have to say it.....

I have been waiting for an article like this issue's cover story for a long time..... It's exactly what the Icelandic scene has been desperately needing for a long, long time.... Haukur's insight into "gargandi snilld" was exactly what I thought but couldn't have put into words for the life of me. You guys continue to amaze me.....

Bo
(Musician and producer)

Cool. This really would pick up my spirits if I didn't think there was a possibility I was going to hell. You see, I may have told some mistruths in my past. About some paintings. Paintings of GW.

Dear Grapevine.

Let's look at issue 4 year 3, of your lovely publication.

In an article by editor Cameron, "Growing pains for the world's oldest parliament", Hans Kristján Árnason complains that, "The sheer majority in Alþingi thinks of itself as the ruler of the country and it doesn't have to take any account of the minority." He goes on to say that one can claim that democracy is in peril.

My dears. A parliamentary majority, ruling a country, IS democracy.

Best regards

Óli Tynes
(Journalist, Stöð 2)

Thank you for the response and for the close reading. I openly acknowledge that we have a long way to go, and that criticism from our peers will help us. I say this assuming that your goal was to aid us and point out shortcomings.

That said, perhaps the article to which you refer reflects more a difference in the understanding of journalism and democracy.

For example, when I write an article and use quotes from those involved in the political process, I include quotes from people with whom I don't necessarily agree. If someone I quote makes a logical error, I feel that is part of the story. The readers can decide for themselves how valid that source is based on all the facts presented.

As you are a journalist and interested in government, I feel I should clear something up: a parliamentary majority ruling a country does not equal democracy. As students of high school Civics classes across America can tell you, many countries hold elections and have parliaments but then those parliaments don't actually do anything. They are restricted by another authority.

Democracy is a complicated concept. Typically, democracies are judged by how transparent the decision-making processes are, and by who truly influences decisions. This is where the press plays a role: if they report on the actions of elected officials and, say, people who donate heavily to those officials, they can help inform the citizens.

In fact, Mr. Árnason was referring to the modern Liberal Democracy, which is expected to use a constitution to protect from the "Tyranny of the Majority", another fundamental concept that one learns in high school Civics classes.

Mr. Árnason complains that in a country where 85% of the population disagrees with involvement in the war in Iraq, he can't get a reasonable investigation into how two people could decide the nation of Iceland should go to war anyway.

I think his concern is understandable. I think your lack of understanding of a fundamental concept of Western society is less so.

Dear Madam/Sir,

I've just returned from my tourist experience in your beautiful Iceland. I actually won a holiday in a national UK competition and as I had always yearned to see Iceland I chose to go there. I had wanted to travel by the cruise liner from Orkney up to The Shetlands and cross through The Faroes but my travel agent was having none of it and so I did the 3 flights from Kirkwall to Glasgow, then from Stansted to Reykjavik. It wasn't easy especially as there are two Glasgow airports (travellers beware) and my husband (who had never been abroad before) and I ended up at the wrong one. We had to get up at 3am to get a taxi to Prestwick, Glasgow. Mad! We arrived at our Iceland hotel at midnight then pushed ourselves to do one of the tourist excursions the next day. Well worth the money! Sat in a bus: the tour guide does all the work and the talking and represents the people of Iceland well. Lots of convenience and feeding breaks too. All important when you're past 50! I loved the long long days, and the drinking water and the fast flush toilets and the clever green ways. I was scared by the very idea of The Hidden People 'cause them elves can be damn ugly. I appreciated the graffiti everywhere. I loved sculptures all over the place and found the horse meat absolutely delicious. Thank you, Iceland. Sincerely, Gilli Miur Orkney

Where did you get all this energy? Oh, must be the horse meat. Mmmmm. Horse meat.

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Four newspapers, twelve magazines, no press



Bart Cameron, Editor

a Grapevine reporter, I was told that this would not be a productive use of time. The ambassador, I was told, prefers to speak to groups of people. Which groups? I asked. The meetings of the young Independence Party and the Progressive Party. Somehow, this makes sense to the embassy. Speaking with a group of 100 people entirely sympathetic to your views is better than speaking with a reporter representing 80,000 readers. (We print 30,000, but Gallup reports a high pass-around rate. 80,000 is a low estimate.) We worry that the policy of the administration, both domestic and abroad, of speaking only to the press that agrees with you, will catch on in Iceland.

We made a difficult editorial decision here. Our planned feature on the repercussions of an oil scandal, in which the local population was fleeced of billions of krónur, which cost the mayor of Reykjavík his position, has been postponed. Our investigation so far has shown that almost nobody who profited from the price collusion scandal has paid any penalties whatsoever.

We had a few problems we thought we'd share with you.

1) Few ministers or business people will talk with the Grapevine on record. In our investigations, the ruling Independence Party, the most conservative party in Iceland, openly sympathetic to neo-conservative politicians in America, is the party least likely to go on record. A conversation I had with the American Embassy reminds me of where the Independence Party may be learning their habits. When I asked if the US Embassy would be interested in discussing policies with

2) The Icelandic media (with the noble exception of the comedy show Spaugstofan) has not thoroughly investigated the oil scandal or the insurance collusion scandal that will make up part of the piece. The media simply state that charges have been filed. I realize finding leads and sources is all part of the job, but we are simply trying to report to the English-speaking audience. It is surprising to us that we have to do first-time investigating.

3) We had others stories that were more timely. But this all brings us to a main concern. The Grapevine is trying to present the news of the day and important tourist information to English speakers and those new residents who haven't yet picked up a difficult language. And yet, when we want to report the relevant information, we keep on finding that none of the four newspapers, the dozen magazines, or the television and radio news have properly investigated the news. Time and

again Icelanders are coming to us for... shudder... legitimate news.

Months ago, I was sure the Icelandic press hit its low point when Fréttablaðið ran a front page story on a "Price War" between Krónan and Bónus (the store that started the Baugur empire; Baugur being the company that owns Fréttablaðið.) That story included such outlandishly inane journalism as a "scientific study" in which shoppers were sent to each store to buy the same list of foods at the same time. Everything on the list was SOMEHOW cheaper at Bónus. All this was front-page news—a grocery store started a newspaper and the top story was that the grocery store was cheap. At the very least of my concerns, below the fact that the average Joe who chose to get important news from the paper was being denied information on, for example, the fact that Syria had decided to withdraw from Lebanon in response to a large, mostly peaceful protest, an event already in the history books as the Cedar Revolution, beyond the fact that this major event was barely being covered was the idea of how incredibly subjective the paper was on the price of milk and juice. Of course, I joked at the time, had there been a paper put out by Krónan, they could have found a way to compose a similar list that would have made Krónan cheaper.

The answer to Iceland's media problems arrived this month, when Krónan put out a newspaper. Iceland now has four regular newspapers. With four regular newspapers, you can find out which of the major grocery stores has a sale. You can find out who drinks at Sirkus or Kaffibarinn. What you can't find out are the following: who is making key decisions involving business and government policy? Why are they making those decisions? How can I affect those decisions?

The reasons for the atrocious journalism in this country are many fold. A clear reason is that the

newspapers are owned by people who are best suited to keeping their readership ill-informed. You could cite the lack of a journalism school, the fact that writing is rarely taught in schools here, and the fact that a limited number of trained journalists have suddenly been spread far and wide across something like three times the number of writing positions that were available only five years ago. But in my discussions with local journalists, writers for every paper except Morgunblaðið have claimed their editors insist on short, vague articles.

There are four key stories that we at the Grapevine would like to see somebody in the local media cover.

Here they are:
 Could one newspaper explain which major public officials got their jobs immediately after a relative earned a position in parliament?
 Could one newspaper investigate the Prime Minister's inheritance? (For visitors, the Prime Minister inherited a great deal of fishing quota out of a system he helped create when he was Minister of Fisheries.)
 Could one newspaper explain Iceland's current role in Iraq and Afghanistan, and explain how the investigation into improprieties on the part of the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister ended so quickly?
 If they can't do any of the above, could one newspaper please interview or profile one New Icelander... 2.3 percent of the citizens of this country have immigrated legally; there are many more foreign residents waiting for citizenship, or simply living and working here on temporary permits. In reviewing the newspapers of the last month, guess how many mentions we found of them outside of stories about their arrests?

All of these topics were covered with more attention in Spaugstofan than they were in the news media.

We're not asking for much, we just want somebody else to do the leg work, so we can relax and make crude jokes.

The End of Black-and-White



Paul F Nikolov
Journalist & Online Editor

I've received some interesting feedback from the co-editorial I wrote in the last issue, "What the Hell is Going On with The Progressive Party?" Conservatives I know were happy to hear I'd come around. As one friend told me, "There is no effective party on the left." At the same time, some liberals I know asked me what on earth I was thinking touting the Progressive Party. "First you write that article promoting [Progressive Party MP] Siv [Friðleifsdóttir]," said one, "and now you're siding with the Progressives?"

To set the record straight, both sides got me wrong.

I don't live in a black-and-white

world. When I started writing about politics some years ago, I left behind the "for us or against us" mentality and decided to enter any interview I do with the assumption that this MP/minister/public official that I'm about to talk to is working hard and cares about serving the public interest. I give them the benefit of the doubt and let them make their case. The result? Sometimes they actually are serving the public good, sometimes they're not, both to varying degrees, but they almost all believe that they're making Iceland a better country. Very, very rarely have I found that some MP/minister/public official is just a complete and utter bastard.

This is why I choose to report with all the cards on the table

and avoid making black-or-white statements when possible. On the plus side, this keeps the public better informed. On the minus side, you end up pissing off one group of polar-minded people or another.

Seeing the world in black-and-white doesn't serve the public, it doesn't serve democracy, and it certainly doesn't make good journalism.

One high-ranking official from an Icelandic ministry confided in me once, "I think we'd be a lot better off with a two-party system. We're pretty much there anyway." While Iceland's parliament may or may not be headed towards polarization, the public would be doing themselves a disservice to adopt the same mentality.

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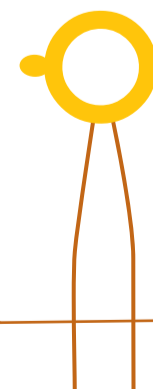


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Pride or Prejudice?

Þór Whitehead on Iceland and the Jews

Þór Whitehead is a professor of history at the University of Iceland. He is the author of eight books, including Iceland in the Second World War, a survey of Icelandic foreign relations in the early Cold War period entitled The Ally Who Came In From the Cold, and many others. Dr. Whitehead's work was recently thrust into the public spotlight when Prime Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson was asked if Iceland should follow Denmark's lead and consider apologizing for its policies during World War II.

What led you to study this part of Iceland's history?

When I was doing my doctorate in England, I interviewed a senior Icelandic diplomat named Helgi P. Briem, who told me the story of Karl Kroner... Kroner showed up at the Danish embassy one day [in the 1930s], his head shaven, very upset, saying that the Nazis had arrested him and ordered him to leave the country within twenty-four hours. He wanted Briem's help. Briem had previously met a Nazi named Dietrich von Jagow, who had been bragging at a dinner party that he was the Number Three man in Berlin; that only Goebbels and Hitler were above him. So Briem contacted von Jagow, appealed to his great ego and asked for his help.

Von Jagow avoided him and stalled him for a while, then finally agreed to help. But Briem also told me that there was a stream of Jews coming to the Danish embassy, asking for help in getting to Iceland, and Briem had to turn them away because it was Iceland's policy not to admit any Jews to the country.

This information led me to the archives of the Ministry of Justice where I discovered that everything that Briem had told me was absolutely true. I then used the material that I had found in the archives as well as some U.S. documents to publish an article in Lesbók Morgunblaðsins in 1974 entitled "Iceland's Racial Policy".

Were there any other ethnic groups that Iceland had similar policies towards?

Yes. Black servicemen. It was in fact one of the stipulations for making a defence agreement with the United States in 1941, that no black servicemen be allowed into Iceland. This condition was secretly repeated when Iceland again made the present defence agreement with the U.S. in 1951. But one has to be careful to bear in mind the smallness of the population and the relatively high number of foreign troops in the country.

Why did you think Iceland's racial attitudes were worth investigating and writing about?

I thought it was an interesting aspect of our history, a sort of taboo. Icelanders, as other small nations, generally regard themselves as morally superior. Self-criticism is not our specialty. People would like to believe that they were never racist instead of attempting to deal with

this part of our mentality. At the time I wrote that article for Lesbók, an American naval officer had privately confirmed to me that the racial policy at the Keflavík base had been pursued in some form up to the 1970s. He told me that it had been his task to wait at the airport for new servicemen to arrive. His orders were to tell any black servicemen that came off the plane that their orders had changed; that they were to get back on the plane and go back to the U.S. After the rise of the civil rights movement in the U.S. in the 60s, black Congressmen began to put pressure on the U.S. government to abolish this racial policy, and by 1970, it was beginning to break-down – but not due to any internal pressure in Iceland.

What sort of reaction did you get to your article?

None, whatsoever, which is sad, because there were still a number of people alive who had been active in our government and civil service in the 30s, 40s and 50s, and it would've been interesting to get their reaction.

But... there was a reaction of a kind in 1990, an Icelandic sociologist in Germany, Friðrik Hallur Hallson published a doctoral thesis on the Keflavík airbase and Icelandic society. He intimated in a very learned way that my writings about Iceland's policy towards black people from 1951 was just a conspiracy hatched by the military in Washington in order to undermine the moral fibre and national resistance of the Icelandic people. But by the time this was being published in Iceland, the papers relating to the 1951 defence agreement had already

been declassified in Washington, and surely enough, there was a document proving that the Icelandic government had made exactly the same conditions as regards the entry of black servicemen as in 1941. This is what I had maintained in my article in 1974, but at that time the relevant documents were still classified.

Are racial attitudes a part of the Icelandic national character?

I do not think that any nation is free of racial attitudes and prejudices, but I think in the Icelandic case, it was very much a product of 19th century nationalism, which has long been dominant here. We had the image of ourselves as the great, heroic and pure race. The authorities believed they were protecting the purity of our race and culture by their policies towards Jews and blacks. The idea that this was racism simply didn't sink in. Iceland was very nationalistic even through the 60s and 70s and still today nationalism is a force to be reckoned with in this country. It has its positive and negative sides.

Anyway, the image was undoubtedly very much a part of a national identity and upbringing, and this is why I hesitate to blame the pursuit of racial policies in this country on one person. Some writers have mainly blamed Hermann Jónasson (who was prime minister and minister of justice at the same time) for these policies in the 30s and 40s. While it is true he was strict, Hermann was pursuing a policy supported by other politicians and probably the great majority of the population. He was reflecting the attitude of the nation as a whole. No protests were heard in this country

from any side when a whole family of Jews was to be deported to Nazi Germany in 1937. On the contrary, there were articles in newspapers across party lines supporting the racial policies of the Progressive-Social Democratic government of Hermann Jónasson.

Like Morgunblaðið, which at the time compared Jews to vermin.

There were some pretty ugly articles, some very strong prejudices. You can find out for yourself by looking in the Icelandic dictionary for the synonyms of the noun *Jew*; it also means a stingy and cruel person.

Still, I think there is a danger in isolating this issue. Certainly Iceland practised anti-Semitism in its immigration policy in the 30s, but the whole world failed the Jews. It is a fact that an attempt was made in the last century to exterminate the Jewish people and since then the Jews have the strong feeling that they have to take care of their own security. No one will do it for them in the end. This is very much a part of the Middle East dilemma.

Were the nationalist tendencies the sole reason behind Iceland's non-inclusion policy towards the Jews?

Not entirely. I can think of three other reasons.

The Depression was going on throughout the 1930s. There was a great unemployment here, and the country was supposedly closed to all foreigners. But there were Scandinavians coming here for work, and Germans of "Aryan origins", too. At the same time, documents show that Jews who wanted to come here – even those who were bringing money with them and would be

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financially independent – were turned away.

A second reason is that the government feared that by allowing a handful of Jews into the country, it would start a great and unlimited flood of Jewish immigration. It was common knowledge that hundreds of thousands of Jews wanted to emigrate, not only from Germany, but later also from Austria and Czechoslovakia. If ministers said yes to a few Jews who sought entry, they worried that they would put themselves in a position where saying no would become increasingly difficult. However, the doors were not entirely closed because about 40 Jews and political exiles from Germany had found a refuge in Iceland by 1940.

The third reason – and mind you, I don't have any documents to back this up – I think, the Icelandic government was afraid of offending the Nazis. The Nazis not only portrayed Iceland as a pure "Aryan country" – Icelandic students were welcome to study in Germany, and Iceland benefited from trade with Germany.

Iceland was trading with Nazi Germany during the 30s?

Yes, even into the start of World War Two. Germany was an important trading partner of Iceland.

Didn't Iceland consider increasing trade with Britain or the US?

Yes, indeed, the Icelandic government did everything it could to expand trade with these countries, but due to the Depression they were restricting imports. We were on the brink of bankruptcy. Then war began, the British soon prevented all trade with Germany and opened up their market for Icelandic fish which they very much needed. This was the beginning of our greatest prosperity: the war made Iceland wealthy.

But there were some contradictions in the non-inclusion policy, weren't there?

I suppose that many Icelanders took the view that the Jews might be an obnoxious people, but they didn't feel that this gave the Nazis any right to maltreat Jews, let alone kill them. But there was also a sort of contradiction on the immigration issue, because the Progressives curiously criticized the Soviet Union for not accepting more Jews while praising other countries for lifting some of their restrictions on immigration. Again, a typical small nation double-morality.

One must, of course, try to see the immigration issue in context. This isn't just a question of black and white – there are shades of grey in it. It's very easy to denounce the governments of the past for what they did, and we should indeed denounce them for treating helpless

people in the way they sometimes did. But one must bear in mind that Icelanders were a population of a hundred and twenty thousand people in the midst of a great depression. Moreover, we have to realize that we have the benefit of hindsight: the mass murder of Jews only started during World War Two.

Have racist attitudes in Iceland declined?

I certainly think so. It was a gradual development. Iceland took a somewhat different path from that of other Western European countries in its development after World War Two – in some respects we were quite a closed, heavily socialized society, pursuing for a while economic policies that remind one of the Soviet bloc or the Third World rather than the Western World. Iceland of today has moved much closer towards the integrated, multicultural European community. One only has to walk about in the centre of Reykjavik for five minutes in order to discover that Iceland is very much a part of globalization.

By Paul F Nikolov

Sunday Times Shocked that Blue Lagoon Doesn't Cure Cancer



The May 22 travel section of London's Sunday Times openly mocked an Icelandic national treasure with a full-page photo and the tag line "This place stinks." The body of the text was a good deal more cruel than the headline, pointing out that the dressings rooms "have all the charm of a municipal gym" that the floor of the lagoon feels like "uncooked liver" and that "young men acting Germanically" may be filling the lagoon with urine.

That this article caused a scandal in the local media, points to the double standard applied to much of Iceland. As it happens, few native Icelanders attend the Blue Lagoon. They claim it is disgusting and

overly crowded—essentially the same argument Susan D'Arcy made for the Times. In fact, had Susan D'Arcy lasted in more than five minutes, (she points out that she didn't), she could have heard the many nasty local rumours about deaths and filth in the Blue Lagoon.

Where the Sunday Times goes wrong is in its opening assumptions. Ms. D'Arcy attacks the Blue Lagoon for not being natural—"it isn't even a natural volcanic spring"—and for having other guests—"The blonde [in the poster] might have been gloriously alone; I was not."

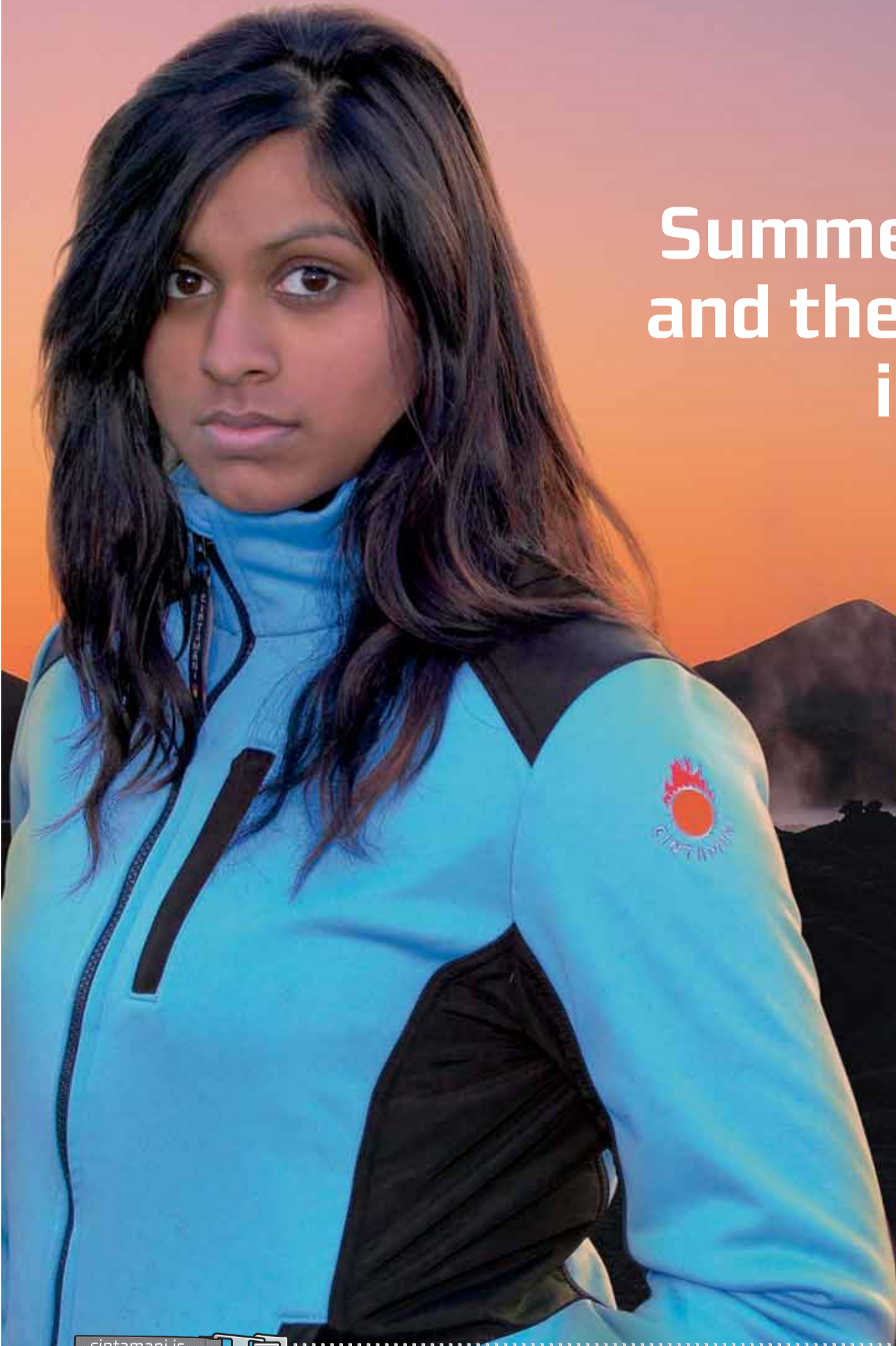
This seems akin to complaining that at Disney World there really weren't any flying fairies, as in the

poster. Or, worse, that say in a trip to Rio de Janeiro, there's this big city that you never see in the posters: "It's not even 100 percent beach."

While there is something lacking in D'Arcy's argument, she has a bit of a point. The Blue Lagoon is extremely pleasant, and it is a perfect way to complete or begin a trip to Iceland—unless you're a germophobe or Germanophobe. But the Blue Lagoon is not the be all, end all of one of the most naturally beautiful countries in the world, just as Bobby Fischer is not the most important historical figure here. Some perspective on all sides would be nice.

By Bart Cameron

Summertime and the living is easy



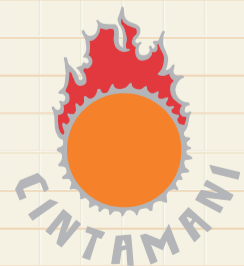
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Eiríkur Norddahl

Giving a F%\$& Less —Ísafjörður Poet on Local Politics, Oprah and Pepsi

Whether I turn on the television, the radio, open up the newspapers or travel online, the same questions keep forcing themselves on me. These questions have one thing in common: I never asked to spend my time thinking about the answer. Most of the time, the answer is redundant and the question useless.

Do I want Össur or Ingibjörg to lead Samfylkingin (Social Democrat Party)? The question is ridiculous in its entirety. I don't belong to Samfylkingin and not only do I loathe politicians, I loathe any form of public debate that's shown its weary, sleepy-eyed, hippie-haired, horn-rimmed glassy head since at least the day I learned to read. Whatsoever.

Public opinion is something that creeps up on you, like a fierce telemarketer that just won't take "F%\$&-off" for an answer. And so I stand, pondering whether Össur or Ingibjörg is a better politician, without really even having any grounds for a verdict. From afar they both sound equally pathetic, with their smiles, vague opinions, bleak attire and other political whatnots. Screaming at the television doesn't seem to make a difference, one way or the other. Oh, you apathetic appliance, applying your under-orgasmic apathy on my bare-fisted soul!

So what about Oprah, you might ask. Was Svanhildur right when she said Icelandic women aren't sluts, despite their slutty behavior? So what then, one might ask, constitutes a slut? Is the word purely derogatory, or does it have its own meaning, namely that a slut is someone who doesn't regard sex as an ever-holy means of transcending love through the use of reproductive (and other) organs? I will frigging get off, right, by any frigging means necessary.

