



FREE

18

Issues of The Reykjavík Grapevine.

4,000,000

Average number of pizza boxes used by Icelanders every year. If stacked, these boxes would reach a height of apx. 240 km.

9786

The number of registered students at the University of Iceland.

5.5

Average heat (in °C) in Reykjavík. Only .5 degrees colder than the hottest year yet.

2007
IN RANDOM NUMBERS

1.8%

Population increase in Iceland.

830,000

Number of text messages sent on the Síminn network alone on New Year's Eve. A 30% increase from last year.

22,603

New cars registered. 517 less than the year before.

312,872

The population of Iceland.

5.9%

Twelve month inflation in Iceland.

1809

The number of ships in Iceland.

4000

The number of new internet domains registered, bringing the total of Icelandic domains to 20.000.

2,200,000

The number of passengers travelling through Leifur Eiríksson International Airport.

2

The number of Ice-cream sellers shut down in Reykjavík for not passing health-inspections.

The Grapevine Selects the Album of the Year • Interview With Director Ragnar Bragason
The Last Day of Earth • Jesus Christ Enters the Stage • The Lonesome Traveller Gets Wet

Opinion

Freedom in Pyrotechnics

An opinion by Alexandra Hertell

Four random conclusions for 2007

An opinion by Haukur Magnússon

08

08

Articles

No Sleep, No Pay

Interview with filmmaker Ragnar Bragason

06

Life in Numbers

Reviewing a year in the life of Páll Hilmarsson in numbers

09

Recent Books About Iceland

Reading suggestions for the Icelandophile

21

Features

Scenes from Suburbia

Photojournal from Seltjarnarnes

12

Looking Back

The Year's Most Interesting Headlines

14

Top 10 Albums of 2007

The Grapevine awards its respected album of the year title

15

Top of the Charts

Interview with Markús Bjarnason & Birkir Fjalar Viðarsson

16

Music & Nightlife

Psychedelic Normalcy

Benny Crespo's Gang in Concert

18

Jesus Christ Rockstar

Jesus Christ Superstar steps on stage

18

CD Reviews

19

Outside Reykjavík

A Different Kind of Country Music

Yet another American music journalist drives the Ring Road

22

Across the Country in 40 Days

Adventures of the Lonesome Traveller, Leg V

28

info.

Listings

B2

Food Reviews

B10

Shopping

B12

30 Years of Contemporary Art

B14

Earth Waves Goodbye to GusGus

B15

From the Editor's Chair

Happy New Year kids. And welcome to the first issue of 2008. What an exciting year we have ahead of us. First, later this month, we have the European Finals in team handball. That should turn this country upside down. Later this year, we will be treated to both the European Finals in football, as well as the Olympic Games in Beijing. I am honestly torn over when would be the ideal time to take a summer vacation. It is entirely possible that the Grapevine will stop publication during this time. And, with any luck, we might have presidential elections this year as well, although it seems unlikely, since our current president will probably be appointed by default, since he is the only candidate to have declared interest in the job.

The public discussion over the presidential

elections has bothered me though. It is as if the majority of the public would rather skip the whole process, since our current president would likely win anyway, than have anyone run against him, citing the financial costs of staging the elections. This is the message in its simplified form: if the outcome of the election were likely to be one way, we would rather forgo our democratic process and save some money doing so.

Democracy demands financial costs. This is inevitable. It is the constitutional right of every man to run for office in this country, as long as he meets certain requirements of age and citizenship, and we should under no conditions try to curfew that right. This sort of talk invites the danger of slippery slope, and that is a slope we don't

want our democracy to be in. We should rather embrace the idea of partaking in the democratic process.

This issue of the Grapevine celebrates the year that has passed. We look at interesting events from 2007, select the album of the year, and round up some numbers that put the year in perspective. I hope you all had a good year. I did.

The Reykjavík Grapevine

Vesturgata 5, 101 Reykjavík

www.grapevine.is

grapevine@grapevine.is

www.myspace.com/reykjavikgrapevine

Published by Fröken ehf.

Editorial:

+354 540 3600 / editor@grapevine.is

Advertising:

+354 540 3605 / ads@grapevine.is

Publisher:

+354 540 3601 / publisher@grapevine.is

The Reykjavík Grapevine Staff

Publisher:

Hilmar Steinn Grétarsson

publisher@grapevine.is

Editor:

Sveinn Birkir Björnsson / birkir@grapevine.is

Assistant Editor:

Steinunn Jakobsdóttir / steinunn@grapevine.is

Staff Writer:

Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir / vala@grapevine.is

Contributing Writer:

Haukur Magnússon / haukur@grapevine.is

Ian Watson / www.ianwatson.org

Art Director:

Gunnar Þorvaldsson / gunni@grapevine.is

Photographer:

Gunnlaugur Arnar Sigurðsson

gull@grapevine.is

Marketing Director:

Jón Trausti Sigurðarson / jontrausti@grapevine.is

Sales Director:

Aðalsteinn Jörundsson

adalsteinn@grapevine.is

Support Manager:

Oddur Óskar Kjartansson / oddur@grapevine.is

Distribution:

Þórir Gunnar Jónsson / thorir@grapevine.is

Proofreader:

Jane Victoria Appleton

Press releases:

listings@grapevine.is

Submissions inquiries:

editor@grapevine.is

Subscription inquiries:

+354 540 3605 / subscribe@grapevine.is

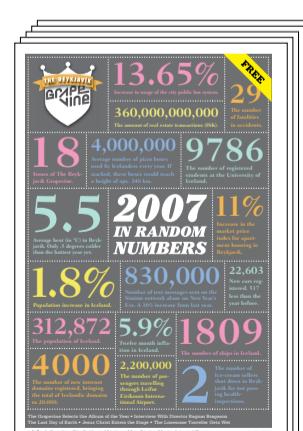
General inquiries:

grapevine@grapevine.is

The Reykjavík Grapevine is published 18 times a year by Fröken ltd. Monthly from November through April, and fortnightly from May til October. Nothing in this magazine may be reproduced in whole or in part without the written permission of the publishers. Although the magazine has endeavoured to ensure that all information inside the magazine is correct, prices and details may be subject to change. The Reykjavík Grapevine can be found in Reykjavík, Akureyri, Egilsstaðir, Selfoss, Keflavík, Ísafjörður, Kárahnjúkar and at key locations around road #1 and at all major tourist attractions and tourist information centres.

You may not like it, but at least it's not sponsored. (No articles in the Reykjavík Grapevine are pay-for articles. The opinions expressed are the writers' own, not the advertisers').

Printed by Landsprent ehf. in 30.000 copies.



Cover illustration:

Gunnar Þorvalds

Facts gathered by:

Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir



WINTER RETREAT

Type: Tinna

Colors: Marron and black

Material: Waterproof and breathable 3 layer

Price: 32.990 ISK



DRESS CODE ICELAND

CINTAMANI CENTER // LAUGAVEGUR 11 // 101 RVK
WWW.CINTAMANI.IS



All you need for a great holiday

City Centre Booking Service // Bus Tours and Activities

Hotels and Guesthouses // Car Rentals // Horse Riding

Whale Watching // Internet and Phone Centre

VAT Cash Refund – Money Exchange



Iceland's Largest Booking Service

**FREE
BOOKING SERVICE**

Simply the most comprehensive Booking Services in the City specialized in customizing and developing travel packages to suit your interests and needs.

We can arrange your accommodation, transfers, tours, flights and car hire based on your requirements.



Your key to the

Capital

Reykjavík Tourist card

Gives admission to:

- all the thermal pools in Reykjavík
- public transport
- museums
- Reykjavík Zoo and Family Park,
- discount on tours and much more.

Great value for money.

Free Internet access for cardholders.

www.visitreykjavik.is



**GREAT VALUE
FOR MONEY**
24 HOURS 1.200 ISK
48 HOURS 1.700 ISK
72 HOURS 2.200 ISK

Sour Grapes

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

Dear Iceland,

As an American, I am as appalled to read of the treatment of Erla Ósk Arnardóttir as you are. Her minor offense does not justify the extreme and inhumane way in which she was treated. I can't apologize on behalf of all Americans, or of the American government, but only for myself. I'm sorry.

But you should know that many Americans like me do recognize the dangerous and absurd degrees to which our government has fallen, even as we do not understand its evolution, and we are frankly ashamed of it. It has escaped our grasp and become a monster we ourselves barely even recognize, and which we do not know how to contain. Our best hope is that the 2008 election will result in a more democratically minded administration, but to be quite honest with you, I fear we have gone a tipping point and that our future is dire. America will probably no longer be what it once was. We will need your help as much as you need ours.

To Ms. Arnardóttir: my apologies.

Sincerely,
David Appell

Dear David,

For some readers of the Grapevine, this might require some explanation. Erla Ósk Arnardóttir travelled to New York to do some shopping for the holidays. At JFK she was met with some very unfriendly Homeland Security officials for overstaying her visa by three weeks in 1995. She was interrogated for hours, jailed in New Jersey and shipped back Iceland in chains.

I think I am at liberty to accept your apology on behalf of Erla Ósk Arnardóttir. I think everyone realises that the treatment on her is not a testimony on the American people, but a testimony of a government that has long since overstepped the boundaries of common sense.

Editor

Dear Editor

I first came to Iceland in June 2006. I was on my way to Europe for the Summer and was making a 5 day layover in Iceland before travelling on. After my first couple of days I knew I needed more time to see the country. 5 days became 2 weeks, which became a month, and before I knew it I stayed the full 90 days I am allowed as a visitor. I stayed because I fell in Love with this country, with its people and its culture. I could write pages about what made me feel this way, but lets just say I felt as though I had finally found my home.

I decided I wanted to apply for a work and residence permit to allow me the chance to share in this community. To offer what I can and contribute in a positive way I began studying the language, and my friends here began teaching me about the customs. However, after 10 months of trying I was left with NO for an answer. The explanation I was given was "he is not European, and we will not issue him a permit". (I am a citizen of the United States)

This did not deter me from following my passion of moving to Iceland. So, in April 2007 I came back for what was suppose to be a week. Again, I became 2, and all of a sudden I was here for the full 90 days allowed. I searched and tried diligently to find a way to receive a permit, but with no luck. Every attempt I made resulted in a dead end. Thus, when my 3 month stay had expired I left with a heavy heart. Leaving my friends and the only place I have ever felt truly at home

behind.

I have returned again, here now in December 2007. I came to see my friends and to experience the Holidays in Iceland. I am still pursuing a permit, but still not having any luck. There is however a change that I have been witness to and I would like to share this. As I am trying to become an immigrant, I have been following the politics surrounding this issue since my first visit in 2006. I am aware of the problems that have been arising and the concerns this community has regarding the issue. I am also aware of the events both recent and past that have caused a not so positive view of the United States. What concerns me is that there has been a good deal of resentment vented towards me simply because of where I was born and because I am trying to be an immigrant. There is no need for me to go into details, but I will say it has been a bit uncomfortable at times. I understand why these people feel as they do, but I would like to point something out to them. When you meet someone who is not native to this land, you must remember that they may love this country as much as you do.

Bestu Kveðjur,

Robert Zartarian

Dear Robert,

Sadly, your story is not the only such example I've heard. Our opinion here at the Grapevine is that there is no justification for treating people badly based on their nationality, no more than you can justify treating people badly based on religion, race, or musical taste. Immigration laws in Iceland have been modified to the point where they are one of the harshest policies in Europe on the subject of immigration. Recently, we have witnessed a surge in anti-immigration attitudes among citizens and politicians, and a political party that campaigned on a platform of anti-immigration, and tougher regulations against foreigners. There seems to be little understanding for how immigrants have enriched our society. The Grapevine greatly deplores this development. It is time for the people of this country to stop viewing immigrants as a problem and start looking for ways to help people who choose to live here with their transition to Iceland. Otherwise, we will have a problem, not a 'immigrant-problem' but an 'Icelanders-problem.'

