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Hello, Regarding your undated article in <http://www.grapevine.is/undirflokkar.aspx?id=7> (REVERSING HISTORY, an interview with Salmann Timini, chairman of the Icelandic Muslim Association), I would like to refer you to the following quote from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West\\_Bank](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank) (Wikipedia).

Prior to 1967, there was no full-fledged university in the West Bank. There were a few lesser institutions of higher education; for example, An-Najah, which started as an elementary school in 1918, became a community college in 1963. As the Jordanian government did not allow the establishment of such universities in the West Bank, it was necessary for Palestinian students to travel abroad to places such as Jordan, Lebanon, or Europe to obtain their undergraduate and graduate-level degrees. After the region was captured by Israel in the Six-Day War, several educational institutions expanded into full-fledged undergraduate institutions, while others opened up as entirely new universities. In all, no less than 7 Universities were commissioned in the West Bank since 1967.

This is in stark contrast to your article, and reflects on the author's tendencies (to slander Israel) or lack of professionalism (in not checking the facts).

Regards,  
Ehud  
Tel-Aviv

*Ehud, You are referring to an introductory paragraph to an interview, in which the following is stated: "Born in Jerusalem in 1955, Tamimi experienced his country go from bad to worse when the 1967 war broke out. The Palestinian university system wiped out, he decided to go to the United States to study. In 1971, he stopped in Iceland on his way over and promptly stayed here."*

*This was written in early 2005, under the guidance of a different editor. However, I see no error. First off, Mr. Nikolov didn't write universities, he wrote university system—those studying in neighbouring countries during the invasion were unable to return home.*

*Still, I don't typically consult the Wikipedia for historical fact. The Wikipedia is edited by the public at large, it is not an academic enterprise. In addition, the very article you quote has a large disclaimer pointing out that "the neutrality of this article is disputed."*

*The previous editor had greater interest in this case than I, but is your argument that the Palestinian situation greatly improved after 1967? I'm afraid you'd have a hard time finding a source that wouldn't "slander Israel" on that topic.*

Hello, My name is Sarah Allen and I am an Icelandic-American. I just finished reading your article entitled Key Facts About Iceland and I was very impressed. The issues that you covered are very distressing and give our country a bad reputation. I have felt distressed for some time about the negative publicity Iceland has been receiving. (I saw that Oprah episode when it aired and felt very angry about how it was handled.) I just wanted to send you a pat on the back for how you han-

dled this article. Very well written and appreciated. Thank You! *Thank you, Sarah Allen. Everyone else can read our facts about Iceland at our website, [www.grapevine.is](http://www.grapevine.is), which hopes to overcome stereotypes perpetuated by guide books and advertising. I might also point out the writings of our columnist Þóráðs Elva Þorvaldsdóttir Bachmann as an excellent source for challenging stereotypes.*

RE: Happy Hookers I'm glad Ms. Þóráðs is OK with prostitution. Living in a country like Iceland - with a low incidence of poverty and a relatively inexpensive drug treatment system - it's no surprise that her notions of prostitution are her cherry-picked examples of people who gleefully sell themselves for movie tickets or airplane flights.

Þóráðs should maybe take a trip to west Philadelphia, or New Delhi, or East Los Angeles, or just about any other major city in the world where you'll find both a high incidence of poverty and poor drug treatment resources. For poor women, especially poor women who are addicted to drugs, their options are very few in such cities. I can assure that they're not happy to be turning to prostitution. For her to assert that "those who trade sex for money are often no more enslaved than" a girl who blows a security guard to get a seat on a plane is just flat-out inaccurate and a testament to how sheltered she must be.

Additionally, it's a shame that the same woman who discussed prejudice against Thai people in the previous issue should perpetuate the old stereotype of Thai women being sex workers in this column - without even stopping to consider why the women offering her boyfriend a "happy ending" might be in the situation they're in.

I'll continue to look forward to reading Grapevine, as all your staff are doing a fantastic job. My only hope is that Ms. Þóráðs learns the difference between starting a discussion on a topic with an intelligent argument and just plain demonstrating her ignorance of reality outside of our tiny island.

Sóley Jónsdóttir

*Þóráðs will respond in time. Until then, I would like to point out that she referred to the assumption of... that is... I would like to... what's that? Dinner's ready? Yeab, mom. I'll be right there. Sorry, my mother's calling, I have to go.*

RE: Column By Thórdís So you and your boyfriend didn't know about these traditional massage places that lined your street in Berlin.

You guys had no idea what goes on in them. Every guy[except yours] knows what goes on in them.

Your boyfriend had no idea...

The other day i was going to one, I patted my dog good-bye, told him where I was going, and he barked out to me, "ruff ruff". Which meant wear a rubber.

Your boyfriend had no idea...

The other day I was visited by a space alien. He said, "Take me to

your leader. But I've had a long trip, could we stop at a Thai massage place first?"

Your boyfriend had no idea...

He sounds like a keeper, marry him.

But be warned, danger lurks elsewhere...

In case your boyfriend is walking down a street and a girl on a corner calls out to him, "Hey handsome, want to have a good time?" She's not looking to go to the ballgame. And if your boyfriend is surfing the net, let him know there have been cases of people finding pornography without even trying. Shocking but true.

Harry  
Detroit

*Oh shit. No you didn't. No you didn't.*

Dear Editor, I wish to apply through you to publish my name and address in your most popular newspaper for me. I have to state that I am a real African who wants Pen Friends from your country so that we may share ideas and know each other's culture, etc.

Publication has therefore necessitated my application and I shall be extremely grateful if my request will be given an exceptional consideration to enable me to achieve my aim.

Below are my particulars:  
Name: Lydia Wood. Address: P.O. Box DA 654, Akim Oda, E/R Ghana, West Africa.

Language: English. Marital Status: Single. Hobbies/ Interests/ Wishes: Here I am, lonely single me! My name is Lydia wood and I am 26 years old. I have an impressive body with nice hair and eyes. I have never been married and enjoy music, travel, reading, sports, visits, cooking, fun, beaches, nature, culture, etc. I would like to meet and correspond with a special, kind, loving, caring, honest, sincere man for beautiful friends, love and marriage. Any race, age, nationality and religion. Write soon. Please, kindly try as much as possible to help me to meet or have someone special. Also, you can extend my advert into any company you know in your area.

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Yours Respectfully,  
Lydia Wood  
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Thank you.

*That's it. There is no fucking God. Lydia, your \$5 will sit somewhere in the office, until it is unceremoniously stolen by the many visiting journalists who come here to ask us about elves.*

I'm taking a vacation. But before I do, let me tell you all, those who question Þóráðs will suffer the wrath of Þóráðs. It's as true today as it was when I got it in a fortune cookie in 1986, in Berlin.

Your boyfriend had no idea...

The other day I was visited by a



Bart Cameron, Editor

## Seeking Foreigners

Once upon a time, the Reykjavík Grapevine was packed with Germans, Dutchmen, Finns, Canadians, and the occasional American crank, all joining together to voice our curiosities about Iceland and to try to create a community of foreigners interested in sticking around for the long haul. Scanning the pages of this issue of the Grapevine, I can't help noting: we lost our foreigners.

I know the foreigners are there, or at least some are there. In fact, I even know the foreigners are reading our paper, as they email regularly, and our pick up rates are doing well.

The question is, why aren't foreigners writing in the Reykjavík Grapevine? On the one hand, we are political and we don't pay well. But we never paid well and we were always political—though we used to stick to one side more than we now do. And then, we're not any less popular, we have constant applications for writers and staff, they just all happen to be Icelandic.

The answers to where the foreigners went became apparent as I read

## EDITORIALS

Gunnar Hrafn Jónsson's interview with Intercultural Center Director Einar Skúlaon. Skúlaon points out that foreigners should really be standing up, especially after a private citizen paid for a Gallup Poll to see if Icelanders were interested in a nationalist party. When the results came back that 30 per cent of Iceland was ready to ship people out, Skúlaon booked a series of meetings for foreigners to voice their complaints.

I believe Skúlaon's heart is in the right place, but, as a foreigner, in the weeks after this Gallup Poll, I sure as shit wasn't going to congregate with other foreigners, just as, in the weeks after Toshiaki Toma, priest for foreigners, received a death threat, I was a little edgy. Come to think of it, in the last year there was also an extended campaign to deport "professional protestors" who came from abroad, there has been constant coverage of foreigners and drug trade, including coverage of Eastern European mafias in a popular local newspaper.

It's a mixed bag. As the ground has gotten more hostile, the Grape-

vine, which is essentially a symbol of immigration and foreigners, has been growing in power, prestige and staff. With more money, we've reached out and found that foreigners don't want to be anywhere near a vocal paper. The joke I get from writers or educated people, which is less and less amusing, is "I barely get my work permit stamped without making any waves."

This is something to think about this Election Day. For tourists, welcome to a seat of democracy and a progressive country that is going through an awkward transition. For immigrants, please consider voting or getting involved in the discussion—maybe by writing for us, maybe by getting over to the Intercultural Centre, maybe by sponsoring a Gallup Poll. For Icelanders, thank you for supporting us and joining our team, but, please, take a look around. Immigrants made the Grapevine and a few other cultural institutions here, and now those key members of Icelandic society are disappearing. That should tell you something.

## So Sue Me

'The Nanny State' is a British turn of phrase, used to describe the general tendency of people in power to continue to legislate ad infinitum, or until every conceivable and inconceivable form of risk is eliminated. There is an Icelandic equivalent in 'forræðishyggja', or governmental paternalism, which refers to a government policy of deciding what is best for you as an individual at virtually every turn. Sometimes, intrusively so.

There are a lot of intrusive, anti-libertarian and frankly unnecessary Nanny State laws in Iceland. One such law actually makes it illegal to mention tobacco or tobacco products in any way that is not unequivocally negative and condemning. Presumably, then, writing: "I encourage everyone to violently overthrow the government and then have a delicious cigarette afterwards" is not allowed, but "I encourage everyone to violently overthrow the government and then think seriously about the dangers of smoking-related diseases" narrowly evades the wrath of the authorities. Then again, there are no doubt also laws against speaking in favour of rebellion, as well. Our masters think of everything, you see. They know best.

It is, to some people, completely unthinkable that a person could ever independently come to the conclusion that smoking was bad or that leading an armed contingent into

Alþingi mightn't be smart. To make correct decisions they think other people need the wisdom of government to decide exactly how to behave and even how to speak and think. In the minds of many of our legislators, the mere mention of revolt or a nice relaxing cigarette is so dangerous that the very words describing the concepts must be regulated and monitored by them.

We have hate speech legislation here, too, which is to me not just a blatant affront to our right to freedom of speech, but an insult to our intelligence. Outlawing people's right to publicly humiliate themselves with racist or homophobic rhetoric is not going to do anything to help them change their pathetic little minds about the issue, it just shuts them up for the sake of our comfort. It also does a disservice to those of us who might like to know exactly how crazy and evil these bigots are when free to speak their minds. If the guy whose anti-war rhetoric you like so much also happens to think the world is run by seven Jewish bankers from a vault in Switzerland, you're probably going to want to be informed so you can steer well clear of him in the future. The best defence against patently ridiculous lies is to expose them and tear them apart publicly, not to throw people in jail for telling them.

To be fair, very few people have

actually been convicted for talking nonsense in Iceland, the unspoken understanding being that most of the nation would be behind bars if our anti-idiocy laws were widely enforced. Alcohol importers are even starting to get away with letting people know about their beer, albeit under the guise of promoting visually identical cans of non-alcoholic beer. These kinds of laws are there for a reason, though—the government is seeking to raise the helpless masses.

Putting all our Nanny Laws to shame are the laws, still on the books, regarding blasphemy. While the punishment isn't forty lashes or public stoning, the idea that the police can knock on your door and arrest you for blaspheming against a religion you might not even belong to is seriously disturbing to me. It's a symptom of the fact that our supposedly secular society still has a state church into which every citizen is born by default. The notion that the government has a responsibility, or even a right, to protect God himself against defamation by harassing its citizens is an anachronism and an absurdity.

So the next time the government passes a thought-crime law or does something silly, irresponsible, criminal or immoral, just remember this: There's nothing quite as sweet and refreshing as that first post-revolutionary cigarette.

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1501-2000 g	1,645 ISK	1,050 ISK

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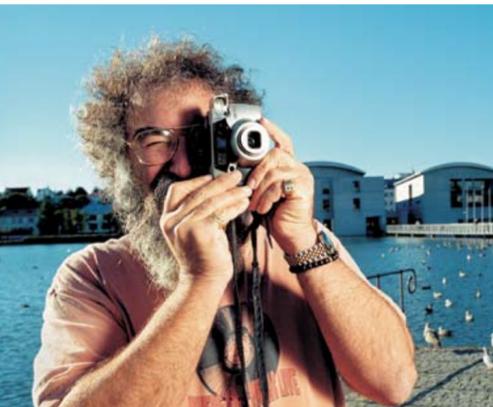
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## The Immigrant Vote

An Interview with Intercultural Centre Director Einar Skúlason

BY GUNNAR HRAFN JÓNSSON PHOTO BY GÚNDI

The Intercultural Centre, standing directly across from the National Theatre, plays a vital role in Reykjavík's immigrant community. Their staff provide an array of services and information, publish a magazine and even run a coffee shop on the ground floor. The Grapevine went to speak with the centre's director, Einar Skúlason, and asked him about the work they do there, what life is like for immigrants in Iceland, and what part he thinks they will play in the upcoming elections.

**/// The Centre's magazine has been covering the upcoming elections in some detail. What kind of reaction have you been seeing from the immigrant community?**

– I'd say most people I have spoken to have shown some degree of curiosity, but there is a significant segment of immigrants with voting rights that doesn't seem to feel these elections are any of their business.

**/// Do you think they are afraid of rocking the boat?**

– The general feeling seems to be more along the lines of: "This is not my concern." Which is odd, because when you are a taxpayer and a citizen of a particular society you are obviously going to need to interact with many aspects of service and governance in that society. When the time comes to actually vote and influence practical and political issues, however, people back off and become strangely indifferent.

**/// There has been much talk of forming an anti-immigrant, nationalist party in Iceland. This is obviously a worrying prospect for the people you represent, has it given more impetus to your attempts to involve immigrants in Icelandic politics?**

– I don't think people have responded strongly enough. I expected a much more pronounced reaction to this kind of talk. A dialogue must be established between immigrants and, for lack of a better term, 'those in charge.' There is a relatively small group of people in our society who wield more influence than others, and if immigrants do not become a part of that group there is a distinct danger of a cultural chasm opening up. Sadly, we have already seen this happen in some European countries.

**/// Do you think it's generally difficult for immigrants to have to give up language and customs to blend in?**

– You know, one often sees full page articles in major newspapers like Morgunblaðið, touting the achievements of some 'West Icelander' with far-fetched family ties to Iceland. Can you imagine the reaction here, if a major Thai newspaper ran regular stories highlighting the emergence of a culturally distinctive 'Thai Town' in Reykjavík? I think making part of the city a Thai language zone and renaming the streets would probably result in some mixed reactions, to say the least.

**/// What was the main goal you had when you launched your quarterly magazine?**

– Mostly we try to focus on education people about their rights and other practical information relating to life in Iceland. In the last issue we had a feature on the kennitala system, for example. National identification numbers are new to many people, and many of them find it hard to understand why you need some kind of centrally registered numerical code to do the simplest things, such as rent a video. We also make a point of interviewing varied people from all over the world, if only to give a small insight into the different cultures and societies they hail from.

**/// Do Icelanders, particularly those in positions of authority, freely grant interviews as well? How are the authorities treating you in general?**

– The relationship is quite good. We interviewed Jón Kristjánsson, the Minister for



Social Affairs, in our last issue and the parties currently in government were apparently very pleased with the result. They have requested a great number of copies to take on the campaign trail and pass out at workplaces that have a high percentage of immigrant workers. After the elections, we have a series of meetings planned with representatives of all the parties, during which we plan to go over what went right, what went wrong and how we can better involve new Icelanders in the election process in the future – both as voters and candidates.

**/// The politicians seem to be interested, then. What kind of impact do they think the immigrant vote can have on their election prospects?**

**"I'd say most people I have spoken to have shown some degree of curiosity, but there is a significant segment of immigrants with voting rights that doesn't seem to feel these elections are any of their business."**

– Some very rough math indicates that we have around 9000 potential voters of non-Icelandic origins.

**/// But most of them not terribly interested in exercising their right to vote?**

– Sadly, I don't think there is nearly enough interest in these elections. We hosted a series of open meetings with representatives of all the parties, and a number of translators, but only a handful of people showed up and we had to cancel the last three in a series of twelve.

**/// Did you get the feeling that those who did show up were learning from the experience, though?**

– Actually, I think the politicians learned the most from the experience. For one thing, they all seemed to come away understanding how meaningless the word 'immigrant' is when trying to describe such a disparate group of people. I think the main thing the Icelanders came away with was an appreciation of

the diversity of the immigrant community in Iceland.

**/// What campaign issues concern immigrants the most, in your experience?**

– The school system is a major concern, as are day care facilities, as the way those institutions are run can touch on many critical issues such as language proficiency, cultural identity and tolerance. Secondly, there is housing, particularly its rising cost.

**/// Do they tend to vote along 'left-right' political lines?**

– One thing that worries me sometimes is the degree to which the political leanings of political parties in Iceland can be translated

into terms that outsiders can relate to. I think the political landscape in Iceland is not all that varied, most of our politicians seem to straddle the middle and there isn't any fascist or communist party to draw away the fringe. Thus it's important to explain to people that the Independence Party is not ultra-conservative and the Left Greens aren't actually a communist party, either. We don't have those extremes.

**/// Do immigrants in Iceland feel empowered, generally speaking?**

– I'm afraid that would be the exception. There has been some talk about moving democracy in Iceland to the grass roots level and making politics more local, but non-native Icelanders as a group have not been part of that trend.

**/// Couldn't that be key, then, to increasing the election turnout – to give immigrants a better opportunity to become invested in their adopted society?**

– Well, that's basically the message we have

been trying to get across. Iceland is a democratic country, we have a parliamentary system and it is possible to affect change through that system. Apart from our efforts to promote this approach, the political parties themselves will also need to open up to a much greater extent.

**/// The Intercultural Centre is the main hub for non-native residents and citizens of Iceland, which of your services are most in demand?**

– The translation and legal services, definitely. We translated over thirty five hundred documents last year and have a registry of about two hundred interpreters. As far as the legal side goes, we have a perpetually booked lawyer here that gives free advice, mostly pertaining to residency permits and such. Many people come here without the expectation of settling down, only to change their minds. They then require legal advice on how to go about applying for the paperwork their family would need to join them – in cases where that is even possible. It should be noted that, as of two years ago, it became a lot harder to get such permits.

**/// Lastly, what do you, and the people who come to your centre, need the most right now?**

– There is not nearly enough being done to help people learn the language in a timely and affordable manner. Politicians pay lip service to this problem, but there is little movement to be seen.

**/// Árni Magnússon, then Minister of Social Affairs, once told the Grapevine, when asked how he could defend the policy of making 150 hours of Icelandic classes mandatory while doing nothing to curb their rising cost: "That's life."**

– That's an interesting way to put it. I wonder if "well, that's life" would still be his response if government mismanagement of immigration issues were to actually ignite serious social strife in this country in the future.

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### THE VIKING : INFO

Hafnarstræti 3  
101 Reykjavik  
tel: 551 1250

Hafnarstræti 104  
600 Akureyri  
tel: 461 5551

email: theviking@simnet.is



## News in Brief

BY GUNNAR HRAFN JÓNSSON, SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON AND PAUL F. NIKOLOV  
COMPILED BY STEINUNN JAKOBSDÓTTIR PHOTOS BY FRIKKI

### President to Lay Cornerstone to Economically Unviable Dam

The president of Iceland, Mr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, placed the cornerstone for the construction of an operational house for the Kárahnjúkar dam on May 12. Arriving in a chartered jet, 180 guests in Egilsstaðir witnessed the event and took a tour of the dam site.

Meanwhile, the Icelandic Nature Conservation Association issued a statement claiming that the dam's economic viability is grossly overstated.

According to the statement, the price of energy is 1.20 ISK per Kwh. This is a lower number than the Icelandic Nature Conservation Association used in an earlier projection of the economical viability of the dam. According to that projection, the dam's worth is minus 40 billion ISK, in relation to a normal required rate of return.

In a conversation with The Grapevine, the President of the Icelandic Nature Conservation Association, Árni Finnsson, said, "We obtained this information from a person we consider to be an extremely reliable source. We thought today would be a good day to reveal the information."

### Iceland's First Lady Involved in Diplomatic Incident in Israel

Dorrit Moussaieff, the Israeli-born wife of President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, was detained at Israel's Ben Gurion airport recently, after she got into an argument with security personnel who refused to acknowledge her British passport. Part of the incident was captured on film and shown on Israeli television, where it was described as an international incident.

Moussaieff, who was in Israel on a private visit, is a British citizen despite being born in Jerusalem in 1950. She told RÚV that the airport staff demanded that she present them with an Israeli passport. When she couldn't produce one, she says they were rude and aggressive,

asking her suggestive and personal questions such as "What is it like to have a husband who's not a Jew?"

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency, JTA, has reported that during the exchange the First Lady responded with various insults of her own, including the statement: "This is why everyone hates the Jews."

Moussaieff told RÚV that in the heat of the moment she may have gone too far, but that the rudeness of the security staff was inexcusable.

### Controversy Escalates Over Baugur Case

A recent series of reports by RÚV news program Kastljós sparked fresh rows and controversy earlier this month over the legal case being pursued against the owners of financial and retail behemoth Baugur. Representatives of Baugur accused Kastljós editor Þórhallur Gunnarsson and his staff of bias and of being personal friends with Baugur's main accuser, Jón Gerald Sullenberger.

Amongst those to come forward with their own statements regarding the program's reporting so far are Baugur's Chairman Hreinn Loftsson, its former CEO Tryggvi Jónsson, current CEO Jón Ásgeir Jóhannesson and his father and Bónus' founder Jóhannes Jónsson.

One of the main issues this time around is the credibility of Sullenberger as a source. The Reykjavik district court, which recently threw out a different set of charges against the Baugur owners that were prompted by allegations made by Sullenberger, has in a previous decision found him to be an unreliable witness and one motivated by personal grievances.

While the Baugur representatives continue to criticise the Kastljós reporters' decision to omit any references to that fact and to give extensive airtime to Sullenberger's statements, editor Þórhallur Gunnarsson has defended his program by issuing a statement say-

ing that the previous charges were unrelated and not relevant to the specifics that were being discussed on the program in question.

### Stoke Holding Sells Shares In Stoke City

Stoke Holding, a company belonging to Icelandic investors, agreed earlier this month to sell its 60% share in Stoke City Football Club, to Peter Coates, former chairman of Stoke City FC from 1989 -1998.

Both parties have agreed to the deal in principle, and the matter should be resolved with in two weeks. Stoke Holding CEO Gunnar Þór Gíslason was unavailable for comment.

A group of Icelandic investors bought Stoke City FC in 1999. Former manager of the Icelandic national team, Guðjón Þórðarson, was installed as manager. After a turbulent three years at the club, where Þórðarson clashed with members of the board repeatedly, he was let go.

In came Tony Pulis, who was later let go, after clashing with the board on the matter of choosing homegrown players at the expense of Icelandic talent.

Next up was the Dutch Jon Boskamp. He resigned after clashing with the board and team officials.

Despite turbulent times, Stoke City has been promoted once during the Icelandic reign, and finished this year 13th in the table for English League Championship, the equivalent to the former English 1st division.

### Women Challenge Football Authorities

The Association of Icelandic Women's Movements issued a statement the 4th of May, challenging the Icelandic Football Association and the German Embassy in Iceland to put a stop to the increase in the number of prostitutes in Germany during the World Cup in football



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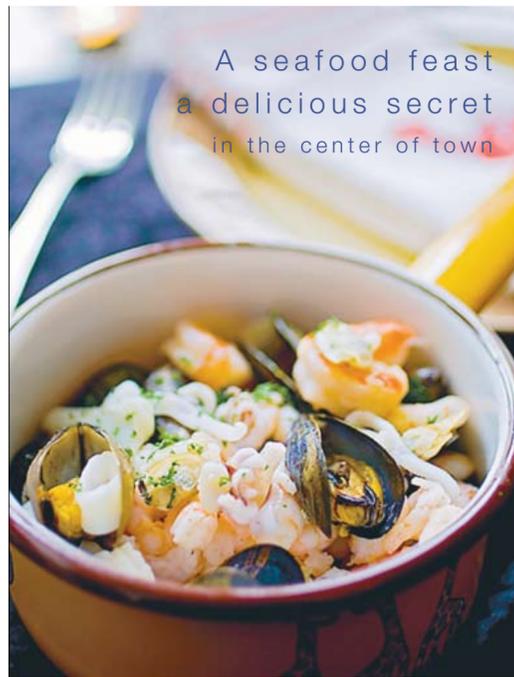
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this summer.