And yet again, I look up from my newspaper and ask myself the million dollar question: Why the hell do I care one way or the other? This isn't something I have any time, or an inkling of longing, to make up my mind about.

How would you rate the coolness of the latest Pepsi Max commercial, on the scale from one to ten? I've literally been asked this. Is this the best use we can find for the human mind? I felt like throwing up down the receiving end of my phone. But it doesn't do any good.

At the best of times I've uttered the phrase that any man can be master of his own destiny. That we're all to blame for our own fuckups, that guilt-free is a useless and misleading concept. And yes, very well, I could turn off my television, I have the god-given liberty to burn my books and have my telephone line closed. To bury myself a hole to live in, free from public, or official, opinion. But something tells me I might be a lesser man for losing the benefits of phone and press. And besides, they'd probably just plaster their polls on the walls of mountains — *the rocks and stones themselves would start to sing* as the saviour once put it — were I to abscond from the battlefields of the Össurs and Ingibjörqs of the world.

I don't think it's as much of a coincidence as it first might seem, that the public debate articles in Morgunblaðið are right next to the obituaries. It's all about the dying. Össur or Ingibjörg, you ask? Whatever happened to Leon Trotsky?

Þórdís Elva Þorvaldsdóttir
Bachmann

Human Rights of Paedophiles

Child molesters undoubtedly commit one of the most loathed and brutal crimes known to humanity. Their photographs are front-page material for local newspapers, so worried parents can keep an eye out for their children. Steingrímur Njálsson, the notorious, Icelandic paedophile who has spent a quarter of his life behind bars, recently had such a front page dedicated to him. Furthermore, a webpage with exclusive information on Steingrímur opened on the Internet. There, his criminal record, which spans an impressive 46 years, was published in detail. The page also contained personal information on Steingrímur, such as his date of birth, current residence, his parents' full names, and of course, a recent photograph of Steingrímur. Those responsible for the web page failed to identify themselves, but they did, however, put forth a very explicit opinion of Steingrímur, whom they simply called a "wretch". Without a doubt, many Icelanders surely agree. Steingrímur Njálsson has obtained deep-seated contempt as a result of his horrendous crimes. But how far can we take our hatred for criminals like Steingrímur? Have convicted child molesters forfeited their human rights?

Steingrímur Njálsson claims to have been subject to tremendous public harassment for decades. In May 2003, two men broke into his apartment and assaulted him. Moreover, he has been publicly attacked, his property has been vandalized and he even claims to have had fireworks shot at him. Some may find that a waste of a good banger. But can this sort of lynch-mob attitude be justified? The answer depends largely on how we view paedophilia. Is it a sexual fetish or, more seriously — a mental illness?

If we subscribe to the former theory, i.e. that paedophiles have a sexual fetish for children, we'll find it easier to understand why Steingrímur Njálsson has been subject to harassment through the years. From the fetish-perspective, he's a man who can control his own actions and is therefore responsible for them. The Icelandic legal system has thus far treated Steingrímur and other paedophiles like other ordinary crooks and put them away for periods at a time. This method has not been successful for people like Steingrímur, who upon being released, has invariably gone back to raping and molesting children.

In light of the latter theory, i.e. paedophilia as a mental illness, we will find it hard, if not impossible, to justify public harassment and attacks of a mentally ill person. In this context, it can be argued that both the patient (the paedophile) along with the rest of the society, are being let down. This failure takes place by not providing the patient with the treatment needed for him to A) better control his illness or B) admit him indefinitely to a institution for the mentally ill. At least it'd prevent more innocent children from falling into his trap.

Regardless of whether we subscribe to the former or the latter theory on paedophilia, it is a fact that human rights laws also apply to paedophiles. They have a right to security of person and are protected under the law just like the rest of us, which is probably part of the reason why the website on Steingrímur Njálsson was deleted shortly after it opened. On the other hand, it is high time we find a better solution for men like Steingrímur, who has been sentenced for sexual violence 14 times. The public rage is understandable, but should it be directed at Steingrímur himself, or at the system that makes it possible for him to commit these horrible crimes over and over again? Shouldn't we be shooting our fireworks at the Supreme Court instead?

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So where do they stand on...

1) Building another aluminium smelter?

Leftist-Green Party: OPPOSED
Believe further heavy industry would harm both the environment and other industries already in Iceland.

Alliance Party: CAUTIOUS
Alliance Party MP Ágúst Ólafur Ágústsson told Grapevine, "I think that we should be careful; look at the possibility [of a smelter], and not say no without looking."

Progressive Party: SUPPORTING
Minister of Industry and leading Progressive Valgerður Sværísdóttir has made building an aluminium smelter in the north of Iceland a pet project.

Liberal Party: CAUTIOUS
Party manager Margrét Sværísdóttir told Grapevine, "We should be careful and examine this slowly. We don't want to put all our eggs in one basket."

Independence Party: MIXED
While they support the idea in general, Independence Party members in Suðurnes were unhappy that the smelter could be built in the north, and not in Suðurnes.

2) Making their financial records public?

Leftist-Green Party: SUPPORTING
Financial records already available on their website.

Alliance Party: SUPPORTING
Financial records for the party and individual MPs are open to the public.

Progressive Party: SUPPORTING
Progressive MP Jónína Bjartmarz introduced the idea.

Liberal Party: SUPPORTING, with conditions. The financial information for the party is available on their website, but, while willing to release financial records of individual MPs, they don't see the point.

Independence Party: OPPOSED
Davíð Oddsson has called the move "unnecessary."

3) Eliminating the statute of limitations for sexually assaulting a child?

Leftist-Green Party: SUPPORTING
Went with the original language of the bill (eliminating the statute of limitations altogether), is now open to the conditions proposed by the Independence Party.

Alliance Party: SUPPORTING
Alliance Party MP Ágúst Ólafur Ágústsson introduced the bill.

Progressive Party: SUPPORTING, with conditions. Has taken the same position as the Independence Party.

Liberal Party: SUPPORTING, with conditions. Has taken the same position as the Independence Party.

Independence Party: OPPOSED originally, currently supporting, with conditions. Chairman of the Parliamentary General Committee Bjarni Benediktsson originally said that the bill makes no distinction between "minor" and "serious" sexual assault of a child, then proposed extending the statute of limitations by four years.

Who They Are:



The Leftist-Green Party

(Vinstrihreyfingin-Grænt Framboð)

Guiding principles: Far-left, pro-environmental, anti-NATO, feminist.

Party Chairman: Steingrímur J. Sigfússon

Number of seats: 5

Registered members: about 1,400

Ministers: none

Strange but true: Party chairman Steingrímur J. Sigfússon, during a speech in parliament about Iceland's support of the war in Iraq, called Foreign Minister Davíð Oddsson "a slut and a coward."

Website: www.vg.is

E-mail: vg@vg.is

Phone: 552-8872

Address: Pósthólf 175, 121 Reykjavík



The Alliance Party (Samfylkingin)

Guiding principles: Left-centrist, social-democratic.

Party Chairman: Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir

Number of seats: 20

Registered members: about 20,000

Ministers: none

Strange but true: Rumour has it that many members of the Independence Party registered into the Alliance Party just to vote for Skarphéðinsson as party chairman in the recent party chairman elections.

Website: www.samfylking.is

E-mail: samfylking@samfylking.is

Phone: 551-1660

Address: Hallveigarstíg 1 (2nd Floor), Box 160, 101 Reykjavík



The Progressive Party

(Framsóknarflokkurinn)

Guiding principles: Right-centrist; believes in fewer economic and environmental regulations while strengthening the social system.

Party Chairman: Hjálmar Árnason

Number of seats: 12

Registered members: about 10,000

Ministers: Prime Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson, Minister of Social Affairs Árni Magnússon, Minister of Agriculture Guðni Ágústsson, Minister of Health Jón Kristjánsson, Minister of Industry Valgerður Sværísdóttir

Strange but true: Originally "the farmer's party," have ruled with the Independence party for ten years.

Website: www.framsokn.is

E-mail: framsokn@framsokn.is

Phone: 540-4300

Address: Hverfisgata 33 (2nd Floor), 101 Reykjavík



The Liberal Party (Frjálslyndir)

Guiding principles: Right wing, pretty much the same as the Independence Party, with more emphasis on the rights of fishermen.

Party Chairman: Guðjón Kristjánsson

Number of seats: 3

Registered members: about 2,000

Ministers: none

Strange but true: Former Liberal Party MP Gunnar Örlygsson quit the party to join the Independence Party, telling television news show Kastljósið that he felt the Liberals had "strayed too far to the left."

Website: www.frjalslyndir.is

E-mail: xf@xf.is

Phone: 552-2600

Address: Aðalstræti 9, 101 Reykjavík



The Independence Party

(Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn)

Guiding principles: Right wing, believes in further privatization in all areas of society.

Party Chairman: Davíð Oddsson

Number of seats: 23

Registered members: about 34,000

Ministers: Minister of Fisheries Árni M. Mathiesen, Minister of Justice Björn Bjarnason, Minister of Foreign Affairs Davíð Oddsson, Minister of the Economy Geir H. Haarde, President of Parliament Solveig Pétursdóttir, Minister of the Environment Sigríður A. Þórðardóttir, Minister of Communications Sturla Böðvarsson, Minister of Education Þórgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir


Strange but true: Have been the ruling party of the governing coalition since 1991.

Website: www.xd.is


E-mail: xd@xd.is

Phone: 515-1700

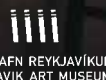
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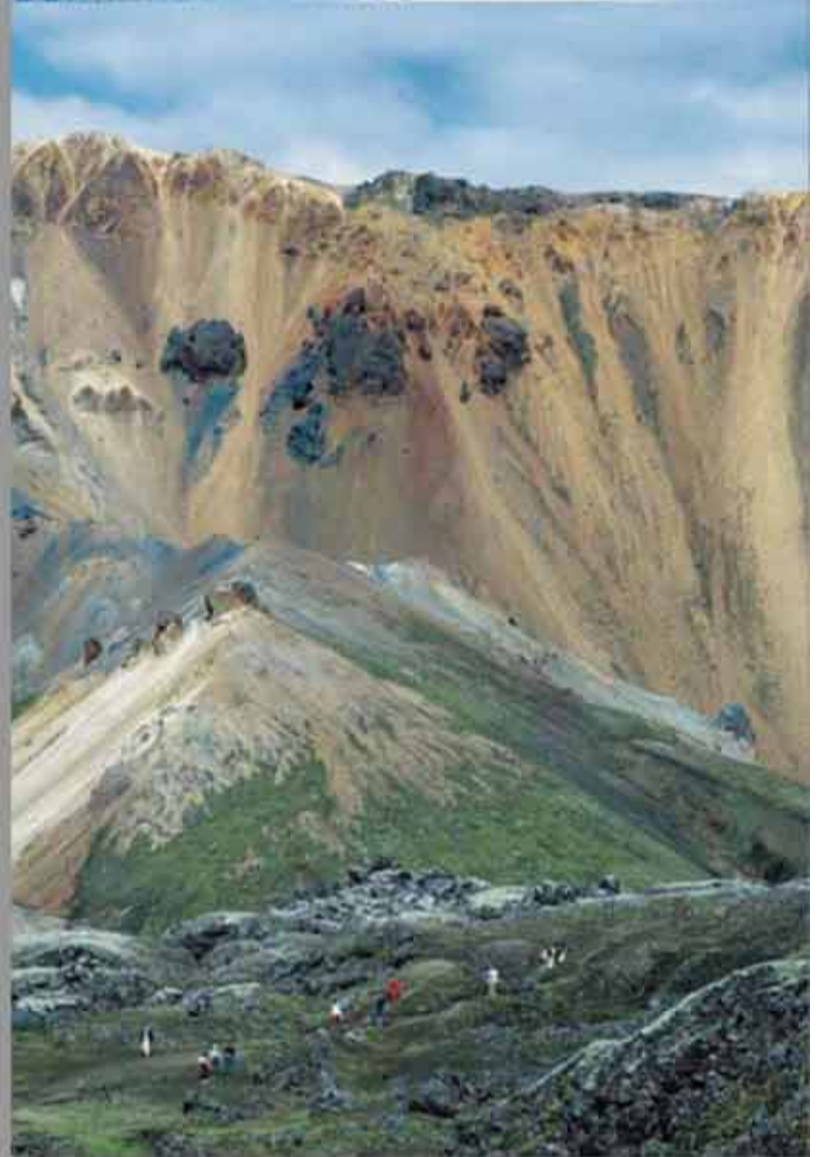


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Next Winter's Food, Today



Sharks Land At the Harbour

We were just sitting in the office, enjoying the view of the harbour on a beautiful sunny day, when Bart noticed a crane lifting what appeared to be an enormous shark off the deck of a ship. Always first to chase the stories that touch us all, we scrambled down to the harbour for a closer look.

A total of 19 sharks were being taken off of three ships and loaded onto an open trailer, and they were enormous – about three metres long – which we later learned was their average size. The sharks had already been gutted, but not beheaded as they normally are. Arnar Þór, the truck driver who was taking the sharks to Bjarnahöfn in Snæfellsness, told us that 19 sharks is an unusually large catch.

“Normally there will be one or two, but I’ve never seen this many,” he said. “To eat it like this is disgusting, though. You have to let it rot a little first.” And by “a little,” he means until next winter.

We watched as Arnar Þór strapped the sharks down, part of which involved actually walking on top of them. Unfortunately for him, he was wearing only socks and sandals. A misstep landed his foot inside one of the sharks, which resulted in a little swearing but no injury. He also tried tucking some unknown tissue back into one shark’s body cavity, but with no success. Hauling shark is obviously harder than it looks.

Nobody fishes for Greenland sharks on purpose. Kristján Salmannson, captain of the trawler Harðbakur, was fishing redfish southwest of Iceland when he ended up hauling in five Greenland sharks three days ago. Rather than take up valuable below-deck storage, the sharks were laid out on deck.

Stunned, we asked him to explain the experience of having five 16-foot sharks spread out across the deck.

Salmannson shrugged it off. Of course you have sharks on deck. “You should see it when we cut them open,” he told us. “The liver is about two metres long.”

We were hoping to see a

carnival-style shark weighing, but it was not to be. As big as the sharks were, Salmannson doesn’t get paid for the amount of shark meat he’s brought ashore – he gets paid per shark. These staples of the winter season aren’t treated very well. Salmannson pointed out that the sharks at the bottom of the trailer pile were older: “See how their meat is more yellow? That means they’ve been sitting out longer.”

About this time, the pungent smell of shark meat was beginning to make us lightheaded. Bart repeatedly pointed out that all the seagulls were on the other end of the pier, whereas usually when fish are unloaded, seagulls try to get a bite or two.

A crew member jokingly suggested driving the open trailer of sharks down Laugavegur, and crew, truck driver and captain alike laughed. Then Bart suggested the sharks be strung up to decorate a stage for the forthcoming Iron Maiden concert. Apparently, that was going too far: the captain didn’t find this funny, and simply waved us goodbye as he walked away.

By Paul F Nikolov

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PaulGrapevine

Getting To Know Them

The Country's Most Famous Asylum Seekers Tell Their Story

Ramin and Jana Sana came to Iceland in November 2003, seeking political asylum from their respective home countries of Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. Their son, Tomas, was born in Iceland a little more than a year ago. Their lengthy legal battle to attain status as refugees in Iceland has been well-covered in the local Icelandic-language media. What Grapevine couldn't help wondering was, where were the more banal questions that flood typical interviews with locals? Reading about Ramin and Jana, and following their saga, we realized we had no idea what they were like as people.

Tell me how the two of you met.

Jana: I was living in Uzbekistan, and Ramin's sister was staying with me.

Ramin: My family had a company in Uzbekistan, and we often went to Uzbekistan to work.

This interview is being done in Icelandic, and I know you have a grasp of English. What language do the two of you speak with each other?

Ramin: We speak Russian. I learned

Russian by working for five years in [Uzbekistan capital] Tashkent. We also speak a little Persian together.

So what made you two decide to leave Uzbekistan?

Ramin: After being in Uzbekistan for four or five years, it was difficult. Because I'm not Uzbek, I always needed a visa. Sometimes they gave me one, sometimes they didn't. It was expensive, and the government was always causing some kind of problem. I talked to my parents about it, who were living in Denmark at the time, and they were telling us to just come to Denmark.

We've been told that no one picks Iceland as their first choice of a country to seek asylum in. Did you originally plan on going to Denmark?

Ramin: I thought about it. My father said, "If you don't want to be there, come here. We have political asylum here." He spoke to Danish immigration authorities about me and they said I needed to go to the nearest Danish embassy. At the same time, I thought that while I wanted to be with my parents, it would be better for us [Ramin and Jana] to be on our own.

Hence Iceland?

My parents asked, "If Iceland's so great, how come so many Icelanders live in Denmark?" But in my heart I felt it was good for me to come here, to Iceland.

The both of you speak Icelandic very

well for only having been here less than two years. How did you learn the language so quickly?

Ramin: When we first came here, a woman at the Red Cross asked us if we want to learn Icelandic. We said, of course we want to learn. We want to get a good paying job after all. So she helped out and after about a week we started taking classes. It didn't cost us anything because we were refugees.

Immigration authorities here aren't easily convinced that someone seeking political asylum deserves it. Was it difficult to convince the authorities of your refugee status?

Ramin: Yes. We arrived in November 2003. At that time Jana was pregnant [with their son, Tomas]. It was hard to convince immigration that we were refugees. We had someone at the Office of Immigration tell us that they didn't believe we qualified for refugee status. So again we went to the Red Cross and they got us a good lawyer who promised us that everything would work out. He filed a case and we won a one-year residency. We just now got another two and a half years.

I've known many immigrants who find it difficult to adjust to Iceland. How have you two been settling in?

Ramin: It was difficult at first; going to school, studying, raising a kid.

Jana: But now we like it very much. It's a lot easier because we

understand more Icelandic and have a lot of friends.

There often seem to be limited opportunities for immigrants. What do the two of you ultimately see yourself working in?

Ramin: I don't know now. I have to start at zero; to start by learning Icelandic and then find whatever work I can get.

Jana: I originally wanted to be a dentist, and then a pediatrician. Now it's difficult to say. I have to know the language better. But if my language improves I would still like to be a doctor.

Ramin: My mother taught medicine, and my sister was in medicine, so for a while I thought maybe I'd go into medicine, too. Right now I'm trying to become a math teacher. It's difficult because of the language. I think if I was still in Afghanistan, I would be involved with politics. My father used to work with [Afghan President Hamid] Karzai.

Have either of you thought of going back to Uzbekistan or Afghanistan if the situation there improves?

Ramin: We don't think about going back, but Afghanistan is my home and I miss it, of course. If some time in the future it calms down there, maybe. But we don't think about that now. I would have to say that the Afghans are a very unlucky people. First there was the British, then Pakistan, then the Soviet Union, the US, and now even Iran

has become a problem.

Jana: We have family there, and we miss them, but we're a family now, too.

Ramin: Things were great in Afghanistan when I was about ten years old. I really liked living there.

Have recent events in Kyrgyzstan [where a popular and nearly bloodless uprising caused longtime president Askar Akayev to resign] given either of you hope that democracy and stability will come to the region?

Ramin: After the Soviet Union left Afghanistan, my father predicted that sooner or later, something like this would happen. The president of Uzbekistan thinks only of himself; not of the people. If you work for the president, or know someone who does, then you can get a job. If you don't know anyone, then you don't work. You can see that. Kyrgyzstan now is better than Uzbekistan ever was.

Jana: If you're not in the government, you can't work. I saw on the news just the other day that 700 people were killed [during clashes between protestors and government security forces in Uzbekistan]. This is why people rise up – you just can't take it any more. It's very upsetting to me, too, because I still have family there.

Ramin: Changes always come about when people have nothing left to lose.

The Dirty Secret Made Public

Sounding Off on the Attack of the Reputation of Icelandic Women

Recently, an American talk show shed a light on our frostbitten, beloved little island. The show presented no groundbreaking information, it didn't take a fresh angle, nor was it even original. In fact, most of what the show's host chose to focus on were well-known facts and clichés about Iceland. Y'know, the usual stuff, including the food that grosses everyone out (good old sheep testicles never fail), our active night life, and our near-24 hour sunlight in the summertime. It was almost surprising that Geysir didn't get a special spot on the show, that's how standard and predictable it seemed at a glance. However, this particular programme made more than a few Icelanders act completely hysterical, write angry letters to Morgunblaðið (Icelanders need to be REALLY pissed off to write letters to the papers) and even threaten to change their nationality. The reason people took this TV episode so personally is simple: Oprah and sex.
continued on following page.



Dirty Secrets Made Public

It is true that Oprah Winfrey has an estimated 30 million viewers and is one of the most influential people in today's entertainment. It is also true that when it comes to Iceland's global reputation, sex seems to be a touchy subject to its inhabitants. As Icelanders, we have no qualms about glorifying our unique landscape, our fresh water, our clean air, our well-preserved language, our sagas, or even our performance in Eurovision. We've survived volcanic eruptions, pandemics, earthquakes and extreme weather for centuries. No wonder we're proud. However, when sex becomes the topic of conversation, we change the subject. So when a hot, blond Icelandic anchorwoman confesses that one night stands do happen in Iceland (as do they in the rest of the world), the shit – or perhaps the rotten shark – hits the fan.

The national psyche is perhaps still healing its wounds from the loss of prestige that it suffered when our very own Icelandair started marketing Iceland as a place where beautiful women didn't think twice about jumping into bed with just about anyone. The offers to Britons to come and enjoy a "dirty weekend" or even a "one night stand" in Iceland caused a public outrage in 2003. The Centre for Gender Equality in Iceland, along with the Icelandic Women's Rights Association, filed complaints with the Equal Status Council of Iceland. The complaints were later dismissed on the grounds that the British campaigns were outside of the committee's jurisdiction. But the point had been made clear, and Icelandair's dirty campaigns were history. What few people know is that tourism to Iceland had been decreasing in the years of 2001 and 2002, by a worrisome 4-5% per year (Hagstofan, the Icelandic Registry Office). However, in 2003, tourism increased by a good 17%. It is impossible to pinpoint what caused this sudden boost in tourism, but knowing about the "Dirty Weekend" ads, you get to thinking. Especially given the fact that tourists from Britain went from 44,800 in 2002 to 53,900 in 2003, which is a 20% rise between years (Icelandic Tourist Board).

The State

Maybe we have to go even further back in history to find the wound that makes the nation hypersensitive to sex-talk. In World War II, Icelandic women developed a reputation of flocking around the

British and American soldiers who came here. It got to the point where the derogatory term "ástandið" ("the state" or "the situation") was coined about the time when respectable, Icelandic women turned into army-groupies. Getting caught up in "the situation" was spoken of in the same hush-hush manner as STDs or adultery. At the time, Iceland was a developing country, and the soldiers were wealthy and exotic compared to the average Icelander. They had rare and expensive things to offer their sweethearts, such as chewing gum and nylon stockings, unavailable to the Icelandic public. As a result, some of the girls may have developed the dream of being swept away to another country with more comfort and luxury available to the average consumer.

Whatever the cause may be, most Icelanders are less than thrilled about our reputation as the "Bangkok of the North" and the "Country of Sin" in other parts of the world. The hot, blond anchorwoman on Oprah, Svanhildur Hólm, has been publicly attacked and criticized for furthering this kind of attitude towards Icelanders. But is it possible that there's a grain of truth to the claims made in the Oprah episode? Many of the angry letters and responses the show provoked focused on the statement made by an unidentified Icelandic woman who claimed that Icelanders start having sex at the age of fifteen, adding that neither girls nor boys are looked at as promiscuous for doing so. Moreover, she claimed that sex on the first date is "a pretty common thing" in Iceland. The definition of promiscuity varies from person to person and is hard if not impossible to measure, but the age of first sexual experience and number of sexual partners however, are easier to calculate. Durex, the biggest condom manufacturer in the world, conducts an annual global sex survey. In 2004, more than 350,000 people from 41 countries took part in the world's largest ever survey of sexual attitudes and behaviour. Those of you who made a fuss over Oprah may want to stop reading this article right now. According to the survey, we're not only young when we start having sex, we're the youngest in the world by far. Icelanders start doing the horizontal mambo at the tender age of 15.7 years (also confirmed in an Icelandic survey by Jóna Ingibjörg Jónsdóttir in 1998).

As a nation, we are two whole years under the global average age of 17.7 years. We're also half a year younger than the next nation on the list, being Germany at 16.2 years. So

yes, the statements made in Oprah do have a hint of truth to them. Furthermore, the Durex survey proves that not only are we eager to get started, we're also a nation of sexual adventurers. We're the leading country when it comes to vibrator ownership, beating the global average of 27% with an impressive 52%. Since we're so fond of our vibrating buddies, it doesn't come as a surprise that Icelanders are also the nation most likely to use sex toys in the world, as 56% of Icelanders who partook in the survey confirmed. When it comes to number of sexual partners, or as some may put it – promiscuity – Iceland tops the world average easily. On a global scale, the average human being sleeps with 10.5 different people, while Icelanders do the hanky panky with 12.4, placing us 5th on the list after China, Brazil, Japan and Denmark. The unspeakable one night stand? Yes, we're top of the list there as well, with a towering 71% of Icelanders confessing to the deed in the 2003 survey, compared to the global average of 45%, (with only Vietnam topping us at 75%).