Editor

Hressingarskálinn

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

Food is served from 10 until 22 every day. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, after the kitchen closes Hressó heats up with live music. Weekends, DJs keep the party going until morning, with no cover charge.



THE CENTRE
The Official Tourist Information Centre in Reykjavík

Special offer

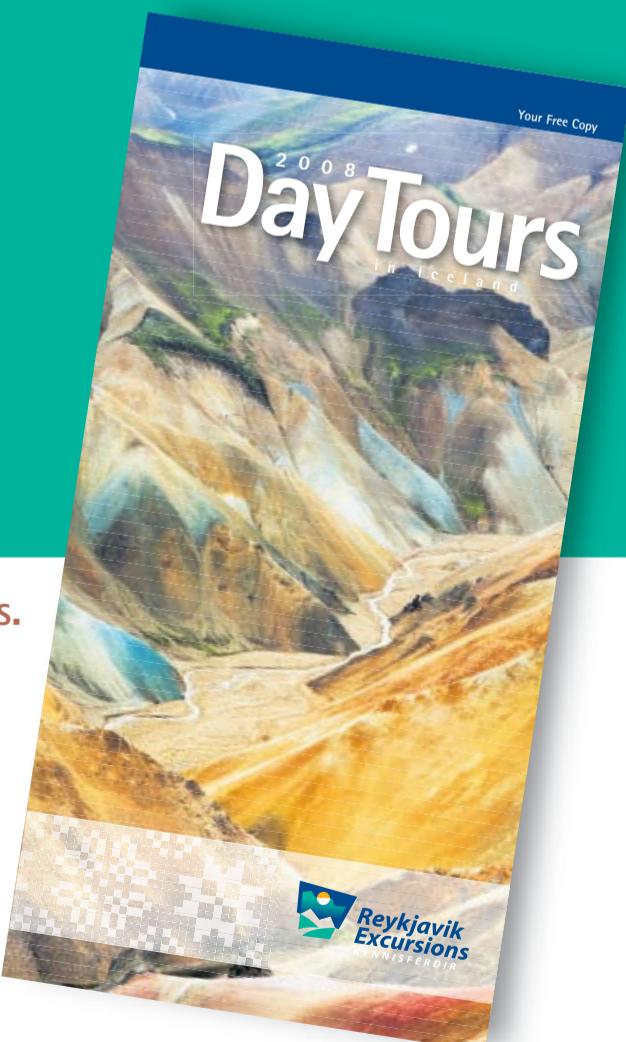


Discounts on day tours

- 5% discount for 1 daytour
- 10% discount for 2 daytours
- 15% discount for 3 daytours

Tours must be purchased at Reykjavik Excursions
sales offices: BSI Bus Terminal, Radisson SAS Hotel Saga,
Hilton Reykjavik Nordica, Icelandair Hotel Loftleidir.

Our brochure is available at all major hotels and guesthouses.



Booking phone: Tel: (+354) 562 1011 www.re.is e-mail: main@re.is

Director Ragnar Bragason enjoyed considerable success in 2007. Unfortunately, success leaves little room for sleep.
Photo by GAS



No Sleep, No Pay

"The truth is that we are in no way ready to take in immigrants, as we are doing absolutely nothing for them. They come over here and basically carry our society – if they'd just up and leave, all of them, then Iceland would collapse completely."

Celebrated Icelandic filmmaker Ragnar Bragason has certainly kept busy. His 2007 saw the release of *Foreldrar* ("Parents"), the sequel to 2006's *Börn* ("Children") to great public and critical acclaim; the début of a hugely popular TV series, *Næturvaktin* ("Night Watch"); as well as his overseeing the annual "Áramótaskaup" comedy revue romp (more on that later).

It doesn't sound like you've been sleeping a lot...

You're always juggling ten projects at a time in this business, as it's hard to determine which will come to fruition when you're dependant on outside factors, like money. The last two years have been kind of insane for me because a lot of the projects I'd been working on became possible at the same time.

Like with *Börn* and *Foreldrar*, we started work on those in 2005, so a long time passed in between when we shot them and when they premiered. We gave ourselves plenty of time for post-production, editing and the like. Since the project was extremely low budget, eliminating the need for investors who needed returns on their money, we could take the time we wanted to make those movies. It's a little backward – the smaller the budget for a film, the more time and freedom you have to work on it. There's no outside pressure.

I went without salary, pretty much, for the two years it took to complete the films. We decided to produce them using a different system than what's usually done, so the actors and I founded a company, a co-op, really. We decided to make these movies communally, and not in the egomaniac-dictator style that film-makers often employ, where the director is all-powerful.

We wanted to make films that mattered too, and were the product of more people than just a director or screenwriter. So the actors also served as screenwriters and producers, and everybody had a say about everything.

There are of course certain problems with going without pay for so long. That's maybe the reason why I worked so much after we finished shooting – in two and a half years I made two full-length movies, 20 episodes of *Stelpurnar* [sketch comedy show 'The Girls'] and 12 episodes of *Næturvaktin* [the TV sensation that Icelanders as a whole fell in love with last fall]. That's a lot of directing in two years, and I used pretty much the same crew through all of those projects.

You've been a filmmaker for nearly a decade now, and there seems to be a certain aesthetic thread running through your work...

My first flick, *Fíaskó*, was released in 2000. So that's a little under eight years I've been making movies for a living. When I think about it, *Fíaskó* isn't that far removed from *Næturvaktin*... both projects are realist and, at the core, human drama straight out of Icelandic reality, but with a sort of tragicomic undertone. I've always considered *Næturvaktin* as drama, when we started work on the

project the idea was that the dramatic aspects of the show would surpass the comedic ones. A realistic show, focused on people and human tragedy in all its forms. It isn't sitcom humour, we focus on uncomfortable scenarios and the humour springs from character flaws rather than jokes or punch lines.

The humour represented in your works seems to revolve a lot around drama and tragedy. Were there times when you envisioned *Börn* and *Foreldrar* as comedies, rather than the tragedies they wound up being?

Yes, there's an incredibly thin line between drama and comedy, and it's evident that a lot of the best comedies of all time could have easily been turned into dramas, with a few simple nuances. I don't think anything can be really funny unless it has drama at its core. All the best comedy stuff is based on tragedies, and the best comics employ it mercilessly. Peter Sellers, among others; his roles usually depict human tragedy. Inspector Clouseau is a really tragic character, for instance, rather dim-witted, unfortunate – a tragic individual. And I find treading that fine line satisfying and fun – it is the same path that life treads.

Did you have a hard time financing your first project?

No. Actually it was incredibly easy. At the time I made *Fíaskó*, a lot of money was going around in Europe and all these funds were very open for Iceland and Icelanders. *Fíaskó* was financed in an incredibly short amount of time, and actually is the most expensive project I've worked on.

I think Icelandic film directors have it pretty easy compared to many of their colleagues overseas. We live in a community where doing stuff – not just films, but all creative projects – is incredibly easy. For instance, I think you won't find as many bands operating anywhere in the world; releasing a record and gaining exposure, getting people to help, is certainly simpler than in neighbouring countries. This is a luxury derived from the minuscule size of our society and there is a certain unity at work, too. It's easy to get people to participate in whatever project and you are not bound by endless rules and regulations. While making a film abroad, you'll have to acquire various permits and the like if you want to shoot a scene outdoors. Over here, you can just take your video camera for a walk, and everybody you encounter will be ready and willing to help.

This isn't the case in most places I know of, so I think Icelandic directors that complain about the lack of opportunity... I laugh at those complaints. If they don't go through with their ideas, it's their own fault; it's just so much laziness. With the situation as it is over here for filmmaking, or any kind of art, there's nothing stopping you but yourself, and if you don't get that 100 million you think you need to make your movie you just need to rethink your strategy and go a different way.

The Grapevine has been getting enquiries as to whether there are any plans underway to

release a *Næturvaktin* DVD with foreign language subtitles. You seem the obvious person to ask...

I thought it was really sad that the original DVD release of the series wasn't subtitled. It was awful really, because, you know, somewhere I heard that between 10 and 15.000 non-fluent Icelandic speakers were living in the country. These are people that want to live here and presumably wish to learn the language and participate in our culture. And a huge part of that is being able to observe and understand whatever's popular on TV at a given time, seeing Icelandic movies, etc. Subtitled materials help them learn the language, and get a grip on the culture. It is a key for tuning in on the zeitgeist, understanding the culture and getting a grip on the humour. All art reflects a certain atmosphere within the community and culture from whence it springs, and it is important that it should be readily available to anyone who's interested.

You seem to have an active interest in immigrant issues, as was evident in your handling of the 2007 Áramótaskaup show [the Áramótaskaup is a cultural institution in Iceland that runs on National TV every New Year's eve before the fireworks display. It is watched by something like 95% of the population and aims to make light of some of the preceding year's issues].

Yeah, I think that Icelanders have a lot of pent up racism and we... somehow it's not acceptable to talk about anything that concerns immigrants or immigration. If a discourse starts, it's somehow killed off immediately. The truth is that we are in no way ready to take in immigrants, as we are doing absolutely nothing for them. They come over here and basically carry our society – if they'd just up and leave, all of them, then Iceland would collapse completely. And we don't appreciate that at all. Instead, we let greedy bastards get away with renting groups of immigrants ridiculously small apartments at sky-high prices, never pausing a moment to think of their rights. We need to accept and celebrate the fact that we are living in a multicultural society, and try to better our community accordingly.

And the final scene of *Áramótaskaupið* was a kind of jab at the country, playing a music video of *Ísland er land þitt* ["Iceland is your country"], where every sentence starts with "Iceland is...", as performed by a group of immigrants in a fish processing plant, where most people would like to keep them doing the jobs we aren't interested in. Honestly, nothing angers me more than any kind of nationalism or racism. People like to hold on to their status quo, keeping a balance is a big part of the human instinct, but it's simply not possible, and it's also very dangerous.

Text by Haukur Magnússon



I'M SENDING MY SUPPORT

WESTERN UNION®

Fast, reliable, worldwide money transfer.



Landsbankinn

410 4000 landsbanki.is

© 2007 WESTERN UNION HOLDINGS, INC. All rights reserved.



It's the journey - not the destination

FREE
CD Guide

Enjoy ...

... the beautiful nature of Iceland with your own CD guide.
When booking please ask for the GRAPEVINE offer.

The best and easiest way to get to know the rugged beauty of Iceland is simply to have your own car.
We are your car rental experts in Iceland.

Hertz
+354 522 44 00 • www.hertz.is

Hertz locations in Iceland: Keflavík Airport, Reykjavík, Ísafjörður, Akureyri, Höfn, Egilsstaðir, Selfoss

Freedom in Pyrotechnics



Alexandra Hertell is professional musician from Puerto Rico. She now resides in Reykjavík.

I had never seen anything like it in my life. There was so much smoke everywhere it was hard to breathe and my eyes were watery. My hair was a little burnt from ash that had fallen on it and lights were bursting and flashing everywhere I looked. It may sound like I was in the middle of some chaotic disorder and I was. New Year's Eve in Reykjavík was upon me and the pyrotechnics war had started. I walked like a drunk, zigzagging and swerving in attempts to avoid children aiming firecrackers straight at me, straight at everybody. I am used to fireworks being at the hands of the city council and not at the will of the population. Seeing all those tykes and champagne-wielding adults firing off made me nervous, although I have to say it was nice to see that everybody got to participate in lighting up the midnight sky and that it wasn't just an officially organised affair.