According to The Coalition Against Trafficking Women, an estimated 40,000 women will be “imported” from Mid- and Eastern Europe to Germany, where prostitution is legal, to accommodate the booming business created by the influx of 3,000,000 football fans, mostly males, who are projected to attend the football World Cup.

In Berlin, brothels are being constructed, and reports of drive-in sex huts have appeared.

According to the issued statement from the Association of Icelandic Women's Movements, this equates sports and sex, objectifies women as sex toys for men, and increases human trafficking.

Geir Magnússon, the manager of The Icelandic Football Association told the Grapevine that the board would convene to address the challenge.

#### Finance Minister Accused of Deception

Former Minister of Social Affairs, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, strongly criticised the current Minister of Finance, Árni Mathiesen, for what she called “lying to the parliament and the nation.”

In a parliamentary session early in May, Sigurðardóttir accused Mathiesen of “denying reality” as he still stands by his claims that his party has lowered the average person's tax burden. She pointed to figures, supported by all the

country's leading authorities on economics, that indicate that people in the mid to low income bracket are effectively paying two to three times more of their total wages to taxes than they were in 1995.

When asked to elaborate, Sigurðardóttir told the Grapevine: “This is my second parliamentary query regarding this matter, and once again the minister has confirmed that he deceived us about taxation under his government. All leading economists and commentators agree that the figures clearly show that people with low or average incomes have a significantly heavier tax burden today than they did before the current government came to power. Árni Mathiesen, Geir Haarde and Friðrik Sophusson have probably increased taxes on this significant group of people more than any other Finance Ministers in the history of Iceland.”

#### Tax Returns to Be Presented in Seven Different Languages Next Year

The Icelandic Internal Revenue Service has announced plans to provide non-Icelandic speakers with tax returns in their native languages, starting next year. The languages in question are: English, Russian, Spanish, Chinese, German, French and Polish.

So far the scheme is limited to those who pay income tax and possess no assets other than savings, and everyone else will still have

to file a standard tax return form. However, most of those have now been made available in English.

#### Apologies for Straying From the Asphalt Path

Magnús Oddsson, Chairman of the Icelandic Tourist Board, has apologised for an advertisement in which a heavily modified jeep was seen driving through rough Icelandic terrain. Oddsson told Morgunblaðið in the beginning of May that the accompanying text: “Where monster trucks create the roads” was entirely inappropriate and deeply regrettable.

The reason for the controversy is the fact that off-road driving is technically illegal in Iceland. Despite having large swathes of uninhabited countryside with no road system and far outside the beaten path, and despite the fact that aggressive subsidized agriculture is largely to blame for the sorry state of the country's ecology, off-road driving has been fingered by politicians as a main culprit in erosion and was consequently outlawed here many years ago.

Oddsson told Morgunblaðið: “This came as a strong shock to me, as I have spent years fighting against the publication of depictions of off-road driving in Iceland.”

He added that the ad agency responsible had been contacted and ordered not to let the advertisement be republished in any form in the future.



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- A skiing paradise (with home-made snow if needed) 2 swimming pools, 3 fitness clubs, an indoor skating rink, the world's northernmost 18 hole golf course, planned walking routes, mystery tours -and then there is of course the pearl of Kjarnaskógur woodland.

Further information on events and travel opportunities in Akureyri at [akureyri.is](http://akureyri.is) and [nordurland.is](http://nordurland.is)



## Grapevine's City Council Guide Who They Are and How They Vote



The Leftist-Green Party (Vinstrihreyfingin-Grænt Frambod)

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

**Mayoral candidate:** Svandís Svavarsdóttir

**Current number of seats on city council:** 2

**Registered members:** about 1,400

**Strange but true:** Mayoral candidate, Svandís Svavarsdóttir is the daughter of former minister and leading left figure Svavar Gestsson.

**Website:** www.vg.is

**E-mail:** vg@vg.is

**Tel.:** 552-8872

**Address:** Pósthólf 175, 121 Reykjavík



The Social Democratic Party (Samfylkingin)

**Guiding principles:** Left-centrist, social-democratic

**Mayoral candidate:** Dagur B. Eggertsson

**Number of seats on city council:** 4

**Registered members:** about 20,000

**Strange but true:** Mayoral candidate Dagur B. Eggertsson wrote a two volume biography of former Progressive Party chairman Steingrímur Hermannsson.

**Website:** www.samfylking.is

**E-mail:** samfylking@samfylking.is

**Tel.:** 414-2200

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



The Progressive Party (Framsóknarflokkurinn)

**Guiding principles:** Right-centrist, pro-EU, pro-heavy industry; believes in fewer economic and environmental regulations while strengthening the social system.

**Mayoral candidate:** Björn Ingi Hrafnsson

**Number of seats on city council:** 2

**Registered members:** about 10,000

**Strange but true:** Björn Ingi Hrafnsson, the party's primary candidate, was one of the most vocal supporters of the Iraq invasion.

**Website:** www.framsokn.is

**E-mail:** framsokn@framsokn.is

**Tel.:** 540-4300

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



The Liberal Party (Frjálslyndir)

**Guiding principles:** Right-centrist, emphasising the rights of fishermen and increasing government transparency.

**Mayoral candidate:** Ólafur F. Magnússon

**Number of seats on city council:** 1

**Registered members:** about 2,000

**Strange but true:** Ólafur F. Magnússon, the party's primary candidate, was a member of city council as a representative for the Independence Party.

**Website:** www.frljalslyndir.is

**E-mail:** xf@xf.is

**Tel.:** 552-2600

**Address:** Aðalstræti 9, 101 Reykjavík



The Independence Party (Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn)

**Guiding principles:** Right wing, believes in further privatisation in all areas of society; anti-EU

**Mayoral candidate:** Vilhjálmur Þ. Vilhjálmsson

**Number of seats on city council:** 6

**Registered members:** about 34,000

**Strange but true:** Mayoral candidate Vilhjálmur Þ. Vilhjálmsson has confessed on his homepage that he is easily brought to tears.

**Website:** www.xd.is

**E-mail:** xd@xd.is

**Tel.:** 515-1700

**Address:** Háaleitisbraut 1, 105 Reykjavík

## And this issue's question is . . .

What is the key issue the citizens of Reykjavík will be voting on in the upcoming elections?

■ **Leftist-Green Party:** "The big issue in this election is that the citizens of Reykjavík must guard City Hall from the government. It is imperative that the parties sitting in majority on Parliament do not claim power in Reykjavík as well. There are many important issues for the citizens of Reykjavík that have been stranded by the government." *Svandís Svavarsdóttir, primary candidate.*

■ **Social Democratic Party:** "The key questions regard development and services and how we want our city to be run. We put an emphasis on moving the administrative power closer to the citizens. We want to be responsible but still invest in

service for the people." *Dagur B. Eggertsson, primary candidate.*

■ **Progressive Party:** "In my opinion, with the way politics have been developing, the voters should consider whether they would like one party to be in majority on city council. They would not want one party to be in majority in parliament, and only have to consider narrow party interests. People have a good experience with coalition governments, and the people of Reykjavík have a good experience with coalitions on city council." *Björn Ingi Hrafnsson, primary candidate.*

■ **Liberal Party:** "The key issue is that this is a second chance to vote on the location of the Reykjavík

airport. The location of the airport is the biggest city planning and transportation issue facing us.

There was no real conclusion from the 2001 election. We are a clear alternative in this matter." *Ólafur F. Magnússon, primary candidate.*

■ **Independence Party:** "I think the voters must decide whether they want a vote for one united group with a clear vision and lucid policies or if they want to bring in another coalition concoction under the guidance of Dagur Eggertsson." *Vilhjálmur Þ. Vilhjálmsson, primary candidate.*



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## We're the Party that Cares for Old People AND Babies

The Grapevine Guide to the 2006 Reykjavik Mayoral Elections

BY SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON

There is considerable anticipation regarding the upcoming elections in Reykjavik. Going into the election, it looks as if the Independent Party might win back City Hall. For decades, The Independence Party had a stronghold on city elections, receiving a majority in every election from 1930 – 1994, with the exception of one term, 1978-1982.

In 1994, other parties formed a political coalition and subsequently won the election that year, and they have managed to maintain power in City Hall for three terms. Negotiations for the continued co-operation of the parties in the coalition fell through last year. As a result, The Progressive Party now faces extinction. According to the latest IMG Gallup poll, the party would not get a representative voted on city council if the election were

held today.

The turmoil surrounding the coalition has put the Independence party in a favourable position. According to the same IMG Gallup poll, the party would receive 49% support in the city elections, enough to put eight people on city council, thereby securing a majority.

In terms of politics, the race for City Hall is really a race for bragging rights. There are no clean-cut lines in form of ideological differences between the parties.

"I can understand that people have a difficult time seeing the difference between the different campaigns," Social Democrat mayoral candidate Dagur B. Eggertson told The Grapevine, possibly offering the understatement of the year. "People seem to have laid down their arms and come to an agreement

over certain issues."

The location of the Reykjavik airport has been blown up to be a big issue, which is curious, considering that the issue was put to the polls in the 2002 elections and the decision to relocate it has already been made. All the parties, with the exception of the Liberal Party, have agreed that the airport should be relocated. There is a committee looking at different options for the relocation, but it is not expected to reach conclusions any time soon.

Other issues that have been in focus are the costs of day care for pre-schoolers and the conditions of the elderly and traffic congestion. On all issues, the parties are more or less in total agreement. At the end of the day, this will probably be the most boring campaign fight in the history of man. During the last elections,

at least we had two candidates that hated each other.

The total number of registered voters in Reykjavik in the upcoming elections is 86,000. Every Icelandic citizen above the age of 18 is eligible to vote. In addition, all foreign citizens who have had legal residence in Iceland for at least five years on election day, i.e. from May 27th 2001, and are at least 18 years old have the right to vote and run for seats in the city elections. Scandinavian citizens (Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish nationals) have the right to vote after three years residence in Iceland prior to Election Day, i.e. from May 27th 2003. The number of foreign citizens with voting rights in the city elections is about 2300.



### The Independence Party

**Primary candidate: Vilhjálmur P. Vilhjálmsson. 60-year-old lawyer and a current member of the city council.**

The Independence Party has built their campaign platform around the curious slogan "Time to live." The slogan, and the platform, is based on a poll that revealed that 95% of the people of Reykjavik want to spend more time

with their family. Well, Reykjavikians, you asked for it, you got it. The Independence Party, the corporate watchdog, has figured out how you can spend more time with your family with an innovative four point plan.

Not really. The innovative plan consists of reducing the costs of pre-school (at least they are not promising to make it free like everyone else), integrating schools, sports and arts, as well as muddled statements like improving

schools by letting parents be more active in school administration. Now that is innovation.

Other platform highlights include: New developments and apartment buildings, solving traffic congestion problems with better flow through bigger intersections, preferably by placing key traffic veins in tunnels under the city, and better care for the elderly.

And the airport?

Well, they have spoken very vaguely

about the airport, but they have said that the airport should be relocated.

I know this may all sound about as fresh and innovative, as the Hey Ya song did when you heard it on the radio for the 8000th time that month. The Independence Party knows this as well, they are just saying they are better equipped at executing this joint platform.



### Social Democratic Party

**Primary Candidate: Dagur B. Eggertsson. 33-year-old doctor and a current member of city council.**

"Personally I would want to improve the competitiveness of the city," Eggertsson told the Grapevine. "We need to build a city that is competitive with the best cities in the world," mayoral candidate Dagur B. Eggertson answered when asked to spell out what issues he

would want to emphasise if he gained power in City Hall.

"We must place an emphasis on developing a campus area and a knowledge industry around the universities, we need to promote the financial sector, tourism and the smart economy. The foundation for this is to strengthen the service level of the city and the welfare of our citizens," he added.

The Social Democrats have proposed developmental plans for 6000 new apartments in the Reykjavik area.

"The city needs to focus on diversity, not just luxury. We have to make a housing rental market a viable option for people," Eggertsson told us.

In addition to suggesting new development plans, the platform highlights include: Improved care for the elderly, making pre-school free, integrating grade school, sports and arts, improving schools by letting parents be more active in school administration and improving public transportation. They also propose to solve traffic

congestion problems with better flow through bigger intersections, preferably by placing key traffic veins in tunnels under the city.

And the airport?

"The decision regarding the airport should be taken in a professional manner, with no rush of judgement," Eggertson said. Whatever that means in terms of their position, the party in has, in the past, claimed the airport should be relocated.



### Leftist-Green Movement

**Primary candidate: Svandís Svavarsdóttir. 41-year-old linguistic and sign-language interpreter.**

As indicated by their name, The Leftist-Green Movement is a left-leaning, environmental-friendly political movement.

"Personally, I would like to see both pre-schools and grade schools free of charge. That includes both day-care

centres and school meals," Svandís Svavarsdóttir, the party's primary candidate, told The Reykjavik Grapevine when asked what issues she would place the most focus on. As luck has it, she might see her pet projects come to fruition even if she is not elected, thanks to the joint campaign platform of the parties. But, at least they were the first to raise that issue.

"I would also want to eliminate gender-based wage inequality, and fight for the equal opportunity and rights of the

sexes. A key aspect would be to revoke wage confidentiality. It is a tool that is used to safeguard the current wage-difference between the sexes," Svavarsdóttir added.

The Leftist-Greens would also like to promote multiculturalism, arts and culture in the city. Other platform highlights include: Better care for the elderly, better public transportation, building underground tunnels for bigger traffic veins. School, sports, arts... whatever, you get the picture.

And the airport?

"The airport is a non-issue. It has already been decided that it will be moved in 2016. But the decision on where it will be moved to will not even be made in this term. I don't know why this is even a campaign issue. We have said that we like Hölmshéið as an option. But, of course, this is not a decision that should be taken without a wide cross-political agreement."



### The Progressive Party

**Primary candidate: Björn Ingi Hrafnsson. 33-year-old history student, currently working as an assistant to Prime Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson**

The Progressive party has suffered for their bad campaign management. They have campaigned heavily on the issue of the relocation of the Reykjavik airport. They want to locate the airport on Lón-gusker, a landfill just outside the shores

of Reykjavik. It is too bad that it turned out that the land where they plan to relocate the airport does not belong to Reykjavik city, but rather the neighbouring municipality Seltjarnarnes, and it is a part of a natural reserve.

Their platform also proposes that smaller and more efficient cars be promoted. That proposal has been somewhat offset by the campaign manager and the candidates driving around in a huge, black Hummer H2, the world's most environmentally unfriendly car,

with the party's logo splashed all over it. That bad idea turned really ugly when they managed to park it in a handicapped zone where it was subsequently photographed. The photos have been held up for scorn and ridicule on every Internet discussion forum in Iceland.

Other platform highlights include: Better care for the elderly, solving traffic congestion problems with more underground tunnels, free public transportation for the elderly, students and the disabled, free pre schools, improved

diet in school cafeterias, school uniforms and better integration of sports and arts in the city's school system.

To their defence, The Progressive Party promises to make Reykjavik a fun city. They propose a water slide park, an aquarium in Laugardalur and making admission to all city-owned museums free of charge. This is what politics should really be about.



### Liberal Party

**Primary candidate: Ólafur F. Magnússon. 54-year-old doctor and a current member of city council.**

"I am a doctor, and that has shaped my opinions in a lot of ways. We want to focus on welfare and environmental issues," said Magnússon, the party's

primary candidate. "We want to build our campaign around the people who need the assistance the most, the elderly and the disabled."

The key issue for The Liberal Party is the location of the Reykjavik Airport. This is the only party that has taken a firm position against the relocation of the airport. This is really curious, as this issue was put on the ballot in the

last city elections, and the citizens of Reykjavik voted to relocate the airport.

Other platform highlights promise: More beds in nursing homes and increased home-care services for the elderly, free public transportation for the young, the elderly and the disabled and improving access for people with disabilities, and lowering property taxes for the elderly.

"Everyone seems to agree on the need to improve the conditions of the elderly," Magnússon said. "The problem is that some parties don't deliver on their promises. We don't have a back-pack of unfulfilled promises like some other candidates do."



**Árni Þór Sigurðsson**  
number 2 on the Left-green ticket  
in the Reykjavik local elections May 27th

**Svandís Svavarsdóttir**  
number 1 on the Left-green ticket  
in the Reykjavik local elections May 27th

## variety – the spice of life

**LEFT-GREENS** believe that variety makes for a vigorous community.

**LEFT-GREENS** want immigrants to be offered Icelandic lessons free of charge.

**LEFT-GREENS** want immigrants' education, knowledge and experience to be recognised and made use of.

**LEFT-GREENS** want Reykjavik to take the initiative in immigrant affairs.



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**LEFT-GREEN – PLAIN DEALING**



## The Bore Campaign

Baldur Þórhallsson, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Iceland, on the 2006 Reykjavík Mayoral Elections.

BY SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON PHOTO BY GÚNDI

**/// There does not seem to be much difference between the political platforms of the parties running in Reykjavík in the upcoming elections.**

– I agree. There is not a huge division between the parties. There are no clear-cut lines between the parties like there is on the national stage. This is probably because the parties are focusing more on directly servicing the citizens, and the campaign has been evolved around who is willing to make the biggest promises. The difference between the parties is mostly relating to how they want to execute the policies.

It is interesting to see that the Independence Party [a right-wing party] has not spoken much about lowering taxes and reducing the budget, but rather seem to focus on welfare issues and development of the city.

**/// What do you see as the main issue that voters in Reykjavík need to consider in the upcoming elections?**

– Well, there are the issues that have been in the media limelight lately, such as the topic relating to the elderly, the day-care issue, the airport and the city planning.

The Independence Party has placed their emphasis on the need to make a change, and that the parties from the coalition have grown weary of being in power. But it is interesting to see that the Social Democrats have built their platform on the basis of their work in the current Reykjavík coalition and emphasised things that have been successful in the coalition.

The Leftist Greens and The Progressive Party have tried to distance themselves more from the legacy of the coalition and have instead tried to make an impression as unique selections. This is likely because they have brought in new people as candidates they have not hesitated in criticising the work of the coalition.

It is interesting to see how the smaller parties have tried to build their campaigns around

specific issues. It is also interesting to see that in doing so they have managed to somewhat dictate the discourse leading up to the election. The Leftist-Greens recently began talking about the need to re-examine the location of the University hospital, and now all the parties have had to respond to that issue. The bigger parties have had to chase the smaller parties in this regard.

The emphasis on the specific issues is likely due to the parties trying to gather popular vote by focusing on topics that they believe will be popular. But they have managed to stake a claim as unique and individual campaigns.

Considering previous elections, we have not seen as much discussion about the mayoral candidates as we often have. We have not witnessed the same cockfight as usual. I would

**“There is a dire need for laws on the political parties’ finances... This is not good for the parties and it is certainly not good for democracy.”**

have expected that the discussion would be more focused on the leaders of the bigger parties and which one of them is more capable of running the city. The fight is much cleaner than it has been in the last two previous elections, and this is somewhat a surprise. This has been kind of a boring campaign. We the political enthusiasts want a little more action.

**/// You mentioned that the Social Democrats have been running their campaign in part on the legacy of the Reykjavík coalition. Do you consider the Social Democrats to have in some way tried to claim the Reykjavík coalition as their own?**

– No, I don’t think that is the case. The top four candidates for the Social Democrats are all current members of the city council

on behalf of the coalition. I think they are concerned with parading the issues that they have been working on and they consider to be successful. Meanwhile, the other two parties from the coalition, The Progressives and The Leftist-Greens, have new candidates who are not members of the coalition. I think the new people are more likely trying to assert their uniqueness. I also think that in some regards, both the Independence Party and the Social Democrats are trying to tread lightly, they are being cautious and trying not to chase off any of the following they currently have.

**/// There has been some discussion on how the campaigns are run, and that some of the parties are running very expensive campaigns. What is your feeling on this matter?**

– Well, I understand that people want to get their opinion across. That is only natural, whichever medium they choose to do this in. The key issue, however, is how is this financed. We need to know who is financing these campaigns. Who is lending them money? Who is donating money? Where does the capital come from? The voters should have access to this information, and they should have it during the campaign period, not after the elections. There is a dire need for laws on the political parties’ finances. Political parties should never be secretive when it comes to money. This will only lead to gossip and rumours, and make people suspicious. This is not good for the parties and it is certainly not good for democracy.

**/// What has most interested you as a political scientist in the current campaign for the upcoming elections?**

– It has been really interesting to see how the parties in majority in the parliament have been doing in the polls. The Independence Party has been strengthening its position, while the Progressives have been losing. In actuality, the Progressive Party usually does better in elections than they do in polls, while the Independence Party usually does worse in elections than they do in the polls. It will be interesting to see how this turns out on Election Day.

It will also be really interesting to see how the Leftist Greens will do in these elections. They did not do too good in the last local elections. If they do well this time it would be huge boost to them and support their grassroots organization. It will also be very interesting to see how The Social Democrats will do. After being the main party in the government opposition, it would be a big disappointment for them if they do not manage to hold on to at least 30% following nationwide, which is what they had in the last election. They should have at least the same, if not more. Everything else would be considered a failure.

**/// How about the Progressive Party? They are not doing well in the polls, and it looks like they will not get a representative on city council. What would that mean for the Progressive Party nationwide?**

– If The Progressive Party does not get a member on the city council, that would be a huge blow for them. It would be really bad for the party’s infrastructure and their operation in Reykjavík. It would be a blow for [Prime Minister] Halldór Ásgrímsson, because of the relation between Ásgrímsson and Hrafnsson, [the Progressive Party’s primary candidate who is currently Ásgrímsson’s assistant]. I think it is safe to say that it would be very damaging to the party’s moral, which was really not that good to begin with.

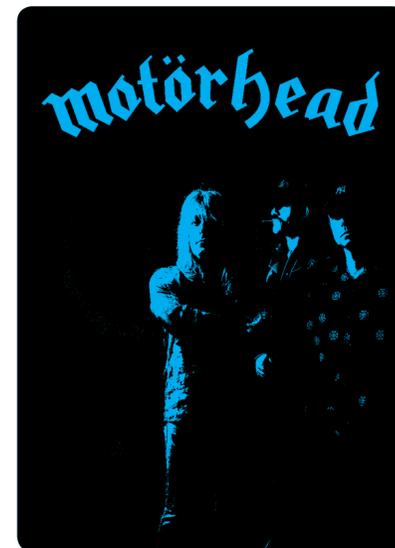
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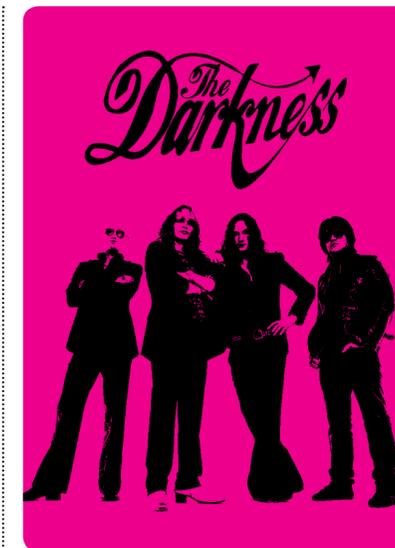
Fimmtudagur 29. júní



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Ham  
Mínus**

+fleiri

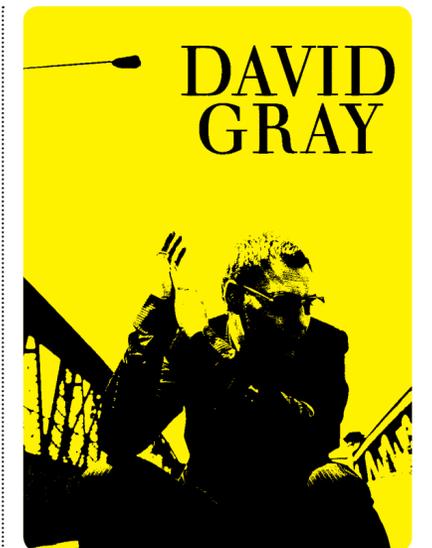
Föstudagur 30. júní



**The Darkness  
Trabant  
Dr. Spock**

+fleiri

Laugardagur 1. júlí



**David Gray  
Ampop  
Hjálmar**

+fleiri



## Reinventing the Bomb

Excerpts from the day Stephen Colbert made satire the new punk

BY BART CAMERON

News of the event arrived a little late in Iceland, but Stephen Colbert's April 29th speech at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner definitely has our attention now. The Grapevine has mocked most political parties in Iceland, and in America and elsewhere for that matter. And we have proudly gotten behind artists and figures who saw injustice and spoke up. But we have not walked up to a room full of the most powerful people in the world, people known to not take criticism well, and bullied them continuously for 24 minutes, as Colbert did.