When it comes to sexual attitude and outlook, Icelanders surveyed admitted another fact that may cause some of the offended Oprah viewers to go haywire, namely that we're indeed very much a nation that considers sex on the first night of meeting someone. In fact, we're one of the top three nations that are willing to get down and dirty on the first date, along with the Russians and the Italians. So why do we flip out when someone points out to us the facts of the matter? How come we publicly behead Svanhildur Hólm and our Oprah-reps for confessing that sex with strangers "happens" in Iceland, when a whopping 2/3rds of the nation confesses to it?

Active but Safe

Let's just face it: Icelanders have sex. According to numerous studies, we start at a young age, have multiple partners, use sexual aids and we even have one-nighters. In fact, we're one of the most sexually adventurous nations on the planet, which may have something to do with our frisky reputation. Of course, this is not true for each and every one of us, but the surveys speak for themselves and arguing with the results is not of any use. What makes more sense is to face our sexual behaviour and use the statistics to see where we're at risk. Today's sexually-related problems such as HIV call for responsible sex lives and use of protection, both

of which Icelanders are aware of. We're the nation who is most willing to see our tax money being spent on contraceptives (56% in 2004 according to Durex). Furthermore, we take far fewer risks when it comes to contracting STDs than our Nordic neighbours. Shockingly enough, Sweden and Denmark share the dubious 1st place when it comes to unprotected sex, with 64% of those asked confessing to the deed. Norway, sadly, comes in only 3rd place, so we can be proud of ourselves for lurking way back at no. 18.

Surely, Iceland could've been portrayed in a better way on Oprah. Svanhildur Hólm claims she tried to open the Oprah-team's eyes to the things she feels are important about Iceland, such as our maternity benefits, that the female workforce participation here is among the highest in the world, that over 60% of our university students are female, that virtually all Icelandic women are wage earners by their own choice, etc. According to her, the talk show diva was not interested in any of these things, strangely enough. Svanhildur also claims that her answers were edited to fit the image Oprah wanted, in this case seemingly the Icelandic, blonde, binge-drinking slut who feeds on putrid foods. This article will not take sides or discredit either Oprah or Svanhildur, so it is safe to say that we'll never know what Svanhildur's intentions were in the interview, and we'll never know whether Oprah has a disgraceful editing style, either. All we can be sure of is the fact that Iceland has a lot more to offer than casual sex, decayed testicles and drinking sessions that last all night. Without knocking the value of any of the above-mentioned things.

However, by watching the show, it was clear that Oprah wants her viewers to feel comfortable in their own skin. America was praised at any given chance, and Oprah pressed all of her guests to tell her what they think of American women, and especially, if they think that they're fat. When a Belgian woman on the show confessed that she thought the American dream was a bit overrated, things took a different turn and the atmosphere became decidedly uncomfortable.

Ms. Berkers: "... and we think that a lot of women have two jobs, work hard, like the single woman, and, you know, don't have the glamorous lifestyle.

Winfrey: Yeah.

Ms. Berkers: So we think the American Dream is a bit overrated.

Winfrey: Oh, really?

Ms. Berkers: That's what we--yeah.
Winfrey: Oh, see, we think we're the luckiest women in the world. I do think...

Ms. Berkers: OK.

Winfrey: ...that we're the luckiest women in the world...

Ms. Berkers: Yeah.

Winfrey: ...being in the United States. I think we're very lucky and very blessed. Do you?

Ms. Berkers: Yes, absolutely...

Winfrey: Yeah.

Ms. Berkers: ...because we're free and...

Winfrey: Yes.

Ms. Berkers: Yeah.

Winfrey: Yeah.

Ms. Berkers: Yeah.

Winfrey: I think we're lucky and we're blessed here. I don't think we're balanced.

Ms. Berkers: Yeah, you put it--yeah.

Winfrey: I think we--thank you.

Ms. Berkers: Yeah.

Winfrey: Belgium produces 172,000 tons of chocolate a year?

Ms. Berkers: Yeah.

Maybe that's where the secret lies. Maybe Oprah doesn't want to hear about how lucky women are in other parts of the world, such as Iceland. Maybe Oprah wants her viewers to sit happily ignorant in front of their TV sets, praising their self-proclaimed "land of the free", while receiving bizarrely skewed news from other countries. Okay, so we're sexually adventurous in Iceland, and yes, some Icelanders do eat rotten shark once a year in the annual Þorrablót. When it comes to women's empowerment, 30.2% of the seats in the Icelandic national legislature in 2004 belonged to women, while the in United States, only 14% of representatives were women (Inter-Parliamentary Union). As a matter of fact, Icelandic women's good status on a global scale has made the European Council look to Iceland as a role model for equal opportunity. A 2002 report from the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men states that a section of the Icelandic constitution concerning the equal rights of the sexes "bears witness to an inalienable wish to elevate the right of the individual to the highest possible position in society." While amendments to the constitution have very little to do with luck, this one certainly leaves me feeling lucky.

15,7

Age of Icelanders when they start having sex.

52%

Icelandic vibrator ownership.

56%

of Icelanders are likely to use sex toys.

12,4

Average number of sex partners per Icelander.

71%

of Icelanders have one night stands

56%

Icelanders willing to see their tax money spent on contraceptives.

Svanhildur on Oprah

Much has been made about how an Icelandic journalist gave up the dirt on the local private lives to the most popular show in America. What the Grapevine took notice of is the following: that whoever runs the transcripts for Oprah can't figure out how Reykjavik is pronounced, that Oprah felt Svanhildur's "dirt" was average for America as well, and that Svanhildur went on a talk show with the most weight-obsessed public figure in the world and told her to chill out on the dieting.

Here's the transcript:

Winfrey: Wonderful. Thank you, Thorunn. Mm. I think it's fascinating. Svanhildur is an anchorwoman on IBC Channel 2 in Reykjavik pronounced Rock-a-vitch).

Ms. Valsdóttir: Reykjavik (pronounced Ray-ka-vitch).

Winfrey: Reykjavik (pronounced Ray-ka-vitch). Reykjavik (pronounced Ray-ka-vitch).

Ms. Valsdóttir: Reykjavik (pronounced Ray-ka-vitch).

Winfrey: Reykjavik (pronounced Ray-ka-vitch). Yeah.

Ms. Valsdóttir: That's good enough. Good enough.

Winfrey: No, Reykjavik (pronounced Ray-ka-vitch)...

Ms. Valsdóttir: Yeah.

Winfrey: ...which is home of the OPRAH show in Iceland. Now what I found interesting about that--what did you--all find interesting about that tape we just heard? For me, the most interesting was that there is no stigma about being a single mom whatsoever.

Ms. Valsdóttir: No.

Winfrey: None whatsoever.

Ms. Valsdóttir: No. No.

Winfrey: It's just accepted?

Ms. Valsdóttir: Yeah.

Winfrey: No judgment whatsoever.

Ms. Valsdóttir: Nope, none.

Winfrey: It's not like you're less than the people who are married or not and you...

Ms. Valsdóttir: No.

Winfrey: No?

Ms. Valsdóttir: No, you don't need a husband to have some kind of a status.

Winfrey: Who are you talking to, girl? I think I'm part Icelandic. Yeah.

And I never knew it until now. OK. Is it true that having sex when you first meet someone is the norm? Is that the norm in Iceland, would you say?

Ms. Valsdóttir: It happens, yes.

Winfrey: OK.

Ms. Valsdóttir: I don't think sex is that big a deal in Iceland, because, you know, probably just about everyone is having it, so it's not something you have to talk about and be ashamed of.

Winfrey: Yeah, because everybody's having it. Everybody having it here, too.

Ms. Valsdóttir: Yeah. Well, so why is it a big deal?

Winfrey: Why is it that it's not such a big deal there, do you think?

Ms. Valsdóttir: I guess we're a bit liberal about things because we have a much lower threshold for beginning new relationships. And you don't have to go on a date, number one and two, and perhaps on the third date you ask him in. You don't have rules like that.

Winfrey: You don't have rules like that.

Ms. Valsdóttir: No.

Winfrey: I want to know what you guys think of us. When you're out there to bars and you're drinking and you've had a couple of pops, what do you say about American women in particular?

Ms. Valsdóttir: Oh, you've got these absolutely fabulous television shows, like, you know, practically every woman in Iceland watched "Sex and the City" as the new...(Brief discussion of crappy TV shows.)

Winfrey: Do you like our celebrities? Like, OK, do you like Tom Cruise?

Ms. Valsdóttir: My sister loves him...

Winfrey: Loves. OK. Good.

Ms. Valsdóttir: ...but the new craze is "Desperate Housewives," and...

Winfrey: Oh, it is for us, too. It is for us, too.

Ms. Valsdóttir: It's just kind of a show that I think probably everyone can relate to.

Winfrey: OK. But this is what I really want to know. When you all are talking about American women, do you say we're fat? You're blushing, so that must have come up at some point.

Ms. Valsdóttir: What I was going to say was that when I watch the OPRAH show at home...

Winfrey: Yeah.

Ms. Valsdóttir: ...I always thought that you had make-up artists go over, like, all the audience, because everyone always looked so great.

Winfrey: Yeah. Don't they?

Ms. Valsdóttir: Yeah, they do.

Winfrey: So you do say that we're fat, don't you?

Ms. Valsdóttir: Well, we have a lot of news coming from America in Iceland.

Winfrey: Yeah.

Ms. Valsdóttir: And we often have footage of obese people walking down the street, people that are so fat that you couldn't find a single person in Iceland that would be that fat.

Winfrey: Yeah.

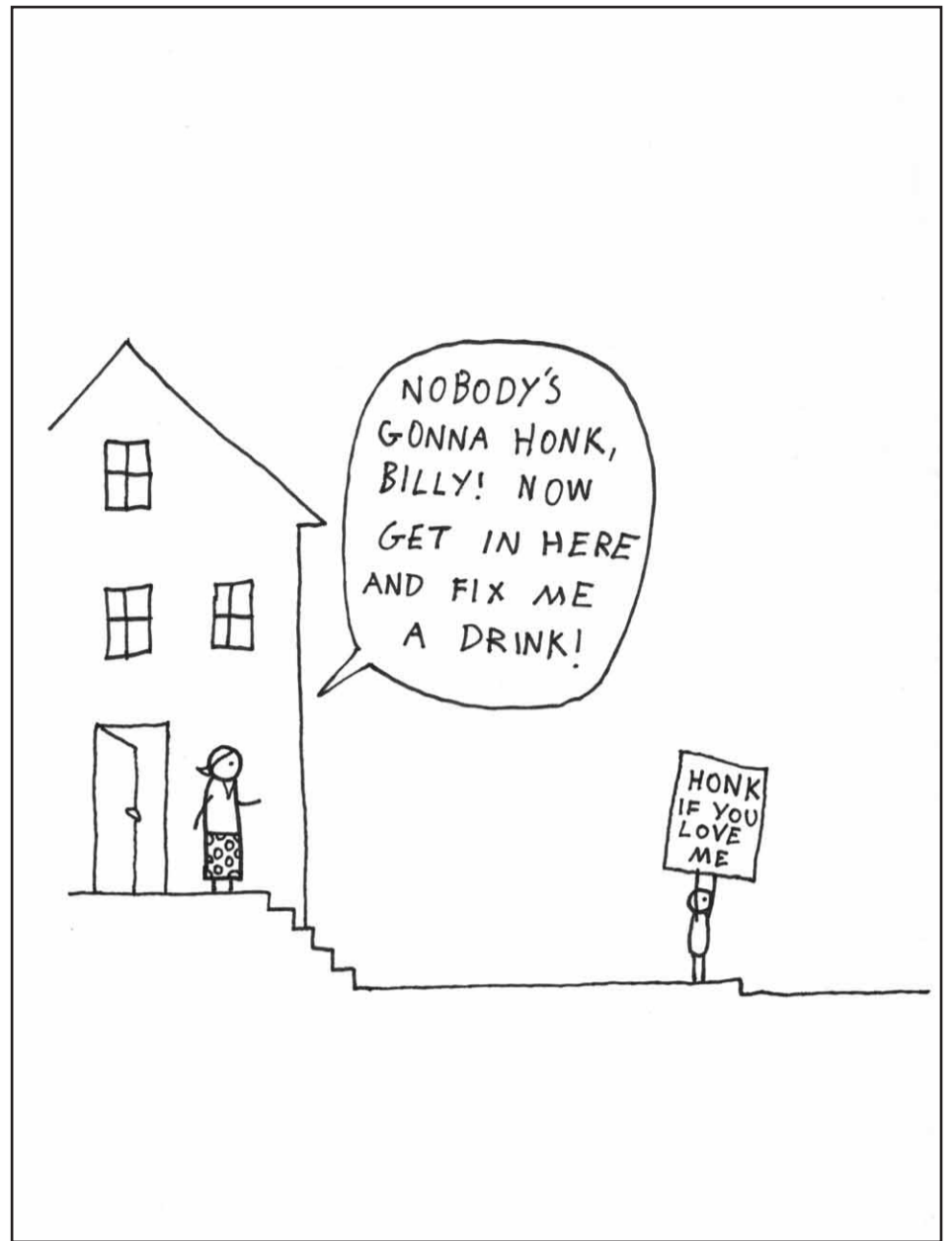
Ms. Valsdóttir: I've been watching a lot of American television for the last days, and I think you have too many commercials trying to make you lose weight, because I don't think it's the people that really need to lose weight but just think, "Oh, God, I have an extra pound here or an extra pound here. I have to lose it," because...

Winfrey: You think we have too much emphasis on weight? Is that what you think?

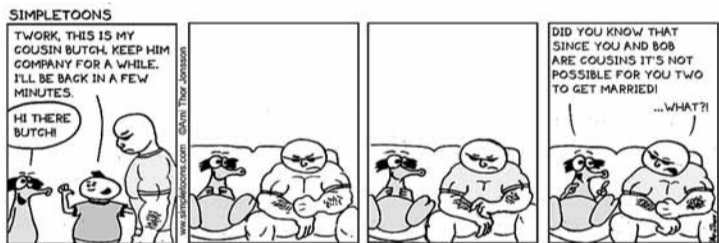
Ms. Valsdóttir: Yeah.

Winfrey: OK. More of our world tour when we come back. We'll be right back.

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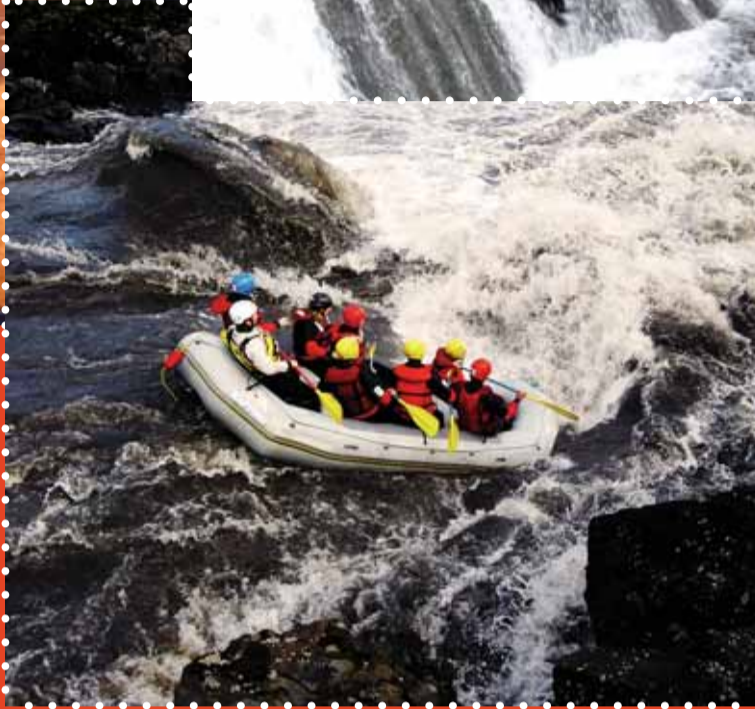
Courses for children, ages 6 to 15 (grade 1-9):
July 11th -28th Mondays through Fridays. These courses are free of charge.
Courses in Icelandic: kl. 09⁰⁰-12⁰⁰
Recreation/summecamp: for ages 6 - 12 at 12⁰⁰-16⁰⁰.
The recreation course in the afternoon is available for a limited number of children and those who have never attended this course before will have priority, others will be notified in time. Please contact ÍTR for alternative courses available at ÍTR.

Nánari upplýsingar / Further information :
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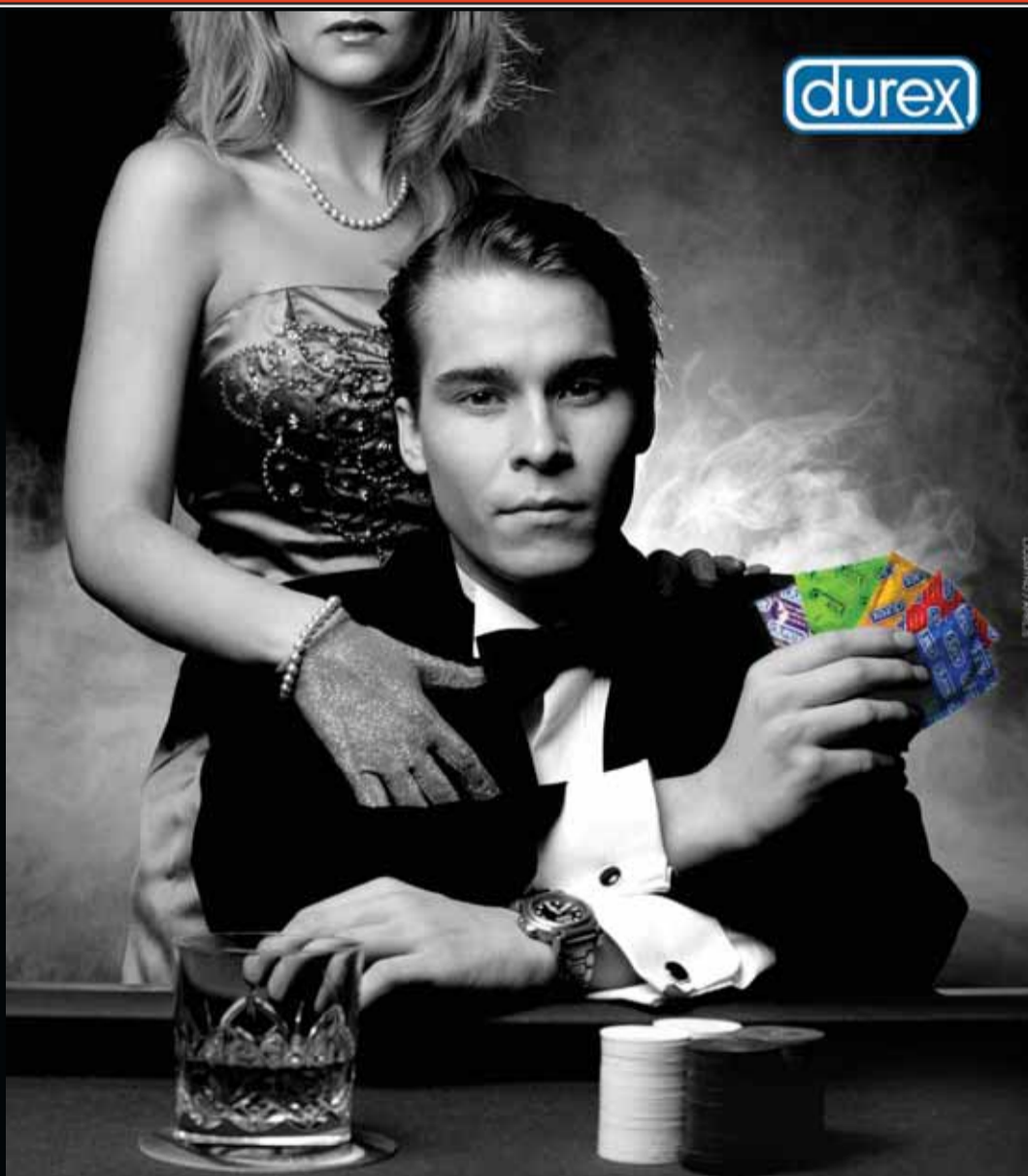
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Vikurprjón/Vikwool Ltd., is located in Vik, which is the southernmost village in Iceland, around 180 km. from Reykjavik. The company is one of the oldest and best known knitwear producers in Iceland. The production is extremely varied, but the largest part involves sewing all kinds of clothing from the Icelandic sheep wool. Vikurprjón uses traditional methods with the original colors and national patterns as well as designing and producing clothes that go with the latest fashion trends.

A tourist shop is situated at the factory in Vik, where all its products are sold along with an extensive assortment of souvenirs. Vikurprjón also runs a store in the centre of Reykjavik, called Vik-Wool. Whether you are looking for a genuine Icelandic souvenir or simply a stylish garment, Vikurprjón and Vik-Wool are the places to start and end the search.

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Never Poke Your Partner



"My favourite thing in stage fighting is dying - it's not that easy," says Ine Camilla Bjørnsten, who organizes stage fighting workshops in Iceland this spring. Ine Camilla is a freelance theatre director and leader of theatre group Teaterverket Lit in Tromsø in northern Norway. She is also a certified stage fight teacher and actively working in the Nordic Stage Fight Society. Now she is in Reykjavik and eager to show Icelanders how to kick some ass - on stage.

is good fun! Who wouldn't enjoy a weekend of beating up your partner? In her workshops, Ine Camilla focuses on teaching falling, punching, and kicking as well as techniques of working with a partner in combat. After basics, there are, however, several different techniques and weapons to train with. And of course, she will not forget to show her tricks on how to make getting killed a spectacle...

"Icelandic stage fighting will never be the same again."

In Iceland, Ine Camilla's ambition is to get an active group of stage fighters together and into the network of the Nordic Stage Fight Society. This would mean more teachers and workshops, more skilled stage fighters and of course more spectacular fights both on stage and on TV. As a member of executive committee, Ine Camilla is planning the society's ten-year anniversary workshop in Estonia this summer and hopes to get some new stage fighters from Iceland to take part in that.

"Icelandic stage fighting will never be the same again," Ine Camilla laughs and finishes with her motto, "Thrust me - I'm a stage fighter!"

Sword Fights to Slapstick

Although stage fighting sounds like a form of martial arts, it actually has nothing to do with self-defence. Stage fighting is the art of physical conflict used in theatrical productions, movies, television and historical festivals. Stage fights can vary from unarmed combat to historical sword fights and even to comic slapstick fights. There are, however, clear rules in stage fighting. Rule number one: Never poke your partner.

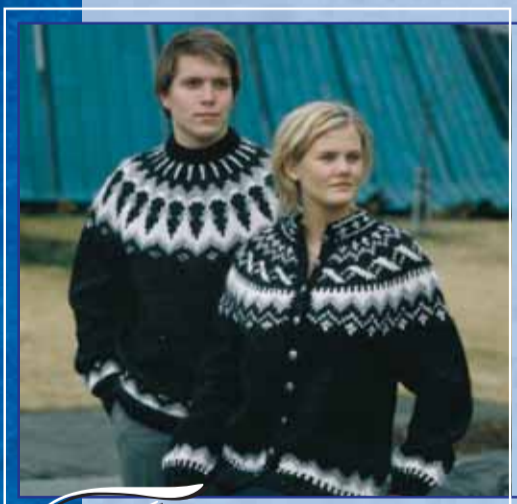
Fighting Safely

Besides being a useful skill on stage, stage fighting is also a great exercise in body control. And most of all, it

For more information on workshops contact:
inecam@gmail.com or the Nordic Stage Fight Society:
www.nordicstagefight.com

by Piia Susanna Mettälä

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Napoleon Banggangomite



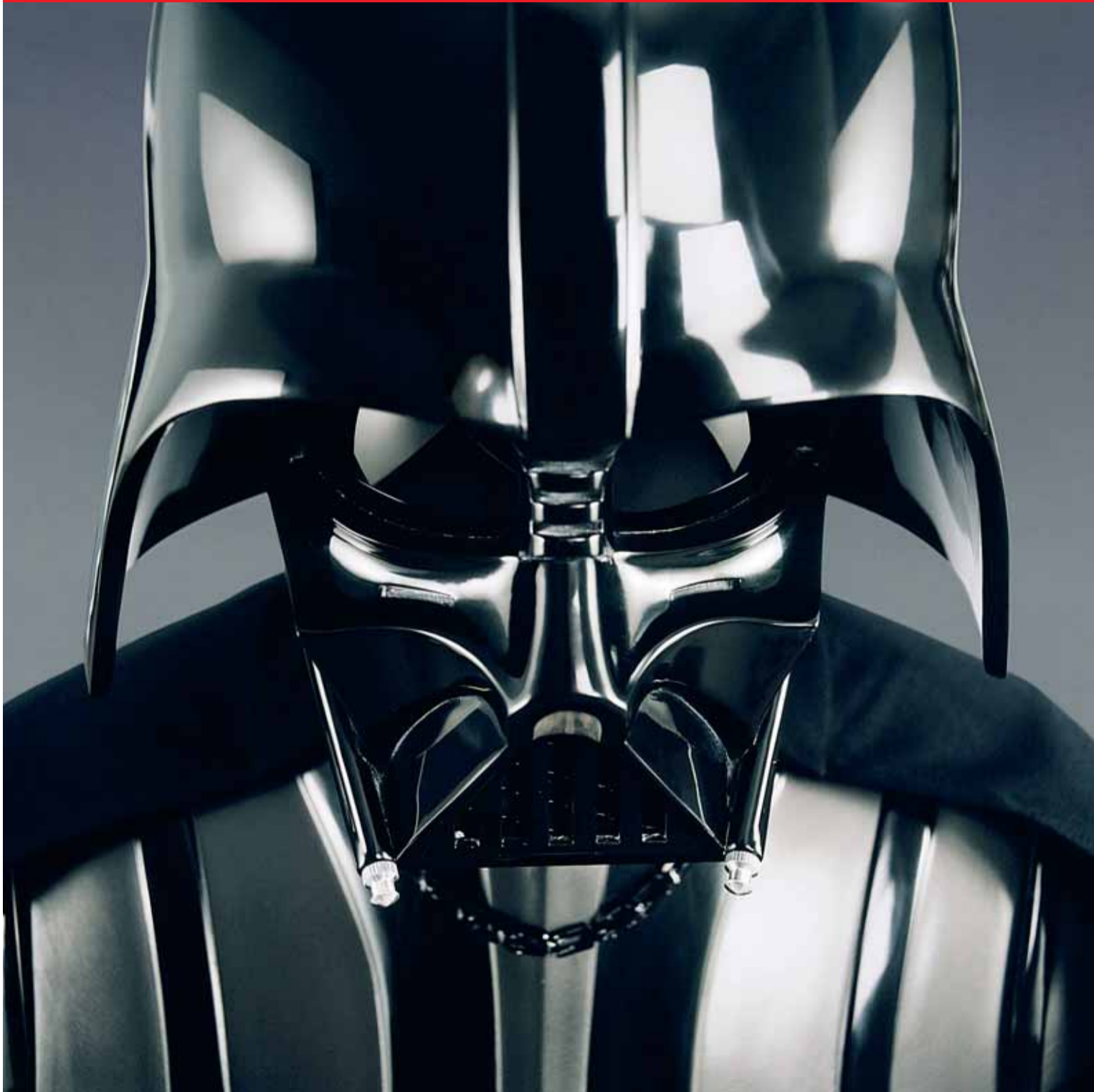
As a show on display at the Þjóðmenningarhús (the Icelandic Culture House) demonstrates, Icelanders have had a significant impact in the American West, with 28,000 descendants in Utah alone. Maybe this is the reason that a recent film from Idaho, Napoleon Dynamite, seems so incredibly Icelandic. Perhaps its filmmaker Jared Hess's dedication to landscape in contrast with a closed and isolated society. Or perhaps it's just that the title character, played by Idaho native Jon Heder, looks and talks exactly like one of Iceland's most famous exports, Barði Jóhannsson of Bang Gang.