The type of New Year's celebration I am used to has quite a pathetic showing of fireworks that is aimed at tourists rather than locals. I come from a small, immensely beautiful island in the Caribbean: Puerto Rico. Our tradition there is to spend the hours up until midnight with the family, so people tend to be inside when the clock strikes twelve. The explosives display (I can't even remember the last time I saw it) is conducted from Old San Juan: a relic of the past with faded blue cobblestones and Spanish architecture adorned with bold colours. However, very few Puerto Ricans will be walking around the old city to enjoy the few sparks visible in the sky. It is mainly a display to satisfy the sun burnt, Hawaiian-shirt-wearing tourists.

Sadly for the people back home, it is illegal for individuals to buy or use fireworks, so people

miss out on all the fun that Icelanders are entitled to. To make matters worse, with sparklers prohibited, an odd tradition has developed since some intellectually challenged individuals decided that firing bullets into the sky would be a great replacement for firecrackers, ignoring Newton's law of gravity that what goes up must eventually come down. This year, the government had to spend money running campaigns titled: "Not one more bullet into the air!" in order to curtail this crazy twenty-first-century ritual.

The morning after my first Icelandic New Year's Eve, I inspect my coat for burns and wonder how the hell nobody gets injured in all this mayhem. Then I think of last New Year's Eve and I am reminded that I prefer a four-year-old with a firecracker to bullets flying across the sky. I come to the conclusion that people just want to feel in control of their lives and the actions they take. People on my island want to experience the start of the New Year literally and figuratively in their own hands. When simple freedoms such as this are constrained, people revolt and find other ways to express themselves.

There was a comparable situation in Reykjavík before 1999 when bars were required to close at three in the morning. Partygoers were forced to leave the bars amidst their merriment. However, the bartender's last call did not stop people from spilling onto the streets where rowdy crowds of thousands would gather to continue their partying. This became too bothersome a burden for the police to handle and the drinking laws were relaxed allowing for later closing times. Similarly, before 1989 the beer prohibition did not prevent people from getting intoxicated. Instead Iceland-

ers drank Bjórlíki, a non-alcoholic beer named from the Icelandic word bjór meaning beer and líki meaning imitation, laced with large shots of whiskey or vodka. If the government decides to behave like an overzealous parent and tell its citizens not to behave in a certain way that endangers no one, the independent and proud child will do exactly what they are told not to do, or worse. As a matter of principle people should be responsible for themselves and behave the way they wish as long as it does not interfere with the safety of others.

The extravagant 360-degree fireworks display I experienced here and the whimsical smiles of those taking part in the grand spectacle inspired me. Now that I know what to expect, I will be prepared for next year with my own arsenal of fireworks so that I can contribute to the carnival atmosphere instead of just being a spectator. So if you happen to find yourself annoyed at the fireworks damage suffered by your newly acquired vintage dress, simply laugh about it and remember that at least you have the freedom to enjoy 2008 behaving as wildly or primly as you please.

Four Random Conclusions for 2007



Haukur Magnússon is a contributing writer for the Reykjavík Grapevine. He lives with eight cats.

One) Re-designing 101 Reykjavík is dumb:

Tearing down old houses on Laugarvegur, some of which have great historical significance, others that have gained status as bona fide cultural institutions in latter years, to make way for a downtown shopping mall is dumb. And shortsighted.

Not only is it dumb for the very obvious reason that some of the places earmarked for destruction by city planners have become veritable tourist attractions and landmarks in their own right, contributing greatly to the "vibrant downtown atmosphere and music life" that many Grapevine readers cite as their main reason for visiting Iceland in the first place.

They are tearing down Grand Rokk. And Sirkús. Not that I am the biggest fan of either of those establishments (actually, I've probably spent more time unsuccessfully trying to gain entry to Sirkús than actually inside of it, and Grand Rokk's drunken patrons frighten me). But still. Sirkús often employed bouncers for the sole reason of keeping the frightened-by-the-price-of-alcohol-but-still-keen-to-observe-and-thus-take-up-space tourists out. More often than not, those bouncers were veteran frightened-by-the-price-of-beer tourists that had settled and pushed through the glass ceiling.

It is also dumb because we already have at least two fully functioning enoromo-malls in the greater Reykjavík area, that are well befitting for serving all average mall goers shopping needs.

And it is dumb because 101 Reykjavík's attraction now lies mainly in its coffeehouses, bars, galleries and concert venues – its nightlife. Laugavegur abandoned its post as Reykjavík's shopping street sometime in the mid-eighties, when they opened Kringlan. And that is fine.

And it is dumb because one of the main arguments for tearing down those historical landmarks is how ugly they've grown in the past decade. Am I just being silly, or wouldn't it be a good idea, say, if I were a real estate developer, to let a building I owned grot down and slumify if I desperately wanted to level it so I could build a high-price mega-mall on the lot? And it is dumb because Laugavegur seems to be working fine as is.

Two) Don't listen to anything those evil fucks on the Internet try and tell you:

Back in the utopian times of 2003, people who had

opinions that they wished to share with their fellow citizens actually had to bother expressing them on paper, purchasing stamps and sending them off to a newspaper, where they would be approved of (or not), proofread and typeset. It is likely that anyone who bothers going through with this whole procedure will have also bothered to actually form their opinion in a thoughtful manner, and formulating it to an understandable degree, too.

Of course, all opinions are valid as such. But not all statements are opinions, and that is important to remember. The advent of one-click publishing has, for the most part, killed off any inkling of belief in democracy and public discourse I once held.

There are countless examples of this from the Icelandic blogosphere of 2007. The case of the disappearing re-appearing dog, Lúkas, for one. Every discussion on feminism made on-line in the Icelandic language. Also every discussion on religion. And music. And pretty much anything weightier than Britney Spears exiting a car with her gaping vagina on display (the internet is an excellent place for that).

So, if anyone from the internet reads this, please pay attention: YOUR THOUGHTS AS THEY APPEAR IN YOUR MIND AT A GIVEN MOMENT AREN'T NECESSARILY OPINIONS; MOST LIKELY, THEY ARE REACTIONS. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO ARRANGE THOSE REACTIONS IN ORDER, AND TO VERIFY THEM AGAINST A LIST OF FACTS THAT ARE EVIDENTLY TRUE (cogito ergo sum). Please.

Three) Banning smoking in bars was a really shitty idea:

I've generally clung to the opinion that anyone who chooses to spend their spare time drinking in bars isn't really concerned about their personal welfare.

Furthermore, not being libertarian or anything, I've still managed to believe that if there was a market for non-smoking bars and cafés, someone would see fit to open these, and those drinkers that were sick of having to take showers and burn their clothes once they got home from a night out at a smoky bar would see fit to attend those. And they would flourish and prosper, just like all those pre-smoking ban polls showed. How does this not make sense?

Since it apparently doesn't, I would now like

to call for a ban on drinking in bars and cafés. The smell of alcohol and stale beer is generally unpleasant. Drunk people really annoy me when I am trying to have sober fun at a bar; they are loud, rude and rowdy. Many of them harbour the absurd pastime of beating random strangers to a pulp. And, sometimes, people die from those beatings.

In conclusion, I would like to be able to go out to the bar without being exposed to drunken people. We could make an example out of the forthcoming downtown shopping mall's bar.

Four) At the core, all cities are essentially larger versions of my hometown, Ísafjörður:

2007 saw me visit Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Brussels, Cologne, Paris, New York, London, Oslo, Copenhagen, Manchester, Cannes and Austin, Texas, among others. They are all the same, really (although some of them have awfully modernised, ghost-town like city centres while others feature thriving, culturally significant, historical ones). Oh, some of them will have more video stores than others, and of course climates will differ, but at the core, they are all divided into the same neighbourhoods, and their inhabitants foster the same hopes, dreams and fears. Not to say that Western culture is growing increasingly homogenous (which I am sure it is), rather that people all over are generally good, helpful and hopeful.

Especially those without blogs.
And that was a nice discovery.



Life in Numbers

After all, consumption drives this society and I take my role in it very seriously. One part of this consumption is drinking my coffee at Hressingarskálinn, where a cup of coffee Americano costs 320 ISK.

320 ISK.

I have never been particularly interested in mathematics. However, I am extremely interested in numbers and statistics. So much so that at times it borders on obsession. I like to keep track of all numbers, major and minor. Despite this I haven't really been good at feeding the obsession. But thanks to the digital age making things a bit easier and my new year's resolution of 2007 to keep a detailed account of my life in numbers, I can now present to you my life in 2007 in digits. Fascinating stuff I promise you.

I'm on the internet almost 24/7. I surf relentlessly. Almost all my digital consumption comes from the internet: music, movies and what not. My internet service provider measures my download from servers outside Iceland. Last year that totalled 153.29 gigabytes during an 8-month period. That's a whopping 19 GB average per month. Most of the bigger stuff (movies for example) comes from Icelandic servers so I think it's safe to assume we can triple that amount. That's 57 GB a month or 57,000 megabytes. Like that guy said: Man, there is a lot of porn out there. To accommodate this enormous amount of zeros and ones I added a 500 GB hard drive to the family server space. That didn't cut it. This year I'll need to add an additional terabyte of storage. Somewhere, something needs to be cut down and simplified.

When I'm not scouring the internet, I'm talking on my mobile phone. During my 8 months in Iceland in the year 2007, I sent 1098 sms messages. I received 1308. That is a surplus of 210 messages. I suspect that most of the surplus is on account of my bank reminding me of the money I owe them. They seem really keen on sending me a message at 5 pm each day containing the total of my debt. Even so, this is a part of my life where, at least it appears, I'm winning.

When it comes to banking, however, I'm losing faster and faster each month. The debts on my apartment total around 7 million ISK. They are divided into two loans, one which was originally for 700,000 and another for 6.3 million. In January 2007 the monthly payment (number 5 of 480) for the bigger loan was 28,974 ISK. At that time it would have cost me 6,072,501 ISK to pay up the loan. January 2008, the same monthly payment was suddenly up to 30,560 ISK and the loan

now stands at 6,373,335 ISK. That means that my monthly payments have increased by 1,586 ISK and the loan (despite my diligent, on time, payments) has inflated by 300,834 ISK. Obviously, this is one game where I cannot win. This loan will continue to expand, making money for some people, somewhere. I can understand the laws of inflation and interest, but I cannot see the justice in this monetary system. But then again, who can?

To pay for this, and all the other stuff that comes with being a highly successful person, I work for the Nursing Faculty of the University of Iceland in a 50% position. For that I have been paid (over 8 months) a massive 738,683 ISK. It is all gone. Another score for the market economy. After all, consumption drives this society and I take my role in it very seriously. One part of this consumption is drinking my coffee at Hressingarskálinn, where a cup of coffee Americano costs 320 ISK. My (slightly incomplete) fiscal measurements show that I've paid for this commodity of hot water and coffee grounds at least 92 times, again over an 8-month period, totalling around 30,000 ISK. There were some times when somebody else picked up the tab so let's round off the number of Americanos to 120. To keep my sanity I've decided not to calculate the amount spent on beer and cigarettes at the various establishments around town. After all, if I am going to keep contributing to this market carousel, I must turn a blind eye to at least some of my spending. Otherwise I might be tempted to cut down and that might spell bad things for bar owners and staff alike.