To celebrate the event, and to express our complete shock that Colbert did what he did, we will present the best quotes from the comedy sketch that put punk to shame. To set the scene, George Bush, the President of the United States, held a banquet at which he was to earn the press's graces by showing he had a sense of humour – last year, Mrs. Bush took the lead by explaining George's fondness for horse genitalia in a wry, WASPy kind of way. This year, presumably, Stephen Colbert was supposed to imitate a Fox News correspondent and joke about blue states and red states.

"Madame First Lady, Mr. President, my name is Stephen Colbert and tonight it's my privilege to celebrate this president. We're not so different, he and I. We get it. We're not brainiacs on the nerd patrol. We're not members of the factinista. We go straight from the gut, right sir? That's where the truth lies, right down here in the gut. Do you know you have more nerve endings in your gut than you have in your head? You can look it up. I know some of you are going to say "I did look it up, and that's not true." That's 'cause you looked it up in a book. Next time, look it up in your gut. I did. My gut tells me that's how our nervous system works.

(...)

"I believe in pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps. I believe it is possible – I saw this guy do it once in Cirque du Soleil. It was magical. And though I am a committed Christian, I believe that everyone has the right to their own religion, be you Hindu, Jewish or Muslim. I believe there are infinite paths to accepting Jesus Christ as your personal saviour. (...)

"Now, I know there are some polls out there saying this man has a 32% approval rating. But guys like us, we don't pay attention to the polls. We know that polls are just a collection of statistics that reflect what people are thinking in "reality." And reality has a well-known liberal bias. (...)

"I stand by this man. I stand by this man because he stands for things. Not only for things, he stands on things. Things like aircraft carriers and rubble and recently flooded city squares. And that sends a strong message: that no matter what happens to America, she will always rebound – with the most powerfully staged photo ops in the world. (...)

"As excited as I am to be here with the president, I am appalled to be surrounded by the liberal media that is destroying America, with the exception of Fox News. Fox News gives you both sides of every story: the president's side, and the vice president's side.

"But the rest of you, what are you thinking, reporting on NSA wiretapping or secret prisons in Eastern Europe? Those things are secret for a very important reason: they're super-depressing. And if that's your goal, well, misery accomplished.

"Over the last five years you people were so good -- over tax cuts, WMD intelligence, the effect of global warming. We Americans didn't want to know, and you had the courtesy not to

try to find out. Those were good times, as far as we knew.

"But, listen, let's review the rules. Here's how it works: the president makes decisions. He's the Decider. The Press Secretary announces those decisions, and you people of the press type those decisions down. Make, announce, type. Just put them through a spell check and go home. Get to know your family again. Make love to your wife. Write that novel you got kicking around in your head. You know, the one about the intrepid Washington reporter with the courage to stand up to the administration. You know - fiction!

"Because really, what incentive do these people have to answer your questions, after all? I mean, nothing satisfies you. Everybody asks for personnel changes. So the White House has personnel changes. Then you write, "Oh, they're just rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic." First of all, that is a terrible metaphor. This administration is not sinking. This administration is soaring. If anything, they are rearranging the deck chairs on the Hindenburg! (...)

"See who we've got here tonight. General Moseley, Air Force Chief of Staff. General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They still support Rumsfeld. Right, you guys aren't retired yet, right? Right, they still support Rumsfeld.

"Look, by the way, I've got a theory about how to handle these retired generals causing all this trouble: don't let them retire! Come on, we've got a stop-loss program; let's use it on these guys. I've seen Zinni and that crowd on Wolf Blitzer. If you're strong enough to go on one of those pundit shows, you can stand on a bank of computers and order men into battle. Come on.

"Jesse Jackson is here, the Reverend.

Haven't heard from the Reverend in a little while. I had him on the show. Very interesting and challenging interview. You can ask him anything, but he's going to say what he wants, at the pace that he wants. It's like boxing a glacier. Enjoy that metaphor, by the way, because your grandchildren will have no idea what a glacier is. (...)

"John McCain is here. John McCain, John McCain, what a maverick! Somebody find out what fork he used on his salad, because I guarantee you it wasn't a salad fork. This guy could have used a spoon! There's no predicting him. By the way, Senator McCain, it's so wonderful to see you coming back into the Republican fold. I have a summer house in South Carolina; look me up when you go to speak at Bob Jones University. So glad you've seen the light, sir."

When a comedian's set goes horribly, horribly wrong, you say the entertainer bombed. To give an example of the way the jokes Colbert told were taken, think of the sensitivity of mocking John McCain about his connections to Bob Jones University. A Bob Jones University professor had, during the 2000 presidential primaries, helped to push Bush into the forefront in South Carolina by sending an emailed report that Senator McCain had an illegitimate, bi-racial child. Not tasteful humour, and nothing McCain found amusing when Colbert joked.

By any account, as a person there to make the immediate audience laugh, Colbert bombed. The marvel is what an effective, jaw-dropping bombing he performed, directly to the face of the most powerful men in the world.

You can access Colbert's speech for free through Google Video by searching the title "Colbert Roasts President Bush."

# Summer of School and Fun

Combination of a course in Icelandic and recreational activities for children, adolescents and adults

Summer of School and Fun offers a possibility to learn Icelandic, get basic information about the Icelandic society and take part in recreational activities

Reykjavík Adult Educational Center, Mímir-símenntun, The Intercultural Center

## Courses for Adults in the Icelandic language and social education

Day classes: 3rd – 21st of July 9:20 -12:00 daily (50 hours)

Evening classes: 26th of June – 20th of July 18:00-21:00 three days a week (50 hours)

The Summer School is located in Austurbæjarskóli at Vitastígur.

Price: 22.000 kr. for citizens of Reykjavík. The Summer School is for those who have been living in Iceland for four years or less. Others are still welcome for the price of 33.000 kr.

On-site baby sitting is provided for children from the age of 18 months to 6 years during the day classes. The day-care service is only provided to participants of the language course.

Registration at Mímir-símenntun, Grenásvegi 16a, tel. 580-1800 until the 16th of June.

Reykjavík City Department of Sports and Leisure, Reykjavík City Education Department of Education, Social Services Skúlagata

## Day Camp and language training for children 6 – 12 years

The Day Camp is located on different sites in Reykjavík and the children attend the one closest to their homes. Language training for foreign children will be a part of the cultural and recreational activities. It is free of charge for those who have lived in Iceland for four years or less.

Registration at ÍTR, Fríkirkjuvegi 11, tel. 411- 1111

Reykjavík Municipal Work School, Reykjavík City Department of Education, Social Services Skúlagata

## Work School for adolescents 13-16 years

Work School offers five weeks of summer work to students in 8th – 10th class from the 12th of June. Adolescents who have been living in Iceland for two years or less will get some language training and social education.

Registration at Umhverfissvið, Skúlagötu 19, tel. 411-1111 until the 10th of May.





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### OPINION



## Being Terrified

A COLUMN BY ÞÓRÐÍS ELVA ÞORVALDSDÓTTIR BACHMANN

A few weeks ago, I read the most controversial book in recent years in Iceland, *Draumalandið – Sjálfshjálparbók handa hræddri þjóð* (Dreamland – Self Help for a Terrified Nation) by writer Andri Snær Magnason. The book has been described as a "milestone in Icelandic ideology" ([www.baggalatur.is](http://www.baggalatur.is)) and has already sold over 6000 copies.

*Draumalandið* is critical of government policy regarding the construction of aluminium plants and their operating in Iceland, especially in the light of environmental issues. It

of politics from time to time. So far, no smear campaign against the book nor Mr. Magnason has taken place, calming my nerves. Knowing that Mr. Magnason has been on a successful book tour, I was finally convinced that his lectures would be conducted in a civilized, respectful manner. I attended a lecture of his in the Íða building, on a so-called 'Skáldaspirukvöld', a brainchild of Benedikt Laffleur, founder of the Laffleur Art Centre (Laffleur Listasetur). 'Skáldaspirukvöld' is a weekly event where writers read selected bits

**"It has been my experience in our day and age that artists and intellectuals who dare criticize the government become victims of slandering campaigns, making them less credible in the eyes of the masses."**

also breaks down government jargon that, until the publishing of this book, has been mostly if not completely incomprehensible for regular citizens.

I must admit that although I was worried before reading this book, it left me, aptly, terrified. Not only did I become terrified of what the future holds for Iceland and its natural resources, I also became terrified that this book and its author would somehow take a hit. It has been my experience in our day and age that artists and intellectuals who dare criticize the government become victims of slandering campaigns, making them less credible in the eyes of the masses. For example, I lived in the United States for two years under

of their works and partake in a general discussion with the audience. Mr. Magnason took questions from the eager crowd. People had strong feelings towards the book but most of them were on their best behaviour, with the exception of a drunken man who blurted out arrogant comments every now and then. At one point, he shouted at Mr. Magnason whether or not he had the answers to his own questions. There was an embarrassing silence as Magnason pondered the answer, and finally he replied: "Yes. It's 42." Even great thinkers need to borrow material from the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy from time to time.

On a more serious note, Mr. Magnason hopes that his book will have

**"Draumalandið and Fahrenheit 9/11 have almost nothing in common, if it weren't for criticism of government policy and the use of humour to underline the absurdity of politics from time to time."**

the George W. Bush regime. During that time, I formed my opinion of the leader of the free world as a more self-righteous, more dangerous and less intelligent version of Homer J. Simpson. I prayed that someone with enough influence would point out the Bush regime's corrupt ways, and to answer my prayers, Michael Moore took the stage with his film *Fahrenheit 9/11*.

In the following months, Mr. Moore was publicly attacked and slandered in the media until he was rendered down to a fat, lying conspiracy theorist who doesn't know how to shave. It got to the point where Linda Ronstadt set off a riot in Las Vegas for dedicating the song 'Desperado' to Mr. Moore. She wasn't even allowed back to her hotel room to pack.

Now, *Draumalandið* and *Fahrenheit 9/11* have almost nothing in common, if it weren't for criticism of government policy and the use of humour to underline the absurdity

the effect that people no longer accept incomprehensible jargon in the papers and in government statements. Enlightenment is the key, he believes. His passionate care for the environment is contagious, and after the lecture I felt like going on a hike to the Þjórsárver area to enjoy the clean air and untouched landscape before it all goes to hell. However, with more thinkers like Magnason, hopefully we can stop it all from going to hell. "According to my calculations, it'll take about 10,000 people to read this book for it to have the desired effect," Magnason said. With 6000 down, I'm allowing myself to be optimistic.

*Editor's note: Þórdís translates brenndur as "terrified", whereas, in the feature on the same book, our other staff writer uses "frightened." A typical translation is "scared or frightened" but all are correct.*



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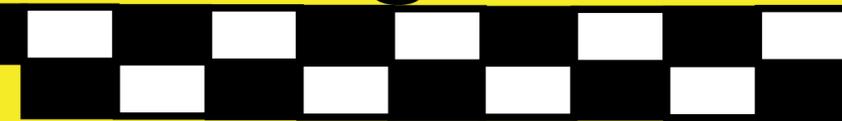
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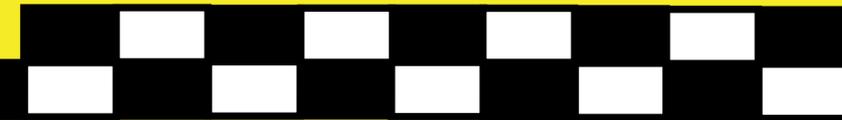
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"The companies write the press releases, the media picks it up and runs it without assessing it, and then I read it in the papers the next day"

## DEFENDING ICELAND

### Welcome To My Nightmare

Discussing the Dreamland With Writer Andri Snær

BY SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON PHOTOS BY GÚNDI

The book is called *Draumlandið: Sjálfshjálparbók handa hræddri þjóð*, or *The Dreamland: A Self-Help Book For A Frightened Nation*. In the three months since its release, it has been re-printed three times, and reached record sales for a book published out of Christmas season, moving in the excess of 8000 copies.

In the book, Andri Snær Magnason, 33-year old novelist, playwright and poet, explores issues surrounding the conflict between environmental preservation and the build up of heavy industry in Iceland, and examines the government's hope to sell cheap energy from hydroelectric power plants in order to place Iceland among the world's biggest aluminium manufacturers. He met with me in a suburban café in Reykjavík, interrupted and congratulated repeatedly on his work.

#### People Would Have Turned the Page

For starters, the question, when a key piece of Icelandic identity hasn't been covered in the newspapers, magazines or other media, why present it suddenly as a book?

"I think it is really the only way. As soon as a newspaper article reaches one page in length, it is too long. A book can be over 300 pages and not be too long. It is really difficult to go through a whole thought process, if you need to be guided step by step in order to understand the whole process and see the things in a different light. All education, whether it is history or something else, is contained in big units. Where as the media, the news, everyone is trying to grab one headline, to fit in one press release. It becomes chaotic.

"Even if it is a big news announcement, it is still too short to convey this reality. If I had written an article in a paper, people would just have turned the page, and I would never have had the time or the space to confront these matters."

Magnason is extremely critical of the

media's role and the form in which the media fulfils that role. In his opinion, news is not a good way to learn about the world.

"I think people should just stop following the news. They should just stop accepting this form and denounce news. You watch a whole news episode, '6000 chickens slaughtered in Patong in China.' People who live two kilometres away most likely didn't even know about the event. Maybe nobody knew. 'A bus rolls over into a ravine in India,' what is the point? This tells us nothing. A bus falls into a ravine... It tells us nothing.

**"The hardest thing was to be so angry, and yet to be able to write a constructive book, and not get lost in name calling, to keep my integrity, although I was not really impartial. The book is created from a lot of anger and the main reason behind me writing it was that I was angry."**

"If you were to do a little test on people concerning Iraq, what they now know about the country, and what they knew before, there is no new knowledge. People might be able to name Fallujah. That is it. People know nothing more about the culture, the literature, and the history. They know nothing more than there have been bombings here and bombings there. They know nothing more about the forces behind the war, the thought behind it... I just think it is time people accept that this is not a good way to acquire knowledge. You are better off not knowing anything from the news about how the Iraq War is going, and read a book on the whole thing."

In his opinion, Icelandic media has failed to critically assess the discussion of heavy-

industrialization, and facilitate an educated discussion.

"It is the media's role to shake things up and give people the whole picture. The media has failed in that respect. Maybe it is just Icelandic media that is so shallow, but it has been more occupied with manufacturing groups of people. We see headlines like 'the people of Húsavík are happy,' or 'the inhabitants of East Iceland rejoice' accompanied with a picture of people from East Iceland raising a flag. This is just a product of fascism. They are manufacturing masses, and PR companies

are build around this, to maintain this sort of fascism-istic discourse that everyone as a whole is ecstatic over some project, before the project has even been started.

"The media just seems to be a stopover for the discourse. The companies write the press releases, the media picks it up and runs it without assessing it, and then I read it in the papers the next day. The media does not seem to realize how the discourse is shaped, how, and what words are used to portray the discourse... Or they know, and they are just in on it too."

I press him for a more concrete example. "Just the other day there was some news regarding the possibility of mining gold up in Þörmóðsdalur. That was all that was said,

and that people were 'optimistic.' There was no mention of how gold is processed. Look... to make one gold ring like my wedding band, you need to grind 30 tons of rock, bath the ore in cyanide to extract the gold and the result is 30 tons of crap and a wedding band. So the area would look like the Kárahnjúkar dam area, with cyanide. And if the price of gold goes up, than maybe grinding 35 tons becomes an acceptable cost.

"We are talking about the worst possible industry. Gold mines in the US produce waste that is next to nuclear waste in terms of pollution because the process extracts all sorts of heavy metals from the ore, plus the cyanide, and there is a constant risk that the cyanide solution will seep into the ground water. There was no mention of this in the news. Everyone who saw the segment probably imagined cowboys with filters kneeling on a riverbank. A few weeks earlier, there had been a very critical 5-page spread world in the New York Times about the environmental and social costs of gold mining, but here there was no mention of this. Here we were just told that people were optimistic."

**Icelandic Environment as Sacrificial Lamb**  
Magnason has plenty on his plate if he sticks with aluminium. Recently, Alcan Aluminium revealed plans for enlarging its Straumsvík aluminium smelter, and that negotiations had begun with Icelandic power companies over how increased demand for energy will be met. The plan is to bring production capabilities up from 180,000 tons to 460,000 tons.

Before Alcan entered negotiations with the government, the power companies and the municipality of Hafnafjörður - where the smelter is located, word had already leaked out that if Alcan were not successful in the negotiation, the plant would close. This created an immense pressure for officials to treat

>>> CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



the negotiations carefully, before they even started.

"One of the things that the media has not picked up on is that the companies seem to be building one half of aluminium smelters. Al-

it to 1,500,000 tons. Here Alcan claim they need 500,000 tons, just in order to function. In Húsavík, they want to build a 250,000-ton aluminium smelter, which is really just half a smelter. It needs to be bigger to be efficient,

**"We see headlines like 'the people of Húsavík are happy,' or 'the inhabitants of East Iceland rejoice' accompanied with a picture of people from East Iceland raising a flag. This is just a product of fascism."**

can say they will close the plant if they cannot enlarge it to 500,000 tons. Which means that 500,000 tons has become the smallest unit of efficiency. Norsk Hydro is, for example, building a smelter in Dubai or Qatar, which is 500,000 tons, with the possibility of enlarging

and everybody knows this. The smelter in Reyðarfjörður is two thirds of a smelter, and the aluminium smelter being planned in Helguvík is a half an aluminium smelter.

"We are creating this huge infrastructure; the companies are planting their feet

and setting up workers who will become an immensely powerful lobby group when the companies announce that they will need to increase production capabilities. This is power that we are losing control of. It is as if nobody realises the structure we are creating. The Minister of Industry previously said in a speech that was published on her website that the limit of production here in Iceland should be one million tons and we should not exceed

**"If you were to do a little test on people concerning Iraq, what they now know about, and what they knew before, there is no new knowledge. People might be able to name Fallujah. That is it. People know nothing more about the culture, the literature, and the history."**

that mark. Six months later, without any discussion taking place, she said that limit should be one and a half million tons, and the earlier speech vanished from her website. The fact of the matter is that, in order to accommodate all the future enlargements of these plants that are now being built, that limit would need to be two and a half million in 20 years time."

The argument that is routinely provided for the continued development of aluminium smelters here in Iceland is that the amount of clean and renewable hydro energy places a moral obligation on us to use that to build up heavy industry that would otherwise be powered by less eco-friendly energy. That is, we should sacrifice our nature for the sake of nature. More and more, this sacrifice is seen as pure and simple waste. The Icelandic Nature Conservation Association, for instance, recently claimed to have from 'very reliable sources' that the Kárahnjúkar dam's economic viability is in fact negative.

"Everything is hidden in the words, 'it is our obligation to use our clean energy resources.' This is a ridiculous argument.

We are always asked to make ethical moral choices. This is bad business, but we should do it anyway on moral grounds." This is enough for Magnason to lose his cool. "Alcoa has no fucking morals. Aluminium companies have never made a moral decision. They just look at the price of the energy and base their decision upon that. If coal is cheaper, they will use coal, if the nuclear energy is cheaper, they will use nuclear energy. There is no morality involved."

In his book, Magnason slowly reveals this very fact, that there has been no morality, and almost as little horse sense, in the selling of Iceland's nature. The conclusion reveals a nation duped. It leaves you feeling both angry and betrayed.

"A lot of people explain their feelings to me in those exact terms," he tells me, on hearing my reaction. "They feel angry and betrayed, ridiculed even. People feel humiliated, and they feel they are seen as inferior."

Did the author himself get angry or feel betrayed?

"Yes, a lot of the time I got really angry. I think one of the most difficult things about writing this book was to read through all the sources, and to discover all the content in the book. I had to keep that bottled up for a year. The hardest thing was to be so angry, and yet to be able to write a constructive book, and not get lost in name calling, to keep my integrity, although I was not really impartial. The book is created from a lot of anger and the main reason behind me writing it was that I was angry."

## Economic Growth

Excerpt from Draumalandið by Andri Snær Magnason

TRANSLATED FROM THE ICELANDIC AND EDITED BY SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON

In 1995, the Progressive Party promised to create 12,000 new jobs before the turn of the millennium. Based on 3% economic growth, [...] it was a given that the jobs would be created automatically, but the promise was made, and the party "kept its promise." They were able to say "We Progressives talked about creating 12,000 jobs before the millennium. It now looks like it might exceed 13,000..."

You could just as well campaign on the promise that grass will grow next summer and that 4000 children will be born. Then you could call yourself the Almighty Father of Children and Growth.

The focus here is on economic growth. Words matter, they control our thoughts. Words that almost no one understands appear on the front pages of our newspapers every day. I conducted an informal poll the other day: "Do you know what the words economic growth mean?" Almost no one could give me an answer. Everyone seemed to agree though, that it signified something positive and good. Growing economy.

"Economic growth is good, we need economic growth," was a common reply. Economic growth is an example of a word that that controls people.

On a TV debate show, the winner is the one who offers more economic growth. During a debate on the future of Þjórsárver the politician said: "... but we must ensure economic growth." The naturalist tried to object and said: "... but do we necessarily need economic growth?" Thereby, his case was dead, but the politician smiled kindly. The politician was "realistic," he based his opinion on perspective and arguments, but the naturalist was blinded by romance, idealism, and the narrow special interests of his knowledge.

Both of them misunderstood the words.

Economic growth is the yearly increase in the production of a whole nation, but the increase in production is generated by increase in population, technical advancement, and more valuable knowledge with better-educated generations. A milking machine is economic growth. Education is economic growth.

Politicians don't hesitate to steal the words and claim the honour for increasing the production of a whole nation. "The party created the economic growth," is considered an acceptable thing to say. This is because the phrase allows it. If we dissolve the phrase, the

**"Economic growth is like qualifying a world record in 100 metres sprint without ever taking a drug test. Economic growth will only measure how fast the run was, not whether the runner will live to see forty."**

results become interesting.

"If you don't vote for me, people will become lazier, computers will slow down, artificial limbs become peg legs, hotel rental will go down, and lawyers, doctors, policemen, business administrators, teachers and all the other people who maintain the system will go on a rampage and destroy everything."

A person who would say this would be considered crazy, people would be insulted: "Did you invent the computer, you fool?" Economic growth is a complex interplay and it does not hinge on one company or one possibility.

Economic growth only measures economic sizes, it does not evaluate consequences

or long-term effects, the intrinsic value or quality of things. Economic growth does not measure people's time with their children or their family. Whoever purchases a private lap dance instead of fooling around with his wife at home has a positive effect on the economic growth.

Economic growth does not measure exploitation or war or if we are burdening future generations with excessive borrowing or pollution. War, exploitation, natural catastrophes and running excessive debts can produce economic growth.

Economic growth is like qualifying a

world record in 100 metres sprint without ever taking a drug test. Economic growth will only measure how fast the run was, not whether the runner will live to see forty. We have no concept of benign or malignant economic growth. We never see headlines like: "Malignant Economic Growth Identified Last Year." A person who quits his job in order to continue his education reduces economic growth, even if that person is strengthening and growing for a longer and shorter period of time.

The words economic growth have acquired a meaning that far exceeds their capabilities as a unit of measurement. It is so significant that the words by themselves can be used to disarm a biologist on a TV

talk show. Economic growth is combined of various different and complex elements but you might wonder whether it is applicable as a category or a grading system for the condition or the success of a whole community.