The love interest of Napoleon, Deb, also bears a striking resemblance to another famous Icelandic singer. To see for yourself, rent Napoleon Dynamite, then attend the Lady and the Bird concert, featuring Barði of Bang Gang, and Keren Ann.

Lady and the Bird. May 28, 8 pm. Icelandic Opera. Part of the Reykjavik Arts Festival.
Napoleon Dynamite is showing at Háskólabíó

by Bart Cameron

GRAPEVINE **IN** your pocket



24-HOUR SUNLIGHT? TIME FOR A MOVIE

You'd think after a winter of perpetual darkness and cold, you couldn't keep an Icelander indoors for another second come summertime. This is not the case: in the summer, Icelanders flock to the movies for blockbuster entertainment. While tastes in the fall and winter often lean toward cultured, only the loudest of Hollywood popcorn movies stay in the theatres for long during the summer. This summer, that means Star Wars, Fantastic Four, Batman (filmed partially in Iceland), and War of the Worlds. If you're here for more than three days, we recommend stopping by a cinema. Watch the snack runs, listen to the unusual laughing points that the locals choose, and stick around to hear the lines Icelanders repeat after the movie. In three hours, you can get more of a feel for the country than you can in a weekend watching geysers.

Reykjavík throws a few kinks into the movie hunt. If you want to see a

comic book or science fiction movie, stop in at Nexus, Hverfisgata 103, and they can set you up with tickets to special advance screenings well before the movie hits the masses. If you want to sip a beer with your movie, Smárabio's VIP lounge offers a deluxe service for not too bad a price. And if you want to see hipsters and artists reveal that deep inside they're people/ Star Wars geeks too, stop at 101's favourite theatre, Regnboginn.

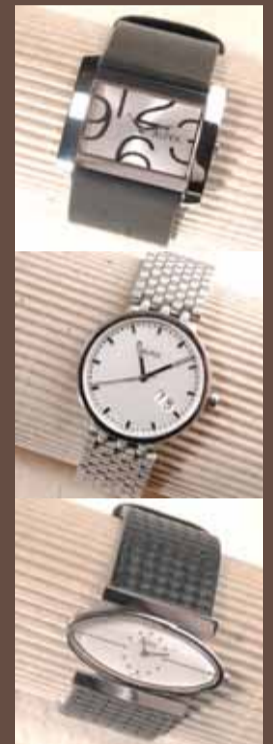
■ by Bart Cameron

Nexus, Hverfisgata 103, 101 Reykjavík, Tel. 552-9011.

Smárabio, Smáralind, Kopavogur, Tel. 564-0000.

Regnboginn, Hverfisgata 54, 101 Reykjavík, Tel. 551-9000.

For times and listings, visit www.kvikmyndir.is and click on "í bíó".



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GUIDE TO THE CITY CENTER

This pullout has all the information one might need, so for a safer journey, pull it out and put it in your pocket.

CAFÉS

1. Café Roma

Laugavegur 118
Is the closest thing you'll find to a New York deli in town. A lively cross-section of artists, students and office workers enjoy home baked pannini and great coffee all at low prices.

2. Ráðhúskaffi

City Hall
With a view over the city pond, Ráðhúskaffi is situated inside the City Hall. Coffee and great cakes as you enjoy the view. Free Internet access for customers and, in the lobby of City Hall, you'll find a big 80m2 model of Iceland.

3. Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a
Grái Kötturinn is across the street from the National Theater and is quite 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, but somewhat pricey.

4. Café Paris

Austurstræti 14
Situating in the heart of the city with a view over Austurvöllur, spacious, popular and usually full in the afternoon, Café Paris is international like the city it's named after. In the mornings it is more quiet and a hangout for philosophers and artists. Offers light meals and the opportunity to sit outside when the weather is nice.

5. 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. The walls are covered with art for sale and, though seats are usually filled by loyal customers, every now and then you'll catch a glimpse of the owners, a really nice and friendly couple in their seventies who have owned the café since its inception.

6. Feng Shui

Laugavegur 42b, by Frakkastígur
Inside the Feng Shui house is a café called "Teahouse of the August moon". The café just recently opened and they serve organic cakes, biscuits and the largest selection of tea in town. Try the waffle biscuits and have a Kashmir tea latte.

7. Svartakaffi

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

8. Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27
A very nice "grandma" style café. It's not that apparent from the street, being in on the bottom floor, but is actually bigger than it looks. They serve traditional treats such as hot chocolate and waffles, but grandma is also known to come up with new delicacies, such as the Snickers cake, and you can even try her latest work in progress.

9. Kaffitár

Bankastræti 8
Expanded and improved, this is the downtown store for one of the country's finest coffee importers. While anything here is good, the specialty coffee drinks are truly remarkable: our favourite, the Azteca, an espresso drink with lime and tabasco.

10. Te og Kaffi

Laugavegur 24
The downtown location for the other big coffee importer (see Kaffitár for the competition), Te og Kaffi hosts the nation's best-trained baristas, as proven in a recent competition. Newly situated on the sunnier side of the street, this coffee shop has an ideal angle for people-gazing.

BARS & BISTRO

11. Sólon

Bankastræti 7a
Named after (in his own opinion, at least), Iceland's greatest man, Sólon is a pretty crowded nightclub on Friday and Saturday nights. It seems to have more lives than one, however, since in the day it's a fairly artsy coffeehouse and in the evening (weeknights) they have a decent menu. You can get a three course fish of the day meal for under 2000 krónur, or try the delicious fish and meat mixed sticks.

12. Café 22

Laugavegur 22
Has recently undergone a major facelift. The top floor is now dedicated to artist Jón Sæmundur, aka Dead, whose Dead label can be seen on quite a few people these days. Downstairs is a decent bistro (try the Gringo), whereas the middle floor houses a dancefloor. Open until the wee small hours, and a great place for a late night drink for those who want drink along with a less trendy (and perhaps more cool) crowd. Be warned, though, they do charge 500 krónur entrance after 01:30.

13. Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 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 ranging from the hopefuls to the world famous. Blur's Damon Albarn owns a share of the bar, probably figur-

ing it was cheaper than buying the director of the film 101 Reykjavik in the film.

14. Sirkus

Klapparstígur 30
"Welcome to the Jungle! We're here!" With tropical palm trees on the welcome to the party that never ends any time soon. Usually, you want to be students of the 10 musicians and other members of the floor, for whatever reason, look

15. Nelly's

Þingholtsstræti 2
The cheapest beer in Reykjavik for drinkers as well as expats. Troubadours though. In the weekend large dancefloor on the upper floor, for whatever reason, look

16. Vegamót

Vegamótastígur 4
Wants to be the in-spot to be seen up, flaunt it and enjoy the view there, and the fittest, or at least Kitchen open every day until 2am brunch. Try the lobster pizza.

17. Pósthúsið

Þingholtsstræti 13
Situating by Austurvöllur, Pósthúsið treat. It is also one of few restaurants service. Live jazz once a week and menu they have, only 1490ISK

18. Rósenberg

Lækjargötu 2
Perhaps the closest we have to a wall. People go there for conversation than dancing. The place tends to play live jazz once a week and band Misery Loves Company.

19. Grand Rokk

Smíðjustígur 6
A place true to the spirit of Reykjavik covers. Better and lesser known than three bands a night, free admission or not is up to the band starring artists. Grab a beer and



SPOT THIS
Nexus

The best thing about Hollywood discovering comics is that devoted, hard-working shopkeepers like the good people at Nexus are able to introduce Newbies to the world of underground entertainment. If you're doing any book or art shopping, the Grapevine suggests you swallow your cultural stigmas and walk into this shop. After reading the works of Seth, Daniel Clowes (author of Ghost World) or Warren Ellis, all prominently on display at Nexus, you may realize that literature has been redefined for the better. Also, if you need a light saber or Darth Vader mask for the bedroom...we don't think the staff will judge you.
Nexus, Hverfisgata 103, 101 Reykjavik, Tel. 552-9011.



tveir fiskar

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SEAFOOD

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European Continental Director for World Association of Cooks Societies



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tveir fiskar

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drinks all the time. Another owner is Reykjavik, and the bar figures prominently

ot fun and games," quoth the poet. e outside and tropical heat on the inside, r came to an end and doesn't seem to be full of regulars (many of whom are, were Icelandic Academy of Arts) mixed with of the city's underground. The upper s like the inside of a bus.

s, with tends to attract more experienced s badboys play on most weekdays, mostly s a younger crowd comes in, and there's a floor. The prices do, however, go up after

en, and succeeds to some degree. Dress s as others do the same. It's a jungle in the fittest looking, come out on top. 2. Specials of the day and weekend

barinn is a bistro prized restaurant, a rare urants in Reykjavik with decent outdoor and check out the reasonably prized fish t. Try the plaice.

a jazz club, and old instruments line the eraation and listening to music rather to have jazz or blues type music. Regular Mike Pollock and Tom Waits cover

ck 'n' Roll and bands that don't do Icelandic bands play there, usually no ur nights a week. Whether they charge and, but if they do, all proceeds do go to ck rock on! During the day this is a hang-

out for chess players, challenging each other and anyone that might wander in here for a game, as every table doubles as a chess board. One of the best places to meet locals for a chat, every night of the week.

20. Bar 11

Laugavegur 11 The rock hangout, be it live music or the riff-heavy jukebox. Many of Iceland's rock bands are regulars. Bands play and/or poetry is recited most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, A good place to come down on Sundays, with a screening of cult films.

21. Hressingarskólinn (Hressó)

Austurstræti 20 The celebrated site of one of the more famous coffeehouses in Iceland, this bar/coffeehouse/restaurant brings a European flare to the city. That is until about 11, when things get to rockin', and you can see the true character of Reykjavik.

22. Þröðva

Austurstræti 22 Not, sadly, a meeting place for the communist party but somewhere quite far from it. This location, which formerly housed Astró, has long been home to bleached blonde babes and hnakki's. It is perhaps the bar in Reykjavik that comes closest to a nightclub type atmosphere.

23. 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 multi-ethnic food and frequent concerts. Wednesday night is tango night. Anyone can join in, but this is not a place to learn as the regulars know their way around a dancefloor.

24. Þríkið

Bankastræti 12 Used to be a traditional coffee house which has been around longer than any but, after a change of clientele, they now cater to a younger crowd. A diner during the day and a nightclub on weekends. You can also borrow games there, such as backgammon or chess.

25. Rex

Austurstræti 9 A favourite hangout for Kate Winslet look-alikes. Rex is one of the posher hangouts, dress code is not insisted upon, but you'll find yourself out of place if you're too casual. Also rumoured to be a haunt for generous middle aged ladies.

26. Thorvaldsen

Austurstræti 8 Posh as the fifth circle of hell. That said, they make a mean Mojito. DJ's on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Arrive before 12 if you want to avoid the queue Theme nights during the week, wine and cheese on Wednesdays, Finlandia nights on Fridays and Sunday roast on, well, Sundays. Civilian attire is looked down upon.

27. Gaukur á Stöng

Tryggvagata 22 Iceland's oldest bar is now in it's early twenties. During the day it's a pool pub and on weekend evenings there are live rock concerts by a mix of mainstream and underground bands. On weekends there is usually a lot of action with cover bands playing everything from Britney to the Beatles. Admission is sometimes between 500-1000 weekends, but usually its free.

28. Dillon

Langavegur 30 From the I've-just-been-to-hell-and-boy-am-I-pissed art on the walls, to the hard rock on the speakers and steady-flowing whiskey at the bar, Dillon is vying for the aggressive crowd. Now with two floors, though, many nights it also provides decent seating for merely modest partying.

29. Glauubar

Tryggvagötu 20 One of the few proper sport bars in Reykjavik, so you can go and watch whatever game happens to be on the TV screens. The establishment is basically based around the bar, so you won't have to go a long way for a drink. Open until five, and has a reputation for late night partying

30. Litli ljóti andarunginn

Lækjargata 6B Named after the HC Andersen fairy tale, The Ugly Duckling. The Duckling is one of the very best places for a quiet night, when even on Saturday nights you can hear what your partner is saying. They have recently expanded the place with additional room for seating, and have food at lunchtime.

RESTAURANTS

31. La Primavera

Austurstræti 9 Everybody laughed when we discovered a contemporary restaurant that has its most notable influences from Northern Italian cooking but 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!!

32. Tveir fiskar

Geisgötu 9 Seafood restaurant, although they also do land-based animals. At lunchtime you can have a three course meal for 2300, which isn't too bad, all things considered. The chef has been awarded the Medal of the Order of the White Rose by the President of Finland.

33. Hornið

Hafnarstræti 15 Means "the corner" and the place lives up to its name. This is actually the oldest Italian restaurant in town, celebrating its 25th year, which says something about the scene here before then. Excellent quality pizza, pasta and salads and yet remaining one of the more affordable ones. Try the calzone.

34. Húmarhúsið

Amtmannstígur 1 One of the oldest restaurants in the country, this fine dining establishment is known for its humar (lobster), but also for an impressive cognac lounge, and for intimate dining.

35. 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 Úlfar Eysteinnsson, the owner, may be present regaling the clientele with wild whaling tales. Don't forget to ask Chef Úlfar for dark Icelandic pumpernickel bread with pure Icelandic butter, and don't forget to make a reservation!

36. Pasta Basta

Klappartíg 38 An affordable Italian place, the pasta is in generous portions and the salad with grilled chicken is a good light option. The garden is nice, with a glass ceiling protecting punters from the wind and the rain at all times of year. Upstairs, the Blue Bar offers a more bar type atmosphere.

37. Tapas

Vesturgata 3b For those with a bit of money and time on their hands, the evening is well spent at Tapas, where you can vilt away the evening having course after course of wonderful miniature dishes served. Recommended is the garlic fried lobster and lamb in apricot sauce. If you don't feel like getting up right away afterwards, there's also a lounge to lounge in, and the paintings there are worth a look.

38. Jómfrúin

Lækjargata 4 In this global age, it can be hard to find good smörrebröd even in Copenhagen. Never fear: out here in the colonies you can still find first rate smörrebröd at Jómfrúin. They even import their own eel directly from Denmark to make one of Scandinavia's delicacies.

39. Shalimar

Austurstræti 4 Prides itself on being the northernmost Indian restaurant in the world. How this affects the food, we don't know as there are no comparisons in town. The daily special, comprised of two dishes on your plate, goes for roughly 1000kr. But we recommend the Chicken Tikka Masala, known to be highly addictive. And if the curry gets to you, they have a self service ice cone machine.

40. Tjarnarbakkinn (Íðnó)

Vonarstæti 3 Above the Íðnó theatre, so it's a good place to go before shows, or during if you prefer a more quiet atmosphere. If you sit by the window you get a nice view of the pond. It's not a bad place to try one of Iceland's culinary specialties, the lamb steak, one of those rare traditional treats that does not come as a shock to the uninitiated.

FAST FOOD

41. Nonnabiti

Hafnarstræti 11 The owner is a miser who charges additionally for everything, but this is almost certainly the best junk food in the Greater Reykjavik area. The subs are great, none of that Subway commitment to healthy living, and they probably contribute significantly to the ever-increasing "size" of the nation. They also serve burgers and sandwiches, and have lunchtime offers.

42. Pizza King

Hafnarstræti 18 Yes, you can go here late at night and grab the best pizza in town, but it also hosts the best lunch specials, and food so good you'd eat it sober, something you can't say for most food in Reykjavik. Call in advance if you're going during the day.

43. Purple Onion

Hafnarstræti 18 Stepping up Reykjavik's diversity a notch, the Purple Onion serves up Eastern European and Indian food fast. If you are as uncultured as we are, just smile and say you're hungry, and they'll give you something nice for under 1000 ISK.

44. Baejarins bestu

Tryggvagata They claim to have the best hot dogs in town, and for once the product lives up to the hype. Ask for one with everything, and you'll get a dog in a bun with ketchup, mustard, remulade (don't ask), fried and raw onion. The standard Icelandic hotdog, only somehow it tastes better.

45. Hlöll

By Ingólfstorg Where Nonni used to work before he went solo, due to creative differences no doubt. They have a somewhat larger selection of subs than Nonni, and they also have smaller sizes for kids and weight watchers. Brave souls might want to try the Gúmmi-Bátur (rubber boat), which might seem like an oversized relative of the ever-present pulsa.

46. Eldsmiðjan

Bragagata 38a Oven-baked pizzas simply don't get much better than this. It is slightly more expensive than other pizzerias, but well worth it. A wide selection of toppings, including that sorely missed pizza delight, snails. You can also turn the chef loose and let him decide what goes on it - you'll rarely be disappointed. Take away, order delivery, or eat in at the cosy restaurant upstairs. The paintings are worth a peek as well.

47. Vitobar

Bergþórugata 21 Actually a bar, but best known for its hamburgers. A burger with fries for 500 is one of the best meal deals in town, but special mention must go to the Forget-Me-Not blue cheese and garlic extravaganza. The Viking beer always feels particularly cold and refreshing here.

48. First Vegetarian (Á naestu grösum)

Laugavegur 20b Used to be called One Woman Restaurant, as there was always the same woman working there. Has new owners and a larger staff, but the theme is still vegetarian, with one vegan and one wheat-free dish always on offer. The only vegetarian restaurant licensed to carry beer and wine. Remains on the right side of the 1000 krónur bill at lunchtime, slips slightly over in the evening.

49. Dominos Pizza

Welcome to Iceland, home of the most profitable Dominos franchises in the world. You know the taste. The number, for anywhere in Iceland, is 58-12345. Go local and hit the global chain. Look by the harbour downtown.

50. Reykjavík Bagel Company

Laugavegur 81 Situated a bit from the immediate centre but close to Hlemmur bus-stop. Bagels, wraps and coffee that might make you feel better in the morning than the more hardcore fast foods farther down the street.

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Useful for Emergencies

Emergency phone 112 fire, police, ambulance
Emergency Ward, City Hospital 24hrs. 525-1000
Doctor: 1770
Dentist: 575-0505
Directory information 118
Police: 444-1000
Pharmacies find your closest or call 118

Internet Cafés

Bleika dífan, Laugavegi 21, 101 Rvk, 517-1980
BSI, Vatnsmyrárvægur 10, 101 Rvk, 591-1000
Ráðhúskaffi, City Hall, 101 Rvk, 563-2169
Netkaffi, Kringlan mall, 103 Rvk, 533-2424
Reykjavík Travel Service, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk, 511-2442
Ground Zero, Vallarstræti 4, 101 Rvk, 562-7776

Useful Websites

www.icetourist.is
www.visitreykjavik.is
www.this.is/iceland
www.grapevine.is

Car Rentals

ALP/Budget 562-6060
Avis 591-4000
Berg car rental 577-6050
Europcar 591-4050
SBK car rental 420-6000

Other Useful Numbers

City bus info, 551-2700
BSÍ bus info, 591-1000

Advertisement for ÍÐNÓ Summer menu. Includes logo with a house and a swan, and contact info: Tel. 562 9700 www.idno.is

Advertisement for DOMUS GUESTHOUSE. Includes photo of the building and contact info: Hverfisgata 45, 101 Reykjavík, phone: 561-1200, domus@simnet.is

Advertisement for THE EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM. Includes photo of museum interior and contact info: by Eiríksgröta, opposite the Hallgrímur Pétursson Memorial Church. Open: Febr.-May and Sept. 16th-Nov., Saturd. and Sund. 14-17.

THEY DO GIVE EXCHANGE TICKETS

Reykjavík has no trams, trains or subways, only buses. These yellow things can take you pretty much anywhere in the Reykjavík area. 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, the nine ticket package for 1500kr would be a better deal. 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 exact amount, unless you want to pay more for your ride. The driver cannot give you change. You can ask the driver for a free, time-limited transfer ticket if you need two buses to complete your journey.

The bus system is closed at 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 Reykjavík are Hlemmur and Lækjartorg, where you'll be able to get all the information you need.



Advertisement for INTERNET CAFÉ FREE FOR CUSTOMERS. Includes photo of the café and contact info: Open: MÅN - FÖST 10:30 - 18:00, LAUG - SUN 12:00 - 18:00. DAILY SPECIAL 550.- 690.-. VIKING beer only 400.-.

Advertisement for Café Rosenberg. Includes logo and contact info: Live music Thu-Sat, Lækjargötu 2, tel. 551-8008



A Foreigner's Guide to Drinking in Iceland

Vínbúðirnar

The first thing you need to know is, if you just arrived in Iceland, you better have bought some booze at the airport. Especially if you're visiting someone. No forgiveness on this one. Still, if you're here, we guess you have to deal. A large beer in a bar will cost you 600 ISK (about ten US dollars) on average, but it is possible to drink both cheaply and with quality in Iceland, provided you know where to go.

Any night out involving drinking should begin with a trip to "Vínbúð," also known as The State Alcohol and Tobacco Monopoly of Iceland. A half-litre of Viking beer, which in a bar goes for 600 ISK, is only 216 ISK at Vínbúð. Stock up here, go home, get your drink on with some friends and then go out around midnight (the bars don't begin to get interesting until then anyway) and you'll end up spending a fraction of what you normally would on a night out.

For those who are more interested in quality spirits than getting wasted for less, Vínbúð not only has a decent variety of quality wines, but the price of a good European wine is often lower than that of a cheap American wine. For example, while 750mL of California's Delicato Merlot goes for 1,220 ISK, the same volume of France's Le Piat d'Or is only 920 ISK. That's right: now you can act like a Sideways-style wine snob without killing your budget. Except of course they drink California wine in that movie... and we just dissed American wine... ahem. In terms of liquor, keep in mind that low quality spirits often sell for about the same price as top shelf stuff: 700 mL of Smirnoff costs the same as the same volume of Finlandia, 2,990 ISK. This is because prices for liquor are determined by alcohol content and popularity, so you can drink like an adult instead of a college freshman for the same money.

If you need something particularly exotic, like sake or absinthe (albeit hallucinogen-free), you should know that

not all Vínbúð outlets are created equal. You're more likely to find more obscure products at the larger outlets. For Reykjavík, this means either the Kringlan mall or Heiðrún, which is in the east of town.

If you still don't find what you're looking for, there is one more option for those who'll be here for a while: ordering. You can ask Vínbúð to order any particular beer, wine or liquor from any of the distributors Vínbúð already does business with.

Lastly, try to get to Vínbúð during the week, as Friday and Saturday afternoons will be packed with teenagers buying so much beer you'd think Prohibition was beginning in a week. Fortunately, they mostly go for the cheapest crap they can find, so anything other than Tuborg and Bacardi Breezers should remain untouched.

For more information on your alcohol options, plus locations, you can check out Vínbúð's website at <http://www.atv.is/>.