Perhaps you are wondering why my fiscal year is 8 months and not 12 like everyone else's. For the first 4 months of 2007 I was travelling around Southeast-Asia, visiting 4 countries (6 if you count Stansted airport in the UK and Dubai airport). During that time I travelled on 8 different planes for a total of 25,752 km. The CO₂ emissions from my travels are, loosely calculated, around 4466 kg of CO₂. Maybe if I cut down on the coffee spending I'll be able to plant some trees this year to make up for this horrific number. Don't bet on it though.

At the beginning of my journey my personal weight, sans accessories, stood at 78.3 kg. At the end of the trip, after living on the finest Asian cui-

sine for 4 months it was 76.2 kg (measured on a highly dodgy set of scales in a Bangkok back alley). By the end of the year my likeable self had inflated to 79.5 kg. It seems I inflate in relation to my debts. This is despite my personal definition of myself as a runner. You see, back in 2003 I trained for and completed a half marathon. That's 21.1 km. It took me 2 hours and 9 minutes of waddling. Since then I regularly deceive people who ask me about my work-out habits (which, I must admit, happens much too often, probably due to my inflating physique) by telling them that I'm an avid runner – on par with the best Kenyans. In the year 2007 I went running 7 times for a total distance of 23.23 km. This is abysmal and must be rectified this year if I'm not going to resemble the Michelin Man at the end of this year. On the bright side, I managed to climb 1 mountain, that's 1 more than in the year 2006. It was a climb to 649 metres, the total walking distance 7.04 km, which took 2 hours. I see a Mt. Everest ascent on the horizon.

But let's not dwell on personal defeats. The victories are much more fun. During the year I managed to add to my tattoo collection 2 times, both works inked in Bangkok, Thailand. I donated blood 1 time, in a run-down blood bank in Shianoukville, Cambodia, and managed to survive my 4-month trip without ever putting on a pair of socks. It's the small numbers that give the most satisfaction it seems. This year will bring many more of these small victories, I predict. At least I've made it my mission to document the year 2008 in numbers far more thoroughly. For instance the running total of times I've shaved this year stands at 1. Tonight I'll add 1 more, trudging along to a happy and prosperous, numerical year.

Text by Páll Hilmarsson



Wszystko, o czym powinieneś wiedzieć dla swojego bezpieczeństwa

Poważne kary za łamanie prawa drogowego

Na Islandii można stracić prawo jazdy bądź zostać ukarany bardzo wysoką grzywną za łamanie prawa drogowego. W niektórych przypadkach dochodzi nawet do konfiskaty pojazdu a kierowca zostaje wysłany na specjalny kurs oraz ma obowiązek ponownego zdania egzaminu na prawo jazdy.

Dopuszczalna prędkość

Przekraczanie prędkości jest najczęściej popełnianym wykroczeniem na Islandii. Poza obszarem zabudowanym na drodze asfaltowej maksymalna prędkość wynosi 90 km/godz. a 80 km/godz. na drodze szortowej. Na obszarze zabudowanym maksymalna prędkość wynosi 50 km/godz. chyba, że jest inny nakaz. Ten nakaz może być stosowany tylko podczas dobrej pogody.

Mandaty za przekroczenie prędkości

Za przekroczenie prędkości o 30 km mandat wynosi 45 tysięcy koron. Mandat może wynosić nawet 110 tysięcy koron a także inne kary z odebraniem prawa jazdy włącznie.

Zabrania się prowadzenia pojazdu pod wpływem alkoholu

Na Islandii surowo zabrania się prowadzenia pojazdu pod wpływem alkoholu lub środków odurzających. Osoby mające powyżej 0,5 promila alkoholu we krwi otrzymują mandat oraz zawieszenie prawa jazdy.

Kary pieniężne za jazdę pod wpływem alkoholu

Mandaty wynoszą od 70 do 140 tysięcy koron. Osoby prowadzące pod wpływem alkoholu bądź też środków odurzających tracą prawo do otrzymania jakiegokolwiek odszkodowania i wszelkie koszty muszą pokryć same.

Obowiązek zapinania pasów

Zarówno kierowca jak i pasażer mają obowiązek zapinania pasów, również na tylnych siedzeniach. Dzieci powinny być w specjalnych fotelikach, dopasowanych do swojej wagi i wzrostu.

O tym dodatkowo powinniśmy pamiętać:

- Zawsze zachowywać bezpieczny odstęp w razie nagłego hamowania.
- Zmęczony i śpiący kierowca to niebezpieczny kierowca.
- Poziom alkoholu we krwi utrzymuje się nawet następnego dnia.
- Obowiązkowo należy mieć włączone światła mijania przez całą dobę.
- Należy zmniejszyć prędkość podczas zmiany z drogi asfaltowej na szortową.
- Na Islandii jest wiele wąskich mostów, na których należy zachować szczególną ostrożność.
- Zabrania się rozmowy przez telefon, chyba że posiadamy zestaw słuchawkowy.

Na stronie internetowej www.drive.is można zobaczyć film "Jak jeździć po Islandii/How to drive in Iceland", który pokazuje jak powinno się jeździć w islandzkich warunkach pogodowych. Film można obejrzeć w języku angielskim, niemieckim, francuskim oraz hiszpańskim.

Что нужно знать водителю, чтобы обеспечить свою безопасность



Строгие наказания за нарушения правил движения

В Исландии за нарушение правил уличного движения можно лишиться водительских прав и подвергнуться очень высокому штрафу. В некоторых случаях автомобиль, ставший причиной аварии, конфискуют, а водителя посылают на специальные курсы, и ему придется снова сдавать экзамен на права.

Максимальная скорость

Наиболее частой причиной серьезных аварий в Исландии является превышение скорости. Вне города на асфальтовой дороге максимальная скорость составляет 90 км/час, а на грунтовой – 80 км/час. Внутри города максимальная скорость равна 50 км/час, если нет специального указателя о другой разрешенной скорости. Эти цифры действительны при самых благоприятных дорожных условиях.

Штраф за превышение скорости

Штраф за превышение скорости на 30 километров составляет 45 тысяч крон. Штраф за превышение скорости может достигать 110 тысяч и более с одновременным лишением водительских прав.

Запрещается вести машину после употребления алкоголя

В Исландии запрещается вести машину после употребления алкоголя или наркотических веществ. Если содержание алкоголя в крови водителя превышает 0,5 промилле, то он подвергается штрафу и лишается водительских прав.

Штраф за езду в нетрезвом состоянии

За езду в нетрезвом состоянии взимается штраф в размере от 70 тысяч до 140 тысяч крон. Водитель, попавший в аварию в состоянии опьянения или под влиянием наркотических средств, не получает страховых выплат и обязан сам оплачивать причиненный ущерб, который может составлять миллионы крон.

Обязательное использование ремня безопасности

Водитель и пассажiry автомобиля на переднем и заднем siedeniyah обязаны пристегнуть ремни безопасности. Для перевozki dzieci должно быть специальное automobile kreslo ili другое приспособление, соответствующее rostu и весu ребенка.

В дополнение к вышесказанному следует помнить также, что:

- Необходимо сохранять достаточную дистанцию до движущегося впереди автомобиля, чтобы суметь вовремя остановить машину.
- Невыспавшийся и усталый водитель очень опасен.
- Алкоголь часто сохраняется в крови водителя на следующий день после выпивки.
- Фары автомобиля должны быть включены при езде в любое время суток.
- Важно замедлить скорость при съезде с асфальта на грунтовую дорогу.
- В Исландии много одноколейных мостов, где нужно соблюдать особенную осторожность.
- Запрещается разговаривать по телефону во время езды без специального устройства, освобождающего ruki водителя.

На вебсайте www.drive.is есть видеоролик «Как ездить по Исландии», который посвящен особенностям езды по исландским дорогам. Текст видеоролика на английском, немецком, французском и испанском языках.

Visit www.drive.is and



Important information regarding road safety



Severe punishments for violation of traffic laws

In Iceland, people can expect to lose their driver's licence and receive high fines for violation of traffic laws. In some cases, the car of the guilty party will be confiscated and the driver will have to attend a special course or even take a driver's test again.

Speed limits

Speeding is the most common cause of serious traffic accidents in Iceland. Outside populated areas on paved roads, the speed limit is 90 km/hr., but only 80 km/hr on gravel roads. Within populated areas, the speed limit is 50 km/hr., if not stated otherwise. These speed limits are under optimal conditions.

Penalties for speeding

The penalty for driving at 30 km over the speed limit is 45,000 kr. The penalty for speeding can be up to 110,000 kr, or even more, plus suspension of the driver's licence.

Drinking and driving is strictly forbidden

In Iceland, it is forbidden to drive a car after having consumed alcohol or drugs. Those driving a car with more than the legal blood alcohol limit of 0.5 per mill, have to pay a penalty and suffer suspension of their drivers's licence.

Penalties for drunk driving

The penalties for drunk driving are between 70,000 kr up to 140,000 kr. If driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you will not be entitled to compensation in case of an accident and will have to bear the total cost of the accident yourself. This can amount to several million krona.

Seat Belt Laws

Drivers as well as all passengers in a car are required to wear a seat belt, both in the front and back seats. Children have to be in a safety seat or use other equipment according to their age and weight.

Please keep the following in mind:

- Keep a safe distance between you and the car in front of you to enable you to stop your car without any problems.
- A tired and worn-out driver is very dangerous.
- Alcohol might still be present in your blood on the day after drinking.
- You are required to drive with lights on at all hours.
- It is important to slow down when a paved road turns into a gravel road.
- In Iceland, there are a large number of single-lane bridges where you have to drive with special care.
- It is forbidden to use your mobile phone while driving unless you use a special hands free mobile car kit.

On www.drive.is, you can find an instructional video on "How to drive in Iceland" which deals with driving in Icelandic conditions. The video is available in English, German, French and Spanish.

see how to drive in Iceland

Nauðsynlegt að vita varðandi öryggi þitt



Harðar refsingar við umferðalagabrotum

Á Íslandi getur folk átt von á að missa ökuréttindi og fá mjög háar sektir vegna umferðalagabrota. Í sumum tilfelli er bíll þess sem brýtur af sér tekinn eignarnámi og ökumaður sendur á sérstakt námskeið, jafnvel þarf sá hinn sami að taka ökuprófið að nýju.

Hámarkshraði

Of mikill hraði er algengasta orsök alvarlegra umferðarslysa á Íslandi. Utan þéttbýlis á bundnu slitagi er hámarkshraði 90 km/klst. en 80 km/klst. á malarvegum. Í þéttbýli er hámarkshraði 50 km/klst. nema annað sé tekið sérstaklega fram. Þetta miðast við bestu hugsanlegu skilyrði.

Refsing fyrir of hraðan akstur

Fyrir að keyra á 30 km yfir hámarkshraða er sektin 45 þúsund krónur. Sekt fyrir of hraðan akstur getur orðið 110 þúsund krónur og jafnvel meiri auk svíptingar ökuréttinda.

Það er bannað að aka eftir neyslu áfengis

Á Íslandi er bannað að aka bíl eftir að hafa neytt áfengis eða fíkniefna. Þeir sem aka með meira en 0,5 prómill áfengismagns í blóði eru sektaðir og svíptir ökuréttindum.

Refsing fyrir ölvunarakstur

Sektir fyrir ölvunarakstur eru frá 70 þúsund krónum til 140 þúsunda. Sá sem keyrir ölváður eða undir áhrifum fíkniefna fær ekki bætur ef hann lendir í slysi og þarf að bera allan kostnað vagna tjónsins sjálfur. Getur sú upphæð numið milljónum króna.