The world could lose Langisjór and Þjórsárver [Some of Iceland's most beautiful locations] for a 0.1% increase in economic growth in one year, which would automatically generate a compliment from a lowly intern sitting in front of a computer in the OECD's Small States Department, that would become a headline in the newspapers: "OECD Praises Iceland."

From that perspective, you might actually argue that the word is detrimental, even dangerous. If we throw out the word and establish a ten point grading system, then people might perhaps be able to discuss things without being constantly pro- or anti- economic growth. Pro-education, Pro-technical advancement, pro-growing population, pro-indexes that measure the vocabulary of teenagers as a proportion of the increased natural reserves in Þjórsárver to the second power.

I should mention that I don't understand the word, whoever is capable of explaining in detail how economic growth is created or not created should receive a Nobel Prize in economics. It is good to measure things, it is fun to line up units on a scale, but the scale should serve the people, not the other way around.

"Órvar! Did you spend 100,000 on a strip joint, you bastard?"

"What, are you against economic growth?"

it's free

the REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

# INFO

Issue 06, 2006

8 Page Listings Section in Your Pocket



## MAY 27: ELECTION DAY

In 2002, the voter turnout for the City of Reykjavik was an impressive 84%. As it turns out, democracy in this, the home of the world's oldest parliament, the Althingi, is a point of pride. And, as we mention repeatedly in this edition of the Grapevine, if you have been a resident of Iceland for five years, (three for the Nordic residents), you too are entitled to vote in the local elections.

Beyond voting, this year the Íslandsvinir, or Friends of Iceland, are organizing a massive march and concert to protest actions of the government ranging from the promotion of heavy industry to bizarre city planning. The march begins at 1 pm at the Hlemmur Bus Terminal, and it ends at Austurvöllur, near the Alþingi, with bands including KK, Hjálmar and Benni Hemm Hemm performing a free show.

In all, 50,000 people are expected to join the protest, and roughly 80,000 are expected to vote. You're guaranteed to see democracy in action.

■ By Bart Cameron



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Music and nightlife events usually start around 21:00, unless otherwise stated. Pubs close at 01:00 on weekdays and much, much later on weekends. For those just wanting to party, the pubs and clubs don't get crowded until after midnight on weekends, although Thursday is a semi-official night out.  
Compiled by Paul F. Nikolov.  
listings@grapevine.is

## FRIDAY - 19 MAY

**Hraun**  
Rósenberg

**DJ Hlynur**  
Thorvaldsen

**Árni Sveins**  
Kaffibarinn

**Gin and Tonic Night with Frískó, DJ Benni and much more**  
Prikjó

**SI-CUT.DD, Rósa Guðmundsdóttir**  
Gallery Lobster or Fame (starts at 17:30)

**Mát, followed by DJ Maggí**  
Hressó

**DJ Heiðar Austmann**  
Sólon

**Joanna Newsom**  
Frikirkjan (Free Lutheran Church)

**Matti (from Papar) and Einar**  
Café Victor

**Skátar, Reykjavík!, Hooker Swing**  
The old library in Hafnarfjörður

**B.M.X.**  
Gaukur á Stöng

**COD Music Party featuring Wulfgang, Lay Low, Black Valentine, Benny Crespo's Gang, Future Future, Helgi Valur and Dr. Mister & Mr. Handsome**  
NASA

**DJ Hermigervill, DJ Stef**  
Pravda

## SATURDAY - 20 MAY

**I Adapt, Innvortis, Hostile**  
Grand Rokk

**DJ Aki Pain**  
Pravda (top floor)

**DJ Maggí Flass**  
Pravda (first floor)

**Nýhil Grand Opening, featuring: Space-man, Retro Stepson**  
Nýhil Bookstore (Starts at 15:00)

**Páll Óskar's annual Eurovision Extraganza**  
NASA

**Eurovision on the big screen**  
Prikjó

**Eurovision on the big screen**  
Gaukur á Stöng

**DJ Afro**  
Café Victor

**DJ Hlynur**  
Thorvaldsen

**Hraun**  
Rósenberg

**Two troubadours: Gotti and Eisi, followed by DJ Georg**  
Hressó

**DJ Ríkkí G**  
Sólon (downstairs)

**DJ Heiðar Austmann**  
Sólon (upstairs)

**Gulli (from Ósóma)**  
Bar 11

**Bulgarian Voices Angelite (choir)**  
Hallgrímskirkja, starts at 16:00

**Midnight Concert: Benni Hemm Hemm and The Big Band**  
Löno

## SUNDAY - 21 MAY

**Six Icelandic Pianists Play Schumann**  
Ýmir

**Bulgarian Voices Angelite (choir)**  
Hallgrímskirkja, starts at 16:00

**La Strada – The Music of Nino Rota**  
Hafnarborg, starts at 17:00

**The Reykjavík Chamber Orchestra celebrates Mozart's 250th birthday**  
Langhótskirkja, starts at 20:00

**DJ Afro**  
Café Victor

## TUESDAY - 23 MAY

**Ian Anderson of Jethro Hull**  
Laugardagshöll

**Rússíbanar**  
The Icelandic Opera House, starts at 20:00

**James Apollo with Lay Low and the Foghorns**  
Grand Rokk, 500 ISK entry

## WEDNESDAY - 24 MAY

**Exos and Luke Slater**  
NASA

**Troubadour Tóti, followed by DJ Maggí**  
Hressó

**DJ Pröstur**  
Café Victor

**Mugison, Gullfoss og Geysir**  
Prikjó

**Roskilde Festival Warm-Up Party**  
Gaukur á Stöng

**Asia de Cuba Night, followed by DJ Baddi**  
Thorvaldsen

**Manchester.is presents: Northern Soul with Tommy the Champ**  
Sirkus

## THURSDAY - 25 MAY

**Mojito Night with DJ Alexander**  
Thorvaldsen

**Troubadour Tóti**  
Hressó

**I Fagiolini L'Amfipamaso**  
The Icelandic Opera

**Pétur Jesús**  
Café Victor

**DJ Maggí Legó**  
Prikjó

**Standup Comedy (foreign performer, as of yet unannounced)**  
Gaukur á Stöng

## FRIDAY - 26 MAY

**John Spencer and the Heavy Trash**  
NASA

**Menn Ársins, followed by DJ Johnny**  
Hressó

**I Fagiolini L'Amfipamaso**  
The Icelandic Opera

**Sólstafr (release concert)**  
Gaukur á Stöng

**Matti (from Papar)**  
Café Victor

**Mullet Night with Gisli Galdur and Addi the Drummer**  
Prikjó

**DJ Hlynur**  
Thorvaldsen

## SATURDAY - 27 MAY

**Íslandsvinir Parade with Hjalmar, Benni Hemm Hemm, Flís and Guests**  
Parade meets at Hlemmur at 1 pm. Concludes outside NASA with concerts.

**Morðingjarnir (release concert), Hölt**

**Hóra and Innvortis**  
Grand Rokk

**DJ Óli Hjörtur, Anna Brá**  
Prikjó

**Midnight concert: Vorvindar**  
Löno

**Mount Eerie, Woelv, Micah Blue Smaldone, Rökkurró**  
The old library in Hafnarfjörður

**DJ Hlynur**  
Thorvaldsen

**Jón Gestur**  
Café Victor

**Menn í svörtum fötum**  
NASA

## SUNDAY - 28 MAY

**Jón Gestur**  
Café Victor

**I Fagiolini - Monteverdi**  
The Icelandic Opera

**Mugison**  
Austurbær

## TUESDAY - 30 MAY

**Dúndurfréttir**  
Gaukur á Stöng

## WEDNESDAY - 31 MAY

**Langi Seli & Skuggarnir**  
Sirkus

**Dúndurfréttir**  
Gaukur á Stöng

**Asia de Cuba Nigh:**  
Thorvaldsen

## THURSDAY - 1 JUNE

## JON SPENCER AND HEAVY TRASH

Jon Spencer of the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion has new rockabilly band called Heavy Trash (read more on page 52). They will display their awesomeness along with the forerunners of the Danish alternative scene, Powersolo and The Tremelo Beer Gut.

**NASA, May 26th**

## MOUNT EERIE

Phil Elvrum, formerly The Microphones, now Mount Eerie, displays his considerable composition skills for an evening of Indie rock in Hafnarfjörður, joined by Woelv, Micah Blue Smaldone and Rökkurró.

**The Old Library, Hafnarfjörður May 27th**

**Café Rosenberg**

Live music  
Thu-Sat

Lækjargötu 2, tel. 551-8008

**Anders Widmark and Carmen**  
NASA

## FRIDAY - 2 JUNE

**Reykjavík Trópik Festival, featuring: Jakobínarína, Cynic Guru, Daníel Agúst, Benni Hemm Hemm, Girls in Hawaii, Hjalmar, Bang Gang, Ladytron, Apparat Organ Quartet and DJ Buckmaster**  
Located in a large tent outside the University of Iceland

## SATURDAY - 3 JUNE

**Reykjavík Trópik Festival, featuring: Supergrass, Skátar, The Foghorns, Jan Mayen, Stílluppsteypa, Úlpa, Johnny Sexual, Hairdoctor, Kimono, Jeff Who?, Leaves and DJ Andrés**  
Located in a large tent outside the University of Iceland

## SUNDAY - 4 JUNE

**Reykjavík Trópik Festival, featuring: Flís and Bogomil Font, Nortón, Hermigervill, Forgotten Lores, Kid Carpet, Dr. Spock, Ghostigítal, ESG, Gus Gus DJ Set, Trabant, DJ Jack Schidt and DJ Casanova**  
Located in a large tent outside the University of Iceland

**Sleater Kinney in concert**  
NASA

## FRIDAY - 9 JUNE

**Zappa Plays Zappa Dweezil and Ahmen, sons of Frank Zappa, perform with legendary members of the Zappa band.**  
Laugardalshöll



## JAMES APOLLO

From Libertyville, Arkansas via Minnesota comes James Apollo, a singular musical talent and a self-described tumbleweed, that comfortably blends old time Americana with something even more western. He will be accompanied by the Icelandic country and western phenomenon Lay Low The cover charge is 500 ISK.

**Grand Rokk, May 23rd**

## The Reykjavík City Theatre

**On the main stage:**

**A Perfect Wedding**  
Icelandic translation of the comedic play by Robin Hawdon.

**Marlene Dietrich**

A play examining the work of the legendary actress during World War 2. Features contributions from Slovenia, France and Belgium.

**Ronia the Robber's Daughter**

Icelandic translation of the children's classic by Astrid Lindgren.

**Who wants to find a million krónur?**

Icelandic translation of a comedy by Ray Cooney.

**On the other stages:**

**The Belgian Congo**

An Icelandic play by Bragi Ólafsson, dealing with attempts to mend broken family ties before it is too late.

**A Crime Against Disco**

Gary Owen's take on club life.

**Naglinn**

Tragicomedy by comedian Jón Gnarr.

**JSB Student Exhibition 2006**

An exhibition by students from Bára's Jazzballet School, that includes bits and pieces from celebrated musicals and fantasy.

**The Tenor**

A comedy by Guðmundur Ólafsson.

## Broadway

**Miss Iceland 2006**

A new beauty queen will be crowned on the 24th of May

**Le Sing**

A combination of dinner and a show; here the waiters are also the performers.

## The National Theatre of Iceland

The Celebration



## I ADAPT

Fresh off of two weeks' gruelling tour of the UK, I Adapt returns with new material from an upcoming album. The hardcore punks and the sXe scene favourites will be joined by veterans of punk rock, Innvortis, who despite not having written a new song for over three years, still attract the most loyal audience in the country. In addition, Hostile will churn out groove metal anthems in the loving memory of Dimebag Darrell.

**Grand Rokk, Friday, May 20th**



## MIRIAM MAKEBA

Miriam Makeba, also affectionately known as Mama Africa, is an African legend. Since being arrested and deported for her participation in the anti-apartheid movement in the late fifties, Makeba has touched hearts around the world and fought for justice with her music and vibrant personality. Mama Africa returned to her native South Africa at the behest of Nelson Mandela himself in 1990, and was voted one of the 40 greatest South Africans of all time, and people who have experienced being carried away by her powerful music and stage presence will know exactly why. Unfortunately, the occasion of her visit to Iceland is not an entirely joyous one for fans of her music: this will be her last ever performance as she is retiring from music to dedicate herself entirely to humanitarian and human rights issues. We wish her all the best.

**May 16th at The National Theatre**

An Icelandic translation of the classic Harold Pinter play.

**Now I would Laugh if I Wasn't Dead!**

A play geared towards younger audience members. It is based on a variety of Icelandic folk stories, but also includes references to more modern media such as movies and television. Don't be put off by the title, it's just the punchline from an old Icelandic joke. Metamorphosis: Poetry in motion Short stories and philosophical musings presented in the form of a puppet show.

**Virkjunin**

Also known as Das Wek, by award winning playwright Elfriede Jelinek.

**Eight Women**

Icelandic translation of a farcical comedy by Robert Thomas

**Pétur Gautur**

Icelandic version of the Henrik Ibsen play.

## Ílöno

I'm My Own Woman

Icelandic translation of Doug Wright's play on German transvestite Charlotte Von Mahlsdorf, performed by popular Icelandic actor Hilmir Snær Guðnason.

## The Akureyri Theatrical Company

**Little Shop of Horrors**

Icelandic translation of the musical by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman.

**The Ladybird**

Icelandic translation of this Vassily Sigarev play.

## The Icelandic Opera

**Little Shop of Horrors**

Icelandic translation of the musical by Alan Menken and Howard Ashman. Same cast as in the Akureyri version.

## Dance

See www.id.is for an up to date list of events by the Iceland Dance Company.

**1 CAFÉ**  
**Café Roma**  
 Laugavegur 118

Roma, at the far end of the main street Laugavegur, is a deli-type coffee house, and one of the best take-away places in town. It almost feels unnatural that all the tempting cookies, cakes and other sweet things that are calling your name on the shelves are actually quite reasonably priced.

**8 Tíu Dropar**  
 Laugavegur 27

A very nice "grandma" style café. Subterranean, as all traditional coffee shops should be. This place makes you feel warm, both with its atmosphere and the generosity of the coffee refills.

**15 Café Victor**  
 Hafnarstræti 1-3

Spelled with a C rather than with the more traditional K in order to be more cosmopolitan. This place seems to be working, as the bar has become a hangout for foreigners. The Viking ship sitting on top of the building might also add to the appeal. The crowd is very mixed, both in origin and age, and so is the music.

**22 Právda**  
 Austurstræti 22

Právda is one of the larger clubs/bars in downtown Reykjavík. It's divided between two floors and also separately into the Právda Bar and the Právda Club. The club section of Právda is ideal for dancing, while the bar section is somewhat more quiet and chilled out, with occasional live jazz and sometimes reggae.

**25 Ölstofan**  
 Vegamótastígur 9

There are no tricks to this one. You know what you want and you know what you'll get when you enter this simple, straightforward pub. We are talking about drinking beer. Known as the hangout for the intellectual circles of Reykjavík.

**28 Kaffibrennslan**  
 Pósthússtræti 9

Kaffibrennslan manages to be just a nice, "normal" place to go to, and a place to be seen at, surprisingly enough both at the same time. A wide variety of beverages, both biestro menu and a terrace outside the bar when the weather allows it. The iced coffee beverage is a delight.

**31 RESTAURANTS**  
**Krua Thai**  
 Tryggvagata 14

It's easy when you know what you're doing: good food for a reasonable price. To make it easier for the rest of us, they have their menu outside with images in colour and numbers. Just say the number and eat the food.

**34 Argentina**  
 Barónsstígur 11a

Argentina is something in the direction of South American-steakhouse-goes-fine-dining-in-Reykjavík. It was the first restaurant around to offer steaks by weight, and it focuses on the beef—but they know their whale, sheep and reindeer as well.

**37 Tapas**  
 Vesturgata 36

For those with a bit of money and time on their hands, the evening is well spent at Tapas, where you can while away the evening having course after course of wonderful miniature dishes served. If you don't feel like getting up right away afterwards, there's also a lounge.

**44 Bæjarins Bestu**  
 Tryggvagata

Their menu is simple: It consists of Cole and hotdog. And nothing else. Ask for one with everything, and you'll get a dog in a bun with ketchup, mustard, remoulade (don't ask), fried and raw onion. The standard Icelandic hotdog, only somehow it tastes better.

**2 Ráðhúskaffi**  
 City Hall

Ráðhúskaffi inside the Reykjavík City Hall is a comfortable choice for the view over Tjörninn, especially recommended on the so-called window weather days—the days that are beautiful, as long as you stay indoors. Also art exhibitions, 30m2 of miniature Iceland and municipal politics, all conveniently under the same roof.

**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.

**16 Vegamót**  
 Vegamótastígur 4

Vegamót (crossroads) has an appealing lunch menu, they serve brunch during the weekends, and the kitchen is open until 22 daily. After that the beat goes on, and you can check the end results in photos published the day after on their website www.vegमत. is. If you like Oliver, try Vegamót and vice versa.

**23 Café Cultura**  
 Hverfisgata 18

The recently expanded Cultura is located in the same building with the Intercultural Centre. A good value menu, friendly service and settings that allow you to either sit down and carry on discussions, or dance the night away—tango on Wednesdays starting with free lessons from 20 to 21:00.

**26 Thorvaldsen**  
 Austurstræti 8

Posh as the fifth circle of hell. DJs on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Arrive before 12 if you want to avoid the queue. Civilian attire is looked down upon. Do not expect to get in wearing hiking boots.

**29 Glaubar**  
 Tryggvagata 20

One of the few proper sports bars in Reykjavík, 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.

**32 Tveir Fiskar**  
 Geirsgata 9

Seafood restaurant, although they also do land-based animals. At lunchtime you can have a three-course meal for 2,300, 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.

**35 Vin og Skel**  
 By Ingólfrstræti 55

If you like fresh seafood and are in the mood for something a little different, this cosy but ambitious new restaurant just might fit the bill. Shellfish, salmon, squid, lobster and other creatures of the deep predominate the menu here. There is no smoking in the restaurant, but if you want to have a go at sitting outside there are fleecy blankets provided.

**38 Sægreifinn**  
 Geirsgata

A place to go for the local touch, even if usually a place recommended with this argument instantly loses the exotic. Still, I'd try this one. Sægreifinn (Sea Baron) is a combination of a fish store and a... well, not exactly a restaurant but a place that serves prepared food, located in a harbour warehouse. Smell of fish, view over the harbour, old man that looks exactly like an Icelandic fisherman should. What's not to love?

**45 Hlöllla Bátar**  
 By Ingólfrstræti

The first sub sandwich shop in Iceland, opened in 1986, Hlöllla Batar has a large selection of subs filled and named with creativity and imagination. Brave souls might want to try the Gúmmi-Bátur (rubber boat), or go local and choose Sýslu-mannabátur (sheriff sub) with lamb filling.

**3 Grái Kötturrinn**  
 Hverfisgata 16a

Grái Kötturrinn (The grey cat) is a cosy place, and that's why it's a shame that it's quite often closed when we knock on their door and peer through the window later in the evening. Don't follow our example and go during the daylight, it's especially popular during the morning hours.

**10 Segafredo**  
 By Laejartorg

With McDonalds long departed from the centre of Reykjavík, we got Italian chain Segafredo, which isn't a bad trade-off. The staff are expert baristas, and, even though Iceland is proud of its coffee, nobody quite tops the Segafredo latte.

**17 B5**  
 Bankastræti 5

B5 is a newly opened bistro with a Scandinavian focus on the menu. Don't be fooled by the impressive collection of design classics that you see in the window when passing by—it's neither cold nor overly expensive, but rather a cozy place with friendly service.

**4 Kaffi Hjómaland**  
 Laugavegur 21

A peaceful café with perfect windows for people-watching and a lot of daylight. Hjómaland is run by a non-profit organisation and it only serves organic & fair trade products.

**11 BARS 'N' BISTROS**  
**Sólón**  
 Bankastræti 7a

Sólón is a nightclub on Friday and Saturday nights, but it seems to have more lives than one, since in the day it's a coffeehouse and in the evening (weeknights) they have a decent menu as well, and an art exhibition on the walls to finish the package with an artsy touch.

**18 Rósenberg**  
 Laejargata 2

Perhaps the closest thing to a jazz club in town, with old instruments lining the walls. People go there for conversation and listening to music rather than dancing. The place tends to have jazz or blues-type music, and is developing a bluegrass scene.

**5 Mokka**  
 Skólavörðustígur 3a

Kaffi Mokka is the oldest café in Reykjavík, dating back to the 1950s. It's the place with dark, smoky atmosphere and great numbers of loyal customers. Their waffles are best in town. Seriously.

**12 Oliver**  
 Laugavegur 20a

Oliver is one of the biggest hits in town at the moment. Good news for the early birds: they open at 8 in the morning with an extensive brunch menu, staying chic all day long, until late—always crowded, with an everlasting queue outside especially towards weekend nights. Their Mediterranean menu, served in huge portions, is guaranteed to make you smile.

**19 Grand Rokk**  
 Smiðustígur 6

As the Viking style garden and logo accurately signal, this is no place for the weak—yes, chess bars are that tough. Even if the downstairs atmosphere can feel a bit ominous at times, it's one of the best venues for live music in town. Chess, beer and rock'n'roll.

**6 Ömmukaffi**  
 Austurstræti

A coffee house where you can find all kinds of people—all ages, all nationalities, with very friendly, down-to-earth feel to it. Affordable prices on coffee, cakes and the lunch menu. Try their speciality, the (South) African latte.

**13 Kaffibarinn**  
 Bergstaðastræti 1

Kaffibarinn is Cool Hip Reykjavík. Blur's Damon Albarn owns a share of the bar, probably figuring it was cheaper than buying drinks all the time. This place has managed to serve as a 101 living room for quite a while already, with DJs often playing on the weeknights, with volumes rising towards the weekend. Friday and Saturday nights serve as the weekly peaks of elustrophobia.

**20 Bar 11**  
 Laugavegur 11

The rock bar on Laugavegur is one of the late-night party venues in town. You'll feel the floor jumping every Friday and Saturday, and it's neither you nor an earthquake. Live concerts and a nice foosball table upstairs.

**7 Babalú**  
 Skólavörðustígur 22a

The youngest coffee house in Reykjavík is also the homiest. Almost like a living room away from home, Babalú keeps it simple, quiet and cozy with coffee and the occasional crêpe.

**14 Sirkus**  
 Klappargata 30

"Welcome to the Jungle! We got fun and games," quote the bard. Elements of this odd and alternative cultural institution also include an upstairs that looks and smells like a bus, a garden, a flea market and a queue on weekend nights that looks never-ending.

**21 Hressingarskálinn**  
 Austurstræti 20

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

**24 Þríkið**  
 Bankastræti 12

Used to be the oldest continuously running traditional coffeehouse on the street, 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.

**27 Gaukur á Stöng**  
 Tryggvagata 22

Iceland's oldest bar is now in its 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...

**30 Litli Ljótli Andarunginn**  
 Laejargata 6b

They have a fish buffet for 2,500ISK every evening, with the magic words "cat-as-much-as-you-can" floating in the air. They also have an Icelandic media person working there every now and then, so watch out for a curly haired, friendly gentleman called Egill.

**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—all priced affordably.

**36 Tjarnarbakkinn**  
 Vonarstræti 3

Above the Íðnið theatre, so it's good place to go before shows, or during if you prefer a more quiet atmosphere. If you sit by the window you get 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.