Vínbúð at Kringlan

Mon.-Thurs. 11:00-18:00
Fri. 11:00-19:00
Sat. 11:00-18:00
Closed Sundays

Vínbúðin Austurstræti (downtown Reykjavík)

Mon.-Thurs. 11-18:00
Fri. 11:00-19:00
Sat. 11:00-14:00

Vínbúðin Heiðrún (best selection)

Stuðlabálsi 2 Tel. 560-7720
Mon.-Thurs. 9-18:00
Fri. 9-19:00
Sat. 9-16:00

by Paul F Nikolov

GRAPEVINE'S PURCHASES THAT JUSTIFY EXISTENCE

1 Fröken Reykjavík lighters Even if you're not a smoker or an arsonist, these disposable lighters emblazoned with the words "Fröken Reykjavík" (after the name of the hotdog stand that sells them) and inexplicably, a high-heeled shoe, make for some great souvenirs. And for 150 ISK, they're quite possibly the cheapest, too. Buy ten of them and take them home with you on the plane. *Fröken Reykjavík, Austurstræti 22, 5512522.*

2 The 10-11 Salad Bar If you work like we do, you don't really get a lunch hour. Or a lunch fifteen-minutes for that matter. How can you very quickly pick up a giant pile of lunch food to take-away for pocket change? The 10-11 salad bar (which also has pastas, meats, cheeses and even hummus) is your best bet. The smaller container – which is large enough to feed two people comfortably – goes for a trifling 329 ISK. *10-11, locations all over Iceland.*

3 The Green Card No., not the immigration kind – the bus kind! If you're going to be here for a few weeks and you don't have a car, the green card is a must. For 4,500 ISK, you get unlimited bus rides for a month. Trust us: we've done the math. The bus authority simply must be losing money on this thing. *Get them while they last. Lækjartorg, Hlemmur or Mjódd bus stations, 7:00-20:00 every day.*

4 Sunglasses from Tiger It's not just about UV ray protection for your eyes for 200 ISK. It's about looking like Tom Cruise, Andy Warhol or Joan Collins for 200 ISK. It's a win-win situation. *Tiger on Laugavegur.*

BUY SHIT

The Grapevine celebrates capitalism

HOW WE GET OUR DRINK ON



Icelandic Beer-Thule

Icelandic beer has a heavy, extremely hoppy taste, similar to Carlsberg. Locals prefer Viking Gullfoss over Egill's two to one, but many Americans prefer Thule, which is the most accessible of the local beers.

International Beer-Cobra from India.

You can't buy it everywhere in the world, but at the Kringlan Vínbúð, pick up this outstandingly rich pilsner. It comes in a small can, but people will still respect you, cause you're drinking Cobra.

Malt Liquor-Faxe 10

If you miss Olde English 800 or Mickeys, or you just want to get angry, grab the black can of Faxe. It's expensive, as beers are rated according to their alcohol content, but it also takes a long time to drink, so perhaps that's value.

French Wine-La Fôret

The best deal in town, a classic French Pinot for 1490 ISK.

Cheap Wine-Black Opal Chardoney

An Australian wine priced to go, 1190 ISK.

Brennivín

There is only one. The traditional Icelandic spirit is consumed in the winter over heavy foods, typically. But tourists should try it. Though beware, it is strong.

Cognac-Courvoisier V.S.O.P. Exclusif

The finest drink in the hip world ain't too popular in Iceland. So you can drink and pass the Courvoisier at 2320 ISK for 350 ml. Seriously, this is a deal.

Whiskey-Jameson

All the superstars and musicians in town drink Jack Daniels. But Jameson sells at a much lower price for outstanding blended Irish whiskey. There simply is no cheap bourbon in this country, so if you didn't bring it yourself, give up.

Rum-Havana Club

For Americans, Cuban rum is risqué. For everyone else, it's a great liquor at a decent price.

Landi (Moonshine)-Don't do this.

Once upon a time, many boys and girls in this country drank moonshine. Then they went blind. Still popular in Eastern Iceland, beyond the health risks associated with drinking something made in a bathtub, there is a severe social stigma against landi. And the blind thing is true. It also causes brain damage. The unfunny kind.



by Bart Cameron



Rauðhetta og Úlfurinn

I've been telling foreigners that the real thing to purchase during a visit, the ultimate souvenir, is the Icelandic haircut, the North Atlantic hipster do. The fact is that Icelanders take their hair very seriously. A large percentage of the population insists on regular fashionable haircuts. Among the more than thirty premiere studios in 101 Reykjavík, none have a better reputation than Rauðhetta og Úlfurinn, the independent studio that serves most of the rock n rollers and good selling artists.

I made the four block trip to Rauðhetta recently to find out what goes into the perfect haircut. The answer, there doesn't seem to be much a rule. My stylist, a part owner of the studio who goes by the nickname Grjóni, shrugged his shoulders when I asked if there was a hard and fast rule.

"Just look at the person and at their head and style."

And here we had a slight problem. I walked into the hippest studio in a hip city wearing standard-issue Brooklyn-commuter English teacher duds. Deep down, did I have the style that might make for a good haircut?

Lord knows. But I know this, after five minutes looking my hair over and talking to me, and after a shampoo and rinse, Grjóni had a plan. He explained it. Then he got the scissors ready. Then he stopped. "It's okay to cut? Just want to double check."

One thought occurred to me as he began chopping away:

Most artists and musicians I know are neurotic nut-jobs.

So this is how a studio serves neurotic nut-jobs. They do things like talk about what they're going to do. They ask a lot of questions. And they don't do anything that will make you nervous.

Overall, a haircut at the incredibly hip studio took about an hour. During this time, I could have learned about all the gossip of friends, neighbours and famous people. (I wouldn't rate this too highly, I was told that the staff of Grapevine, which I think includes me, hang out at a bar that I'd never heard of before.)

While getting my pompadour, I might have also simply stared at the excessively attractive young women filling the room for haircuts. Instead, I asked Grjóni about his career path, about fishing summers to put away the money for the hair studio.

By the end of it all, I had a head of hair that looked better than it had any right to, and I had a firm understanding that Grjóni and his fellow stylists at Rauðhetta could probably handle any clientele that walked through their door.

On my way out the door, I suggested that the Icelandic haircut might be the strongest local folk art. It got me a 600 ISK discount.

Rauðhetta og Úlfurinn, Tryggvagata 4-6, 101 Reykjavík, Tel. 511-4004

by Bart Cameron



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Litli ljóti andarunginn restaurant, Lækjargötu 3b, tel: 552-9815



HUMARHÚSIÐ

"I saw your turnover, going to Cuba in the autumn?"

"Well, you don't jump around just anywhere, if Icelandair doesn't fly there."

"The owners have changed ..."

"The owners have changed but it's still about loyalty."

"Air Atlanta?"

"I don't even know if they have 400 seats. 400 seats are hard to find."

"One plane only?"

"Well, if you're going to fly the whole board over, you might as well invite the directors and staff. And if you're flying the whole company over, then make sure you take your most important clients as well – that way, if the plane goes down, there will be no harm to anyone."

"I see what you mean."

"Anyway, honestly, I think this take-over will be the best deal you ever made."

The cover faces of Icelandic business magazines seem to frequent Humarhúsið – the Lobster House – and honestly, if I were a cover face of an Icelandic business magazine,

I probably would as well. Ideally located by Lækjargata, in one of Reykjavík's oldest houses (1838), the place is elegant and cosy, the staff friendly, the wines excellent and the food might be the most adventurous Icelandic fusion around.

Icelandic lobster, by the way, seems to be excellent raw material. Strictly speaking, my lobster expert companion informed me, it is not lobster, but langoustine: smaller, juicier and with a richer taste than the more common Canadian or American lobster. Humarhúsið serves both in the improvised 5-course menu (7,900 – 11,900 ISK including selected wines with each course) which is no less memorable than the conversations in the parlour.

"Anyway, I'm going to California next week."

"Oh, and you're taking the family?"

"Oh, no, I'm going for a vacation. Gústaf, who left Kaupthing, has a house there. He's inviting a few guys over for a week. Beach in the afternoon, computer games

throughout the night."

(If anyone can inform me whether computer games are a codeword for something really thrilling, or if Icelandic businessmen fly to California to hook up their Playstations, I would be most grateful.)

As an amateur in the lobster business I was astonished. My more experienced companion was delighted.

Tips: Don't wear a leather jacket, they cause too much noise in the leather armchairs and sofas. And watch your head when walking around the upstairs parlour – my lobster expert companion and I both got a mild concussion.



*Humarhúsið Amtmannsstíg 1
Tel. 561 3303*

Reviews by Haukur Már Helgason



Under ISK 1000



Between ISK 1000 and ISK 2500



Between ISK 2500 and ISK 4000



Over ISK 4000



ELDSMIÐJAN

Eldsmiðjan was one of the country's first pizzerias, a sensation when it opened 18 years ago in the city centre. They seem to have established a whole generation of old fans, and my companion was one of those – stunned to see that the place has grown two floors, so you can actually sit and eat now.

The hyper-kitschy art on the grey walls makes certain no one feels intimidated in there – as does the kindergarten outside the window. You will find a very mixed crowd in the restaurant, but mostly people under 40.

The staff was a bit insecure, yet fulfilled any request without scruples. As my companion asked for a small Coke, but in a big glass, with water added, it was served, and no questions asked. Which I found remarkable.

I didn't taste the wine in there, as soda seemed more appropriate to the atmosphere ... even at nine in the evening it feels like lunch rather than dinner. The pizzas are great, and might be your only opportunity to taste Reykjavík-Napolitan food ever, as the basically traditional North Italian pizza here is baked over open fire from aromatic birch, leaving a wonderfully eccentric taste on top of the ingredients.

Especially recommended: the nut/chicken/sun-dried tomatoes variety.



*Eldsmiðjan, Bragagötu 38a,
Tel. 562-3838*



PRIKIÐ

Prikið used to be a similar place to Café Mokka, in Skólavörðustígur, where elderly stoics drank their coffee in the morning, beer in the evening, leaving the outside world to its own ... until five years ago or so, when young sputnik businessmen bought the place, changed nothing but prolonged the opening hours and inserted a DJ. The place was an instant hit among those people in their early twenties who want to keep the best of the alleged two universes: mainstream and alternative. So you

will find a lot of people here who know how to make a decent income from their art and/or education.

And now they have a kitchen. Originally it was a side-step, as the place offered their regulars some snacks and French fries, but has now grown into a full-fledged bistro menu à la Hard Rock Café. In short, the menu is very satisfying and coherent with the place itself. It does not involve a lot of risk but is decently served, both in quantity and

quality – the steak is among the best you will find for the modest price, and the French fries melt in your mouth.



*Prikið, Bankastræti 12,
Tel. 551-2866*

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BEZT Í HEIMI: SHALIMAR

Previous winners: Pizza King, Hótel Holt and Argentína.

Restaurants



A Whole Lot Better than They Have to Be

One of the complaints I hear about dining out in Iceland is that Italian, Thai and Indian restaurants severely tone down the spices to suit the Icelandic palate. For many visitors to Iceland, it can be very confusing to see a dish labelled as "hot" only to discover that this means it's been dusted with black pepper. Fortunately, you'll never have that problem at Shalimar.

My hometown has an Indian restaurant on every block, and I've sampled quite a number of them. Many of these restaurants cater to a predominantly Indian clientele. It's a testament to Shalimar's cuisine that they're not only fiercely loyal to recipes I'm pretty familiar with, but that they are without having to be – there are less than a hundred Indians living in Iceland, so few would be able to accuse them of inauthenticity if they ever cheated. And yet they don't.

The restaurant itself has a warm, friendly atmosphere. You want to take your time there and enjoy your meal while a soundtrack of Indian pop numbers plays unobtrusively. The lower level is all one dining room, but at the top of a spiral staircase are secluded booths ideal for a romantic dinner.

Started by Sheikh Aamir Uz-Zaman in January 2001, Shalimar used to bear the slogan "Where hot means hot" and it still applies. If a dish on the menu is labelled as "hot," even the most seasoned veterans of Indian food will discover that this is truth in advertising.

"I visited another Indian restaurant in town," says Uz-Zaman. "And it was obvious they'd diluted the recipes to suit Icelandic tastes. It wasn't very good. To me, it's important to stay true to the original recipes."

Shalimar also has milder dishes, vegetarian dishes, and the menu changes daily.

"Indian people get bored easily," explains Uz-Zaman. "They don't want to eat the same thing all the time. At an Indian wedding the food will sometimes take up most of the space at the wedding party, with lots of different dishes."

Uz-Zaman, who grew up learning how to cook, carries the tradition of multiple dishes over. The daily special – four different entrées to choose from in combinations of two, three or four – changes daily but is always 1290 ISK for all four entrées. They also have a discount card where five visits gets you 50% off and after ten visits you eat for free. Plus, Uz-Zaman is open to group rates.

"When it comes to larger groups, we can always work something out," says Uz-Zaman. "Weddings, birthdays, anything. We aim to please."

Best of all, they have free delivery, albeit with a 3000 ISK minimum order, which is a heap of food, as their prices range from 750 to 1550 ISK. Orders for delivery and take-away can be made by phone or via their website, www.shalimar.is.

*Shalimar Austurstræti 4 101 Reykjavík Tel. 551-0292
Mon. – Thurs. 11:30-22:00, Fri.-Sat. 11:30-23:00, Sun.
17:00-22:00*

by Paul F Nikolov

Restaurants

3 Frakkar, Baldursgata 14, p: 552-3939
Café Opera, Lækjargata 2, p: 552-9499
Horníó, Hafnarstræti 15, p: 551-3340
Jómfrúin, Lækjargata 4, p: 551-0100

Maru, Aðalstræti 12, p: 511-4440
Pasta Basta, Klappartígur 38, p: 511-2238
Sjávarkjallarinn, Aðalstræti 2, p: 511-1212
Tapas, Vesturgata 3b, p: 551-2344
Tjarnarbakkinn, Vonarstræti 2, p: 562-9700

Tveir Fiskar, Geirsgata 9, p: 511-3474
Við Tjörmina, Templarasund 3, p: 551-8666
Vox Nordica Hotel, Suðurlandsbraut 2, p: 444-5050
Argentína, Barónstígur 11a, p: 5519555
Fjalakötturinn, Aðalstræti 16, p: 514-6000

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Taking the Dieter Roth train is a trip through the essence of art. All is art, everything Dieter did was an expression of art and the train trip takes you on an unforgettable trip, giving the viewer a whole new perspective on art in our every day lives. The redundant gains new life and meaning as he tilts the angle of infinite possibilities of mundane experience becoming something amazing.

The thing that impressed me the most was how one could feel the creative joy in so many of his work. He obviously didn't take himself too seriously, an undertone of playfulness can be found in all his work, as if he must have had terrible fun within the whirlwind of his creative process.

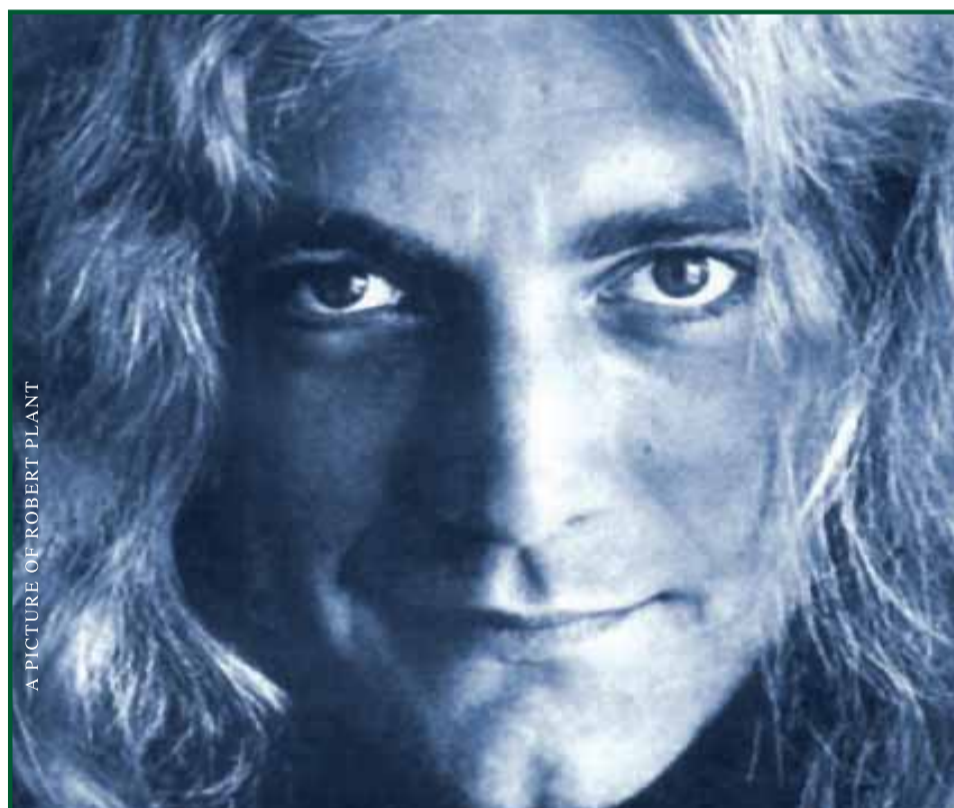
Looking at his work one has to wonder why is he not a household name in Iceland. It is so obvious where the source of inspiration is for so many Icelandic artists. Perhaps he was like a nature element that influenced everything around him, yet no one could put their finger from where it came from. Dieter's work is not only for hard-core art lovers. It is for everyone. His diversity is so vast that everyone will find something at this three-fold exhibition that they will love. My personal favourite is the film Domino and the photos of all the houses in Reykjavík. I have yet to go on a second and a third trip with the Train but might get new favourites depending on my inner weather during that day.

Train is exhibited at Hafnarbúsið, the Reykjavík Art Museum, National Gallery of Iceland and Gallery 100, additionally "Shops at Road 1" will move along road 1 with a starting point from Eiðar in the east of Iceland.

Dieter Roth

- the Godfather of Icelandic Modern Art

By Birgitta Jónsdóttir



A PICTURE OF ROBERT PLANT

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James Hoodwood

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ARTS AND CULTURE LISTINGS

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

OPENINGS

penings—Good art goes best with complimentary beverages. Here are Grapevine's picks for May.

Compiled by Birgitta Jónsdóttir.

28 MAY

14:00
Without Roots – 8 South African Photographers
 Photographers at the Reykjavík Museum of Photography,
 Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor.

ONGOING

101 Gallery
Jökla Series – Ólafur Eliasson
 Thu-Sat 14:00 - 17:00
<http://www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery>
 Hverfisgata 18a, tel: 561 0125

ASÍ museum
Headphones with Migrant Stories
Ólafur Arni Ólafsson and Líbía Pérez de Siles de Castro
 Tue-Sun 13:00 - 17:00
<http://www.asi.is>
 Freyjugata 41, 101 R, tel: 511 5353

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum
 Thu-Fri 10:00-17:00, Sat-Sun 10:00-18:00
<http://www.arbaejarsafn.is>
 Kistuhyl 4, 110 R, tel: 577 1111

Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum
The Man and Material
 Daily 10:00-16:00
<http://www.listasafnreykjavikur.is>
 Sigtún, 105 R, tel: 553 2155

CIA - Center for Icelandic Art
 Mon-Fri 10:00 - 16:00
<http://www.cia.is>
 Hafnarstræti 16, tel: 562 7262

Culture House
The Road to Zion
 Daily 11:00-17:00
<http://www.thjodmenning.is>
 Hverfisgata 15, tel: 545 1400

Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum
 Tues-Sun 14:00 - 17:00
<http://www.skulptur.is>
 Njarðargata, tel: 551 3797

FUGL – Reykjavík Project Space
Redundant Information – Ivar Brynjólfsson
 Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00, Sat 11:00-16:00
<http://fugl.is>



Reykjavík Museum of Photography, May 28 to August 14.

ROOTLESS

Reykjavík Museum of Photography is the only independent museum of photography in Iceland. It is located on the sixth floor of Grófarhús. The purpose of the museum is to collect, catalogue and preserve photographic material, i.e. photographs, glass plates, negatives and slides, and articles and documents relating to photography.

The museum holds a number of photographic exhibitions each year. The summer exhibition will host 8 South African photographers in an exhibition titled Rótleysi: Rootless from 28th of May until 14th of August.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography, Tryggvagata 15, 6th Floor 101 Reykjavík

Skólavörðustígur 10, tel: 695 4202

Gallery Föld
 Mon-Fri 10:0-18:30, Thu 10:00-21:00, Sat 10:00-18:00 Sun 13:00-17:00
<http://www.myndlist.is>
 Kringlan Mall, tel: 568 0400

Gel Gallery
 Hverfisgata 37, tel: 551 7733

Gallery Hulduhólar
 Sat 11:00-14:00
<http://www.hulduholar.com>
 Mosfellsbæ, tel: 556 6194

Gallery i8
A Pursuit of Happiness ASAP – Lawrence Weiner

Wed-Fri 11:00-17:00, Sat 13:00-17:00
<http://www.i8.is>
 Klapparstígur 33, tel: 551 3666

Gallery of the Icelandic Printmakers Association
Forum For Kunst i Heidelberg
 Tue-Sun 14:00-18:00
<http://www.islenskgrafik.is>
 Tryggvagata 17, tel: 552 286

Gallery Skuggi
 Thu-Sun 13:00-17:00
<http://www.galleriskuggi.is>
 Hverfisgata 39, tel: 511 1139

Gallery Sævar Karl
On the verge of being & non being – Kristján Jónsson
 Mon-Fri 10:00-17:00
<http://www.saevarkarl.is>
 Bankastræti 7, tel: 551 3470

Gerðarsafn, Kópavogur Art Museum
Material Time/Work Time/Life Time
 Tue-Sun 11:00-17:00
<http://www.gerdarsafn.is>
 Hamraborg 4, tel: 570 0440

Gerðuberg Culture Center
Collectors II - What do Icelanders collect?
 Mon-Fri 11:00-17:00
www.gerduberg.is
 Gerðuberg 3-5, tel: 575 7700

Gljúfrasteinn - Laxness museum
 Thu-Sun 10:00-17:00
www.gljufasteinn.is
 Mosfellsdalur, tel: 586 8066

Hafnarborg - Institute of Culture and Fine Art
Material Time/Work Time/Life Time
 Wed-Sun 11:00-17:00
<http://www.hafnarborg.is>
 Strandgata 34, tel: 555 0080

Hafnarfjörður Folk Museum
 Weekends 13:00 - 17:00
<http://www.hafnarfjordur.is/byggdasafn>
 Vesturgata 5, tel: 565 5420

Hafnarhús - Reykjavík Art Museum
Train – Dieter Roth
 Daily 10:00 - 17:00
<http://www.listasafnreykjavikur.is>
 Tryggvagata 17, tel: 590 1200

Icelandic Institute of Natural History
 Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun 13:00-17:00
<http://www.ni.is/>
 Hlemmur 5, tel: 590 0500

Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum
A Selection of 20th Century Works
 Daily 10:00-17:00
<http://www.listasafnreykjavikur.is>
 Flókagata, Miklatún, tel: 552 6131

Kling & Bang Gallery
Skiptholt – John Bock
 Thu-Sun 14:00-18:00
<http://this.is/klingogbang>
 Laugavegur 23, tel: 696 2209

National Gallery of Iceland
Train – Dieter Roth
 11:00-17:00 except Mon
<http://www.listasafn.is>
 Fríkirkjuvegur 7, tel: 515 9600

National Museum of Iceland
 Daily 11:00-17:00
<http://www.natmus.is>
 Suðurgata 41, tel: 530 2200

Nordic House
Works on Paper – Órnulf Opdahl
Deep Sea Organisms – David Shale
 Tue-Sun 12:00-17:00
<http://www.nordice.is>
 Sturlugata 5, tel: 551 7030

Galleri 100°
Train – Dieter Roth
 Mon-Fri 8:30-16:00, Sat 11:00 - 17:00
<http://www.rafheimar.is>
 Bæjarhálsvegur 1, tel: 516 6790

Reykjavík Museum of Photography
Without Roots – 8 South African Photographers
 Mon-Fri 12:00-19:00, Sat-Sun 13:00-17:00
<http://www.ljosmyndasafnreykjavikur.is>
 Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor, tel: 562 1790

Safn
Reykjavík Swinging Corridor – Carsten Höller
Homage to the proxy – JBK Ransu
 Wed-Fri 14:00-18:00, Sat-Sun 14:00-17:00
<http://www.safn.is>
 Laugavegur 37, tel: 551 4409

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum
Acquisitions and Donations
 Tue-Sun 14:00-17:00
<http://www.iso.is>
 Laugarnestangi 70, tel: 553 2906

The Living Art Museum
Signal in the Heavens – Thomas Hirschhorn
 Wed-Sun 13:00 - 17:00
<http://www.nylo.is>
 Laugavegur 26, tel: 551 4350

Volcano show: Red rock cinema
 Part One at 15:00 & 20:00, Part Two at 16:00 & 21:00
 Hellusund 6a, tel: 845 9548

YZT
 Laugavegur 40, tel: 552 6000



THE GREAT UNREST

by Ragnar Kjartansson

"It's like the ultimate blues," is the way celebrated local artist Ragnar Kjartansson describes this one-man exhibit. Located on the Ring Road just south of Reykjavík, and running until June 5th, The Great Unrest makes use of an abandoned music hall, a suit of armor, and a melancholy voice.

Performances daily, 2-5 pm and 9-11 pm through June 5. Ring Road between Hvolsvöllur and Skógar.



National Museum of Iceland.

WHAT MAKES A NATION?

A must-see at the National Museum of Iceland is the permanent exhibition Making of a Nation—Heritage and History in Iceland. It provides an insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

The exhibition includes about 2,000 objects, from the Settlement Age to the present, plus about 1,000 photographs from the 20th century.

Djóðminjasafn Íslands, Suðurgata 41, 101 Reykjavík Tel: 530-2200 www.thjodminjasafn.is



Reykjavík Art Festival, Viðey.

BLIND PAVILION

Ólafur Eliasson

Ólafur Eliasson opens two exhibitions at the Reykjavík Art Festival Jökla Series at 101 gallery and Blind Pavilion at Viðey.