Skylt að nota bílbelti

Ökumenn eða farþegar í bíl eru skyldugir til að vera með bílbelti spennt, bæði í framsæti og aftursæti. Börn eiga að vera í barnabílstólum eða nota búnað sem hæfir stærð þeirra og þyngd.

Bessu til viðbótar skaltu muna:

- Að hafa nægjanlegt bíl í næsta bíl svo þú getir stöðvað hindrunarlaust.
- Að syfjaður og þreyttur ökumaður er mjög hættulegur.
- Að oft mælist áfengi í blóði ökumanns daginn eftir drykkju.
- Að það er skylt að hafa ökuljósin kveikt í akstri allan sólarhringinn.
- Mikilvægt er að draga úr hraða þegar komið er af vegin með bundnu slitagi inn á malarveg.
- Á Íslandi er fjöldi einbreiðra brúa þar sem gæta þarf mikillar varúðar.
- Það er bannað að tala í síma á meðan á akstri stendur nema notaður sé sérstakur handfrjáls búnaður.

Á heimasíðunni www.drive.is er kynningarmyndin „How to drive in Iceland“ en hún fjallar um akstur við íslenskar aðstæður. Myndin er á ensku, þýsku, frönsku og spænsku.



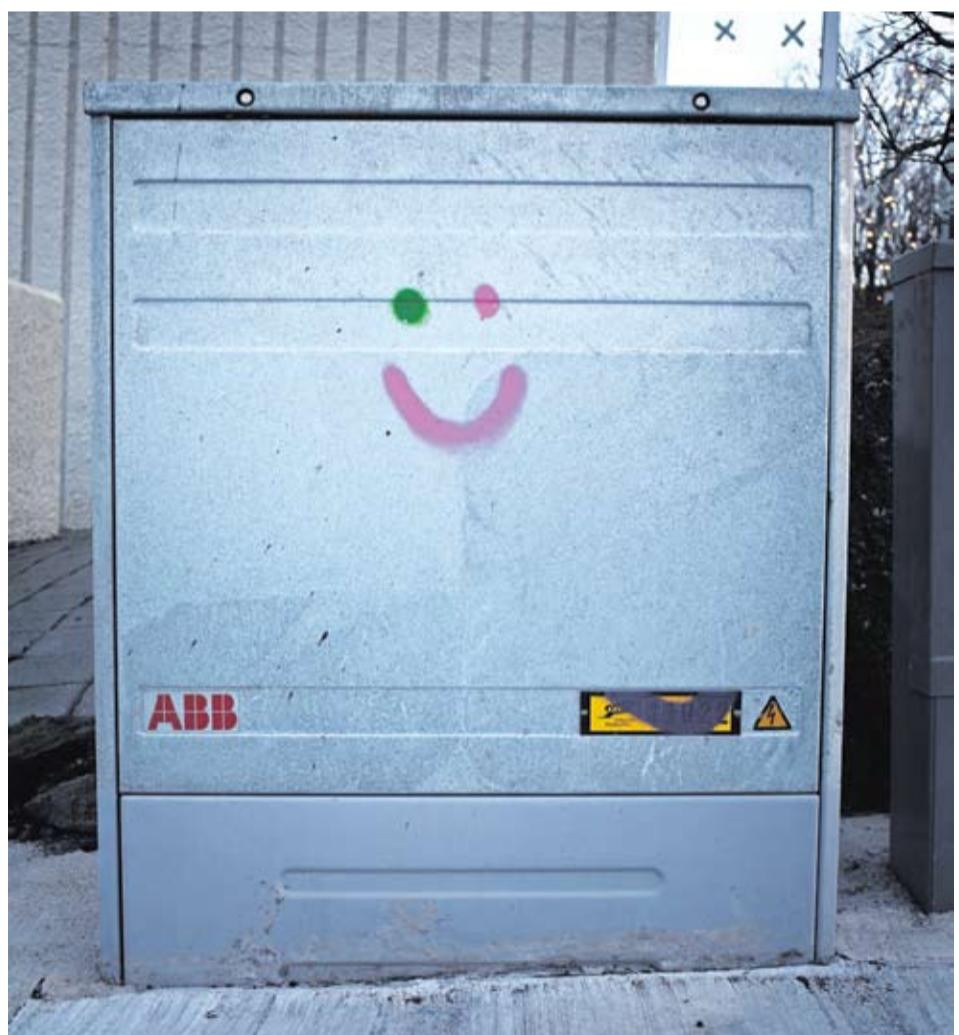
ROAD TRAFFIC DIRECTORATE

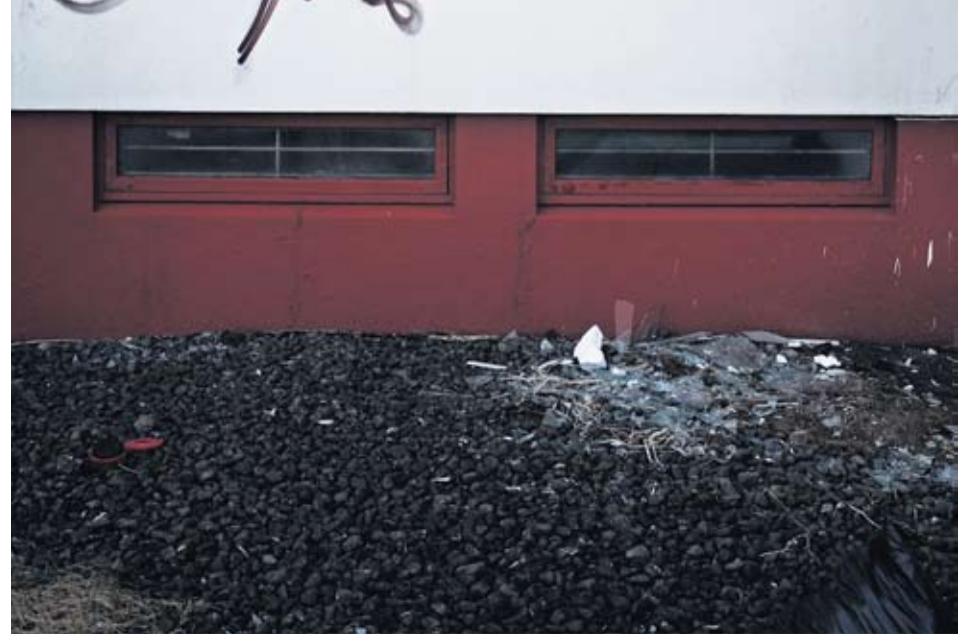


SCENES FROM SUBURBIA

170 *Seltjarnarnes*

Photos by GAS





Lúkas the dog immortalised by a street artist in Lækjartorg.
Photo by Páll Hilmarsson
- www.reykjavik.gotuli.st



Looking Back

He was released a day later after surrendering his passport, under the conditions that he stay away from both the Royal Ontario Museum and explosives. He still faces charges of causing mischief and being a public nuisance.

There were many memorable events that shaped last year. Here is a review of some of the events that stand out in memory.

Dog Cheats Death, Photographer Escapes Angry Mob

The most peculiar news story of 2007 is the adventurous tale of Lúkas the Chinese Crested dog wonder who was reported to have met his fate last June in a most gruesome manner.

The dog was reported missing mid-May, and repeated search missions failed. Mid-June, media reports suggested that Lúkas might have been stuffed in a gym bag, which was subsequently used as a ball-alternative in a game of football between a group of young men during a drunken weekend in Akureyri. A young photographer was named in relation to the heinous act. Soon his mobile phone, e-mail and blog-site were flooded with hundreds of messages – in addition to various blog posts and chat room messages – promising him a fate worse than the dog's, while dog lovers performed candle-light memorial services around the country.

Two weeks later, Lúkas was found alive near Akureyri. He was in good health, despite having lived in the wild for nearly two months. The young photographer has filed criminal charges against more than 100 people for threats of bodily harm – the highest number ever filed at once in Iceland.

Hotel Ousts Pornography Convention, Shuts Down In-house Porn Channel

Over one hundred producers of internet pornography and other industry insiders were scheduled to gather in Iceland for a week-long annual convention in Reykjavík in March 2007. The convention, called Snowgathering, is one of the largest meet-and-greet sessions of the calendar for internet porn-merchants.

The scheduled convention was promptly cancelled after a collective outcry – from city officials including the Mayor, Members of Parliament, and various women's rights groups – forced the Icelandic Farmers Association, owners of Hotel Saga, to cancel the group's booking with the Hotel.

A statement from Freeones.com, the event's organisers, expressed dismay at this treatment, stating, "It seems that being connected in any way to pornography has become a new Icelandic law for declaring you a persona non grata in their country. A country that seems to care more about adult women taking their clothes off – by their own choice, without any pressure or threat – than about the extinction of living creatures like whales!"

In the wake of Hotel Saga's decision to cancel the pornographers' convention, a decision was made to shut down the hotel's in-house pay-per-view porn channel.

Iceland Calls Trooper Home

In September last year, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, decided to call home

the single Icelandic trooper stationed in Iraq. The lone trooper was a member of the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit (ICRU) and served as a media representative in Bagdad.

John Craddock, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe for NATO and the US European Command expressed his disappointment with Gísladóttir's decision, stating that Iceland was an important NATO member. Gísladóttir said the decision coincided with the government's declaration that it regretted the war in Iraq, and the decision to support the invasion. She also stated that in the future, Iceland would support development programs in Iraq, like educational programs for Iraqi refugees, rather than war efforts.

Despite voicing her displeasure with the war in Iraq, ICRU members are still serving in Afghanistan.

Art Student Jailed in Canada for Artistic Bomb Threat

A young Icelandic art student, Þórarinn Ingi Jónsson, was arrested in Toronto in November for placing a sculpture that resembled a bomb outside the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). The Museum was vacated and the Canadian Foundation for AIDS research was forced to cancel a fundraising gala scheduled at the museum that night.

Jónsson, a student at the Ontario College of Art and Design, turned himself in to police authorities stating that he intended the sculpture, called 'This is Not a Bomb,' to be part of video installation project for college and that he had no idea the museum was hosting an AIDS benefit that night.

He was released a day later after surrendering his passport, under the conditions that he stay away from both the Royal Ontario Museum and explosives. He still faces charges of causing mischief and being a public nuisance. Speaking with the Toronto Star newspaper, Toronto police Detective Leslie Dunkley said Jónsson could face up to four years in prison if convicted. "It's a very serious offence," said Dunkley, noting that the bomb threat kept about two dozen police busy and shut down nearby streets. "We take it seriously and we don't want to encourage it."

Jónsson was suspended from the Ontario College of Art and Design and two faculty members were suspended with pay, pending an internal investigation. Speaking with visir.is, Jónsson said he was proud of the work, and pointed out that the Canadian public had never spent as much time talking about art.

Icelandic Teen Calls President Bush

One Saturday night in early December, Vifill Atlason, a 16-year-old student from Akranes, placed a call to one George W. Bush, President of the U.S.A. Using a secret phone number, Atlason reached the President's secretary and introduced himself as Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, President of Iceland, and requested a meeting with President Bush.

As it turned out, President Bush was not available at the time, but the secretary promised him a call-back from the President the following Monday. Instead of hearing from Bush, Atlason was visited by the police who took him to the station for questioning.

"I got this number from a friend of mine years ago, and it is a direct number for what is called the 'security room' in the White House," Atlason told visir.is. Speaking with ABC News, White House spokeswoman Emily Lawrimore insisted that Atlason did not dial a private number but instead dialled 202-456-1414, the main switchboard for the West Wing. That was not the case. The student gave ABC News the number, which verified that it is indeed an extension of the White House switchboard and goes to a security command post office in the building next door to the White House.