**43 Bernhöftsbakari**  
 Bergstaðastræti 13

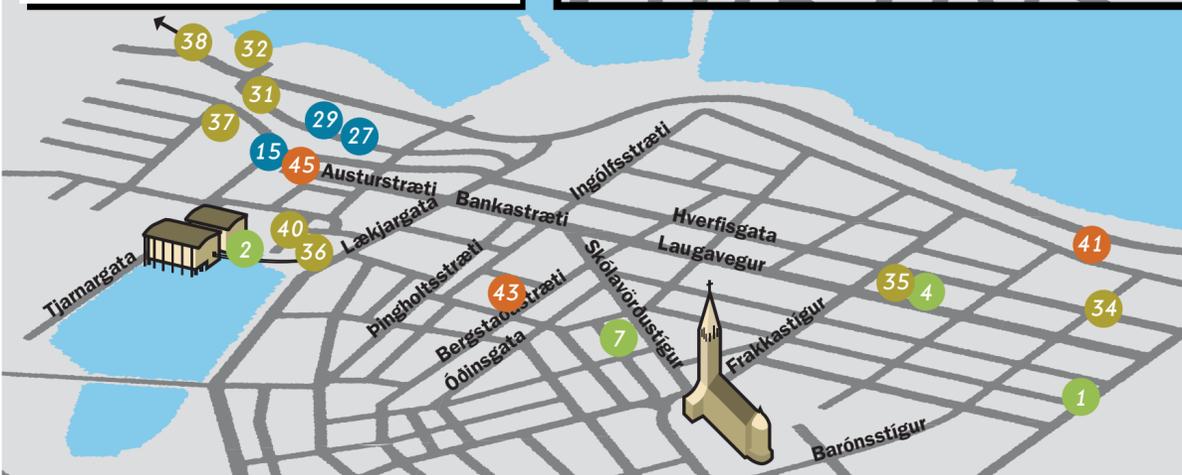
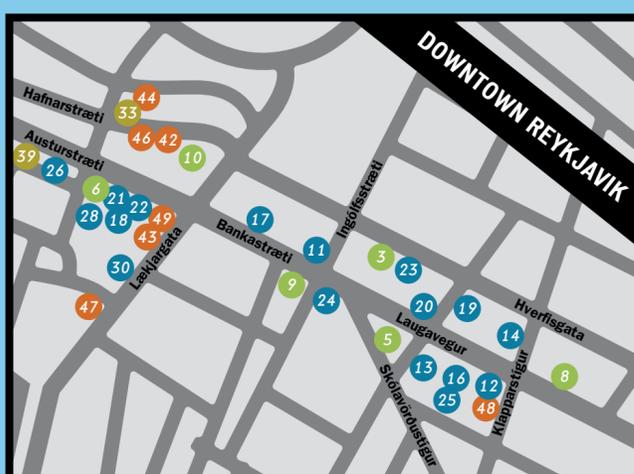
The oldest bakery in Reykjavík, founded in 1834. If you are particular about your bread this is about the best place in central Reykjavík to stock up on a variety of freshly baked loaves—they also do a particularly moist and juicy version of the ever popular vinarbráð pastries.

**50 Vitabar**  
 Bergþórsgata 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.



This summer, big budget movies return, most of which draw their material from either the low art form of comic books, or the much lower form of a steaming pile lumped between to pieces of cardboard and labelled DaVinci Code. Instead of debating albinos with Business majors who consider themselves progressive for reading a book that wasn't labelled homework, check out the graphic novels inspiring the big screen. Start with the recently crucified V for Vendetta, skim over X-Men titles, and then dig into any staff recommendation at Nexus, one of the most respected comic shops in Europe.



**MUSEUMS**

**Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum**  
 Siglín  
 Árbar  
 www.listasafreykjavikur.is

**The Culture House**  
 Hverfisgata 15  
 www.thjodmenning.is

**Nordic House**  
 Sturlugata 5  
 www.nordic.is

**Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum**  
 Laugamestangi 70  
 www.iso.is

**Reykjavík Electrical Museum**  
 Refstöðvarvegur 1  
 www.raffeimar.is

**ASÍ Art Museum**  
 Freyjugata 41  
 www.asi.is

**Einar Jónsson Museum**  
 Eiríksgrata and the sculpture garden, Freyjugata  
 www.skulptur.is

**National Museum of Iceland**  
 Suðurgata 41  
 www.natmus.is



Small charming seafood restaurant which offers the best in food and wine.

**VIDTJORNINA**

Templarsund 3, 101 Reykjavík  
 Tel: 551 8666  
 E-mail: vidtjornina@simnet.is

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Crystal, Reiki and Spiritual healing. Detox System foot spa treatment available also. Iceland's largest minerals and crystals shop.

**Gjafir Jarðar**

Gjafir Jarðar, Ingólfrstræti 2, 101 Reykjavík  
 Tel: 517-2774  
 gjafirjarðar@gjafirjarðar.is  
 www.gjafirjarðar.is

**Discover Icelandic Seafood**  
 At the Reykjavik harbour

Gísur Gudmundsson  
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 European Continental Director for World Association of Cooks Societies

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

**EXTRA ORDINARY INDIAN CUISINE on the edge of the world**

**SHALIMAR**  
 INDIAN - PAKISTANI CUISINE  
 Austrustræti 4, Ph:551 0292 www.shalimar.is

RADIO

**Rás 1**  
Government radio station often featuring talk shows, radio soap operas, and traditional music.

**Rás 2**  
More progressive government radio station, featuring a variety of music as well as news discussion programmes.

**Bylgjan** (98.9 FM)  
Light pop music.

**Útvarp Saga** (99.4 FM)  
Iceland's oldest station, featuring both Icelandic and foreign music from decades past.

**Talstöðin** (90.9 FM)  
Talk radio station, in Icelandic.

**Létt 96.7** (96.7 FM)  
Office pop, easy listening.

**FM 957** (95.7 FM)  
One of the "hnakkistöðvar," playing pop-rock geared towards urban clubbing youth.

**XFM** (91.9FM)  
Iceland's rock station, often playing cutting-edge releases.

**Lindin** (102.9 FM)  
Christian broadcasting station, available all over the country.

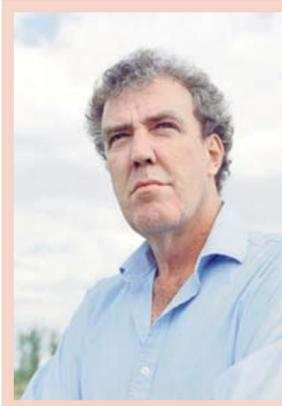
**Kántríbær** (100.7 FM)  
Iceland's country music station, still going strong from Skagafjörður since 1992.

TV

**C.S.I.**  
This police drama about crime scene investigators in Las Vegas has been a smash hit since its debut just over six years ago, spawning two celebrated spin-offs (set in Miami and New York respectively) while the original series is still going strong. While the methods employed are often outlandish, and the results hard to believe, there are usually enough twists and turns to keep you guessing as to the real nature of the crime well beyond the half hour mark. Watching this show will also make you too paranoid to consider so much as jaywalking in the future – the CSI nerds always gets their man and for some reason they get to go around arresting and interrogating people as well. See that spot on your shoe where you brushed off the leaf last week? That leaf leaked traces of sap on your shoe, leaving a specific fingerprint that could only have come from a specific tree outside the house of your murdered ex husband's chauffeur's masseuse's place. Oh, and you have her blood all over your shirt, too.

**Soul Deep: The Story of Black Popular Music**  
Everybody knows rock and roll evolved out of traditional black music styles in America, but this six part series goes a little deeper than usual and tries to explore the rich heritage of African American music and its influence on the world. If you have even a modicum of funk in your

**Lindin** (102.9 FM)  
Christian broadcasting station, available all over the country.



**Top Gear**  
In a recent episode of Top Gear, a Lotus sports car raced against an Apache helicopter guidance system. Repeat, sports car racing helicopter guns. It gets better. Top Gear, an institution on the BBC, entertains like nobody's business. You don't have to drive or like driving to love Top Gear. You just have to realize that Lotuses and helicopters are profoundly cool.  
*Sundays, at 19:00 on Skjár 1*

trunk, or so much as a single shred of soul in your bowl, you're going to want to get down with your bad self on Monday nights and become better acquainted with the black legends of yesteryear.  
*Mondays, 21:05; RÚV*

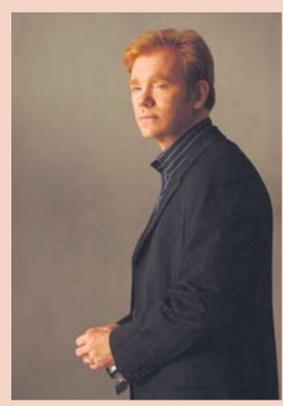
**Gilmore Girls**  
People think hell is some kind of in-your-face experience, but they are wrong. If there really is a hell, it must be plain and boring and completely devoid of any character: exactly like the Gilmore Girls. You see, this is a show that was actually created by something the 'Family Friendly Programming Forum', which as it turns out is exactly what it sound like: a collection of people that wouldn't know entertainment if it was personally engraved by Jesus. If you want to see what a coalition of 40 major advertisers with concerns over the declining morality and godlessness consider entertainment, tune into the Gilmore Girls for some truly neuterific entertainment. It's the only show this unholy coalition has successfully launched so far, but with your support and encouragement they could go on to bore us to tears for decades.  
*Tuesdays, 20:15; RÚV*

TV in Icelandic

**Taka Tvö**  
The Icelandic film industry is finally starting to produce films one isn't embarrassed to talk about abroad. Now starting

a second season with his series, Ásgrímur Sverrisson interviews some of the movers and shakers on the Icelandic film scene, as well as talented youngsters and the people behind the scenes. Mostly, though, he talks about the craft and socializes with people who have the same burning passion for film as he does. The result is mildly entertaining, albeit a bit pretentious at times. If you're a film nerd, Taka Tvö is probably required viewing.  
*Tuesday, 21:00; RÚV*

**Ómega**  
Ever wondered why exactly you are going to burn in hell for all eternity? Ever ask yourself why God's chosen people are the only ones who should ever be allowed on His Holy Land? Have you pondered the question: What Would Jesus Watch? You need some Omega TV, and Omega needs you(r money). You can tune in to this independent channel at just about any time, it seems, for some uniquely Icelandic firebrand preaching mixed in with the best of the worst from the American televangelist scene. Just make sure you don't forget to donate all the money you can possibly spare to various divine missions around the world, because they only remind you every five minutes or so.



**CSI MIAMI**  
The problem with CSI is you grow to like the characters, and you start to feel bad about Grissom having such a crappy job, looking at dead things all day. Have no fear, David Caruso is here. To explain how incredibly campy his acting is, just realize that not only do you want him hanging out with dead people, you can imagine the actors who are playing dead people often contemplate suicide in his presence. With all the acting, empathy and pathos out of the way, CSI: Miami lets you enjoy the guts and blood, as you should.  
*Wednesdays, 22:00; Skjár einn*

Sambíóin - Kringlan

**The DaVinci Code**  
Opens May 19th  
**Mission: Impossible III**  
17:30, 20:00, 22:40  
**The Shaggy Dog**  
17:50, 20:00, 22:10  
**The Inside Man**  
17:30, 20:00, 22:40

Sambíóin - Álfabakki

**The Shaggy Dog**  
15:40, 17:50, 20:30, 22:40  
**Mission: Impossible III**  
15:30, 18:00, 20:00, 22:40  
**Mission Impossible III (VIP)**  
7:30, 20:00, 22:30  
**Scary Movie 4**  
16:00, 18:00, 20:00, 22:10  
**Failure To Launch**  
16:00, 18:00, 20:00, 22:10  
**Firewall**  
17:45, 20:15, 22:40  
**Lassie**  
16:00

Háskólabíó

**The Shaggy Dog**  
18:00, 20:00, 22:00  
**Mission Impossible III**  
18:00, 20:00, 22:00

Scary Movie 4

18:00  
**Firewall**  
17:45, 20:00  
**V for Vendetta**  
22:10

Sambíóin - Akureyri

**The Shaggy Dog**  
18:00, 20:00  
**Mission Impossible III**  
17:40, 20:00, 22:20  
**Scary Movie 4**  
22:00

Sambíóin - Keflavík

**The Shaggy Dog**  
20:00, 22:00  
**Mission Impossible III**  
20:00, 22:20

Laugarásbíó

**The DaVinci Code**  
Opens May 19th  
**Bandidas**  
18:00, 20:00, 22:00  
**Mission Impossible III**  
20:00, 22:20  
**Inside Man**  
20:00, 22:20  
**Little Red Riding Hood (dubbed in**

Icelandic

18:00  
**Skrolla og Skelfir á Saltkráku**  
18:00

Regnboginn

**Bandidas**  
18:00, 20:00, 22:00  
**Cry Wolf**  
20:00, 22:00  
**Little Red Riding Hood (original English language version)**  
18:00, 20:00, 22:00  
**Little Red Riding Hood (dubbed in Icelandic)**  
18:00  
**Prime**  
17:30, 20:00  
**The Hills Have Eyes**  
22:10

Smárabíó

**The DaVinci Code**  
Opens May 19th  
**Mission: Impossible III**  
18:00, 21:00, 23:00  
**Mission: Impossible III (Luxury)**  
18:00  
**Cry Wolf**  
20:00, 22:00  
**Little Red Riding Hood (original English language version)**

16:00, 18:00

**Little Red Riding Hood (dubbed in Icelandic)**  
16:00, 18:00  
**Prime**  
20:00  
**The Hills Have Eyes**  
22:10  
**Ice Age 2 (original English language version)**  
16:00  
**Ice Age 2 (dubbed in Icelandic)**  
16:00, 18:00

Borgarbíó

**Cry Wolf**  
20:00, 22:00  
**Skrolla og Skelfir á Saltkráku**  
18:00  
**Inside Man**  
20:00  
**Little Red Riding Hood (dubbed in Icelandic)**  
18:00  
**Lucky Number Slevin**  
22:20

Visit [www.kvikmyndir.is](http://www.kvikmyndir.is) for regularly updates on new films and showing times.

Prepared for the Grapevine by the Centre for Icelandic Art. For more information, visit [www.CIA.is](http://www.CIA.is), or visit their office at Hafnarstræti 16, 101 Reykjavík.

101 GALLERÍ

Hverfisgata  
*Opening hours: Thu.-Sat. 13-17*

21.04-03.06.2006

**Steingrímur Eyfjörð**

**ÁSMUNDARSAFN**

Sigtún  
*Opening hours: 10-16 every day*

**The Man and Material**

Permanent Exhibition  
A retrospective exhibition of works by Ásmundur Sveinsson

THE EINAR JÓNSSON MUSEUM

Eiríksgrata  
*Opening hours: Sat.-Sun. 14-17*  
<http://www.skulptur.is>

**Permanent exhibition of the sculptor Einar Jónsson**

GERÐUBERG CULTURAL CENTRE

Gerðuberg 3-5, 111 Reykjavík  
06.05-10.09.2006

**Sculptures by Guðjón Stefán Kristinnsson. Materials include driftwood, rock, glass and turf.**

**Acrylic portraits by Jón Ólafsson.**

**Paintings by Ketill Larsen.**

18 GALLERÍ

Klapparstígur  
*Open Thu.-Sat. 13-17 and by appointment*

19.05.06-01.07.06

Upstairs: **Finnbogi Pétursson**  
Downstairs: **Twelve female artists**

GALLERÍ ANIMA

Ingólfsstræti 8  
*Open Fridays 12-17*  
*Sat.-Sun. 13-17*  
Free entrance

28.04-21.05.2006

**Björg Órvar**

DWARF GALLERY

Grundarstígur 21  
*Opening hours vary.*  
Free entrance  
<http://this.is/birta>

06.05-20.05.06

**Magnús Árnason**  
Performance Installation

GYLLINHÆÐ

Art academy exhibition space  
Laugavegur 23  
*Open Thu.-Sun. 14-18*  
**Students from the first year of the Academy.**

KJARVALSSTAÐIR REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM

Flókgagata  
*Open every day 10-17*  
[www.listasafnreykjavikur.is](http://www.listasafnreykjavikur.is)

02.04-05.06.2006

**Illa og Emillía Kabakov**  
**Joseph Kosuth**  
Installations In memory of H.C. Andersen  
08.04-03.12.2006  
**Let's Look at Art**  
A series of exhibitions especially designed for children.

16.06-03.09.2006

**Works from the Reykjavik Art Museum's collection**

KLING & BANG GALLERÍ

Laugavegur 23  
*Open Thu.-Sun. 14-18*  
Free entrance  
[www.this.is/klingandbang](http://www.this.is/klingandbang)

13.05-11.06.2006

**Hannes Lárusson**  
Ubo Roi meets Humpty Dumpty (in Iceland)

13.05-11.06.2006

Downstairs  
**Helgí Þórssson**

ASÍ ART MUSEUM

Freyjugata 41  
*Open every day 13-17; closed on Mondays*  
Free entrance

06-28.05.2006

**Kees Visser**

THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Frikirkjuvegur  
*Opening hours: Tue.-Sun. 11-17*  
Free entrance

12.05-25.06.2006

**Birgír Andrésson**, retrospective  
**Steingrímur Eyfjörð**, retrospective

08.07-10.09.2006

**Landscape and Folklore** (from the National Gallery of Iceland collection)  
[www.listasafn.is](http://www.listasafn.is)

14.05-11.06.2006

**Animals in Reykjavík**: a photographic collaboration by Bryndís Sæbjörnsdóttir and Mark Wilson.

HAFNARHÚS REYKJAVÍK MUSEUM

*Open every day 10-17*  
[www.listsafnreykjavikur.is](http://www.listsafnreykjavikur.is)

06-25.05.2006

**Group exhibition of graduating students from The Icelandic Art Academy.**

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

Suðurgata 41  
*Opening hours: daily 10-17*  
[www.natmus.is](http://www.natmus.is)

The National Gallery of Photography:  
**Roots of the "Rúntur"**

The Arc Hall:  
**Invisible women in Icelandic art**

Research Exhibitions:  
**Archaeological research and Iceland's new view of history**

Permanent Exhibitions

**The Making of a Nation**

NORDIC HOUSE

*Open 12-17; closed on Mondays*

14.04-21.05.2006

**Drawings by children from Nordic countries.**

NÆSTI BAR

Ingólfsstræti 1a

29.04-26.05.2006

**Snorri Ásmundsson**  
Healing Paintings

LIVING ART MUSEUM

[www.nylo.is](http://www.nylo.is)  
*Open Wed.-Sun. 13-17*  
Free entrance

14.05-04.06.2006

**The Supremes** - 19 artists from outside of Iceland, along with five Icelandic artists.

SAFN

*Open Wed.-Fri. 14-18*  
*Sat.-Sun. 14-17*  
Free entrance  
[www.safn.is](http://www.safn.is)

13.05-11.06.2006

**Ceal Floyer**  
**Karin Sander**

SIGURJÓN ÓLAFSSON MUSEUM

Laugarnestangi 70  
<http://www.iso.is/>

The Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum exhibits works by the Icelandic sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson.

GEL GALLERÍ

Hverfisgata 37, 101 Reykjavík

19.05-05.06.2006

"A Model for the Treeman" by Belgian artist **Dirk Leroux**

GALLERY BOREAS

(at Gallerí Úlfar for the month of May)  
Baldursgata 11, 101 Reykjavík  
[www.galleryboreas.com](http://www.galleryboreas.com)  
Until 31.05.2006: The art of **Adam Bateman**

TURPENTINE

*Open Tue.-Fri. 12-18*  
*Sat. 11-16*  
[www.turpentine.is](http://www.turpentine.is)

13.05-11.06.2006

**Nína Tryggvadóttir**

**Photography in the Streets of Downtown Reykjavík**

The Reykjavík Museum of Photography is celebrating its 25th anniversary with a photographic retrospective scattered around the city center. The theme is a general look back at the past century of life in the capital. Most of the photographs are on display in Lækjartorg, Austurvöllur and Fógetagarður.

>>>OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK:

**Hafnarfjörður:**

HAFNARBORG

*Open 11-17, every day but Tuesdays.*

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

06-29.05.2006

**Örn Þorsteinsson** "Kvika úr búi - sculptures"

SUÐSUÐVESTUR

Hafnagata 22  
230 Reykjanesbær  
<http://www.sudsudvestur.is/>

29.04-21.05.2006

**Indiana Auðunsdóttir**

**Akureyri:**

GALLERÍ +

Brekkgata 35

29.04-21.05.2006

**Sólveig Aðalsteinsdóttir**  
**Póra Sigurðardóttir**

JÓNAS VIÐAR GALLERY

Opening hours: Fri.-Sat. 13-18

06.05-20.05.2006

**Helgi Vilberg**  
Paintings

AKUREYRI ART MUSEUM

Open from 12-17. Closed on Mondays.  
<http://www.listasafn.akureyri.is>

06.05-25.06.2006

**Homesick**



GRADUATE EXHIBIT

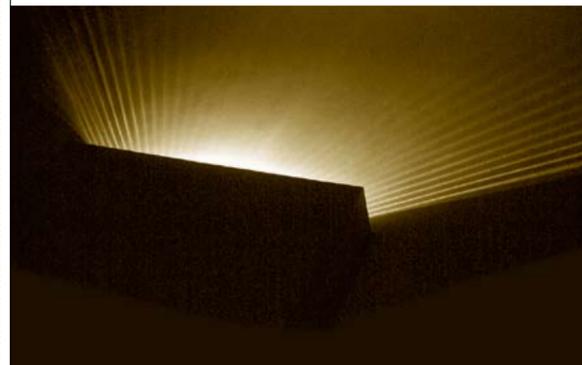
The President came, the mayor came, all of the big people attended the opening of the Academy of Arts's annual show—and it was so packed that nobody could see much. The darlings of the event are the design department, who have blended both usefulness and showstopping beauty to a level one simply doesn't expect from students. But the whole tour suggests good things for the future of this island nation.

i8

Klapparstígur 33  
101 Reykjavík  
Iceland  
sími/tel  
+354 551 3666  
[www.i8.is](http://www.i8.is)

18.05.06 - 01.07.06  
FINNBOGI PÉTURSSON

Opíð miðvikudaga til föstudaga 11-17, laugardaga 13-17 og eftir samkomulagi.  
Opening hours: 11 am - 5 pm Wednesday to Friday, 1 pm - 5 pm Saturday and by appointment.



# Grapevine Art Picks by Bart Cameron and Gunnar Hrafn Jónsson

The Reykjavík Museum of Photography



## LOOK BACK AT THE PAST CENTURY

The Reykjavík Museum of Photography is celebrating its 25th anniversary by bringing some of the best images from their collection to the streets of Reykjavík. The theme, rather appropriately, is a look back at the past century of life in Reykjavík and the ways it has changed and yet stayed the same in character. The stark contrast between the reality in the pictures and the surrounding environment makes the photos particularly effective in the open-air environment they were placed in. The exhibit can be found at Austurvöllur, Lækjartorg and Fógetagarðurinn.

## i8 Gallerí



## FINNBOGI PÉTURSSON - VISUAL COCKTAIL

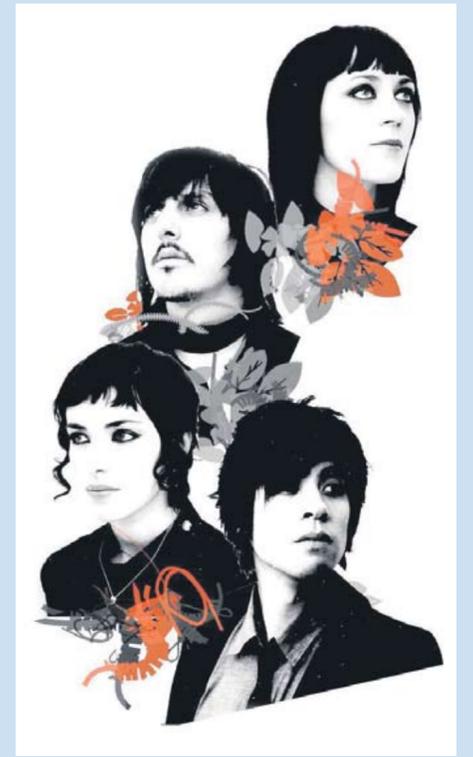
Finnbogi Pétursson has been working with light and sound to much acclaim for the past few years. In an intriguing audio-visual cocktail, Pétursson produces eerie acoustic phenomena in water, wind, metal, and even fire. Consequently, what you are reading now is utterly useless in terms of describing the experience of really being there and taking in the totality of the artist's vision as he meant for it to be. So, you know... just go see/hear it. i8 gallerí, Klapparstígur, 101 Reykjavík.