Ólafur Eliasson has used the basic elements of the weather throughout his career. His installations regularly feature elements appropriated from nature – billowing steam replicating a water geyser, glistening rainbows or fog-filled rooms. By introducing 'natural' phenomena, such as water, mist or light, into an un specifically cultivated setting, be it a city street or an art gallery, the artist encourages the viewer to reflect upon their understanding and perception of the physical world that surrounds them.

With his Blind Pavilion he makes a radical cross-over experiment between architecture and art in the biennale. The pavilion has been transformed into a house of many levels looks for new ways of experiencing and sensing our world. The house suggests the kaleidoscopic view, a multi-perspective.

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Preaching History

“The Road to Zion” The Cultural House

Most of the Icelanders who migrated to North America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries went to Canada. But about 400 Icelanders travelled to Utah, following Mormon missionaries and the promise of a paradise on earth in Utah. The exhibition “The Road to Zion,” currently being shown at The Culture House (Hverfisgata 15, 9:00-17:00, Monday-Friday) chronicles this migration, but be warned: this is less an exhibition than a thinly-disguised missionary outpost.

The biggest problem with this supposedly historical exhibition is that it happens to be historically inaccurate. For example, there’s their take on why the migration to Utah happened in the first place. The late 1800s was not an easy time to be living in Iceland. By that time, there was no land left, people had a difficult time making a living, and the population was rapidly increasing. A promised paradise on earth, even if it was on the other side of the ocean and thousands of kilometres across mostly unsettled land, probably seemed like a far better proposition than struggling to survive at home. But the exhibition literature contends that South Iceland and the Westman Islands (where most of the emigrants came from) had “a rather high standard of living . . . so it was for religious rather than economic reasons that the Icelandic Mormons left.”

Another inaccuracy arises regarding the Book of Mormon, or, as this historical exhibit states, “another testament

of Jesus Christ.” The historical exhibit describes the Book of Mormon as “the spiritual guide of an ancient people who inhabited the Americas.” Few non-Mormon scholars would agree with this interpretation. The Book of Mormon’s initial publication in 1830 was both timely and convenient: this was a time of massive westward expansion for Americans. Preaching a faith that contended that Jesus had already spoken to the North Americans added further justification to wiping out those pesky Native Americans who refused to give up their land and way of life, especially in Utah, where the Mormons were trying to settle to create “Zion” – the kingdom of God on earth.

The exhibition itself was co-sponsored by the Icelandic Association of Utah. They also wrote the exhibition literature and the explanatory text for the pieces in the exhibit, and are decidedly Mormon. A visit to their website describes a visit by the group to Iceland as such: “The group was blessed in many ways. We knew that Heavenly Father and our ancestors were there with us.” While there’s nothing wrong with a religious group wanting to set up an exhibition about their point of view of history, it’s misleading to present this exhibition as historical. Which is a shame, because the purely historical record of the migration to Utah is actually interesting enough on its own without the evangelicism.

The exhibition is comprised of three rooms. Some of

the highlights of the exhibition include the first room, where half the floor is covered with a thin layer of black sand to represent Iceland’s shore. The other half of the floor is a very faithfully recreated hardwood deck of a ship, with sketches on the wall of Icelanders on board ships bound for North America. The second room features a partial recreation of a prairie turf house much like the ones the new immigrants to Utah lived in, and the third room has a wall covered with the photographs of every Icelandic immigrant to Utah who had a photograph. I was particularly interested in the most common ground between Icelanders and Mormons: genealogy. Just as Icelanders faithfully record their family members stretching back centuries, the Mormons do so as well, albeit for different reasons; Icelanders record the genealogy for largely worldly reasons, while the Mormons believe that one’s name needs to be recorded in their genealogical records in order to get into Heaven.

If you want the Mormon perspective on the Icelandic migration to Utah, then visiting “The Road to Zion” is all you need. If you want a more historical point of view, we’d suggest looking elsewhere.

“Road to Zion” Þjóðmenningarhúsið
(The Culture House) Hverfisgata 15 www.thjodmenning.is

By Paul F Nikolov



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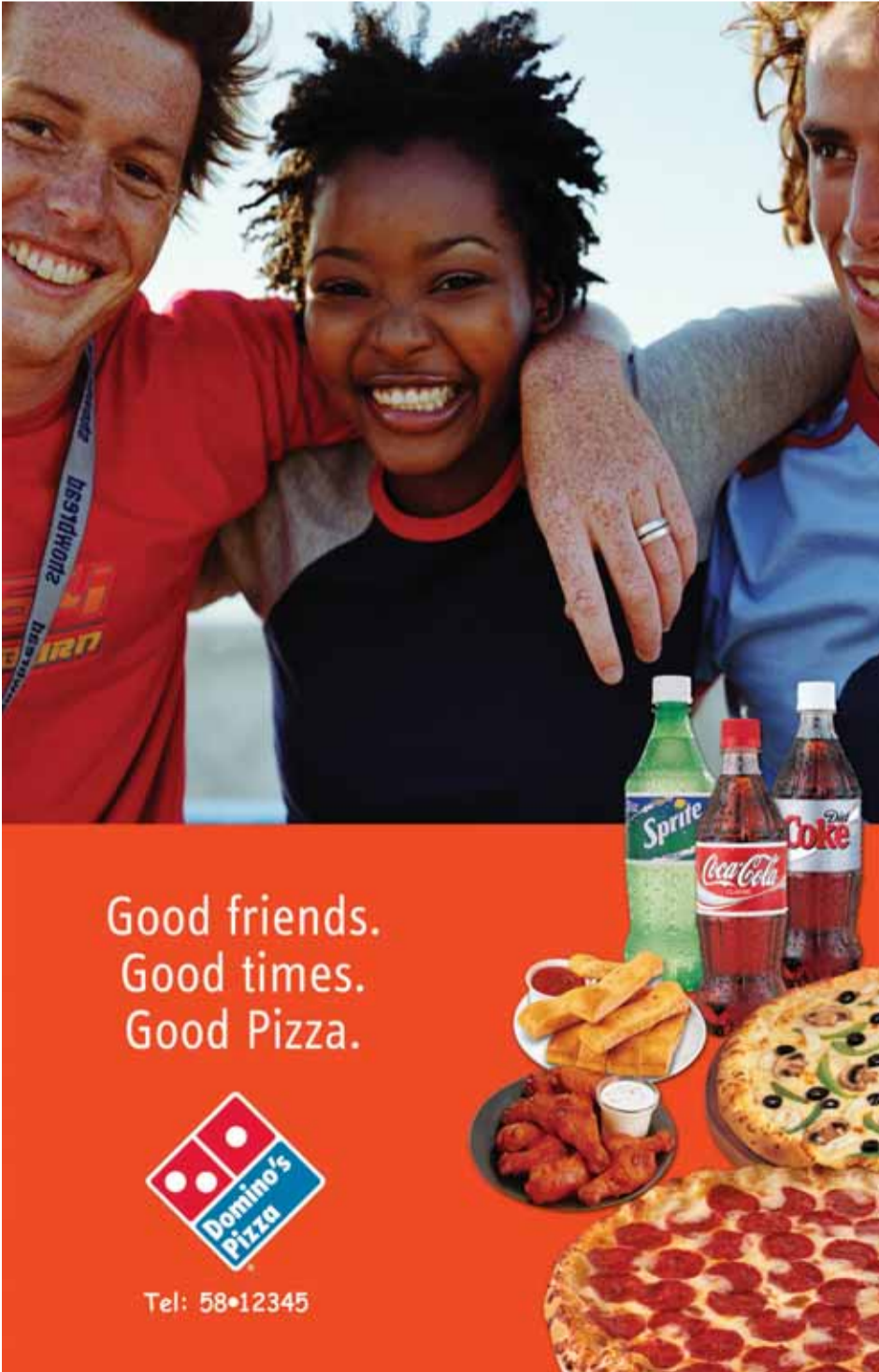
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Hildur Vala

Self-titled

The winner of this year's Icelandic Idol competition... yes, like American Idol. And World Idol. You want us to stop here? No? Okay, Hildur Vala won Icelandic Idol easily: blessed in both the beauty and voice departments, Hildur Vala seems to have the tools to make an impact in the music scene. Unfortunately, as with Idol winners worldwide, she has a difficult time with phrasing and making the songs her own.

Hildur Vala's first album is a lesson in how to waste good material. Even the cover doesn't do her justice. The English-language songs include Chuck E.'s In Love. How many things have to go wrong in the world before someone is forced to re-record that product of Satan's most bastardly spawn, we have no idea. Worse is an interpretation of Dark End of the Street in which we learn that a strong voice and good range DON'T equal SOUL.

The Icelandic Idol's Icelandic-language numbers would make up for the English-language disasters if it weren't for the over-production—nothing as annoying as clouding a nice interpretation of a song with ho-hum crowd singing heavy on the reverb.

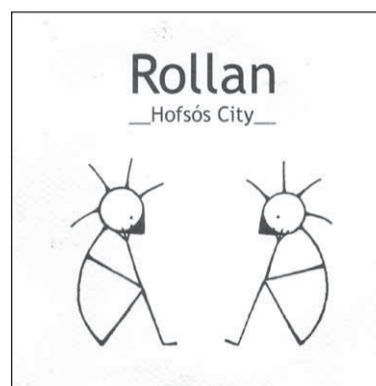
Ultimately, we wish they would have just given Hildur Vala a tape recorder and a guitar and gotten out of the way. Hopefully they will on the next album.

Worth three beers. Costs four beers.



By Bart Cameron
Guide to the ratings system:

In prison, you deal in cigarettes. In Iceland, you deal in beers. We don't condone this, we just accept it as fact. One beer=500 ISK at the seedy bars we frequent. That means a mainstream release costs up to 2500 ISK... or \$40. Yes, that much. That's why we do the beer thing.



Rollan
Hofsós City

The cover and packaging for this CD is tasteful and classic... even the small card explaining that Rollan is the result of a six day drinking bender seemed charming in such packaging. As for the music, remember 1992? These guys really do. Competent musicians, they get the time signatures and guitar work down pat: of course, there are no words and no melodies. If this bores

you, just do as we did in the office, sing "he likes all our pretty songs but he don't know what it means" over the meandering tracks. If you're desperate for a positive reference, and we were, we think you could say they're something like God Speed You Black Emperor. In the same way that neighbour you had who used to get drunk and ram his head into the amplifier was something like Led Zeppelin.

Worth one beer. Cost two beers.

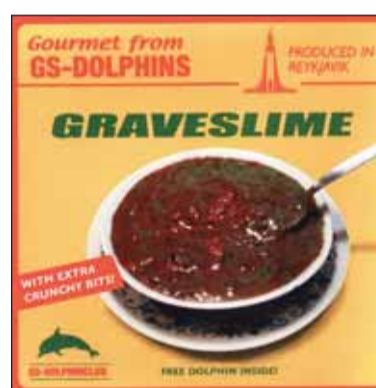


Brúðarbandið
Meira!

We thought we'd take another listen to Brúðarbandið after being informed that they had recently broke the bank on a tour of the Bible Belt in the US. Everyone wants to like Brúðarbandið: they have seven members who wear wedding dresses, they have an accordion player and they have a manifesto. They also have a song with the refrain "Sid Vicious so delicious." On most songs, despite the seven members, the music is curiously thin, with commendable punk bass and less commendable snare-heavy drums and a vague guitar presence.

Over the year since its release, I have revisited this album repeatedly trying to figure exactly what goes wrong. The singing is often flat, the lyrics intentionally grating but apolitical, (unless you think a girl saying a boy is cute is political), and the music, despite reaching for obvious hooks, kills any momentum... or will to live. As I said earlier, we want good things for this band. They seem to have the right material: namely, chutzpah. And an accordion. A CD that features seven women in bridal gowns playing punk has to be really really bad for us not to recommend it. This is dangerously close, but we openly acknowledge that Reykjavík is a better town for having this band here. We just hope they release a better cd soon. Please buy the cd so they have the money for studio time. Give it to a friend, what could be a better souvenir?

Worth two beers. Cost three beers.



Graveslime
Roughness and Toughness

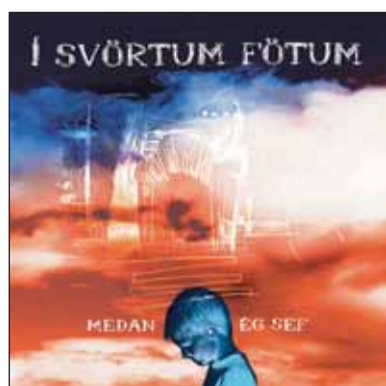
Okay, so you don't like bands with names like Graveslime. And you don't like hard rock. Get over it. This band's 2003 release qualifies as one of the best Icelandic albums of the last ten years. The album contains a range of genres, but it sticks mostly with impeccably constructed slow grindcore. They compare favourably with the Melvins.

All of the 11 tracks on Roughness and Toughness hit their target early on, so it can be a little daunting to have to listen to 10 minute tracks, but on the second and third listens, the songs live up to their time. The few tracks where the band goes schizo, like 362 Days until Christmas in which we hear the relaxed buzz of early-90s Flaming Lips tunes, impressed us the most, though.

Also, kudos on the design—best album package and design without Björk on the cover in the last decade.

If you can find this album, pick it up.

Worth six beers. Costs four beers. Winner.



Í Svörtum Fötum
Meðan Ég Sef

The recent documentary on Icelandic music avoids mentioning this band, which is one of the most popular in Iceland. Which got us to thinking, maybe Í Svörtum Fötum is doing something right. Yes, they are considered a Sveitaballa (country dance) band, which is something like being labelled VH1-fodder, so hipsters of Reykjavík want nothing to do with them. There may be another problem in that the lyrics to Í Svörtum Fötum songs are loaded with things like dreams and kiss me and phrases one usually wouldn't use without irony. Honestly, we can't compliment the songwriting all that highly: chord progressions are in the obvious category, and the beats are droning. And the tendency to add vocal effects and strings and call things a chorus is tiring. However, let's point out something that are commendable

in Í Svörtum Fötum's latest effort. First off, lead singer Jonsi has a natural tenor and remarkably good diction—for foreigners, drunks and children, Icelandic requires clear enunciation. Also, this well-travelled band keeps songs tight, and on occasion layer their keys and guitars nicely. There is room in this world for good-natured, well-produced pop, and on songs like Vaknaðu, Í Svörtum Fötum produces this. Also, did we mention this band wasn't featured in Gargandi Snilld?

Worth four beers. Costs four beers.





The Grapevine and Bad Taste introduce the **Grapevine Bad Taste Summer Concert Series**

With the goal of providing legitimate venues and promotion for everyone involved in the vibrant and diverse local music scene, The Reykjavík Grapevine is proud to announce the Grapevine Bad Taste Summer Concert Series.

Starting May 27 and running until September 9, the Reykjavík Grapevine along with Bad Taste Gallery and Thule, the world famous beer by Vífilfell Brewery, will put on three concerts a week at Sirkus bar and at the Bad Taste Gallery.

The shows will feature local and international bands. Every performance will be reviewed, though the Grapevine promises to maintain its current standards: great performances will be acknowledged; lackluster performances will be evaluated as such.

All Icelandic bands are invited to contact us and schedule a performance.
Please email atli@grapevine.is or call 847-9290.

Grapevine Bad Taste Summer Concert Series

May 27- June 9

Friday
May 27th, 8pm
Sirkus

Nortón and Dáðadrengrir

Saturday
May 28th, 3pm
Bad Taste Gallery

Nina Nastasia and Huun Huur Tu



Nina Nastasia. Nina Nastasia is an accomplished musician, songwriter and performer who currently makes her home in N.Y. She made it to John Peel's Year End Top 50 in 2002, and her new album Run To Ruin promises to satisfy the eager critics and her constantly growing legion of fans.



Nortón. Nortón have been playing since 1999, but haven't put a single song out yet. That's because they've slowly been perfecting their recipe: two cups of funk, one portion of house, a dash of hip-hop, topped with pop-based song structures and a respect for the history of dance music.



Dáðadrengrir. It's safe to say that Dáðadrengrir came as a bit of surprise when they won the nationwide band contest Músíktíraunir in 2003. Not only were they the second hip-hop band to ever win the contest, but they did so in a very white, very old-school, very Beastie Boyish manner. Since then they've expanded their sound palette to include quite a number of influences, as displayed in them painting their faces like KISS at recent shows.



Huun-Huur-Tu

From a region of Tuva just Northwest of Mongolia, these celebrated masters of throat singing have stayed on for an encore performance after their much-praised Arts Festival concert. Music lovers unfamiliar with the name may recognize their sound from Huun-Huur-Tu's work with Frank Zappa and Kronos Quartet.



Thursday
June 2nd, 8pm
Sirkus

Big Kahuna and Nilfisk

Friday
June 3rd, 5pm
Bad Taste Gallery

Nilfisk

Saturday
June 4th, 3pm
Bad Taste Gallery

Big Kahuna

Thursday
June 9th, 8pm
Sirkus

Skátar and Reykjavík!



Big Kahuna

Despite their young age (16 years or so) Big Kahuna are just as tasty as the hamburger joint they take their name from. Taking cues from neo-new-wave acts like Franz Ferdinand they mix hook-driven rock music with a healthy dose of disco, making a hard-to-resist blend.



Nilfisk

NilFisk are lucky bastards. They lived every rockers wet dream when Foo Fighters' Dave Grohl knocked on their garage door, listened to them run through a few songs, and consequently invited them to support the Foo Fighters in Laugardalshöll, Iceland's second largest arena. This is your chance to see them perform in Iceland's smallest bar.



Skátar

Though we have elf-like post-rock acts (Sigur Rós), elf-like pop (Björk), elf-like electronica (múm); Iceland has always lacked a decent and straightforward indie-rock band. Skátar (Scouts) are here to set this right.



Reykjavík!

A punk rock band from Ísafjörður, hence the name Reykjavík. Known to make you sweat.



Bad Taste Gallery (Smekkleysa gallery),

Laugavegur 59, 101 Reykjavík.

Phone: 534 3730

Sirkus,

Klapparstígur 30, 101 Reykjavík

Phone: 551 1999



MUSIC AND NIGHTLIFE LISTINGS

SATURDAY MAY 28

Gaukur á Stöng: Á Móti Sól play, and DJ Maggi spins on the 2nd floor.
Amsterdam: Bjarni Tryggva and Company.
Glaubar: DJ Árni Már from Kiss FM.
Kaffibarinn: DJ Árni Sveins
Sirkus: DJ Árni Sveins
Hverfisbar: DJ Brynjar Már.
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
Vegamót: DJ Dóri.
Café Victor: DJ Gunní.
De Boomkikker: DJ Heavy Metal.
Bar 11: DJ Krummi and band Atómstöðin.
Café 22: DJ Matti
Nelly's: Dj of the house.
Sólón: Dj Þróstur and Dj Brynjar Már from midnight until early morning. Best dance and party music.
Pravda Club: Djs Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki Pain.
Celtic Cross: Downstairs: Live coverband, upstairs: Troubador.
Prikió: Long time no see: DJ Tommi White.
Ari í Ögri: Troubadors Acoustic.
Hressó: The band Tube, then dj Jón Gestur.
Grand Rokk: Mercenary (Denmark), Momentum, Myra and Jericho Fever. Admission is 1500 ISK and the first 100 get a free beer.
Nasa: Pop band í svörtum fötum.
Café Rósenberg: Santiago

FRIDAY MAY 27

Amsterdam: Bjarni Tryggva and Company.
Glaubar: DJ Árni Már from Kiss FM.
Hverfisbar: DJ Brynjar Már.
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
Vegamót: DJ Ellen og Erna
Kaffibarinn: DJ Gísli Galdur.



May 28 Í SVÖRTUM FÖTUM

Underground street newspaper Grapevine recommending the popular video-friendly "country ball" band Í Svörtum Fötum. You've got to be kidding me. We're not, we're just tired of watching bands that think stage presence means drinking a beer and staring at their shoes. Also, straight up, I've watched this band in the presence of a certain lead singer of Sigur Rós, and he openly gave props for the band's commitment to the crowd and to a healthy diet.

Café Victor: DJ Gunní.
De Boomkikker: DJ Heavy Metal.
Sirkus: DJ Jón Atli
Nelly's: Dj of the house.
Café 22: DJ Palli
Sólón: Dj Þróstur and Dj Brynjar Már from midnight until early morning. Best dance and party music.
Pravda Club: Djs Atli skemmtanalögga and Áki Pain.
Celtic Cross: Downstairs: Live coverband, upstairs: Troubador.
Bar 11: Metal-night: Bands Sólstafir and Momentum play and Krummi and Bjóssi from Mínus DJ on both floors.
Gaukur á Stöng: The band Tvö Dónaleg Haust plays, and Atari DJ Maggi is on the upper floor.
Café Rósenberg: Troubador Sváfnir Sigurðs
Ari í Ögri: Troubadors Acoustic.
Nasa: Arts festival.
Hótel Borg: Björn Thoroddsen and Cold Front Trio celebrate their new jazz album with a concert.
Prikió: Búðabandið play before world-famous Djs Gullfoss and Geysir do.
Hressó: Troubadors Daniel and Raggi, then dj Jón Gestur.
Grand Rokk: Maiden Aalborg (Denmark), Dimma, Lada Sport and Masters of Darkness. Admission is 1500 ISK and the first 100 get a free beer.

SUNDAY MAY 29

Café Cultura: Patagonia Jazz Quartet, admission 500 ISK.
Café Rósenberg: Jazz: Cold Front and Björn Thoroddsen with Canadian musicians.

MONDAY MAY 30

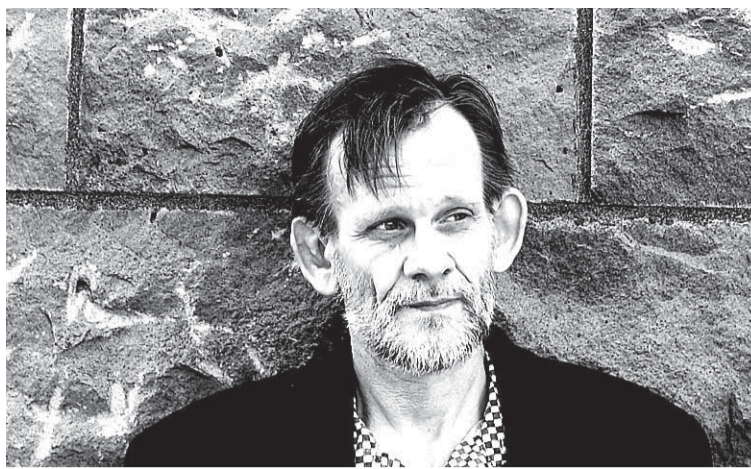
Kaffibarinn: DJ Ýr
Prikió: Fortune-teller Vala pays a visit.

TUESDAY MAY 31

Kaffibarinn: DJ Ýr.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 1

Pravda Club: Breakbeat.is / Drum'n'Bass
Gaukur á Stöng: Concert with Lights on the Highway.
Kaffibarinn: DJ Benni
Café Rósenberg: Jazz quartet Patagonia; acoustic guitar and bass, drums and vibes.



June 5 MEGASÚKKAT

The best songwriter, and damned near the best poet, in Iceland is notorious for erratic showmanship. But the Grapevine was floored by a recent show with this band of well-travelled musicians. The last show they put on was a best of decade kind of experience. From what we've heard, this should be just as special.

THURSDAY JUNE 2

Glaubar: Corona night! Franz from Ensími and Kristó from Lights on the Highway (aka Frizkó) play acoustic until 23:00 when DJ Maggz takes over.
Kaffibarinn: DJ Árni E
Thorvaldsen: DJ Hlynur Mastermix
Sólón: Greenroom session - dj Tommi White and dj Andrés with Heineken session - live electronic house session. Upstairs: Icelandic party session - live music. Five Heineken in a bucket - special offer!
Café Rósenberg: Gypsy Jazz jam night.
Gaukur á Stöng: Rock-band Ókind plays.
Pravda Club: Trio Eyjólf's Þorleifssonar play some jazz.
Grand Rokk: Opening of the Grand Rokk culture festival. At 20:00 there'll be horror and music from 22:00.



June 3 NILFISK & BIG KAHUNA

Nilfisk are famous for opening for the Foo Fighters, band that seems to release the same song on every damned crappy teen soundtrack released. If the Icelandic film industry continues to develop, and it needs sound-alike music for cheesy teen flicks, Nilfisk might provide this. Big Kahuna are the hottest new teen band in town. Put these bands together and you have one young hormonally-changed show.

Hressó: Ryan plays.

FRIDAY JUNE 3

Amsterdam: Coverband Úlírik.
Grand Rokk: Culture festival: 12:00 Music, 12:30 Seminar, 16:30 Red-wine expo, 17:30 Quiz, 23:00 Live music.
Kaffibarinn: DJ Árni Sveins
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
Bar 11: DJ Gulli and Singapore Sling.
Café Victor: DJ Gunní.
De Boomkikker: DJ Heavy Metal.
Café 22: DJ Matti
Nelly's: Dj of the house.
Glaubar: Dj Stjáni the party animal.
Sólón: Dj Þróstur and Dj Brynjar Már from midnight until early morning. Best dance and party music.
Celtic Cross: Downstairs: Live coverband, upstairs: Troubador.
Café Rósenberg: Troubador Helgi Valur performs song from his new album.
Ari í Ögri: Troubadors Acoustic.
Hressó: Kamp Knox, then dj Heiðar Austmann takes over.
Nasa: Pop band Sálin hans Jóns míns. Admission 1900 ISK.

TUESDAY JUNE 7

Kaffibarinn: DJ Arna

WEDNESDAY JUNE 8

Kaffibarinn: DJ Kári
Pravda Club: Hip-hop night.