Atlason said he just wanted to chat with the President and invite him to Iceland. "I just wanted to talk to him about life and existence over a good hamburger," he told visir.is. He added that his parents did not punish him for his prank.

Iceland's Very Own Royal Blackmailer

In November, news broke that Ian Strachan, aka Paul Áðalsteinsson, had been arrested in London for attempting to extort money from a member of the British Royal Family. According to the Sunday Times, two men contacted a member of the royal staff and demanded \$50,000, threatening to go public with video recordings involving sex and drugs if their demand was not met.

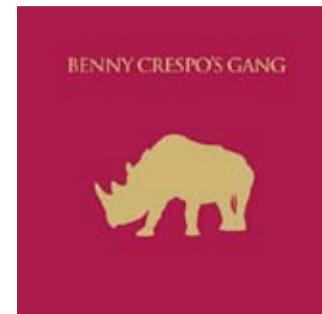
The men said they had evidence that a member of the Royal Family had supplied an aide with an envelope containing cocaine and that they had a video tape showing the aide performing oral sex on the royal. A detective posing as a member of the royal staff arranged a meeting at the Hilton hotel on London's Park Lane on 11 September, where parts of the video were shown. Scotland Yard detectives, secretly filming the meeting from an adjacent room, then arrested the two suspects.

Áðalsteinsson/Strachan, whose father is Icelandic, has lived in Aberdeen for most of his life, but Icelandic media has been quick to establish him as the latest in a row of notable Icelanders abroad, although some confusion has raged over his actual ties to Iceland. Áðalsteinsson/Strachan lawyer, Giovanni Di Stefano – who defended Slobodan Milošević and Saddam Hussein among others – maintains that Áðalsteinsson/Strachan has an Icelandic passport and dual citizenship, while Iceland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims that he is not an Icelandic citizen and has never held an Icelandic passport. If convicted, Strachan/Aðalsteinsson could serve his time in Iceland, where he could be released after serving a third of his sentence.

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson

Top 10 Albums of 2007

Selecting the album of the year 2007 proved to be a difficult task for the Grapevine selection committee. Opinions varied and heated arguments ensued. No two members of our committee selected the same album as the year's best, but certain titles turned up more than others. After much debate and strenuous mathematical exercises, using the finest IT equipment and methods of higher order calculus, we came up with the following list. *Note, a tiebreaker was required to settle the top seat.*



1. Skátar

Ghost of the Bollocks to Come

The original Grapevine review of Skátar's *The Ghost of the Bollocks to Come* stated: "it is not the most accessible CD the first time around, but the quirkiness grows on you." And it does indeed. Skátar's sound does not lend itself to easy categorisation, with a barrage of guitars, bass doodles and keyboards that seem to be heading in different directions. Once the initial strangeness wears off, what remains is one of the most interesting albums in years.

2. I Adapt

Chainlike Burden

Hardcore die-hards I Adapt finally released a long awaited third LP. Chainlike Burden is the band's heaviest album, full of dramatic outpour and huge, devastating riffs that stay well clear of the common hardcore emo-delusion and capture the band's tremendous live energy. The album has been compared with lowans Modern Life is War, although The Hope Conspiracy might be a more fitting comparison. The most energetic record of the year by far.

3. Mugison

Mugiboogie

While Mugison still trudges with one foot along the alternative folk-blues path he carved on 2005's crowd pleaser *Mugimama, Is This Monkey Music?*, this album sounds heavier, darker and in general, more sweaty. With a wide variety of influences, from industrial metal to Tom Waits, Mugison might have proven himself to have the biggest balls in the business.

4. Benny Crespo's Gang

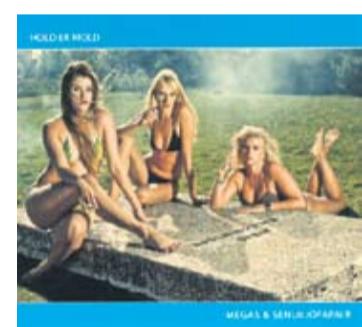
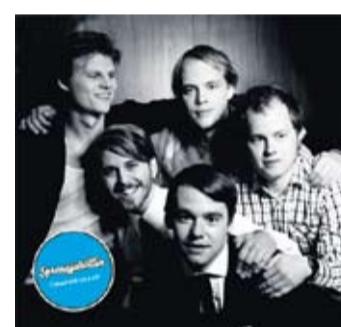
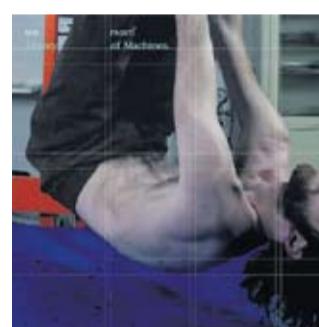
Benny Crespo's Gang

The debut release from the Selfoss quartet Benny Crespo's Gang has been on the verge of release for years. It proved to be worth the wait. Benny Crespo's chaotic indie-rock delivers on all fronts. With Bassi's powerful drum sound, the split vocal duties by Lovísia and Helgi Rúnar, Magnús's synth overdrive, and screeching guitars, in short, this album is a slayer of men.

5. Seabear

The Ghost That Carried Us Away

The first full-length album from Reykjavík's seven piece Seabear generated a low key buzz that resonated all the way to Germany where the respected label Morr Music decided to pick up the International distribution. Seabear delivers a folksy-pop sound with arrangements which rely heavily on xylophone, strings, banjo and piano to deliver a warm and beautiful sound. This is the year's most peaceful and pleasant album.



6. Ólöf Arnalds

Við og við

A former mún vocalist, Ólöf Arnalds' debut solo album, *Við og við*, has made her a whole new set of fans as a singer-songwriter in the old-timer troubadour fashion. Ólöf's folk seeks inspiration from the '70s sound of Joan Baez in particular, crossed with the indie flair for unconventional instrumental arrangements. While her unique voice lies a pitch or two above high, she croons as much as she sings to create the most endearing album of the year.

7. Ben Frost

Theory of Machines

Theory of Machines is the third release from adopted-from-Australia-Icelander Ben Frost, put out on the Bedroom Community Label. Frost is more of an audio artist than an out and out musician, focusing on audio explorations, texture and ambience; filtering drone-like guitar churning and minimal electronica. *Theory of Machines* has met with critical acclaim from the international music press, although Icelanders have paid little attention to his exploits. This is the year's most experimental album.

8. Sprengjuhöllin

Tímarnir okkar

Pop-quintet Sprengjuhöllin has put sentimentality in the now with their debut release, *Tímarnir Okkar*, that adds a dash of social commentary to a youthful portrait of modern-day life in Iceland. As one of our Grapevine reporters put it in her previously-published review, "The distinct unabashedness at the heart of this album is, like our wasted generation, as fresh and fascinating as it is consequential." We're getting nostalgic already.

9. GusGus

Forever

GusGus have managed to outlive their acid & house contemporaries by far, and time has only aged them to perfection. The beats are more biting and minimal than ever, the hooks more shamelessly poptastic and infectiously catchy and the Ecstasy just as dominant in the bloodstream as it was twelve years ago. It's always satisfying when a band reaches the age where it becomes capable of filtering all the bullshit out of their music and sticking to what matters most.

10. Megas

Hold er mold

Folk legend Megas added to his respectable catalogue by publishing two albums this year: *Frágangur*, and an album of outtakes from the productive *Frágangur* recording session with members of the reggae band Hjálmar. As usual, Megas' genius lies in the lyrical aspect, although his elegantly simple folk-pop melodies and raspy voice are an often overlooked side of his genius. This is an album that is likely to inspire a whole new generation of fans.

Top 5 Album Covers of 2007



1. Hjaltalín

Sleepdrunk Seasons

Eggert Pétursson's intricate landscape paintings are a good match with Hjaltalín's detailed musical creations. Designed by Sigrún Óddsson, painting by Eggert Pétursson

2. Björk

Volta

Björk stays on top of the fashion game with her collaboration with the playful Bernhard Wilhelm. Designed by M/M (Paris), costume by Bernhard Wilhelm

3. Mínus

The Great Northern Whalekill

Nut-grabbing photo and an interesting wordplay on both the political climate and a looming social epidemic. Designed by Gunnar Þór Vilhjálmsson, photo by Bórkur Sigþórsson

4. Benni Hemm Hemm

Ein í leyni

The clever format of Benni Hemm Hemm's cover design gives you a thing to play with while the album plays. Designed by Auður Jörundsdóttir

5. Mr. Silla & Mongoose

Foxbite

Mr. Silla's simple and soothing design invites you to lie down on the sofa while you listen. Designed by Mr. Silla

Markús Bjarnason

"We have all been in different bands before that played a little experimental music, but in this band, on this record, it just all came together in a way that doesn't sound too arty or too pretentious, or just plainly too boring."

Congratulations on topping our list for album of the year.

Thank you. I was convinced, of course, like the other two times I've put out a record, that this was the best record in the world.

Naturally. Did you work on this album for long?

Yes, we did have some time to digest this one. It took us a long time to write the material and to play it until we got rid of the rough edges, but we recorded it in two sessions. First we recorded the foundation during one weekend in a summer house out in the country. A few months later we recorded the overdub and vocals. Since this was all done on the side, it took a few months to put it all together. A weekend here and a weekend there. I moved to the Faroe Islands to work just before the album was released, so when it finally came out, they recruited Reykjavík and Jan Mayen to cover the songs for the release concert.

So you were living in the Faroe Islands? That must have made it hard to play shows to promote the album?

Yes, I came home two months after the album came out and then we really started to promote the album with a new guitarist, Kolbeinn, who joined the band then to replace Ólafur Steinsson who moved to California before the album came out. He just recorded the stuff and moved. His wife made the artwork for the album, so it took some time to get that done as well. We had grand plans for a tour of the U.S. to go and visit Ólafur, but we encountered so many delays that it didn't pan out, so that gave us more time to digest it. But, I think also, the delays meant that once it came out, everyone was fully loaded and rearing to go.

How has the album been received?

Ridiculously well; at least I think so. Maybe because we play a lot of shows and give it our all when we play, we have managed to build up some momentum around us and this material. It would be very easy to dismiss this album, so I've been very surprised at how many people from different directions seem to have caught on to it.

It is a little quirky and it did take me a while to get into it, but it grows on you. Was this something you set out to do?

This was just the material we had at hand, we couldn't really manipulate it much, so it wasn't very planned. It is just when people like us come together to make music over a long period of time, writing songs that may take a year to complete and trying different parts together, it may sound a bit odd at first, and it feels a bit odd when you are writing it, but I think that is what we thrive on as a band. To make music that you haven't heard anywhere else. Something that turns you on and makes you say 'damn, that's strange,' then that is something we try to expand on. A lot of these songs sound like ordinary pop songs to us, but we stay with it because it may contain a harder chapter later.

So you set out to do something a little off-centre?

Yes, well, we allow what might surprise you. I don't know when it started, but we have all been in different bands before that played a little experimental music, but in this band, on this record, it just all came together in a way that doesn't sound too arty or too pretentious, or just plainly too boring. This is not an album that is written for the 1% that likes to experiment. There is a lot of pop influence on this record as well. But the main idea is to allow the surprises to go in. But really, we owe it to our friends Bjarni and Ingi who recorded and mixed the album. This comes through on the record because if you are dealing with 'difficult' or 'off-centre' music and the sound is not good, then it's

game over. But we were lucky to work with good people.