## Sissa Photography School



## GRADUATION SHOW

Graduation show at Ljósmyndaskóli Sissu. Founded in 1997, Sissa Photography School has a number of the more striking young photographers on the teaching staff. Among them, Ari Mag, Spessi, and our own Grapevine photographer Gúndi. This year end show demonstrates the competence of Iceland's image-makers as teachers. Ljósmyndaskóli Sissu, Hólmaslóð 6, 101 Reykjavík. [www.sissa.is](http://www.sissa.is)

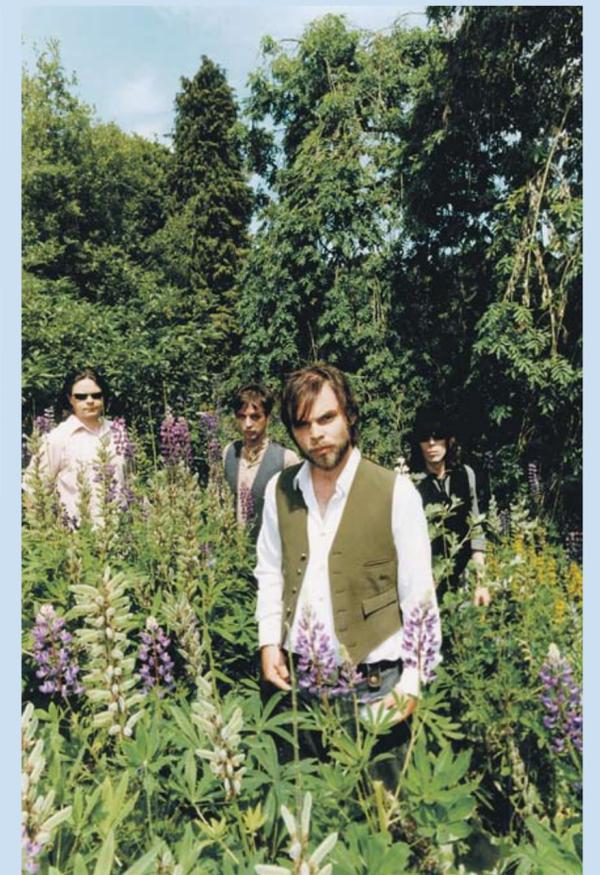


## TURNING REYKJAVÍK INTO GLASTONBURY

We already have Iceland Airwaves, Aldrei Fór Ég Suður, Innipukinn, Krútt, Rites of Spring, but you simply can't get enough of a good thing. This year, the owners of Stúdentakjallarinn, the only bar on campus, have decided to ... make the campus feel like a campus, at least for three days of the year.

So, starting June 2nd, the University of Iceland is hosting a festival to make Reykjavík proud. The key attraction is a toss up between Oxford rockers Supergrass, long a favourite in Iceland but visiting for the first time, and Bronx crew ESG, respected beyond all in the DJ set. Other foreign bands include Kid Carpet, Girls in Hawaii and Ladytron.

Without the imported talent, the local bands on display represent the grandiose ideals of this new festival. From Daniel Ágúst of Gusgus fame, to Apparat Organ Quartet, Bang Gang and Hjalmar, to the royalty of party rock Gusgus and Trabant themselves, Trópík looks to make enough of an impact to create a legitimate institution. Out of the festival, if not the campus. *BC*

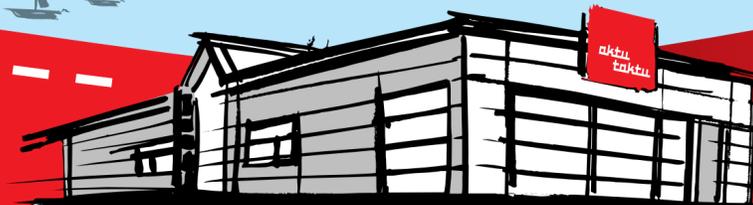


ART

MUSIC

aktu taktu

THE **DRIVE THRU** BY THE SEA



aktu taktu BY THE SEA

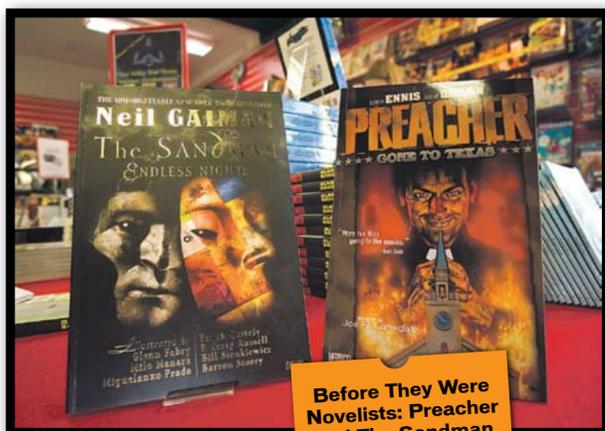
# GRAPEVINE'S PURCHASES THAT JUSTIFY EXISTENCE

BY GUNNAR HRAFN JÓNSSON AND SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON



**Library Card City Library - 1,200 ISK**

At the city library, you can get unlimited access to poetry and comics, magazines and music, fiction and history, CDs and movies, all for the price of two beers. The one stop for all your cerebral needs. Except for the beer of course.



**Before They Were Novelists: Preacher and The Sandman**

Garth Ennis and Neil Gaiman don't write comics, they write novels, childrens books and, gag, plays for Scottish theatre. Before all this, they did comics. Whether you prefer the dark humour of Garth Ennis' The Preacher, or the delicately woven web of mythology present in Gaiman's Sandman, you owe it to yourself as an adult to put your prejudices aside and give this format a chance.

Remember when audio equipment all looked simple, stylish and functional? Tivoli Audio combines the benefits of retro stylishness with up-to-date technology and all modern functions. Their Model line of tabletop radios and CD players, as well as their PAL line of portable radios, can be fully integrated with iPods and other fancy new-fangled crap. The design and colour schemes go well with Mini's and other Yuppie shit, and they weigh enough to cause damage when chucked at the cat. You can check them out at Kokka, Laugavegur 47.

**Retro Radios**



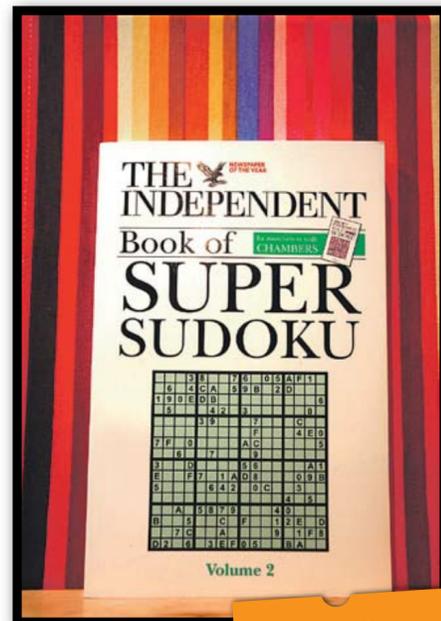
For the big spenders, the ultimate solution in home cleaning. An automatic vacuum cleaner that vacuums the floor by itself while you are out of the house. Simply press the start button or program the timer and the robot takes care of the rest. It will even find its way back to the charger unit for a recharge.

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**A big, fat Hummer**

Are you a member of an unpopular political party that's past its prime? Are you tired of being accused of destroying the environment and selling out to corporate greed? The solution is simple: buy a big Hummer, put your logo all over and park it in a handicapped space outside a campaign rally. That's what the party formerly known as the Progressive Party did - and you know you want to be like them.



**Sudoku Puzzles**

Only grandmothers and losers would be caught dead with a crossword puzzle. You can tell all the other posers it's an ancient Japanese art, but you might be interested to know it was invented by an American magazine in 1979. The great thing about Sudoku, it makes you feel smart, without actually helping to develop one useful skill or section of your brain—something like going on to conservative Internet chat rooms.

What is Treo, the Icelandic over-the-counter pain relief for almost any ailment. Tooth ach, Treo. Back pain, Treo. Sun burn? Dementia? Psychotic episodes? Treo. Actually, Treo is just bubbling Tylenol, but it gets immediate relief quickly, and it comes in a heavy container that you can chuck at your cat, though not heavy enough to do appropriate damage—see above for recommended cat discipliners.

**TREO**



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Artist: Þorgerður Ásteyr

## Hressingarskálinn

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

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## DINING, EATING & GRUBBING

Gunnar Hrafn Jónsson on Reykjavík Dining Photos by Skari

### TAPASBARINN

Vesturgata 3b  
Tel.: 551-2344



Tapas, the Spanish delicacy which most people associate with the Mediterranean, seems to be catching on in the decidedly more frigid climate of Iceland. Several wine bars and coffee houses have begun offering limited tapas menus, but the varied nature of the dish means that, ideally, it takes a dedicated restaurant to do the experience justice and leave you coming away with a feeling of having had a full meal rather than just a series of snacks.

It was with the anticipation of getting

some authentic tapas, then, that we arrived at the aptly named Tapas Bar(inn). One look at the menu and we were satisfied that this was a place that knew its tapas – a staggering 55 different assortments were on offer, and that's not counting any of the other menu items. I ordered a selection of lobster tails prepared in four different ways: deep fried, pan fried, grilled and garlic sautéed. My dining partner for the evening dove head first into the world of tapas, ordering the chef's selection of the eight most popular tapas dishes.

They say you can't go wrong with lobster, but in fact it has been my experience that very few chefs know how to take this much valued ingredient over the line that separates 'good' from 'Oh. My. Sweet. God.' Suffice to say, someone back there at the Tapas bar is an artist and lobster is his canvas – there is not

a negative word to be said about the way the tails were prepared, seasoned or presented. A seemingly never-ending stream of plates kept flowing from the kitchen to my friend's side of the table, and sampling them strategically left me with the impression of a full and diverse menu, designed by chefs who knew exactly what they were doing.

For dessert we had ice cream, which was good if not particularly memorable, and a more unusual dish consisting of fried goat cheese, honey and crispy bread. Now that was memorable, as was the evening as a whole. On the service side there were no complaints, either, with very professional looking waiting staff each giving their sections their undivided attention. While friendly and competent, they didn't seem big on smiling, but maybe that's supposed to be part of the atmosphere.



### GALBÍ

Barónsstígur 2-4  
Tel.: 544-4448



When you arrive at the otherwise fine Korean steakhouse called Galbí, the décor and atmosphere seems somehow less exotic than you expected, which is to say the décor isn't great. In any case, once you have been seated and have picked out your drinks and food, a man arrives and sets your table on fire. Gas valves and removable metal discs in the centre of each table turn them into stylish barbecues at the drop of a hat. Yes, you cook your own food.

The waiter mentioned that some people balk at the idea of cooking their own food

when they first arrive, but I can attest to the fact that it only takes a couple of minutes of the activity before it becomes second nature. And fun, too, it not only gives you full control over your dish, but eating turns into even more of a social activity than it usually is. This is a novelty one can easily picture Icelanders going for.

The food itself was very good: my friend had marinated beef while I went with fish with mint and almonds. You get your food in smallish chunks and the basic instructions are to give each side about thirty seconds of cooking before putting it on a leaf of iceberg and adding a few oddly named Korean spices and sauces. Then you roll it up and eat it; that is, if you want to do it the traditional Korean way. Personally, I couldn't give a fig what the traditional Korean way is – I found it bothersome and the food was great the way it was

before it got turned into a lettuce burrito. After about five minutes of messing around, we both hit upon the perfect combination of Korean whatchamacallits and ate the rest of the meal with relish, literally. The sauces and spices were more or less brilliant, but we soon developed a loathing for some odd condiment called 'kimchi', apparently an essential element of the dish but definitely not for everyone's palate.

For dessert we had an absolutely sublime home-made ice cream. We also tried a very nice Oreó cheesecake, though it was perhaps a bit on the rich side and definitely paled in comparison to the frozen treat that came before it. All in all: Good marks on the food, top marks on the friendly and attentive service (though there weren't too many other guests present) but the ambiance could use some work.

### AUSTUR-INDÍA FÉLAGIÐ

Hverfisgata 56  
Tel.: 552-1630



One of the problems you run into when trying to write a restaurant review is the fact that the best places can often leave you with very little to say that doesn't sound like some kind of advertisement. Such is the case with Austur-Indía Félagið, a semi-legendary Indian restaurant on Hverfisgata. It turns out that it deserves its reputation as one of the finest Asian restaurants in Iceland. Harrison Ford for one is said to have been so enamoured with

the place that he proclaimed it served the best Indian food he had ever tasted.

While we at the Grapevine are wary of proclaiming anything the best in the world (chem), Austur-Indía Félagið is certainly a world-class establishment. As one would expect, the service is exemplary; our waiter went beyond service with a smile and at times discussing the menu with him was like having an old friend guide you through the dining experience. This extremely likeable man then brought us some Indian beer and food that was not just likeable – it was spectacular. From tandoori shrimp to vegetable curries and several unpronounceable meat dishes, nothing missed the mark and the meal was clearly crafted by someone with a great deal of experience in all kinds of Indian cuisine. An old India hand I brought along hazarded a guess that the cook was from the northern part of

the subcontinent, as several dishes from that region were on the menu, but then again he may just have been showing off. To this person's credit, however, he did recommend that we all share a portion of Kashmiri naan bread, in addition to the more standard garlic and butter naan. It turned out to be a unique and tasty treat. Kashmiri naan is somewhat sweet without being a dessert, and comes stuffed with dried fruit. Very Kashmiri, very different and very good.

The only negative part of the meal came at the end, when we realized to our dismay that we had physically exhausted every last square inch of our gastronomic capacity before even getting a look at the dessert menu. Getting up to leave was physically and emotionally taxing, but we soon said our tearful goodbyes to the waiter and wobbled slowly down the street in search of a nice play to lie down.



## BEZT Í HEIMI

Valdi's CDs



### Home Grown Record Shop

BY SINDRI ELDON PHOTO BY GÚNDI

One of the score of narrow one-way streets crisscrossing the mighty Laugavegur is Vitastígur, and provided you're looking for it, it would be rather hard to miss the large, somewhat garish and seemingly hand-painted sign indicating Geislaskáldið Valda, or Valdi's CDs, on the left-hand side of the street walking up from Laugavegur.

Upon closer inspection, the store is also decorated by the merchandise lining the windows. Cheap banners for rock bands of varying quality, rare finds (or as rare as you can find in Iceland, anyway) and VHS tape containers have been haphazardly arrayed, stuck or simply propped up against the windows, and are actually a pretty good indicator of what you'll find inside: the most unpredictable, cramped, badly-aired and altogether best record store in Iceland.

In here you can find old favourites, lovingly worn and scratched by their original owners, stacked next to shiny and fashionable recent releases, onto which Valdi himself has stuck a reassuring green label emblazoned with the word 'nýtt' (new), justifying its slightly higher price. Which, incidentally, is still not very high by Icelandic standards. The new releases are usually priced between 1500 and 2000 ISK, with the older ones varying from anywhere to half as much to the same, depending on popularity and relative value. Considering that there is a better-than-average chance Valdi's will actually have what you're looking for as opposed to trusting your luck (the flea market) or settling for what some slimy record executive wants you to listen to (special offers at a corporate chain outlet), these prices are arguably the best in Iceland today.

And because the phrase "record store" gets tossed around far too liberally these days, let me pause to assure you that Valdi's does indeed carry records, stashed away in

the back across from a rack of VHS tapes that seems constantly on the verge of collapse. He has several extra-special ones draped on the limited wall space in the store, attainable for a far higher price than anything else in there. He also carries DVDs, the aforementioned banners and vast stacks of computer games of every kind imaginable, from ancient Nintendo cartridges to the latest in mind-boggling graphic imagery.

As with most used stores, your choices are admittedly limited to what someone else disliked enough to sell at about a fifth of what they bought it for (Valdi keeps his prices down by driving a miser's bargain when it comes to purchases), but bear in mind that tastes do differ from man to man, and the fact that after the close of Japis and Hljómaland, Valdi is one of a select few still flying a black flag as far as Icelandic record stores go. The only alternative nowadays is faceless corporate entity Skifan or picky high-brow music snobs like Bad Taste and 12 Tónar, who are more likely to snort indignantly than offer any real help when asked if they carry anything that hasn't made the cover of Wire yet.

Valdi himself is of the home grown variety, an affable glasses-wearing music geek seemingly glued in place behind the counter and wearing a red soccer shirt that is in turn glued to him. He's the only employee I've seen in the store and is extremely accommodating to those with questions, smiling just as wide when asked for Spice Girls albums as when asked for Einstürzende Neubauten or GG Allin.

And if you've come to Iceland fishing for Icelandic music made when Icelandic people still knew how to make music instead of drab exercises in sonic narcissism, Valdi is more than likely to carry it.



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## Tattoo City

The Grapevine Discovers Another Per Capita Record

BY SVEINN BIRKIR BJÖRNSSON PHOTO BY SKARI

"In Sweden, there are about 250,000 people for every tattoo artist," says Svanur, the owner of Tattoo & Skart, a tattoo and piercing studio. "Here we have five studios located on an area the size of a post-stamp."

In addition to the five tattoo studios operating on Laugavegur and the parallel Hverfisgata in central Reykjavík, there is also a successful studio in Keflavík. These six studios employ at least 8 resident artists, and there is an increasing demand for guest spots. In a country of 300,000 people, it is hard to imagine a more favourable artist per capita ratio.

"It hasn't always been like this," says Svanur who has been running his tattoo and piercing shop on Hverfisgata along with his wife Sessa since the year 2000. "When we first opened, there were five tattoo shops in Reykjavík. In 2003, I was the only one left. Now, it is back up to five again."

Is it possible for such a small market to support this many shops?

"It seems so," he says. "I will be adding a 2nd artist here for the summer, an Icelandic guy called Jón Þór who tattoos at the English Rose tattoo studio in England. Otherwise I can't keep up."

A part of the explanation for the constant activity is that bigger and more time-consuming pieces have been more in demand lately. "People come in and ask for bigger pieces than they did a few years ago. We do a lot of full-sleeves and half-sleeves now. People want their whole arm or their whole back covered. People also prefer more colourful tattoos today," Sessa explains.

I ask her if that goes for women as well.

"Not really, we do see more of them, but getting big tattoos is still mainly a guy thing. The girls are usually satisfied with getting something smaller. They would rather buy a new pair of jeans than get a tattoo."

### What's My Name?

I ask Svanur how the Icelandic artists compare to their colleagues abroad.

"Well, we don't measure up to the world's finest just yet, but there is incredible progress being made here. I've been doing this for 13 years and I am constantly getting better. We have made a point of going to tattoo conventions in other countries and bring quality guest artists to our shop, people we can learn from. That is really the only way to improve, work with, and learn from, someone who is better than you."

And what does it take to be a successful tattoo artist?

"Dedication. You have to be really occupied with tattooing 24/7. I usually wake up in the morning to make my needles, in the afternoon I come into the shop and tattoo, and in the evenings I draw and design tattoos for my clients."

"It also helps to be open to new things, be humble," he tells me. "As soon as you start thinking you know it all, you are not going to learn new things. There is always room for improvement."

He adds that the first annual Reykjavík Tattoo convention is coming up. "It will be the second weekend in June. It is going to be a vitamin injection to the scene here. All the local artists working under one roof, with some really good foreign artists. I think it will really do us all good."

What about Icelandic tattoo culture? Is there anything specific that could be considered a traditional Icelandic tattoo?

"The old runes are of course very symbolic of Iceland. A lot of tourists come here and they want to get a rune tattooed as souvenir from their stay here in Iceland. I am not sure that is common anywhere else."

Another oddity is names. "Iceland is the only place where people ask me to tattoo their own name on them. Every week people come in and want a tattoo of their own name."

**"Iceland is the only place where people ask me to tattoo their own name on them. Every week people come in and want a tattoo of their own name."**

### Healthy Competition

Bíri is a young local tattoo artist. He has been running the Icelandic Tattoos studio on Hverfisgata since May 2005, in cooperation with his former mentor Jón Páll, formerly the lead character designer for the Eve Online computer game and now the lead artist for Lazy Town productions. When I bring up the number of tattoo parlours in Reykjavík in our conversation, he sounds perplexed.

"It sort of surprised us. We didn't really expect Reykjavík would be able to support this many shops, but nobody is complaining, everybody is working. We have a steady stream of customers, so it seems to be working. In the summer time, it can be difficult to get an appointment and it is hard for us to keep up. It is slower in the winters for some reason, during the winter we get more people who are coming in for larger pieces that take many sessions to finish."

But he doesn't see the competition as a bad thing. Rather, it brings out the best in the Icelandic artists.

"The key to being a good tattoo artist is healthy competition and the ambition to be the best," he says. "Iceland is a very small market so there is a lot of competition here, everybody wants to be the best. The Icelandic artists are progressing a lot because of the competition here. You never stop learning in this business. I have met people who have been doing this for over 30 years and they are still learning new things."

For Bíri, professionalism is very important, and he takes his

job very seriously.

"There are a lot of dodgy people involved in the tattoo industry. It is important to be professional about the work. If I am not feeling good, you know, if I am having a bad day, or just have a cold, I will cancel all my appointments for the day. I am really doing people a favour. If you are not focused, you are not going to be putting out your best work. People who are making the commitment to have a tattoo at least deserve to have you doing your best work."

Do you see a lot of fashion swings in tattooing?

"No matter how you fight it, tattoos are always going to be little fashion oriented, different styles become popular. A few years ago, everybody wanted a tribal tattoo. It often comes from movies. After From Dust 'til Dawn came out, more than a few people came in to get a sort of tribal tattoo from the wrist up to the neck, like George Clooney's character had. It also happened after Oceans 12. People want a tattoo like Brad Pitt, or David Beckham, although we see less of that now."

What are people getting now instead?

"People are coming in for much larger pieces now. We do a lot of half-sleeves and full sleeves and whole back pieces," says Bíri. "Colour has been coming in more and more. Different styles are popular, Japanese tradition, old school tattoos. There are a lot more of individual designs where we help people out with designing the tattoo and drawing it up. I like doing Japanese traditional tattoos. I always feel good when I stand up from doing one those. But there is much more variety today."

## Reykjavík Tattoo shops

### Tattoo og skart

Hverfisgata 108, 101 Reykjavík  
552 7800

### Íslenzka húðflúrstofan

Hverfisgata 39, 101 Reykjavík  
552 7913

### J.P. Tatto

Laugavegur 54, 101 Reykjavík  
551 9070

### House of Pain

Laugavegur 45, 101 Reykjavík  
555 4015

### Tattoo 69

Laugavegur 69, 101 Reykjavík  
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# GRAPEVINE ALBUM REVIEWS



**Fantastic Four**  
*Original Melody*  
Worth three beers.

"Not too much stress...simple rhythms, nice melodies...just makes me feel good, you know what I'm sayin'?"...or so quoth an anonymous gentleman in a sample in the closing moments of the third track, and he's pretty much right on the money. But while they are definitely melodious – laid-back beats sampled from jazz, ragtime and such coupled with easygoing sequencers and synthesizers form the basis of their music – Fantastic Four have yet to live up to the first half of their name, and it is a telling statement on their belief in originality and being themselves that not a single

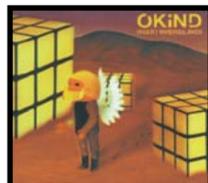
song on the entire album (23 tracks in all) sounds like it was made by an Icelandic hip-hop band, but rather by an established American act. But I digress. *Original Melody* is a good album, faultless and solid and containing its share of strong tracks (Do What You Gotta Do!, *Imagination*) and what I interpret as banality may just be their interpretation of professionalism, but for now it seems like Fantastic Four are content with simply contributing to the scene instead of pushing its boundaries.



**Jet Black Joe**  
*Full Circle*  
Worth three beers.

Despite its tendency to veer towards insipid clichés and some very dumb lyrics, Jet Black Joe's return to the studio is tight, powerful and inspirationally short, relying mostly on straightforward rock melodies and brisk performances rather than succumbing to the complacent narcissism most of their contemporaries have sunk to, and even outdoes many younger bands. It's also nice that the only truly bad songs on the album should be put

back-to-back at the end, so you can just eject the CD after the first ten songs and be quite satisfied. Other than the brainless ending that cost them an entire beer, *Full Circle* is laced with sandy, bare-stripped guitar hooks, carnivorous riffs and ethereal vocal overdubs, and is a particularly satisfying return to form for Jet Black Joe, as sure to gladden old fans as it is to surprise skeptics.