THURSDAY JUNE 9

Thorvaldsen: DJ Hlynur Mastermix.
Kaffibarinn: DJ Jón Atli
Sólón: Greenroom session - dj Tommi White and dj Andrés with Heineken session - live electronic house session. Upstairs: Icelandic party session - live music. Five Heineken in a bucket - special offer!
Glaubar: Hreimur of pop band Land & Synir plays unplugged along with Vignir from Írafár. At 23:00 DJ Maggz takes the floor.
Hressó: Pálmar the troubador.



June 9 SKÁTAR & REYKJAVÍK

Reykjavík are from Ísafjörður, where the bands are extremely serious about showmanship and short attention spans. While the music is a little too hard rock for many, any show they put on is an experience. Playing with Iceland's answer to Devo, in a much younger and more rockin' manner, Skátar.

Gaukur á Stöng: Techno.is: Thomas P. Heckman, Exos, Bjóssi brunahani, DJ Aldís, Hermiger-vill (live). 1000 ISK admission.

SATURDAY JUNE 4

Amsterdam: Coverband Úlírik.
Grand Rokk: Culture festival: 12:00 Sviðin jörð play live, 12:30 Seminar, 14:00 Poetry reading, 16-20 Short film festival, 22:00 Live music.
Kaffibarinn: DJ Adda & Edda
Thorvaldsen: DJ Daddi Disco
Café Victor: DJ Gunní.
De Boomkikker: DJ Heavy Metal.
Nelly's: Dj of the house.
Glaubar: DJ Stjáni the party animal.
Sólón: Dj Þróstur and Dj Brynjar Már from midnight until early morning. Best dance and party music.
Celtic Cross: Downstairs: Live coverband, upstairs: Troubador.
Gaukur á Stöng: Giant rock!
Café Rósenberg: Hraun!
Café 22: Pink and Floyd
Ari í Ögri: Troubadors Acoustic.
Hressó: Troubadors Ari and Gunní, then dj Heiðar Austman takes over.
Bar 11: Truckload of Steel and Númer núll play whilst DJ Bjóssi spins.
Nasa: Reggae band Hjalmar.

SUNDAY JUNE 5

Grand Rokk: Culture festival: 12:30 Seminar, 16:00 Auction, 20:00 Theatre group, 22:00 Historical band Megasúkkat.
Kaffibarinn: DJ Adda & Edda.
Café Rósenberg: Óskar Guðnason Jazz Quartet introduce new album Bossanova Hot Springs.

MONDAY JUNE 6

Kaffibarinn: DJ Arna



Egilshöll, June 7 IRON MAIDEN

Iron Maiden bring their old and tired asses over to Iceland. That's right! Be afraid. Your parents won't like this kind of music... they're too YOUNG. Seriously, Eddie the 'Ed, Wow. A big evil guy with bad skin. See this concert if you feel grumpy that one nation got the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin, and you want to see the Yang. But to stop "taking the piss" as they say, Iron Maiden have made their livelihood on concert extravaganzas, and Icelanders love an extravaganza—if you can get in, go.

Egilshöll, Grafavogur. Tickets available at Íslandsbanki at Kringlan and Smáralind.



WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS

Live Music Reviews

JAMES APOLLO
May 11 Grand Rokk, supported by Þórir



Minnesota may have the most vital music scene in America, claiming responsibility not just for Bob Dylan, The Replacements, Prince and the like, but also for scores more songwriters who write the songs that make New Yorkers famous. Still, it was a surprise to find that a local musician had imported James Apollo, a lesser-known Minnesota band, to play a couple sets in Iceland on their way through Europe. Also surprising, James Apollo sounded like Okies. "We get that a lot. When we were in the Southwest, people said we sounded like every other band," James Apollo told us between sets. "In Minnesota, you get horrible voices and troubadours, we just do something different." To Mr. Apollo's credit, when he does Southwestern-style music, he does it well. On their recent disc, *Good Grief*, and live, they produce a layered, nuanced, and smooth sound much like Chris Isaak... basically, the sound a kid in Minnesota might imagine would be played in a juke joint in Arizona. The fault in the music was by no means the singing or the musicianship—both were smooth.

Song selection and styling just seemed... bogus. There were a few reasons for this. The first was completely out of James Apollo's control; a young troubadour, Þórir, was asked to open for the band. Locals know Þórir is talented, but he came on and put on the best show we've ever seen from him. With gut-wrenchingly honest delivery, and with smart but biting lyrics, he set the bar pretty high. The other reason James Apollo seemed phoney, other than the fact that he was singing music from the Southwest and wearing a cheesy-ass country shirt, was the fact that he sang songs he didn't seem to have earned. The best example was a jaw-dropping lounge act version of the working man's classic *16 Tons*. To hear a golden-voiced, cheesy-smiling 20-something suburb kid on his way through Europe sing "St. Peter don't ya' call me cause I can't go, I owe my soul to the company store" was akin to the Háskóli Íslands putting on a production of *Roots*. (They haven't done this yet, but I just thought I'd nip that in the bud now too.)

by Bart Cameron

DÝRÐIN AND BACON
May 19 Grand Rokk,
supported by
California Cheeseburger
and The Foghorns

In the week since this ensemble show, in which all bands seemed to play support for each other, we have been asked repeatedly by Americans, Canadians and various foreigners where one might buy California Cheeseburger. This goes to a stereotype that we can take care of right now: every band in Iceland does NOT automatically get a recording contract. Dýrðin has been performing a Nintendo pop for years,

but it has taken a while to fill out the sound and get the right amount of energy into the songs, which in the past sometimes felt a little bit like 3 am Japanese karaoke. With the addition of a keyboard player, they now have the ability to captivate a live audience. California Cheeseburger performs the most foreigner friendly music in Iceland at the moment—using harmonies and double rhythm

guitars, their music comes off as somewhere between the Pixies and Weezer. Finally, Bacon demonstrated why they had so many music critics screaming their praises weeks ago. In a shortened set, their jazz hard rock fusion set was mesmerizing.

by Bart Cameron

the hottest
place in Iceland's
coolest city

find out what's going on at www.pravda.is

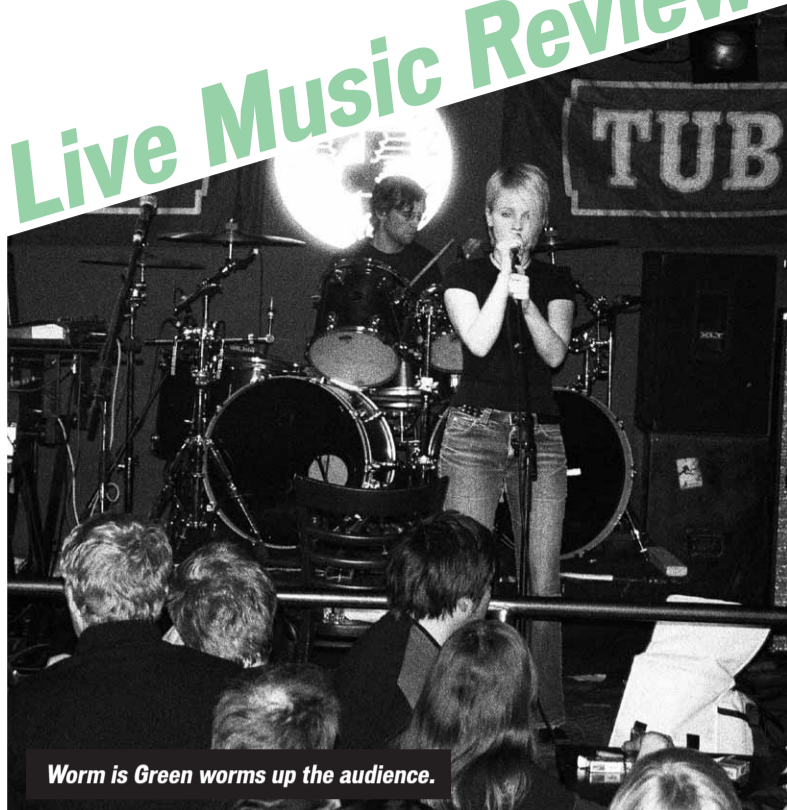


Mix
GORDON'S
with Pleasure

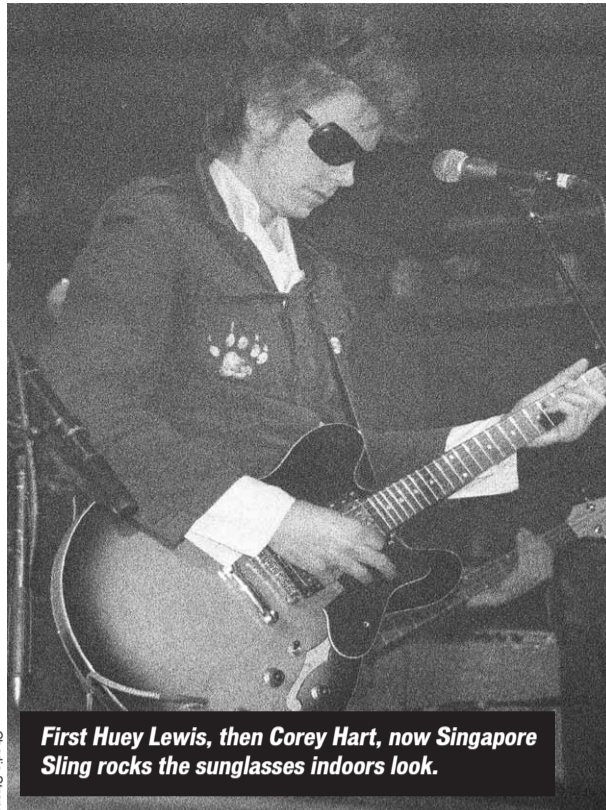


PRAVDA
CLUB / BAR

Live Music Review



Worm is Green worms up the audience.



First Huey Lewis, then Corey Hart, now Singapore Sling rocks the sunglasses indoors look.



Pollock Brothers hitting the exact note.

IAN CURTIS TRIBUTE NIGHT May 19 Gaukur á Stöng

Appearances by: Birgitta Jónsdóttir, Hanoi Jane, Taugadeildinn, Worm is Green, Magga Stína and Hringir, Mike and Danny Pollock, Singapore Sling, Sólstafr.

To begin with, we should name the winners: Worm is Green, Singapore Sling and the Pollock Brothers Ah, but was there a competition? Well, let's explain the idea of the Icelandic tribute concert. They'll tribute damned near anyone here: I will never forget the three-day festival honouring the musical oeuvre of Baltimore.

by Bart Cameron

Tribute nights are viewed as a competition between bands, because we can finally see musicians playing the exact same songs, just better. Occasionally, the competition results in good, a-type rock, and this was the case with the Ian Curtis Tribute Night, mainly because Ian Curtis' droning take on punk has been extremely influential on the local music scene.

Worm is Green, the atmospheric emo band, put forward their well-travelled rendition of Love Will Tear Us Apart to a strong response. The Pollock Brothers, famous in Iceland for their participation in the local punk scene two decades ago, were able to perfectly capture the sound of early Joy Division. And Singapore Sling, who have burned up their karma, reputation and line-up, somehow came on stage with the best sound of the night, and the most chemistry on stage. Chemistry in the Ian Curtis pointless self-destruction sense of the word.

As we write, we have just gotten word that Thurl Ravenscroft, the voice of Tony the Tiger, died at the age of 91. Perhaps in that tribute, Hanoi Jane and Sólstafr, bands that we felt put a good amount of energy and thought into their shows but went under-appreciated, might win.



Singapore Sling's keyboard player. He's new, he'll stop smiling soon.

Beer Garden
Dillon
Rock Bar
Rock on Dillon!
Dillon, Laugavegi 30, p: 511-2400

Lights on The Highway
Concerts with Lights on The Highway on Friday the 27th of May. Starts at 22:00.



The Beer Garden is in the back!

- Friday, May 27th
Lights on The Highway & DJ Andrea
- Saturday, May 28th
DJ Andrea
- Friday, June 3rd
Addi úr Sólstöfum
- Saturday, June 4th
DJ Andrea

Our house DJ is Andrea Jóns. She's the best, ask anyone!

Sunday - Thursday 18-01 Friday 16-03 Saturday 14-03

MOVIES AND THEATRE

Movie Reviews

Reviews by Bart Cameron



Lucas Saves His Franchise and Reminds Us What's Missing in Pop Cinema

Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith is imperfect and silly at times, but it still captures most of the magic in the original three Star Wars movies. What is more, with the lowered expectations that the abysmal other two prequels set up and the absolute shock of seeing a pop movie that takes on morally difficult material, Episode III makes a better impression than any Lucas movie since Empire Strikes Back—also released during a time of fluff movies and political crisis.

What Star Wars Episode III doesn't do is the following: it won't tell you what the hell George Lucas was doing when he tarnished one of the most loved movie series in history. With Episode III, all the earlier material is, for the most part, forgotten. If Lucas can't pretend he never made Jar Jar Binks or raced jet pods around in canyons, then he at least gives only the briefest of nods to his mistakes

and moves on. Beyond that, this movie takes on all the ideas that kids and adults have been asking since 1980, "How can an evil person have a good son?" And, to paraphrase Luke Skywalker speaking to Obi Wan, "How can a good person become a hurtful murderer?" Unfortunately, the answer Star Wars fans were provided with in 1983 was "Forget the moral dilemma. We've got muppets!"

The first hour of Episode III is dedicated to Star Wars toy and video game fans, I think. There are enormous star ship battles and fights with druids. As with the other prequels, the CGI looks like animation. However, in this movie, during battle scenes, the camera at least focuses on live action heroes, and dialogue, while stilted, is at least delivered with a certain amount of style. It isn't just that the script improved, it's that all actors in this movie seem to have been studying Harrison Ford, and

they've learned to get some life out of dead lines.

As the plot develops, we discover that one actor, a classically trained Scot named Ian McDiarmid, can deliver Lucas lines like they were Shakespeare. As McDiarmid also happens to be playing a pivotal character, and as he vaguely resembles members of the Bush cabinet, the movie genuinely begins to take off. Even George Lucas, the director, seems interested. Suddenly dialogues get crisp, fight scenes make sense, and we begin to care about other characters... also, all the stupid CGI crap starts to disappear. It is nice to see that the director of a movie where going to the Dark Side involves turning to machines, is only able to rescue his movie when he gets rid of computer effects and lets his actors do the job.

Much has been made about how closely the logic of Anakin turning into Darth Vader

resembles the logic George W Bush has been accused of using. Conservatives in America have even talked of banning the movie. To Lucas's credit, when he shows Darth Vader turn to evil out of fear, he does a better job of humanizing a villain than most of Europe has done in their summary judgements of Bush and America.

The film also has something for the film buffs out there. Lucas is close to his 1977 film student form, and you can see quotes from German expressionist film, an enormous amount of Kurosawa, and a handy little bit of Francis Ford Coppola.

Looking over the last two decades of blockbusters, including the overwrought Lord of the Rings series, Star Wars Episode III stands out as a return to old form, and it reminds the viewer how bad things have gotten.

You May Not Want to Avoid Sin City



From the director of Spy Kids 3D and the writer of Robocop 2 and 3 comes Sin City, a film noir shot entirely on a soundstage based on a comic book. Sound like hell? Wish someone would mail some estrogen to Hollywood? Well cool your jets a little. A few things: Frank Miller is responsible for introducing grown up writing and style to American comics. He made an enormous impact with Batman: the Dark Knight Returns, in which he presented the first ever female superhero without D-cup breasts.

Miller's love of Manga, or Japanese comics, probably influenced the Wachowski brothers in their making of the Matrix, and, even if it didn't, it at least demonstrates the multi-cultural influence on Sin City.

As for Robert Rodriguez, he seems to have ADD and want to inflict the world with it. On the bright side, he had Quentin Tarantino and Frank Miller co-direct Sin City, and he had an extremely clear plot to go off of.

It's just a sad fact: you can only say "The knights of ni!" so many times. Garth Jennings' (also known as "Hammer and Tongs") expertly shot film, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, is pleasant and you won't walk out of the theatre. But if you're the kind of person who has contemplated physically assaulting Monty Python dorks who don't understand that yes, witches and tiny pebbles are funny, but you don't want the joke repeated, this may not be for you. In 110 minutes, there is a solid 20 minutes of wit, delivered well by all involved. Then repeated. Over and over again.

For long time Douglas Adams fans, the movie may have more rewards, though a change to the ending has had some bloggers fuming. Not sure if that's not their permanent state, though. Bloggers. 'Cause they're always angry at something really stupid. Stupid bloggers.

Even Monty Python Jokes Get Old



Reykholt



CRADLE OF INSPIRATION

There was festivity and a touch of excitement in the air, in the bus on the way to Reykholt to witness the opening of the first cultural theme hotel in Iceland. Fosshótel Reykholt was reopening after extensive renovations as a cultural theme hotel, based on Icelandic literature, Norse mythology and classical music. This tourist class hotel includes a restaurant, bar, library, TV & Internet lounge, 24-hour front desk service, conference rooms for up to 150 persons and parking. The hotel features 24 spacious rooms with bathtub, 29 rooms with shower and 15 rooms without private facilities.

Nature was at its best on the way there, bright blue spots in the sky and the dullness of winter withdrawing for the neon green moss and grass. Nature looked clear and squeaky clean, the smoke puffs from the geothermal heat around Reykholt, smoke knoll made it clear we had arrived. Reykholt has a unique place in Iceland's history, the heritage of Iceland's greatest medieval writer, poet, scholar and historian, Snorri Sturluson (1179-

1241). It was in Reykholt that Snorri made all his literary achievements, when he wrote the sagas about the Norwegian kings in Heimskringla, the Poetic Edda, which teaches poetics and Nordic mythology, and the greatest of all sagas, Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar. His work inspired Tolkien in his creation of the Lord of the Rings and there are many references to Snorra-Edda in the trilogy. If you have not yet read the Poetic Edda then it is a must, there you will find the roots to what Icelanders are really all about. Forget the dirty weekends and drunken single moms at Oprah or eerie music pixies, Icelanders all dream about being warrior poets like Óðinn. There is even a poem in our passports from the Poetic Edda.

Reykholt used to be the centre where all roads could cross; that is before there were roads and people would ride on the tiny Icelandic horses to get around. It was also at Reykholt that Snorri was brutally killed by his two former sons-in-law.

Wandering around Reykholt you will also find two historical churches, an ancient graveyard, Snorri's natural hot pool Snorralaug and Snorrastofa, an exhibit of Snorri's writings and a research centre for medieval studies. Outside the old boarding school is the famous statue of Snorri by the Norwegian sculptor Gustav Vigeland, inside it is the reserve storage of all the books from the National Library. Just a few minutes drive from Reykholt are the beautiful waterfalls Hraunfossar and Barnafoss, Europe's most powerful hot spring, Deildatunguhver, and several lava tubes and caves to be

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explored.

I spent a week at Snorrastofa last year and stopped by at the Reykholt Hotel and it was like any other hotel, so I was really impressed about the changes that have been made in order to merge it with the history and culture of its surroundings. The transformation from the brutally boring to intensely interesting perhaps like the adventure about the ugly duckling. To stay at Fosshótel Reykholt is ideal for people who like

to relax in the countryside, enjoy reading, writing and are interested in extending their knowledge of Icelandic cultural heritage. You will find plenty of things as a fuel for the imaginative aspects of your soul, fantastic art and library of works inspired by the world of Norse Myth, and make no mistake about it this place is no less informative and interesting for locals as it is for guests from abroad.

By Birgitta Jónsdóttir

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The pool of Snorri in Reykholt area.

Fire, Grease and Beer Breath

Working the Viking Festival

Time lurches forward in fits and starts when you work in the kitchen at Fjörúkráin, the Viking Restaurant. I know, I survived a year working there. One moment I'm standing in the prep room, slicing row after row of tomatoes in preparation for the 400 or so people who are expected in less than two hours while the Viking musicians sit in the kitchen drinking coffee in their horseskin tunics, and then a moment later the three of us who have to cook for these people are running around and yelling at each other, the Viking musicians putting out their cigarettes and entering the dining room to greet the tour bus. Then I'm carrying 20 kilos of sliced lamb meat through a seething drunken mass of people outside of the restaurant, trying to avoid lit cigarettes and get the meat to the one of ten booths set up in the makeshift Viking village. And then suddenly the kitchen is closed: you clean what you can and leave the waitresses to deal with the hundreds of drunken tourists in paper hats with horns on them.

On the last day of the Viking Festival, I was mercifully put out at one of the outdoor booths to sell pita sandwiches while dressed as a Viking (i.e., wearing a horseskin tunic). It was June 17th - Independence Day - 2000. I listened to the storyteller repeat the tale of Þór, Loki and the Giant Worm for the five hundredth time and watched the Viking combat re-enactments. Steini, a neighbourhood teenager who was sort of the punching bag



Pagan rituals at the opening ceremony of the Viking Festival

of the kitchen, was listlessly turning a whole lamb on a spit. And then came the rumbling.

At first I thought it was a large truck driving by. But then I noticed that there was no truck, and that people were coming out of the restaurant, their houses, looking around. Seconds later, the rumbling stopped. Everyone filed back inside without comment. This was how I experienced the Independence Day earthquake of 2000, the one that tore up a few roads and cracked a house in two in Sellfoss.

Steini left the lamb, motionless over the fire, and came to my booth to ask, "Do you think that was an earthquake?"

"I think it was," I said, still not entirely sure.

Steini giggled excitedly.

"Wow," he said, and then looked worried and asked, "Do you think I should call my mom to see if she's OK?"

This kid had been washing dishes every day for the past month or so, was picked on mercilessly and yet did every shit job the kitchen staff could find without complaint. He had been so tormented, that he was afraid to ask for phone privileges after an earthquake.

"Of course, you should," I said and handed him my GSM. "Use my phone."

His mom was fine, much to Steini's relief. Later that night, after we'd cleaned the kitchen, I declined to go to A. Hansen to celebrate the end of the madness with the rest of the crew and went home instead. As I stretched out on the couch in my living room, the Viking songs ringing in my head, still smelling the spilled beer, cigarettes and charred meat, my muscles finally daring to let their guard down and relax, I knew that this was going to be the last Viking Festival I would ever work at. Maybe I'd come back as a guest some day, put on a paper hat, get drunk and eat three kilos of lamb like the other guests. It'd be nice to know what the other side of the experience is like.

By Paul F Nikolov

Fjörúkráin,
Strandgata 55, 220 Hafnarfjörður,
565 1890

The Art of meeting People in Reykjavík

What is the difference between Reykjavík and cities such as Edinburgh, Oslo or Hamburg? The main difference between Reykjavík and other European cities is geothermal water. Reykjavík is heated with thermal water, a natural resource that causes virtually no pollution.

One of the many uses of geothermal water is bathing. Nowhere else in the world are there as many pools and baths per capita as in Reykjavík, and no other nation frequents swimming pools as often as the Icelanders.

Reykjavík's Thermal Pools and Baths have an extremely positive affect on overall wellness, the main reason why so many residents visit them regularly. Reykjavíkians also enjoy going to the thermal pools to meet people and discuss matters of the day, a custom they have in common with the ancient Romans. This social activity mostly takes place in the hotpots: small circular pools of thermal water kept at temperatures ranging from 37°C - 42°C (98°F - 111°F).

Water in the hotpots has a unique natural ability to transform all who sit in it into philosophers -- which is why visiting hotpots at the Thermal Pools is a great way to meet Reykjavíkians. Not long after you sit in one of these hotpots, someone will address you in Icelandic. When you explain that you are here on a visit, an interesting conversation may well begin about anything between heaven and earth. And if you need reliable information about something in the city, for example advice about a good eatery or what's "hot" at the moment, a hotpot chat is probably the best and most dependable source of information.

You haven't really been to Reykjavík until you have visited a Thermal Pool and Bath, and sat back in a hotpot filled with wellness water and interesting people.