Is there a new album on the horizon?

We have just applied for sponsorship from the Icelandic Music Fund to record an E.P. with two or three songs. We would prefer to record two or three new songs rather than focus on a full-length album just now. That might take us more time.

You released the album yourselves, didn't you?

We released it ourselves in cooperation with Smekkleysa. They take care of the distribution in Iceland. We have a little label that is called Grandmother's Records, which has previously also released bands Sofandi and Graveslime, so there is a tradition for using that name; we have also produced shows under that name. But there is no structure around it. There is no one working for us promoting the album. But we are lucky that [guitarist] Benni has been working for Smekkleysa so he is around the computer to maintain our Myspace.com site. But I am really pleased with the new label in Akureyri, Kimi Records, that is an indie label that is still not too indie to put an effort into what they are doing. I think it is great that someone has the ambition to do something like that. But this is just a very dysfunctional business. I am just happy that I have not gone insane. I am always convinced that we are making great music and great records, but when you have made a few records and nobody agrees, you start to doubt yourself, so I am just really happy to hear that somebody agrees with me.

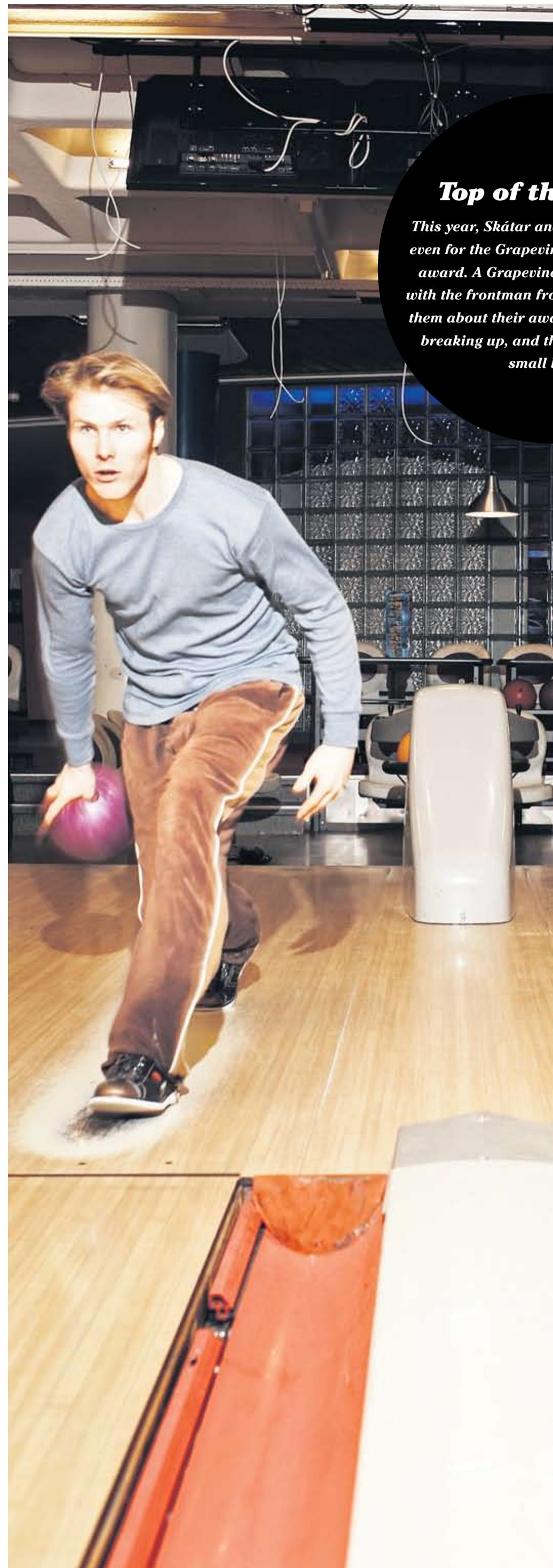
Skátar hasn't played many shows recently, has it?

No, we played a lot just after I got home, for a few months, and then around Airwaves, where we were playing pretty much the same set we have been playing for two years. Since we added Kolbeinn on guitar, we have only been able to rehearse the set with him, although we have a lot more material. We decided to take a little break from playing live to be able to rehearse more songs with him and write a few new songs. But also, we just wanted to give other bands an opportunity to shine as well.

I wanted to ask you about the white overalls you always play in, what is the deal with that?

I am really the wrong person to answer that question, because that tradition started before I joined the band. I think the deal was that they wanted to play in some kind of uniform, and this was the most economical solution. Then it just sort of stuck. The overalls are very warm, and we play a lot better in them than without them, at least to begin with. But we premiered new uniforms at last year's Airwaves: golden latex pants. We are very pleased with them.

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson



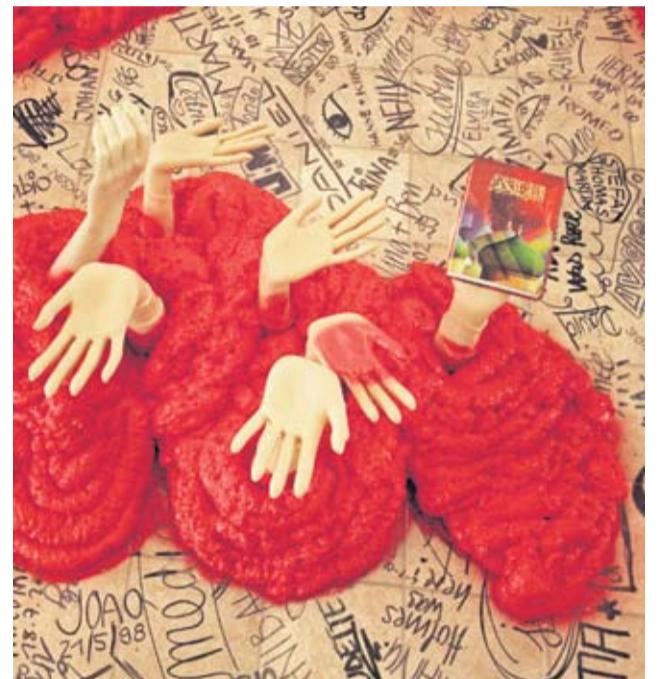
Top of the year

This year, Skátar are even for the Grapevine award. A Grapevine with the frontman from them about their award breaking up, and the small

info.

Music, Art, Films and Events Listings · Eating, Drinking and Shopping · Map

plus The Golden Plover returns from Venice · Earth's final concert with GusGus



above Nýló celebrates its 30th anniversary (B14)

Photos by Ívar Brynjólfsson



WINNER

Egil's Lite was awarded the gold medal at the 2007 and 2006 Monde Selection, as well as the gold award at the 2006 World Beer Cup and the bronze award at the 2006 European Beer Star.

Now available on tap.



Art

The Golden Plover

Steingrímur Eyfjörð is one of Iceland's leading artists. He has exhibited extensively locally and internationally and represented Iceland at the Venice Biennale last year. His contribution to the art festival was an intriguing installation, entitled 'The Golden Plover Has Arrived', which brought together a

group of new works in a wide variety of media and demonstrated the artist's take on various myths that have been known to Icelandic society since the early days. On January 10, Eyfjörð's Golden Plover arrived at the Reykjavík Art Museum where it will be on display until March 2. It's worth noting that as

of 1 January 2008, admission to the Reykjavík Art Museum is free.

January 10 – March 2
Reykjavík Art Museum (*Hafnarhús*),
Tryggvagata 17

If you would like to be included in the Grapevine listings, free of charge, contact the Grapevine by email at listings@grapevine.is.

Music

■ 12 Tónar

Skólaúrðustígur 15
Fri 11.01 Artist Inga Mæja opens a solo exhibition. Reykjavík! plays acoustic rocksongs. Starts at 17:00

■ Bar 11

Laugavegur 11
On weekends DJs Óli Dóri Weapons, Biggi Maus, Gulli Ósoma and Matti.

■ Barinn

Laugavegur 22
Fri 11.01 Flex and Brunheim (1 floor) / Nick (2 floor)
Sat 12.01 Hugsandi dans tónlist (1 floor) / Ási don disco (2 floor)

■ Hafnarborg

Strandgata 34
Sun 20.01 Performance by The Reykjavík Trio. Starts at 20:00.
Thu 07.02 Antonia Hevesi will be playing the piano and her guest, Bjarni Thor Kristinsson will play the bass. Starts at 12:00.

■ Háskólabíó

At Hagatorg
Thu 17.01 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Songs of Love and Heartbreak
Sun 20.01 Concerts to support The Icelandic Childhood Cancer Parent Organisation. Performances by Luxor, Dísella, Nylon, Bubbi Morthens,

Magni & Á móti Sól, Sprengjuhöllin, Guðrún Gunnars and Friðrik Ómar, Garðar Thór Cortes, Land & synir, Klaufarnir, Stebbi and Eyfi, SSSÓL, Birgitta Haukdal, HARA and Ragnheiður Gröndal

Thu 31.01 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Musical Descendants

Thu 07.02 The Icelandic Symphony Orchestra: Dark Days of Music

■ Hellirinn (TPM)

Hólmarslóð 2
Fri 11.01 Concerts: TBA
Sat 02.02 I Adapt concert. Opening act: Gavin Portland

■ Hressó

Austurstræti 20
Fri 11.01 Pub lic followed by DJ Maggi
Sat 12.01 Tepokinn followed by DJ Maggi

Fri 18.01 Trubadours Gotti and Eisi followed by DJ Maggi

Sat 19.01 Trubadours Alexander and Örvar followed by DJ Maggi

Fri 25.01 Trubadours Alexander and Örvar followed by DJ Bjarni

Sat 26.01 Tepokinn followed by DJ Bjarni

■ Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1
Fri 11.01 DJ Nuno Lx
Sat 12.01 DJ Maggi Lego

Fri 18.01 DJ Terrordisco

Sat 19.01 DJ Árni Steinsson

Thu 24.01 DJ Maggi Lego

Fri 01.02 DJ Maggi Lego

Sat 02.02 DJ Nuno Lx

■ Nasa

by Austurvöllur
Fri 18.01 Björn Thoroddsen's band Cold Front in concert. Starts at 22:00.
Thu 17.01 DJ Anna Brá
Fri 18.01 DJ Jói B

Sat 19.01 Party Zone presents: German electro maniac Marc Romboy backed by Tomas Andersson (SE) Super Diskant (SE) and local crowd-pleasers DJ Casanova and DJ Lazer. Starts at 23:00
Fri 25.01 Burn party featuring the infamous Tommy Lee and DJ Aero

■ Oliver

Laugavegur 20a

Fri 11.01 DJ Óli Dóri followed by Gullfoss og Geysir

Sat 12.01 DJ Haukur followed by DJ Daði

■ Organ

Hafnarstræti 1-3

Fri 11.01 DJ Thor

Sat 12.01 Ed Banger Night featuring Busy P. Starts at 23:00
Fri 18.01 Breakbeat.is party. Starts at 23:00

Sat 19.01 Janis Joplin tribute show featuring Andrea Gylfa, Lay Low, Rósá in Sometime, Elíza, Didda, Kenya, Ragnheiður Gröndal, Jenni Brain Police and many more. Starts at 22:00.
Wed 23.01 Concert: Shadow Parade and Múgsafjun. Starts at 21:00
Thu 24.01 Monitor Night. Starts at 21:00
Fri 25.01 Bloodgroup DJ Set

Wed 30.01 Concert: Hraun. Starts at 21:00
Thu 31.01 This is Spirit (UK). Starts at 21:00
Thu 07.02 Monitor concert

Fri 08.02 Barcode presents DJ Fex

■ Prikið

Bankastræti 12

Fri 11.01 DJ Danni Deluxe

Sat 12.01 DJ Cold Hands

Thu 17.01 DJ Anna Brá

Fri 18.01 DJ Jói B



Film

French Film Festival

From January 11 to 24, a French film festival will take place at Háskólabíó movie theatre. For these two weeks, 11 movies will be screened, most of them brand-new films that are testament to the diversity in French filmmaking.