**Ókind**  
*Hvar í Hvergilandi*  
Worth three beers.

Hvar Í Hvergilandi has a split personality. It is at times a focused, soaring and lyrically perceptive piece of apocalyptic rock blessed with the ability to veer from finely-crafted fanciness to scathing, angst-ridden forthrightness in no time flat, while at other times it seems somehow lost in its own landscape, as if Ókind is being stretched to the limit by its members' excessive musical indulgence. Perhaps they are simply so contented with the

stunning brilliance of songs like Ó, Eg, Illar Dylgjur and Hraðlestrarnámskeið that they feel entitled to push their luck with the drabness of songs like Sem Hreyfast, Verst Klædda Stjarna Ársins and Petta Númer Er Upptekið, but, whatever the case may be, Hvar Í Hvergilandi is a winner, an unstoppable cascade of musical hedonism good enough to get away with it.



**Islands**  
*Return to the Sea*  
Worth one beer.

With members sporting names as pretentious as Neil Diamonds and Jaime Tambour, one would have expected something a little more gripping from Islands, but they seem to be content to rely on their reputations as former members of Indie 'greats' The Unicorns instead of making an album that doesn't sound like every Indie

band ever; it practically sounds like a compilation of Indie pop from 2000 to present. Don't get me wrong though, it's not bad: Songs like Where There's A Will and lengthy Ones have all the makings of Indie classics, but do we really need another soundtrack to some chubby hipsters' basement apartment red wine-and-weed party? Forgettable.



**Adem**  
*Love and Other Planets*  
Worth 1/2 beer.

What a terrible name for an album. Oh well, at least it's more interesting than the music on it. Bland, indecisive acoustic lo-fi folk sludge riddled with half-hearted sappiness, it drifts through its forty-odd minutes with the enthusiasm of a kidney-stone sufferer on his way to the bathroom. Only You And

Moon and Last Transmission From The Lost Mission offer breaks from the monotony with a little rhythmic experimentation (that doesn't make them good songs, mind you), and the title track's yearning vocals do betray a hint of passion. Otherwise, this is about as boring as it gets.



**Sólstafir**  
*Masters of Bitterness*  
Worth two beers.

Sólstafir present a somewhat outdated vision of metal with this, their first full-length album, with dissatisfyingly shallow sounds and chords, but still manage to convey their chosen imagery of frozen Northern wastes populated only by the souls of the damned fairly well. The songs are of hypnosis-inducing length, the screams are those

of a dying man betrayed by his own kin, and the cavernous guitars seem to echo through the halls of an abandoned mountain castle littered with cobweb-strewn skeletons. Excessive and wholesome, but doesn't quite hit the spot somehow, perhaps owing to the rough and diluted production.



**Miri**  
*Fallegt þorp*  
Worth four beers.

Wordless progressive noise mixed with a surprisingly warm pallet of emotions and laced with intricate, mesmerising and often stunningly beautiful guitar work, *Fallegt Þorp* is a true gem, the type of EP that leaves you wishing for a full-length release. The oddly vacant chord progressions

and disconnected sound make for excellent hangover music, a slow, hazy waft that makes you think of a sunbeam hitting cigarette smoke through a window. A fine effort, spoiled only by the half-heartedness of Hafðu Gætur Á Mér, but otherwise unassailable.



**Mugison**  
*Little Trip*  
Worth four beers.

Mugison's sonic companion to Baltasar Kormákur's most recent attempt at filmmaking is rather like Ally Sheedy's character in *The Breakfast Club*: Moody, tormented, dirty, unpredictable and while occasionally so pretentiously quirky that it makes one groan

in exasperation, intriguing, inviting and altogether something to smile about. Also interesting is the album's firm cock-rock opener, *Go Blind*, easily Mugison's best song yet and hopefully the shape of things to come for him.



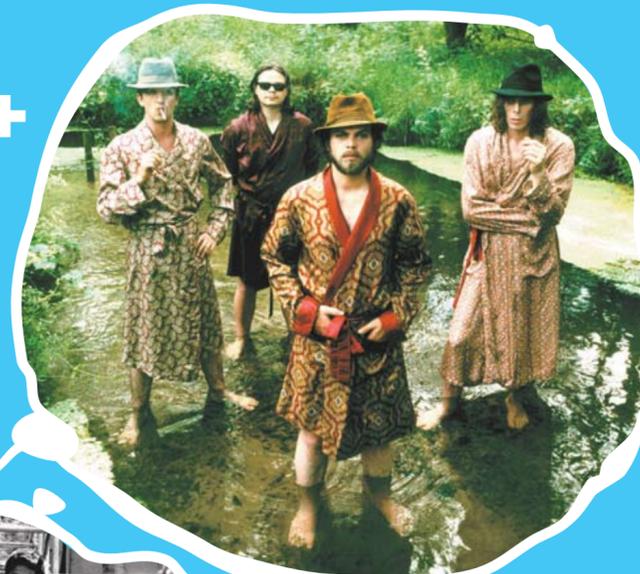
**Psapp**  
*The Only Thing I Ever Wanted*  
Worth one beer.

Exactly what you'd expect from a pair of young women obsessed with cats, cheesy synthesizers and vapid sonic gimmickry: Awful. The beer goes to the only thing saving it from being

the absolute worst ever: A sudden transformation into a conventional pop album for two of the last three songs, perhaps raising hope for future releases.

# SUPERGRASS (UK) +

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LIVE MUSIC  
REVIEWS

WHO

Iggy Pop and the Stooges

WHERE

Reykjavik Art Museum

WHEN

May 3rd 2006



French Kisses and Fucking Media People

By Sveinn Birgir Björnsson | Photo by Skari

At 30 years of age, I am easily in the oldest tenth percentile at most shows I attend. But not at Iggy and the Stooges. People in attendance were more or less three generations removed from the median concert audience, with a certain number of industry insiders in attendance, suggesting that an Iggy Pop concert demands respect. His presence should not be taken lightly.

Dr. Spock opened the show with their usual fanfare. As customary, their show was more about the looks and the attitude than it was about the music. On that note, they set the tone perfectly for the evening, plus they unveiled a new polka song—an unusual genre for a hard rock band, but Dr. Spock specializes in unusual.

Midway through their set, singer Óttar Proppé, aided by a mild underscore from the keyboard player, delivered a confessional song about French kissing an old man. Considering that Óttar was at the time half naked, wearing only pink glimmer disco pants and high-heeled boots, and that he is not really a young man himself, the recital stirred imagery in my head that I could have lived without.

Dr. Spock continued with a strip show that might have stolen the thunder from a lesser band, but Iggy and the Stooges are veterans of sex, drugs and rock and roll, and were not about to be outshined by men in ladies clothes with apparent gender issue complexes.

Iggy took the stage with a storm. Half naked, tan and with streaks in his hair, he looked like a metrosexual punk god. Much like the opening act, Iggy and the Stooges seemed to be aiming for attitude as

much as anything else. That might have been a wise move as the auditorium was not really fit as an auditorium, so a little was lost in the form of acoustics.

Despite that, there was no denying their professionalism. From the first song onwards, they were blazing with authoritative riffs and energetic presence. The added bonus was the fact that the Stooges current bass player is the veteran Mike Watt, formerly of the Minutemen, an institution by himself in the alternative rock scene.

Only two weeks removed from his 59th birthday, Iggy Pop was every bit as crude as he has ever been. His first act on stage was to raise his middle finger and direct it towards the people in the expensive seats upon the balcony. There was no mistaking the message, but I am not entirely sure what exactly he expected from this crowd of baby boomers.

Shortly thereafter he caught a glimpse of a poor bastard wearing a V.I.P. pass. "You must be a member of the press or a politician," he observed in the microphone, and continued, "both kinds of people I FUCKING HATE."

He followed this up by kicking a photographer's camera. By then, music had unmistakably taken a backseat to attitude.

The Stooges opened the show strongly, with many of their best-known songs, like I Wanna Be Your Dog, 1969, and No Fun, delivered rapid fire. I guess that is a common problem with old people-- they tend to climax too early.

By the third song, Iggy did his first of many stage dives of the night. He then handed his microphone off to a member of the audience in an invitation to get a message across. The patron in question let out a real genuine "aaarrghh" gnarl, reminiscent of the Wilhelm Scream. When he recovered his microphone, Iggy Pop

sarcastically deadpanned, "yeah right, the most literate nation in the world."

By the fourth song, Iggy announced, "I've had enough of this shit! Get up here!"

His words were directed at the crowd, and along with his roadie, he assisted people in climbing over the safety fence to join Iggy in a dance on stage.

By the fifth song, he demanded the lights be turned on so he could see the people in the back. When the lights didn't instantly appear, he thundered, "obey my command, or there is going to be a fucking incident." Sadly, the lights were turned on, since I would much rather have witnessed "the incident."

For nearly two hours, Iggy managed to entertain a crowd that most likely had not felt so alive since the sometime during first half of the cold war.

In the last few years, Icelanders have been blessed with the presence of Echo and the Bunnymen, Alice Cooper, Iggy Pop and Megadeath among others. With three quarters of The Ramones being dead and a comeback almost effectively out of the picture, and Mötörhead, Roger Waters and Iain Anderson all due to play in Iceland this summer, I guess all we have left is to bring in Ozzy for the circle to be complete.

Although bringing in past greats may be a nice gesture from a historical and perhaps humanitarian standpoint, I wish Icelandic promoters would set their aim a little higher and perhaps offer us something of relevance for the time and age. Modernity is now, not 30 years ago.

That being said, I still enjoyed Iggy. And word is out that Dweezil Zappa visits Iceland June 6th to perform with the Frank Zappa Band. However that factors in.

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## GRAPEVINE GAMES REVIEWS



### PSP for Business

As I approached a recent interview, and realized that after a lengthy cross-Atlantic flight I would be expected to hold a coherent conversation, I decided I needed a new method for coping with my fear of flying—*anxiety medication is pricey and makes one dopey, alcohol tends to have an effect on the thinking process as well.*

The solution: the PSP, a personal gaming unit by Sony. The arguments against buying a game system when you're over the age of 20 are many: they are anti-social, they are dumb, and women, men, professionals, and even most children will look down at you as a short attention-span goof for tapping away at a little gismo.

However, through experience, I can argue that a PSP can definitely help with social situations in the same way braces might help teenagers. True, while you're playing a PSP you're in a wasteland, but the little machine offers a wholly absorbing distraction that allows you to get through things like delayed flights and turbulence without reacting—it's the closest thing you can get to a temporary lobotomy.

My test with a PSP was fascinating even before I put the disk into the machine. For starters, a PSP has a web browser and excellent wireless modem. In a café, I was able to check email, get songs off of Myspace, and read the Reykjavik Grapevine online.

The games themselves seemed, at first, limiting. A PSP is meant to be played in a somewhat social setting—I did not want to be the guy playing a sniper game, or, for that matter, Grand Theft Auto, on an airplane. Still, I couldn't resist picking up the adventure title *X-Men Legends 2*.

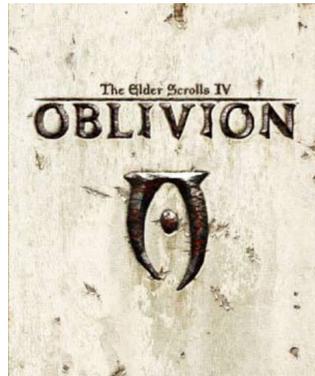
*X-Men* is a platform game, meaning it is something like Super Mario Brothers, in which you guide your heroes throughout maze-type activities, breaking random crap and fighting bad guys. Designed by Activision, the game includes digital comic books, and various side games and distractions—enough for someone bored with the idea of actually gaming to keep focused and happy. Having invested the bulk of two layovers into *X-Men*, I have come nowhere near winning the game or unlocking many characters, and I have no interest in continuing to battle, even if I enjoy freezing things as the uber-fey superhero Iceman. But the game has distracted well.

The main draw on the PSP, though, is the selection and quality of the movie titles. The handheld device functions extremely well as a digital movie player. Sadly, in our test run, I purchased *Once Upon a Time in Mexico* and *Fun with Dick and Jane*. The first ten minutes of each demonstrated PSP's incredible resolution, excellent sound, and

intuitive design. Concentrating as one does on the remarkable screen and sound from the PSP, the over-the-top explosions of *Once Upon a Time* seemed that much bigger—and, after ten minutes of boring dialogue, that much more tedious. The same went for Jim Carrey's pyrotechnic acting style.

After one month with the PSP, I am positive the device has a future for travellers, professionals and people with short attention spans. At present, though, I have yet to see game and movie titles for the over 20, not in need of Visine and brownies, crowd. BC

### Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion



The *Elder Scrolls* is a popular series of RPGs (role playing games) set in its own fantasy world, albeit one heavily based on a variety of other RPG universes that all seem to owe a great deal to the Tolkien mythos. The vast game world is populated with a variety of elves, mages, warriors, animated skeletons, golems, vampires and the like—all playing major or minor roles in the open-ended story the player is participating in. In the latest instalment, *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*, the sheer scale and detail of the surrounding environment has been taken to new levels.

The first thing that strikes you about *Oblivion* is the fact that your computer sucks. If you're not packing some serious NASA-style hardware, you're going to be scaling down the graphics options quite a bit from the highest settings. That being said, the Grapevine reviewed the game on an AMD Athlon 64 with half a gigabyte of memory and managed to get a decent performance out of it, but to keep it looking really pretty we had accept a fairly low frame rate during some of the larger battles.

Speaking of battles, you're going to have to put any pacifistic tendencies aside and do some fighting if you want to survive in the

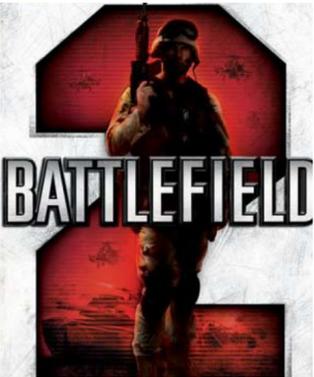
world of *Elder Scrolls*. Granted, the open ended nature of the game means that you often have other options: such as using the powers of persuasion, bribery or stealth. It's just that when you are charged by an army of



unholy apparitions wielding magical bolts of fire and whatnot; negotiations are effectively over and you're going to need to whip out a weapon of some sort. The weapons at your disposal are hugely varied, but they mostly fall into two main categories: magical and non-magical. Magical weapons include spells, enchanted daggers and such, while the more traditional medieval tools of destruction are all there as well. OK, so people in the Middle Ages may not have actually fashioned weapons and armour from the bones of trolls, but the design-theme is there.

All in all, *Elder Scrolls IV* is a fantastic RPG, but not a game that is going to win many new devotees to the genre. It's a hardcore RPG outing and will no doubt please the *Elder Scrolls* fan base no end, packing in more quests, spells, options and refinements than you could shake a very large 'Level 4 Enchanted Stick of Shaking' at. Just don't expect to be pampered or led by the hand through the experience: this is serious nerd territory.

### Battlefield 2



It may not be the newest release on the market, but *Battlefield 2* is one seriously hot game and as more expansion packs are in the pipeline it's set to continue to be one of the most popular online games out there. Essentially a follow up to the tremendously successful *Battlefield: 1942* and *Battlefield: Vietnam*, *Battlefield 2* is a modern combat simulation designed for co-operative online play. You pick a side, a map and a weapons class, and then you head out into an unpredictable and unscripted war zone full of equally ambitious and bloodthirsty armchair soldiers as yourself. Your mission, and you have no choice but to accept it: capture several strategic points on the map, each indicated by a flag and surrounded by angry enemy soldiers who want your flagpoints just as much.

What weapons class you choose can have a big impact on the way you play the game. In the original, unmodified game, there are seven: anti-tank, assault, engineer, medic, sniper, special ops and support. If you have a bazooka you are invaluable to your team when that APC or tank comes rumbling over the horizon, but your weedy little machine-gun makes you a liability in a fire fight. Assault infantry are well armed but poorly armoured, the engineer and medics fix vehicles and people respectively, the sniper obviously snipes, special ops deliver powerful packs of C4 explosives and the support role basically means you carry around a lot of ammo and a ridiculously overpowered machinegun that hits nothing but scares the bejeezus out of everyone nearby. In addition, you can apply to be 'Commander' of your squad, which gives you option of using things like unmanned aerial vehicles, satellite scans and heavy artillery strikes for the benefit of the grunts on the front lines.

Once you get to grips with the various classes and weapons available to you, your next step is probably going to be to play around with the military hardware that is liberally scattered throughout the playing areas. Anyone can jump into anything, be it an enemy helicopter or a friendly jeep, and attempt to raise some vehicular hell. Be warned, though, handling some of the more impressive machinery (particularly the aircraft) is trickier than waxing an angry tiger



in heat – so chances are your early forays into military aviation will simply make you deeply unpopular amongst your team mates. Don't worry, though, someone always has to be "that guy" who drops the 500 pound bomb on his team's victory flag – just call it a tribute to the American Airforce.

In conclusion: if you used to play with toy soldiers and/or simply love the smell of napalm in the morning, *Battlefield 2* is the online gaming experience for all your adrenaline junky needs. This isn't Doom, so forget about running around dungeons at 50 miles per hour, shooting up supernatural entities and aliens with ray guns. *Battlefield* depicts modern combat, pure and unadulterated military pornography in every respect. And just like regular pornography, you don't have to be pro-war to suspend your disbelief and revel in the fantasy of being there and doing that. Repeatedly. GHJ

By Bart Cameron and Gunnar Hrafn Jónsson

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# THE MODERN VIKING

## Summer Means Waxing

By Ketill the Angry

I am hairy. More so, in fact, than any other higher order primate. I imagine this quality is some sort of a Darwinian response to the harsh climate, or I would, were it not that the majority of my countrymen are without body hair. In any case, I have body hair, and body hair is a mess to work with when it comes to fashion.

Until you've had a full body wax treatment, you will never fully appreciate the horrendous pain involved in proper manly grooming. I'm not here to one-up the Brazilian Bikini Wax, but from ear to pinky toe, I deal with 45 minute power-waxing sessions on a regular basis. The nipples are extremely sensitive, I'll tell you that much. Interestingly enough, though, having hair removed from you but-tocks is not so much painful as it is awkward.

Yet, this is something that society calls for. Just as the rules of thirty years ago pronounced a faux pas on white linen suits after labour day, it is impossible to wear a white wife beater with bodily hair bulging underneath it like shoulder pads. Even an Oxford button-down is indecent when the natural turtleneck appears at the top. This is to say nothing of exercise gear: if Ketill had a krona for every time he's been asked about his lopa peysa while rollerblading shirtless, he would be a rich man.

Most importantly, bodily hair significantly impairs my tribal tattoo designs.

I have tried other ways in my battle against bodily hair. For a while, I amused myself and (mostly) others by shaping different forms by trimming and combing the hair on my chest. In an episode of *Queer Eye For A Straight Guy*, Kyan, the grooming specialist – and my hero – offered the advice that correct trimming of bodily hair could be used to accentuate, or even give the illusion of a more muscular body. Being a big fan of Kyan's, I've followed his advise, with mixed results. A mix of Bed Head hair mud and standard issue mouse gave me pees that rivalled Arnold in his Mr. Universe days, but, overall, I'd have to say that trimming and gelling is not a good option. It only keeps the hair at bay for short period of time, and the more you trim it the faster it grows.

Trimming also does weird things for my tan. The thicker hair acts like a sunscreen when I visit a solarium, and sort of like an umbrella when I get a spray tan. The effect is that I get these weird streaks in my tanning. Streaks are very uncool.

Which leaves us with waxing as the only realistic option.

It seems so long ago, but once a hairy chest was actually thought to be manly AND fashionable. Sean Connery was a sex symbol, despite the hair on his shoulders. Burt Reynolds in a buttoned down shirt with his chest hairs poking out used to make women shiver.

Instead, my generation has Brad Pitt and David Beckham. And that guy who does the gardening for Eva Longoria's character on *Desperate Housewives*. I really wish that guy would just keep his shirt on.

Fashion always moves in cycles though. I realise that one day, bodily hair will not be a burden to me, but an actual fashion accessory. Lord knows that facial hair has taken off – as demonstrated by my own impeccably groomed beard, which I grew in a long weekend. Still, even when stranded on an island, hunks like Matthew Fox are allowed stubble on the chin, but the chest is all but bare.

Still, I have hope that one day chest hair will come 'round, and this hope makes my trips to the beauty salon to get waxed seem worth it. Because when that day comes, I will have the upper hand. It is a lot easier for me to have bodily hair removed than it will be for guys with no hair on their chest to have it surgically implanted once they make a comeback. Take that Brad Pitt.

### THE MODERN VIKING FOOD TIP

Summer is for Carbs  
Summer is the only season that Ketill dares to indulge in the wheat products, but I have to admit, in the hot summer sun, Ketill goes for the carbs.

All you protein freaks, you know you miss the sandwich, or just the roll or croissant. A piece of fish simply feels indecent when snacking at a cosy café, or when chatting with friends over a fresh, fruity wine.

So Ketill recommends carbs yes, fat no. You can still go with lean cuts of meat, but dodge the Atkins influence.

### THE MODERN VIKING FASHION TIP

Short Shorts  
Summer is around the corner, so it is time to bring out the shorts. This summer it is all about cut-offs, Tobias Fünke style. Keep them short (they are called shorts for a reason) as to reveal more of that muscular and finely tanned thigh, and carefully trim the loose end at the hems. This is no longer the age of the boxer shorts, and you should demonstrate that your boys are with it, and well housed.

A V-neck T-Shirt will also go well with shorts. It is nicely underscores your hairless chest and allows you to reveal the obligatory dog-tag necklace.



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## Clear View of the Future

Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival Finds a Voice

BY ELECTRIC LIGHTS, (ANNA EHL AND JOSH LOAR) PHOTOS BY JOSH LOAR

As the landscape of music purchasing changes increasingly from record shops to iTunes and other online download sources, an interesting fact has been revealed: most of us like all kinds of music. We have become shuffle-heads. We want to hear our alt-country butted up against our dirty south rap, and if we don't, we get bored—the genre-faithful approach of traditional radio is what is rapidly killing it. Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, in Indio, California, has become the most successful of the American music festivals by anticipating this change. Launched in 1999 (two years before the launch of iPod), Coachella has become a fairly accurate barometer of what is, was, or will be loved by hipsters across America.

Between the two of us, we have seen 5 of the last 7 Coachellas, 3 of them together. Over the years we have witnessed countless performances by some of the luminaries of modern music on a large dusty polo field, and one thing has become very clear: the future of music lies in the destruction of genre altogether. No festival in our experience has ever proven this more clearly than this year's Coachella.

The most outstanding performances of the festival came from those who were actively attempting to cross boundaries. As we watched Bay Area rapper Murs with 9th Wonder, we saw a teenager in a Gogol Bordello shirt bouncing up and down, and we realized that this is the testing ground for the future of popular music. The act that perhaps most clearly demonstrated this genre-crossing is one that is already a sensation in the UK, and is about to drop in the US: Gnarls Barkley. In the studio, Gnarls is the creation of red-hot beat maker Danger Mouse and ex-Goodie Mob soul madman Cee-Lo Green. Live, the pair was joined by a full band including strings, horns, and backup singers.

We had heard a couple of Gnarls' singles on Myspace prior to the show, and they were

brought to full Technicolor life onstage. In addition to being a band of crack musicians, the group dressed as characters from the Wizard of Oz, with Cee-Lo as "Mee-Lo the Not-So-Cowardly-Lion." Combining electronics and live instrumentation to execute songs that in themselves blend rock, soul, funk, techno, and hip hop was quite an impressive feat. We can't remember that last time we saw a stage show so captivating (though Basement Jaxx with a full band, Dizzee Rascal, and dancers in gorilla costumes two years earlier at Coachella does come to mind.) Musicians like Gnarls Barkley and UK soul/electronic sensation Jamie Lidell, who performed earlier in the same venue, understand that music is about communication. If a musician can communicate effectively with their audience, it doesn't really matter how they manage to do it.

Lidell's show was much more minimal than Gnarls', featuring only him, a rack of electronics, and his silly dancer/hype man. Lidell built his music in front of us. He would start beatboxing, sample a four bar section of his rhythm, and loop it, immediately jumping to a keyboard to set up melodies to go with it. As soon as he had backing tracks created/sequenced, he would begin singing, and his show changed from electronic wizardry to classic soul-man, complete with James Brown cape action from his hype man. Here was a decidedly electronic musician whose most effective stage trick was looking the audience in the eyes and singing very well.