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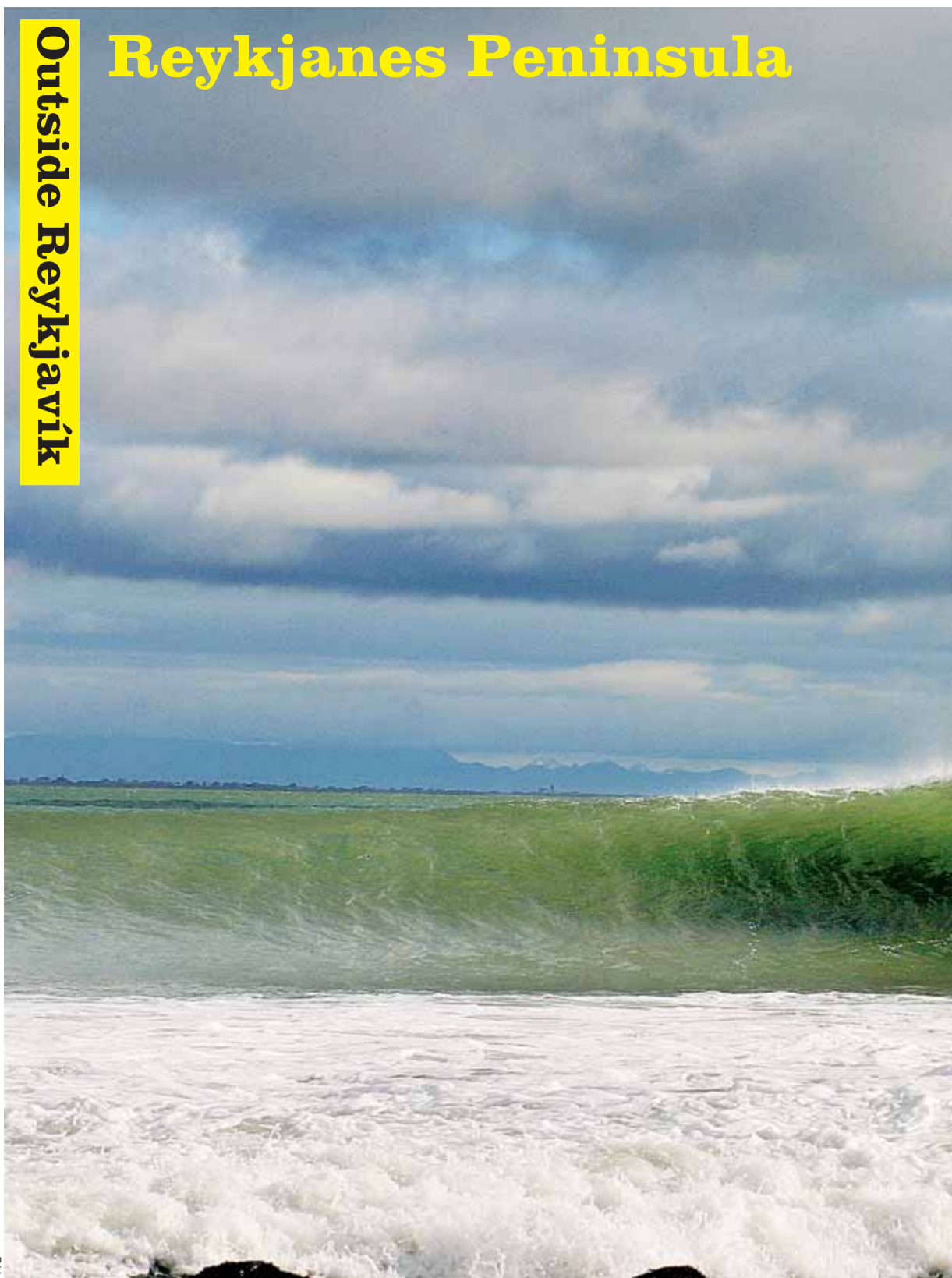
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Outside
 Reykjavík

Reykjanes Peninsula



WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAVE

I am a surfer and regular traveller to Iceland and had never realized that possibilities to surf existed here. With 4988 km of coastline in between the North Atlantic and Greenland Sea there is indeed a huge potential but with so much shoreline to explore I would need guidance to the best breaks available. My first port of call in my journey of discovery was to a well-known surfing website, www.wannasurf.com, where lo and behold I discovered four spots in Iceland. A little more research and I came across a surfer who was based in Keflavík as a US Naval Officer; although there no longer, he pointed me in the direction of a local surfer named Georg Hilmarsson "Iceland's surf guru". A strange feeling to hear those three words in conjunction together.

I contacted Georg shortly after and as with most surfers you come across, he was very approachable and more than happy to help me. Georg, I found out is a native of Reykjavík, as nearly all surfers here are, explaining why most of the known breaks are concentrated in the surrounding area. Moving to Australia at a formative age, he grew up in the bosom of surfing, learning his trade there and eventually returning to his native land in the mid nineties but thought better of trying to surf in the harsh extremities of the ocean. In 1998 a group of local snowboarders started surfing the area around Reykjavík, heralding the emergence of Iceland as a wave riding location and prompting Georg back into the scene. Using his vast experience from Australia, he was quickly propelled to standing out as one of Iceland's premier surfers, amongst the twenty or so who are regulars on the breaks.

Looking at the difficulties presented to the average Icelander on a normal day let alone a surfer, I ask Georg how easy it is to start learning here. He explains that many people have tried to start surfing but have not had the endurance and patience to last, "having strong determination, ...the ability and mental strength to get out there and stay out there is the biggest thing", he tells me. The hardest part personally for him is "putting a wetsuit on standing outside your

car, in sometimes the coldest, bitterest days and then still having the determination to surf after." The weather it seems is the one thing that perturbs people from starting.

To surf in Iceland you need to be prepared. It would be irresponsible to suggest that you could just throw on a pair of shorts, pick up a board, trundle down to the beach, jump on the next passing freight train of a wave, ride a tube and be back in your corrugated tin roofed house to watch the sun go down. The best season to surf in Iceland is during the coldest months of January and February when the winter swell increases the size and frequency of the waves. Therefore with the harsh elements attacking you will need to be wearing a full 6mm wetsuits, gloves, boots and hoods to cope with the conditions. Even on warmer days in spring like the day I went, full protection is needed.

Surfing in so much equipment at first feels claustrophobic and uncomfortable. It is difficult to manoeuvre but guarantees warmth, which is pivotal in these waters as hypothermia can set in only after a few minutes of exposure. All surf spots here are barren and open to the elements.

Surfing Sandvík

Expecting nothing less I arrived in Sandvík, the first stop on my surfing tour that day. Most



Surfer Georg Hilmarrsson cruising the waves in Reykjanes

surfing is conducted around the Reykjanes peninsula, with numerous breaks spread out from Keflavik to Þórshavn, the chances of running into anyone are remote. Sandvík, as its name hints, is a sand bed reef. Situated 10 km south of Keflavik, between Hafnir and Grindavik the beach is an isolated 2 km stretch of phenomenal beauty. The presence of sand gives a false sense of security but when surfing at any time in Iceland, you are subject to many dangers, not only are there the rock reefs to contend with but also extremely strong rips and under-currents. In Sandvík these are exceptional and the rookie surfer would have great difficulty if caught unawares here with the conditions varying greatly. The waves are kind to me on this day, presenting a good mixture of small and medium sized breaks, enabling some nice surf.

I ask Georg about the frequency and size of the waves normally, he explains that "in Iceland you don't think about the size... I am just happy to be out there enjoying it, every wave I get." He has a point, as the frequency of waves around Iceland are known to be erratic and there can be a long wait from one surf to the next, sometimes with months in between. Georg would know as he is part of a small but dedicated bunch who wait patiently by the edge of the ocean, staring into the void.

I feel this is what makes Iceland different from elsewhere, the attraction of its untouched scene. Nobody to hinder you, no one



Frida

detracting from experience, the ultimate surfing episode. Take any other well-known surfing spot in Europe and not only do you have to contend with a vast amount of local and travelling surfers queuing up for waves, but there is also the added danger of the "non-surfer" in the water, neither of these are an issue here. It is just you, the board, the freedom of the waves and sometimes the stares of the odd, old, perplexed fisherman.

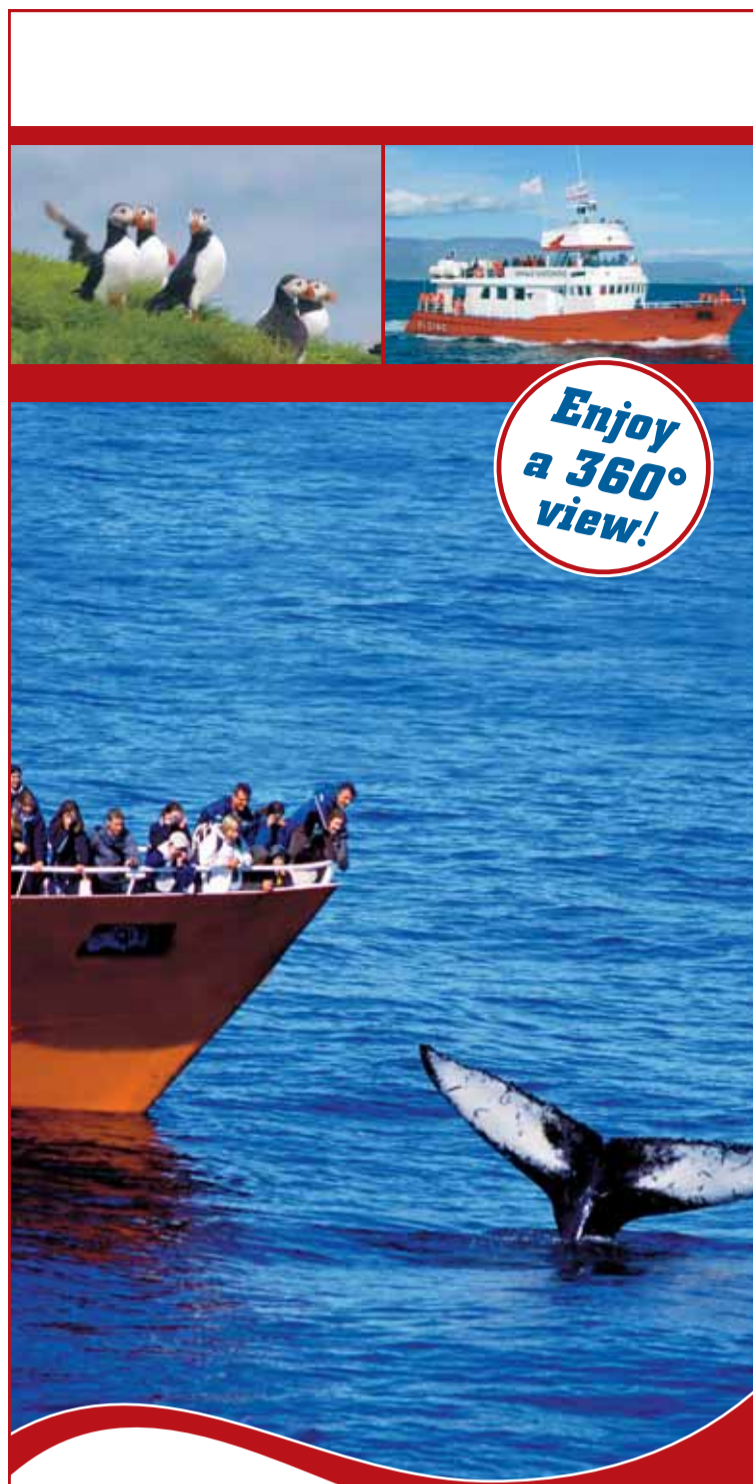
Georg told me that surfing originally came from the US Naval officers based here many years ago and more recently with officers from Hawaii and other notable US surfing areas being stationed around the area, word of Iceland's quality seeped through to professionals. World circuit pro surfer Ross Williams recently visited with a team of pros he surfed along the northwestern shores of Iceland. Amazed by the scenery and quality of the waves he has used it as part of a filmed

location in his recent movie Seasons.

Georg summed up the appeal of Icelandic surfing for me: "even though it's cold, miserable, very dark in winter and sometimes lacking in waves for a long time...it is still a surf paradise in my mind." I cannot agree more, the true words of a guru.

By Stephen Taylor-Matthews

Georg Hilmarrsson is currently in the process of pushing for new ways to increase the awareness of Icelandic Surfing. Further information and links: <http://www.surf.greind.is> Georg's surfing website (in Icelandic) <http://www.geocities.com/surfciceland/> Mike Loomis' guide to Icelandic Surfing (recommended guide in English)



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NEW YORK

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8 days in New York - Photo Journal

Interview by Bart Cameron

What did you do in New York?

Grapevine designer and overall impressionable youth Jóhannes Kjartansson recently journeyed to the land of Vice Magazine. He came back grinning but slightly shaken. We decided to grill him on his journey.

Why did you go to New York City? Don't you know America is full of fundamentalist Christians and fat people and malls?

Because I've always wanted to go and see it for myself. I have a friend working there... most of the Americans I've met aren't in those categories. I'd also heard that New York is a country within a country it's not American it's more a multicultural thing. I'm more excited by New York than maybe Texas.

It can't be that fun in New York. I mean, everyone in Reykjavik is an artist. Everyone in Reykjavik is a somebody. In New York they're probably all accountants or pornographers.

Accountants or pornographers? I once met Peter Saville, the designer of the Joy Division and New Order covers. He made a map of the New York grid and described how Manhattan is a creative centre for the world. A place where ideas melt together.

So you rented a car and drove around? Did they have super-jeeps?

No. No. I saw one Hummer. It was yellow, like in the ads.

I love Sex in the City, that's my favourite show ever. Then Friends. Did you do what those people did? Be rich and say stupid shit?

Yeah, I said a lot of stupid shit, because I was partying every night. I acted rich even though I ain't rich. I took my credit card along and acted stupid. And that made me rich.

Did you see TRL? (Popular MTV Show filmed in Times Square)

Which is? The guy we were staying with had 1000 television stations. I just thought that was excessive. The most fun I had was watching television ads. All the clichés in the world bonded together in 10 seconds. I was surprised that I was the only person who found them hilarious.

There's probably a lot of bands who sound just like The Strokes just walking around everywhere playing Strokes songs.

Yeah. I tried to see as many concerts as I could but the high season doesn't start until June. I saw Fischerspooner and that was the best show I went to. There are certain club nights like Misshapes that have 400 people all looking like the Strokes. But they all go home at 2 or 3 o'clock. No stamina. But they start partying early at like 8 pm. That lifestyle might actually be better than staying out until 7 in the morning like we do in Iceland, because that totally ruins the next couple of days.

Did I mention that tattoos are very popular in New York. Multi-colour roses and dragons tattoos on girls' shoulders and upper arms? And there was a no smoking thing. I liked that. You could go out and not smell like an ash tray when you got home.

I only asked about the Strokes. (Silence.)

Was it lonely in the morning there, when you woke up and all the stores were closed because people were hung over?

I didn't notice that much. What do you mean, stores were closed are you talking about Iceland? Oh, funny. But I did touristy stuff in the mornings. And was shopping in the afternoon—shops are open a lot longer than in Iceland. But I hate the tips. Tips are absurd. People get insulted if you tip them the wrong way. New York would be better without the tips.

They're probably three years behind Iceland in fashion in New York. All fashion coming from Reykjavik, Paris and Milan, where there aren't any fat people or fundamentalist Christians.

Is there any fashion in Iceland?

I'll ask the questions here. Did you feel embarrassed for the New Yorkers that they don't speak an ancient language? I mean, it's so impure.

No. I wouldn't say so. They all speak English and some Spanish, also; that's an old language. And they have different ways of speaking



English, so many accents. The girls have a very special way of talking.

And did you miss being around the most beautiful women in the world?

Not really. I think they are no less beautiful in New York. I figure they have very good figures in New York. It's funny, when I got back to the airport it was very easy to recognize Icelanders. When we went out, me and my friend Siggí, people could tell that we weren't American, and that was before we started speaking with our weird accent. It's not that Icelanders are more beautiful, it's just something different.

Do they listen to a lot of Mugison

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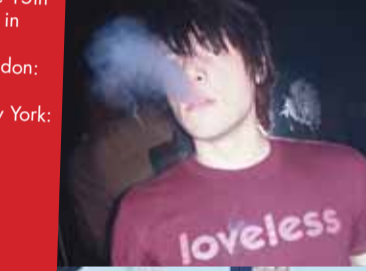
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and Trabant on the radio there?

I didn't hear them. But mostly I listened to the radio in the taxis. Taxi drivers mainly listened to traffic radio. But I know Trabant had a show a month ago there, I just don't know if they've made it to the radio.

Maybe if they were in a traffic accident?

No, I don't get it. Traffic accident? Yeah, exactly. Probably that's a good way to get publicity in New York. Just stop traffic on the way to JFK. Then everyone in the taxis would hear about you on their radios.



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When the ever-hectic young travel writer Anna Sussman, of the New York Times and various extremely glossy magazines, stopped by the Grapevine to get a Reykjavik perspective we made a deal: we told her about Kaffibarinn and Pylsa, and she agreed to give us the scoop on the New York scene.

The Bad: Hummers

In a diverse and confused city like New York, it's hard to pin the blame on one particular culprit. I can't tell if it was P. Diddy who popularized this fad, or they're being given out as souvenirs from Iraq for the soldiers finally finished with their extended, and then re-extended tours of duty, or if it has to do with President Bush and the massive tax cut he put into place on vehicles weighing over 6,000 pounds, but the Hummer has taken over New York City. Actually, wait, I think it's the last one. Which makes the Hummer not just the douchebag car, but the greedy douchebag car.

The Good: Extreme Textiles at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum

On the poster, it looks like a diamond-and-sapphire Van Cleef and Arpels brooch. You could pin it on your lapel if you wanted to, but in fact it's a polyester bioimplantable device for reconstructive shoulder surgery, meant for use inside the body. Like many of the objects on display at *Extreme Textiles: Designing for High Performance*, the embroidery of the blue-and-white 8-pointed star is an aesthetic achievement in its own right. It's easy to forget that as its primary function, the embroidery technique performs Herculean tasks, mimicking the multidirectionality of real tissue while allowing the implant to act as a scaffolding for tissue in-growth. Likewise, the warp knitted stainless steel band, which can withstand temperatures of up to 700°, looks more like a futuristic Issey Miyake scarf than a damping and transportation device used in producing car windshields.

That many of the pieces are displayed like design objects on sale at Muji or Conran makes it hard to conceive of how these textiles are impacting our lives. The pretext of the show, that by using

innovative materials, ancient textile-making techniques can have groundbreaking applications, is simple. However, making the cognitive leap from, for example, the narrow-weaving of an 11th century Peruvian wool turban band to a twill woven Kevlar fabric designed to prevent an airplane's fan blade from penetrating the engine case, can prove difficult.

The show begins with historic examples of textiles from the museum's collection that clearly illustrate, by virtue of accompanying magnified detail photos, the five basic methods of textile construction: weaving, knitting, braiding, netting, and embroidery. It is then organized according to each object's high-performance characteristic: stronger, lighter, faster, smarter, and safer. The textiles' applications span a wide range of fields, from architecture to aerospace and transportation, and are brought to life through the videos, touch panels, and interactive pieces stationed throughout.

Of all of the objects in the exhibition, curator Matilda McQuaid cites the medical textiles, and "how beautiful, how functional they were, as well as how significant the textile structure is in the ultimate performance of the object," as the most surprising elements of the show for her. Indeed, many of the objects, having been developed by NASA or for heavy industry use are so futuristic or high-performance that it's hard to relate them to your daily life, unless you are an astronaut or a race-car driver. Yet, while most of us will probably never need a space suit glove with embedded robotic controls, it's easy to see how the embroidered device for reconstructive surgery might one day save our lives. Which is a lot of responsibility for a textile.

Extreme Textiles: Designing for High Performance is on view at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum through October 30th, 2005.
www.ndm.si.edu

The Inevitable: Outdoor Sushi in New York

For all the heinous noise and environmental pollution, dining outside in New York is still pretty fun. It gets especially worthwhile as the

weather gets warm, girls start wearing slutty clothes, all the pasty people get tans and the city is all around nicer to look at. One of the best things to eat outdoors is sushi. It's tepid, its texture is such that the dirt from the New York air which inevitable coats your food isn't all that noticeable, and it doesn't make you fat, which is also important this time of year.

That said, there are good and bad places to eat sushi outside. The best is **Blue Ribbon Sushi**, 119 Sullivan St, between Prince and Spring, 212 343 0404. (Also with a location in Park Slope, Brooklyn.) Although they don't have outdoor dining on the premises, you can get your order to take away, and eat it in the park a few steps down the street. This way, you skip waiting an hour or more for a table, you're outside with the bums and drunkards, and you don't need to tip anyone. Plus, if you need more fresh-grated wasabi, which you probably will, especially if you've never tasted the good freshly-grated root before, it's right down the street. All of the dishes are recommended since the fish is of outstanding quality; but try the California roll with king crab, just to see what a California roll should really taste like.

The worst is The Garden at 18 9th Avenue, between Gansevoort and 13th St, 212 660 6766. I wouldn't worry too much about winding up here accidentally since apparently the only way to get a reservation is through the publicist since it's "very, very VIP and exclusive. Very strict door policy," according to the air-kissing floor manager, Josh. Enforcing this strict door policy is Josh's stooge, the gum-snapping, pony-tailed Zoolander extra of a doorman, who is backed up by two enormous bodyguards. If for some reason you still want to eat here, maybe because it is outside and has heatlamps and there's a high wall separating the dining space from the hooligans on the street (oh wait, they have the table next to you) there are a variety of extraordinarily boring sushi rolls, most of them priced to offend at around \$15-19 each. Evocative of a Zen garden decorated by Carmen Electra, with candles floating in a reflective pool and backlit by tawdry red recessed neon, this place is a sad reminder of everything that's wrong with New York today.

by Anna Sussman



Galleri List
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Galleri List

How to truly immerse yourself in the local works of art

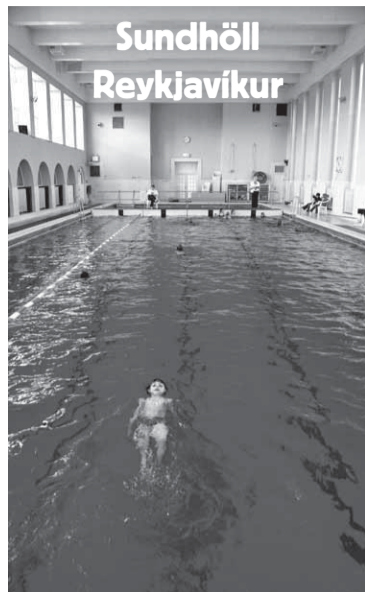
The Grapevine Guide to the Pools. Part 2.

If you tuned in last issue, we told you were the beautiful people take off their clothes, and where the less beautiful people go to do jumping jacks in steam rooms. In this issue, we inform the faithful Grapevine readers about the pools and other structures for bathing that are of significant local importance because of architecture or history.

We are taking a Reykjavík-based approach to this whole swimming pool thing. Part of this is because a devious American journalist beat us to the punch in writing about swimming all across Iceland.

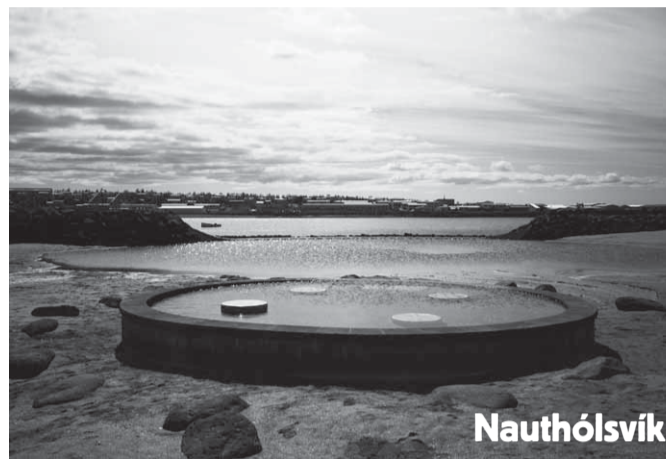
Another reason is that we have the sickly white skin and toothpick physiques of city-slickers. We take these bodies out to Akureyri, where W H Auden celebrated the beauty of the city pools in Letters from Iceland, and we would be mocked severely.

In any case, we have already described the most popular local pools, what follows is a list of the most historically important and beautiful, or, simply, pools that are also sites.



Sundhöll Reykjavíkur

Reason we like it: In our opinion, this is one of the most beautiful buildings in Iceland. The pool was designed by Reykjavík's most accomplished architect, Guðjón Samúelsson, who also designed Hallgrímskirkja, the enormous concrete structure in whose shadow the pool sits. This indoor pool, with its almost gothic maze of locker rooms, has been the feature of more than a few works of art, including a remarkable photographic mural by Roni Horn. **Reason we don't live here:** The pool is indoors. While that makes sense in a cold, windswept country, we just feel it makes a little too much sense. **Typical Quote:** I don't care what you say, I like the French version of Three Men and a Baby much more than the American version.



Hotel Loftleiðir

Reason we like it: The only indoor hotel pool in Reykjavík has been celebrated by locals for decades. With tasteful ornamental interior design, the small pool and hot tub is especially popular during the holiday season, when the whole Nordic swimming outdoors thing gets a little tiresome. A trip to Loftleiðir is regarded as absolute leisure. As one local told me "I went to that pool when I was 8, and I still remember it fondly."

Reason we don't live here: It's a small pool for special occasions.

Typical Quote: If I make enough money, I'm going to build on of these. And also I'll buy a big plasma tv. And lots of hot dogs.

Nauthólsvík

Reason we like it: One of the more absurd beaches in the world, Nauthólsvík features imported yellow sand, hot water pumped into the ocean, and various seldom-used volleyball courts. If you never fully liked the beach, this is the place for you. It's like Tim Burton redesigned L.A. Anybody who isn't sitting in the incredibly comfortable enormous hot pot is shivering, usually. And the view over the bay, with a beached vessel just across the harbour, is flat out beautiful.

Reason we don't live here: It's hard to get to. And it's only open in the summer.

Typical Quote: I can't believe somebody built this.

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Nauthólsvík, Located behind Öskublið
(where Perlan sits) and the Reykjavík airport
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by Bart Cameron

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Stuffed with stuff

"It is safe to say that we'll never know what Svanhildur's intentions were in the interview, and we'll never know whether Oprah has a disgraceful editing-style, either."

From Þórdís Elva Þorvaldsdóttir Bachmann's Feature. [PAGE 17-19](#)

"The authorities believed they were protecting the purity of our race and culture by their policies towards Jews and blacks. The idea that this was racism simply didn't sink in."

Þór Whitehead on immigration. [PAGE 16](#)

"Looking at his work one has to wonder why is he not a household name in Iceland. It is so obvious where the source of inspiration is for so many Icelandic artists."

Birgitta Jónsdóttir on Dieter Roth. [PAGE 30](#)

"I don't think it's as much of a coincidence as it first might seem, that the public debate articles in Morgunblaðið are right next to the obituaries."

From Eiríkur Norðdahl's column. [PAGE 10](#)