In addition to newly-hip acts, Coachella is known for returning alternative pleasures of the last 10 to 20 years to the stage. Sometimes this is a great success, such as with the Pixies' recent reunion and excellent Coachella set two years ago, and this year's Digable Planets return with full live band. Sometimes this turns into the more predictable tired sounding oldies set by a band whose chops are not what they

should be. Sadly, this seemed to be the case with this year's set by Massive Attack. We have been Massive Attack fans for many years, but their show at Coachella was sleep-inducing. They stood absolutely still, and did not play with much energy. The much-hyped addition of Madonna to this year's festival was justified as the addition of a world-class dance act to the bill, but proved to be little more than spectacle for the pop music fans in the crowd.

Not that spectacle is a bad thing. Daft Punk played what became the most camera-phone videoed set of the weekend in that same dance tent by assaulting the audience with some of the most astounding visuals we had ever encountered, coupled with dynamic remixing of their beloved catalogue. The pair arrived inside of a giant pyramid that towered

red over the stage. The pyramid was used as a projection surface from inside and out, allowing light to glow from within and strange psychedelic visuals to appear on the outside. A problem that electronic acts traditionally face in translating their music to American crowds is the lack of stage show. Daft Punk captivated even those too shy to dance to their beats.

The way that we listen to music has changed, and continues to change. This both reflects and effects the way that music is being made, and the way it is being performed live. The record industry is faltering because they have not quite figured out the new mold, but Coachella seems to have it down. Hip-hop next to folk, electronic next to metal, and eventually, it's all just rock and roll.



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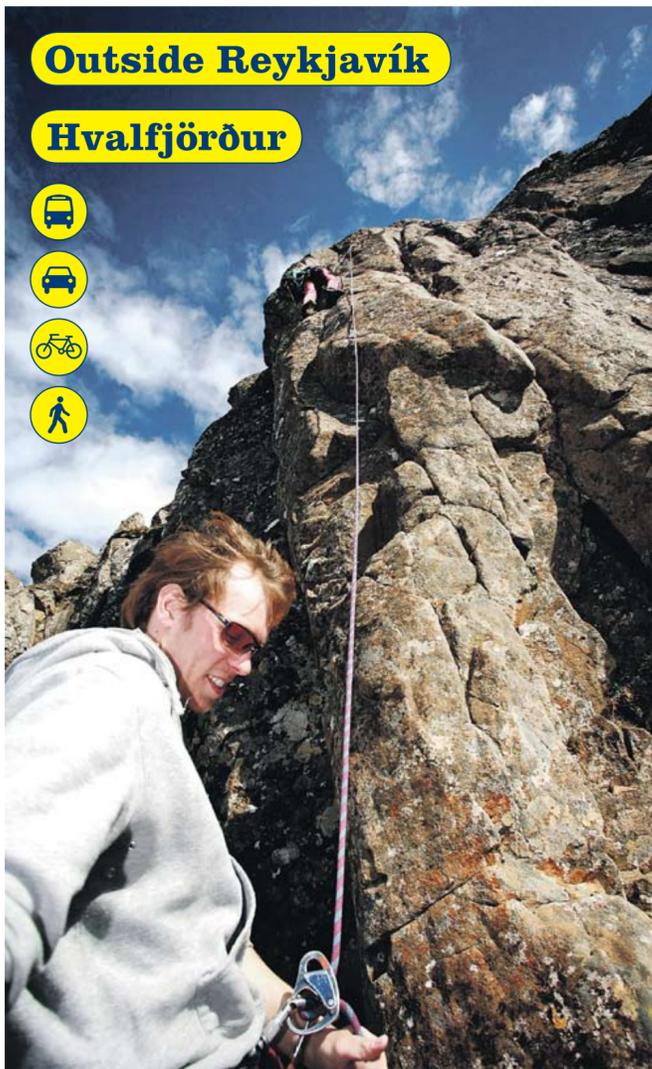
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## Outside Reykjavík

### Hvalfjörður



## Mind the Menacing Bumblebees

Rock climbing in Hvalfjörður

BY SINDRI ELDON PHOTOS BY SKARI

I don't see anything wrong with the fact that rock climbing is considered a pastime activity, rather like how I don't see anything wrong with pouring milk onto bricks in the hope that they will alchemically transform into diamonds. I don't see anything wrong with it, it just doesn't make a lot of sense. I got a decent glimpse of the world of the madmen (and madwomen) that call themselves rock climbers when I tried a bit of it myself one beautiful afternoon in Hvalfjörður.

I had always imagined rock climbing to be a bit like those scenes in the old Batman serials with Adam West, where he and Robin fired a grappling hook into the upper buttresses of a building and climbed steadily up while discussing their plans once they'd reached the top.

The rock, as it happened, was one of those weird, random slabs of stone that you find scattered randomly throughout the countryside. It had a nice view of some cabins and a semi-distant valley that I was rather enjoying when the instructor handed me a harness and said:

"So. You wanna go first?"

I swallowed. "Uh, sure. Why not?" and put the harness on.

I had seen some other climbers on our way to our face of the rock, and had by now come to assume that it wasn't quite as easy as it looked. I was not, however, expecting it to be utterly impossible. What little purchase there was to be had on the rock face was rough, cov-

ered in flaky, dried moss and altogether very dissimilar from the Gotham City skyscrapers. I was also forced to wear rubber ballet slippers that made thong underwear seem loose-fitting and comfortable, and large, menacing

**"I was also forced to wear rubber ballet slippers that made thong underwear seem loose-fitting and comfortable, and large, menacing bumblebees hovered nearby with ominous buzzing sounds."**

bumblebees hovered nearby with ominous buzzing sounds.

ment. But I put those thoughts behind me and

**"And amazed as I am to say it, I feel that were I ever offered to go rock climbing again, there is a better-than-average chance that I might not just snort and find myself something better to do."**

I took the opportunity to do what city kids do best in the countryside, gripe my ass off, much to the amusement of the rest of the climbing party below. My experience was further enriched by what happened when I was about halfway up: I looked down. When you're concentrating that much on what's

realised that my harness was tied through a hook and led straight to the well-muscled hands of the instructor, so if I lost my grip, the worst thing that could happen was a mild concussion and the loss of my sense of smell when my skull hit the rock. With this in mind, I made it to the 'top,' which was basi-

cally a point about twenty feet up on the face where the hook was. I took a short, panicked breath and tried to enjoy my view despite my abject terror. After a moment, I called down to the bottom:

"Um, okay, so how do I get down from here?"

What happened next can only be described as a leap of faith, where I trusted my 120 pounds to a thin rope, a man I'd just met and a weird tool he had tied to the rope. I gingerly made my way down by sitting very awkwardly in my harness as he steadily brought me down to the sorely-missed ground below. My hands coarse and aching, my knees still shaking and my dignity in tatters, I calmly sat down for a cigarette and tried to think up an excuse to not go again, while at the same time waiting very impatiently for my next turn, finding it perversely funny how human nature can drive you to do immensely stupid things just because the only alternative is to feel really dumb for not doing it.

And amazed as I am to say it, I feel that were I ever offered to go rock climbing again, there is a better-than-average chance that I might not just snort and find myself something better to do. On the contrary, I might even seriously consider going. In fact, I may even say yes.

Trip provided by Arctic Rafting, [www.arcticrafting.com](http://www.arcticrafting.com).

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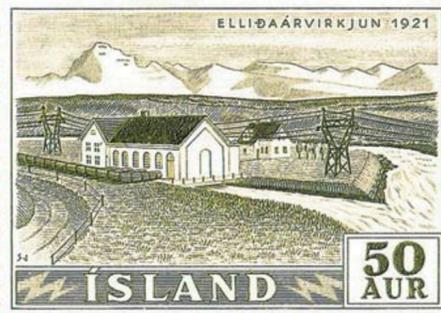
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Hnefatafl is an ancient strategy game that relies on player's prudence and wit and is great entertainment. This game is a modern version of the one the Vikings played in days of old. Hnefatafl was a popular game among the Vikings. This is evident in several findings of game pieces around archaeological sites across Scandinavia, in Iceland and in the British Isles. Nobody knows for sure how the game was played, but the set of rules in this game are made after a description of a game played by a native tribe in Finland in 1732. That game is most likely one version of Hnefatafl.

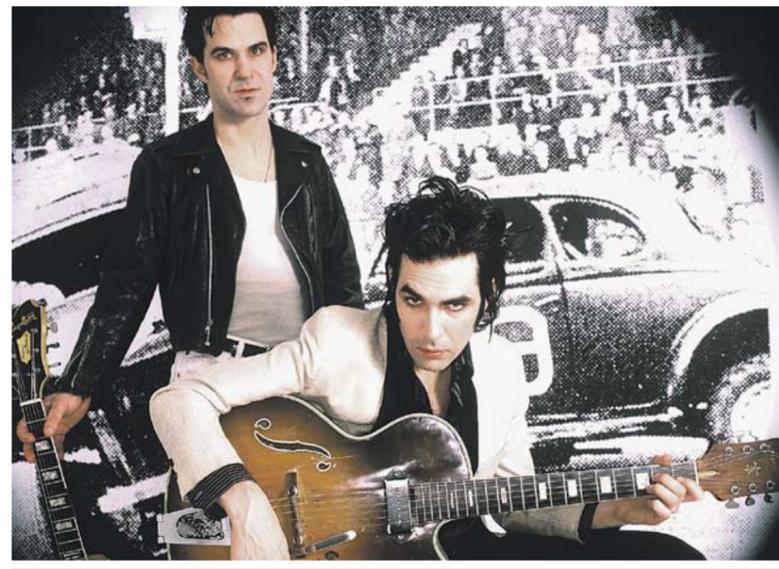


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## Good Morning, Mr. Spencer

BY BART CAMERON PHOTO BY ALI SMITH

It's afternoon here, 9 am in New York. The man on the other end of the line is regarded as a hero of rock music, as the man who found and gave RL Burnside and Mississippi Blues to college kids throughout America, as the leader of the independent music movement, as the king of the European festival circuit, and, overall, as the living embodiment of rock. He is Jon Spencer, and since his first album as the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion in 1994, he has been roughly ten years ahead of the music industry. On May 26th, he'll be in Iceland leading the Rockabilly movement with his new band Heavy Trash.

part of the whole music experience, and it was always something that I got off on as a young fan and still do to this day. The artist for the new album is Paul Pope, a friend of mine. He's a great comic book artist. Among other things, he did Batman Year 100 for DC, which I recommend to anybody. And he spent a lot of time with us, got a good feel for the band, and made something that represents us."

Are comics part of what shapes your sound?  
"I like comics books novels, any type of media, for sure. I like talking to the bus driver. The things I do with my family. Everything, from getting older on, it all feeds into what I'm going to write about."

And cars? Rockabilly is traditionally driving music.  
"I'm not a car person. I'm not a gear head. I think tradition is great. But music isn't real estate, it moves and it's fluid. I think one thing that's weird is the way Rockabilly cats take a hard line. I think that rock n roll moves. Whether or not anyone else agrees with me, I'm going to take the parts I like best and drop the rest."

Your treatment of tradition is controversial. The Reykjavík Grapevine went to the South recently, and we found ourselves in an argument at the Delta Blues Museum based entirely on you. They said that your seminal album with RL Burnside, A Ass Pocket of Whiskey, was mean. They said you just got him drunk and recorded him, that it disrespected tradition.

"I knew RL Burnside. He was a friend. And he drank a lot more than I ever could. I didn't introduce RL to alcohol. We didn't twist his arm at all.

About the album, we'd been touring together and messing around together on stage for a while. We were friends and the record was a natural progression. It was Matthew Johnson's idea to capture what was live and what was going on.

I can understand why some people wouldn't like that record. I think some of the later stuff (Fat Possum Records) did... I think there are worse things that people did than what we did."

In my opinion, A Ass Pocket demonstrated not just that RL was a great blues musician, but that he was still alive and curious in his 70s, and that this whole different, aggressive world of blues was out there.

"It's something that I'm very proud of. The time we spent with RL left such a deep mark. It was a very sad thing to lose him. Touring with him, it was a powerful thing to see people get turned by something that was very alive."

This is the tradition people see you following and developing on.

"I hope so. I think you can look at RL or Charlie Feathers or someone who had a real fire in their bones. And it was a very particular thing that they did. And they stuck to it for their entire lives. And that's some of my favourite stuff."

And will you be pushing it like RL, into your 70s.  
"We'll see. I don't think about it. It's not like 20 years ago I thought this is going to be my job. I like doing this; I don't want to do anything else. I still like to do it, and it still satisfies something, so I'm still doing it."

"I'm a busy guy, I got a lot of stuff to do. Let's get going with this," he says, as soon as I introduce myself.

Mr. Spencer, I was a fan of 1994's rough and ready Orange, which sounds like White Stripes with two Jack Whites, when I came upon you and a freakishly precise Rockabilly guitarist Matt Verta-Ray at a music festival in Norway. How do you go from sloppy and crazy, as an aesthetic, to pool shark precision in Verta-Ray.

"Well, I do love the way Matt Verta-Ray plays. It's just beautiful guitar playing, and that was the reason for heavy trash, the chance to get that sound down on vinyl."

And presumably play live?  
"I love this music. I love rock n roll. It makes me feel good to play this kind of music and to play a concert and have a good time and celebrate something and at the same time mourn something and just sort of get lost a little bit and levitate a few feet above the earth."

Levitate above the Earth?  
"You just get lost with these shows."

I think of Jon Spencer as the Gateway drug, the man who just takes suburban kids, or college kids, or Europeans, and shows them all the dark history of American music.

"It's nice to show people that, the other music, but it's not the reason I'm doing this. My reasons are a bit more selfish. I just want to make records and to play concerts."

You're a 20-year veteran of the Indie circuit. Actually, I guess you invented the Indie circuit—playing your way through Europe as the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, across America with your famous blues tours.

"That's the beauty of it. A lot of people think music is about business and careers, and I think that you can do it on your own. You don't have to have money behind you. It doesn't have to be that way. Of course, sure it would be nice to have some company give us lot of a money. I wouldn't be upset, but everything comes out in the wash. You can tell, just when some gets up on stage, who will stand the test of time. In concert you can separate the wheat from the shaft."

Well, you've got the chops, to say nothing of Matt Verta-Ray.

"Yeah, we've got chops and we've got looks. Take that out and make it a pull quote, cause we're coming to Iceland to blow some people's minds."

About the looks, you're influential in everything from the way you dress to the album covers. This new Heavy Trash album, for example.

"The way that a recording is presented, it's a big



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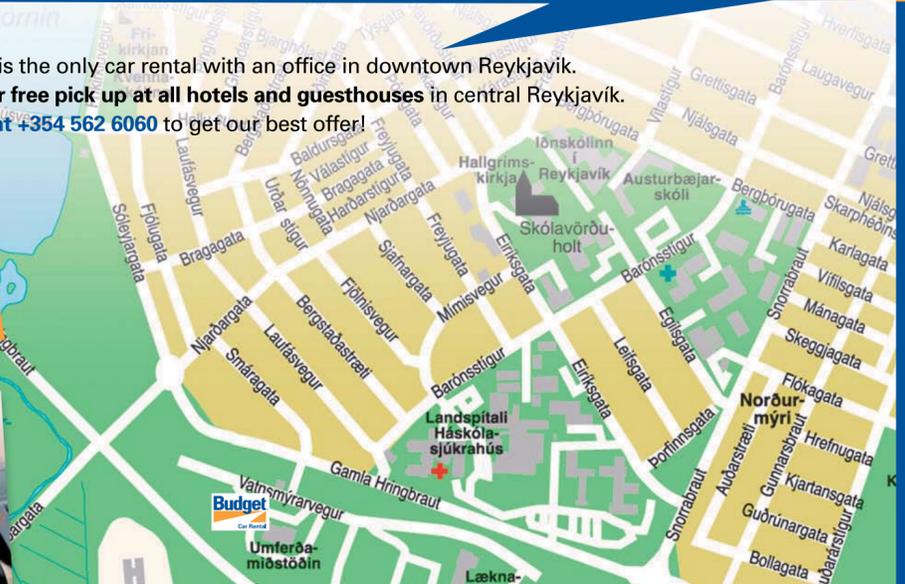
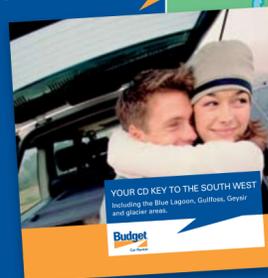


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## Öskjuhlíð to Gay.is

The Grapevine follows the gay Iceland rumour mill

BY GUNNAR HRAFN JÓNSSON

In a country largely unfamiliar with the many uses rest-stops and public toilets can be put to, Öskjuhlíðin was for a time the only place in Reykjavík where men could embrace the love that dares not speak its name. Or at least get a quick shag in the back of a Volkswagen. The tourists who flock to the Perla would probably be surprised to hear that they were hanging out in what could basically be described as a large, outdoor bathhouse – but don't let the locals fool you. All of us, more or less, have heard stories about the alternative side of Öskjuhlíðin – and I don't mean about the wild bunnies that famously dredge out a meagre existence in its rocky and barren landscape.

Not surprisingly, however, the Grapevine had a tough time finding someone willing to talk about his secret gay experiences with strangers in their cars. A couple of men did speak to us on the condition of anonymity. Let us call them Guy #1 and Guy #2, both formerly closeted gay men in their forties. They each confirmed the stories as being very firmly rooted in reality, but weren't too sure about the current popularity of the place as a cruising spot. Said Guy #2: "How much cruising goes on there? People don't seem to agree. In fact, it seems to fluctuate wildly depending on the amount of talk and news coverage on the issue at any given time. When the stories about the place become most rampant, that's when the guys stop showing up for a while and let things cool off."

According to both men, picking someone up in Öskjuhlíðin may be time consuming but the ritual is more or less set in stone and so is etiquette. According to G1: "It's not complicated, you just show up in your car and drive around for a bit, parking here and there and just scouting out the area. It doesn't really matter if you have your headlights on or not, but

you can flash your lights to try and tempt the more timid guys over. Once you make a connection and pull over next to someone it's just a question of who is going to make the first move, which car will be used, stuff like that. There's not much talking, usually, especially with the really nervous closeted types that often show up there," he said, adding that for some reason he was always told Thursdays were the best day to score at Öskjuhlíðin. G2 had never heard the Thursday theory, however.

Despite the general public perception of Öskjuhlíðin's cruisers as middle aged and married, the Grapevine could find little evidence of a generation gap.

"Some guys like that scene, others don't. Just like some people like the bar scene while others loathe it," said G2. He added: "Of course, chat rooms and web pages like einkamal.is have changed things a bit. Some people even say that 'Hlíðin' has simply relocated to the internet!"

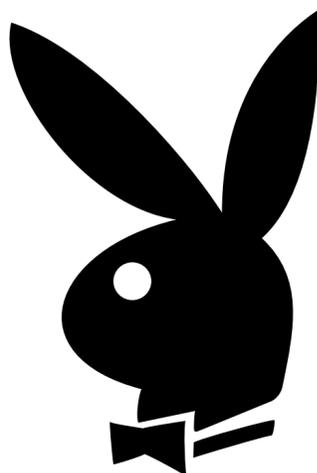
With that in mind, our next mission was definitely going to have to be to check out the gay internet chat channel, #gay.is (it's internet relay chat, don't ask us to teach you how to use it). Once logged in, however, it became apparent that this was a hook-up channel, and no one was terribly interested in answering our questions about Öskjuhlíðin. Penis size was the topic at hand, and no intrusive journalist was going to be allowed to waltz in and disrupt. For anyone curious, 18-19cm seems a popular size in that crowd, but interestingly some people liked to use inches. An expert later told me this was to make it easier to round off liberally – sometimes up to equestrian proportions. Five inches? Hell, that's almost nine inches of man meat you got there.

To conclude the hellishly difficult task of digging up even remotely reliable information

about gay cruising in that area, we drew straws and sent two representatives of the paper to hang out in Öskjuhlíð on a relatively warm and pleasant evening. We weren't directly told to take one for the team, but our editor was clearly hoping our dedication to the assignment would overcome minor issues such as our heterosexuality. As it turns out, absolutely nothing interesting happened – even after I was left up there alone to listen to an iPod and smoke cigarettes while wandering around aimlessly for an hour. Certainly, there were cars. Certainly, some of them were cruising around suspiciously, but the only one I got a good look inside was occupied by four ill-kempt stoners looking for a place to hit their bong. By the

way, if you're reading this, guys, we hope you didn't have a heart attack or spill too much bong water when the bearded guy suddenly popped up in your rear view mirror. But, man, was it ever funny.

At the end of the day, all our investigative efforts got us was a bunch of anecdotes and the definite impression that while the stories are true they are also exaggerated and reek of prejudice towards gays. As G1 put it: "Öskjuhlíðin may be notorious for gay sex, but there are many other out of the way spots where you can find steamy carfuls of heterosexual, as well as gay couples, every single weekend. Some people just need a place to screw, after all."



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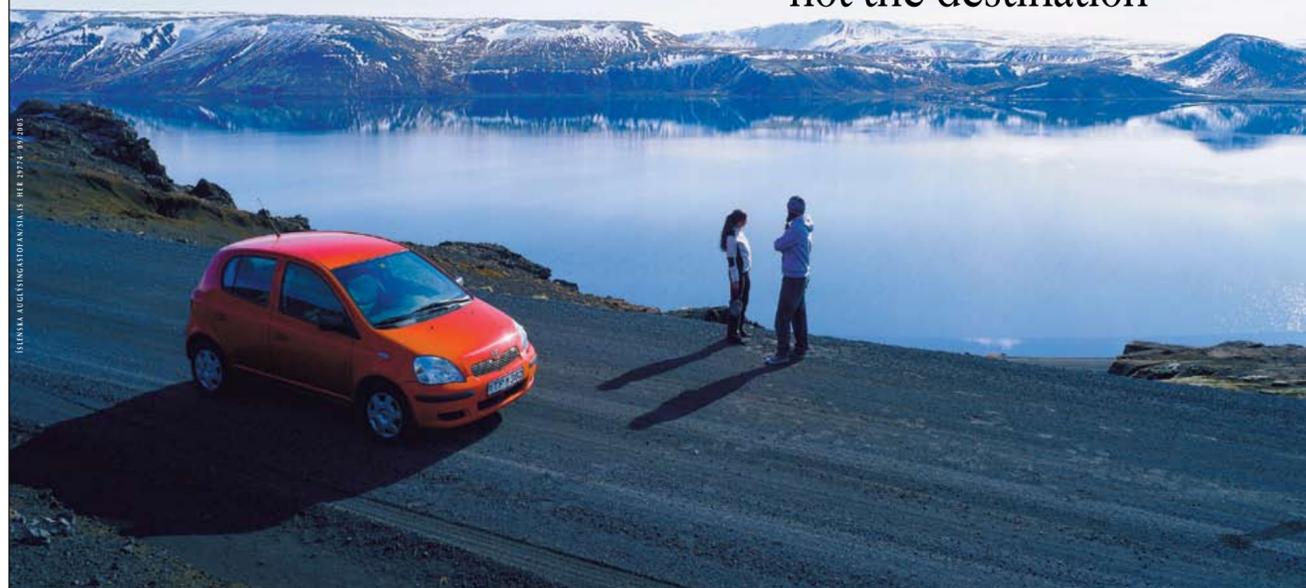
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Gunnar Hrafn Jónsson on the complexities of Icelandic law, **page 5.**

**“The hardest thing was to be so angry, and yet to be able to write a constructive book, and not get lost in name calling, to keep my integrity, although I was not really impartial. The book is created from a lot of anger and the main reason behind me writing it was that I was angry.”**

Andri Snær Magnason on his best-selling critical examination of Iceland's political structure, *Draumalandið*, **page 24.**

**“We want to hear our alt-country butted up against our dirty south rap, and if we don't, we get bored—the genre-faithful approach of traditional radio is what is rapidly killing it.”**

Electric Lights on the Coachella Valley Music Festival, **page 48.**

**“I had always imagined rock climbing to be a bit like those scenes in the old Batman serials with Adam West, where he and Robin fired a grappling hook into the upper buttresses of a building and climbed steadily up while discussing their plans once they'd reached the top.”**

Sindri Eldon, moments before he realizes the difference between rock climbing and comic book fantasizing, **page 50.**

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