The programme includes: 'Promise Me This,' directed by Emir Kusturica; the romantic comedy '2 Days in Paris'; and Laurent Tirard's 'Molière,' about the 16th-century playwright and

comedian Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, best known by his stage name Molière. The documentary 'Terror's Advocate' will also be shown; a film about the controversial lawyer Jacques Vergès who has become famous for defending some of the world's most brutal war criminals and militants.

The opening film of the festival, 'Persepolis,' is a flick for the whole family to enjoy. The award winning animat-

ed movie is based on the acclaimed autobiographical graphic novel of the same name, written by Iranian author Marjane Satrapi.

The festival is organised by Green Light Films, Alliance Française and the French embassy. For a complete schedule and tickets see www.midi.is.

*January 11 – 24
Háskólabíó Movie Theatre at Hagatorg*

Sat 19.01 DJ De la Rósa
Thu 24.01 DJ Anna Brá
Fri 25.01 DJ Óli Hjörtur
Sat 26.01 DJ Danni Deluxe
Thu 31.01 DJ Anna Brá

■ Q-Bar

Ingólfssbraeti 3

Fri 11.01 DJ Ýr and Ási

Sat 12.01 DJ Maggi Lego

Fri 18.01 Surprise Party

Sat 19.01 DJ Yamaho and DJ Kári

Thu 24.01 DJ Margrét Hugrún

Fri 25.01 DJ Diva De La Rósa

Sat 26.01 DJs Skapti and Ingvi. Groovebox DJ set.

Fri 01.02 DJs Ýr & Ási

Sat 02.02 Surprise Guests

Fri 08.02 DJ Haffi Haffi Haff

■ Sirkus

Klapparstígur 30

Fri 11.01 DJ Jón Atli

Sat 12.01 DJ Hjalti

Sun 13.01 French DJs Legal Tender

Wed 16.01 DJ Unnur Andrea

Thu 17.01 Concerts: TBA

Fri 18.01 Jón Jónson Nigh

Sat 19.01 DJ Pórhallur

Thu 24.01 DJ Jason and Sometime concert

Fri 25.01 Sirkus is closing! Huge farewell concerts featuring numerous surprise acts. The line-up will be announced later on

Sat 26.01 Sirkus is closing! Huge farewell concerts

■ Thorvaldsen

Austurstræti 8-10

On weekends DJ Daddi "Diskó" and

DJ Hlynur

Art

■ 101 Gallery

Hverfisgata 18

Thu.–Sat. 14–17 and by appointment
www.101hotel.is/101hotel/101gallery/

■ Artótek

Tryggvagata 15

Mon 10–21, Tue–Thu 10–19, Fri 11–19,
Sat and Sun 13–17

www.sim.is/Index/Islenska/Artotek

Current exhibition:

Exhibition by Eva G. Sigurðardóttir

■ ASÍ Art Museum

Freyjugata 41

Tue–Sun 13–17

Free Entrance

The museum is closed for repairs from 16 December 2007 to 8 March 2008.

■ Auga fyrir Auga

Hverfisgata 35

Open Thu–Fri 15–19, Sat–Sun 14–17

■ Café Mokka

Skólavörðustígur 3a

Open daily from 9:18:30

Current exhibition:

Ukrainian Reality

Pétur Geir Óskarsson's photography exhibition features black and white photos from the Ukrainian coal mining city Krasnyi Luch.

■ The Einar Jónsson Museum

Eiríksgata

Tue–Sun 14–17

www.skulptur.is

Permanent exhibition:

The work of sculptor Einar Jónsson

■ The Culture House

Hverfisgata 15

Open daily 11–17

www.thjodmenning.is

Permanent exhibitions:

Medieval Manuscripts

The National Museum – as it was

The Library Room; The Road to Zion

Berlin Excursion

Current exhibitions:

Surtsey – Genesis

The exhibition traces the emergence and evolution of the island of Surtsey until the present day and predicts its geographical and ecological development over the next 120 years.

The Nation and Nature

A nature film by filmmaker Páll Steingrímsson

■ Dwarf Gallery

Grundarstígur 21

Opening Hours: Fri and Sat 18–20

www.this.is/birta

■ Fotografi

Skólavörðustígur 4a

www.fotografi.is

■ Gallery 100^o

Bæjarháls 1

www.or.is/Forsida/Gallery100/

Open weekdays from 08:30 – 16:00

Oct 20 – Jan 15, 2008

Cube

Project of media artists Holger Mader and Alexander Stublic and architect Heike Wiermann

■ Gallery Art - Iceland

Skólavörðustígur 1a

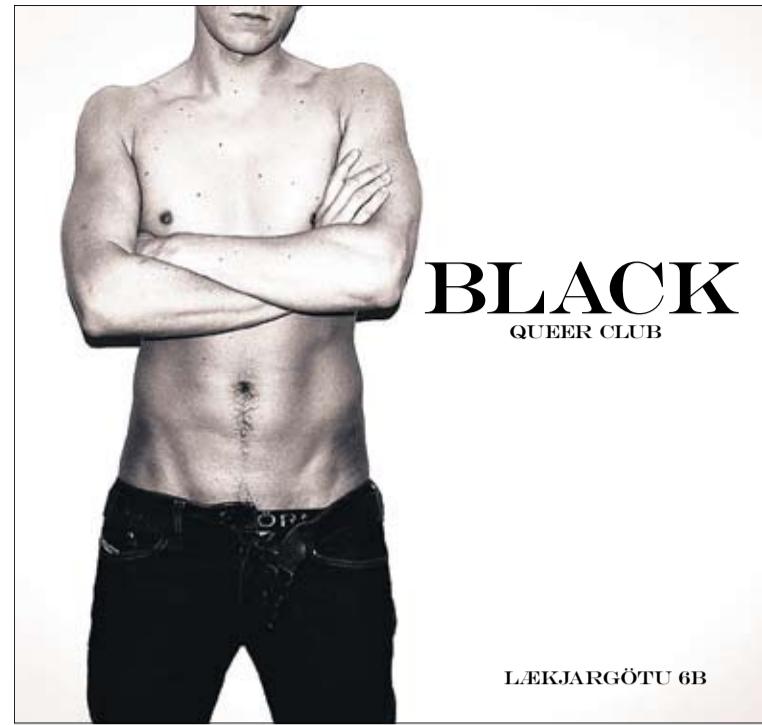
www.art-iceland.com

Current exhibition:

Biðhetjur-Biðenglar

Bergur Thorberg exhibition

■ Gallery Ágúst



LÆKJARGÖTU 6B

by the sea
and a delicious lobster
at Fjörubordid in Stokkseyri



At the seashore the giant lobster makes appointments with mermaids and landlubbers. He waves his large claws, attracting those desiring to be in the company of starfish and lumpfish.



Only 45 minutes drive from Reykjavík

Eyrarbæta 3 · 825 Stokkseyri · Iceland · tel. +354-483 1550
fax. +354-483 1545 · info@fjorubordid.is · www.fjorubordid.is



and the sea said ok...

Welcome!
Witajcie!
ບິນດີຕ້ອນຮັບ!

The official site of Reykjavík City is now available in English, Polish and Thai language, www.reykjavik.is



Tryggvagata 17
101 Reykjavík
Tel: 411 9000
www.velferdarsvid.is



WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS

News // Culture // Dining // Travelling // Shopping // Articles // Interviews



Upcoming concerts

**SONGS OF LOVE
AND HEARTBREAK**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17TH @ 7:30 PM

Conductor :: Rúmon Gamba
Soloist :: Rannveig Fríða Bragadóttir
Gustav Mahler :: Rükert-Lieder
Ralph Vaughan-Williams :: Symphony nr. 5
Þorkell Sigurbjörnsson :: Bows of light

**MUSICAL
DESCENDANTS**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31ST @ 7:30 PM

Conductor :: John Neschling
Soloist :: Natasha Korsakova
Carmago Guarneri :: Abertura concertante
Johannes Brahms :: Violin Concerto op. 77
Sergei Rachmaninoff :: Symphony nr. 2, op. 27

**DARK DAYS
OF MUSIC
- A FESTIVAL OF NEW
ICELANDIC MUSIC**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH @ 7:30 PM

Conductor :: Roland Kluttig
Soloists :: Gunnar Guðbjörnsson
Águst Ólafsson
Atli Heimir Sveinsson :: Symphony nr. 3 - World Première
John Speight :: Symphony nr. 4 - World Première

**A VIRTUOSO
CELLIST**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST @ 7:30 PM

Conductor :: Eivind Aadland
Soloist :: Daniel Müller-Schott
Joseph Haydn :: Cello Concerto, D-major
Ludwig van Beethoven :: Symphony nr. 6 "Pastoral"
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart :: The Magic Flute, Overture

**TICKETS SOLD AT WWW.SINFONIA.IS
OR TEL. 545 2500**

All concerts take place in Háskólabíó.



FL GROUP IS THE MAIN SPONSOR OF
THE ICELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



**ICELAND SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**
WWW.SINFONIA.IS

B4 | Reykjavík Grapevine | Issue 01 2008 | Listings



Art

Colour-madness at Gallery Águst

On January 12, artist Davíð Örn Halldórsson opens his solo exhibition 'Absalút gamall kastale' at Gallery Águst. Halldórsson, who usually works in the medium of painting, is known for his use of unconventional materials in his creations, such as car enamel, oil pastel and spray paint. His work often references graphics, graffiti and pop-culture and is influenced by daily life and his

surroundings. At Gallery Águst, he will present adventurous and colourful paintings as well as a large wall painting that fully occupies one of the gallery's walls.

Halldórsson has exhibited widely both in Iceland and abroad since he graduated from the Icelandic Academy of the Arts a couple of years ago. For instance, he was among the group of Ice-

landic artists selected to present their works at the HangArt-7 art exhibition in Salzburg last fall.

The exhibition opens at 16:00 on January 12 and his paintings will be on display until February 23.

*January 12 – February 23
Gallerí Águst, Baldursgata 12*

ข้อคิด 10 ประการ

1. คิดในแน่ต์ จะทำการอันได้ก็ง่ายขึ้น
2. ถอนน้ำใจแก่บุคคลที่ท่านรัก
3. ไม่แก่เกินไปที่จะไฟห่าเรียนรู้
4. ผิดเป็นครู
5. เคลื่อนไหวร่างกายเป็นประจำ ทำให้ชีวิตสดชื่น
6. ไม่ควรทำซ้ำของท่านให้ยุ่งยากโดยไม่จำเป็น
7. พยายามเข้าใจและให้การสนับสนุน แก่บุคคลรอบข้าง
8. ไม่คิดย่อหัว, ริบเข้าสู่ความสำเร็จของชีวิต
9. ฝึกฝนและค้นหาทักษะให้กับตนเอง
10. ตั้งจุดมุ่งหมาย และสร้างผืนให้เป็นจริง

Gedrækt

LÝDHEILSUSTÖÐ

Attention Electrical Workers!

Basic pay

For unskilled workers:

No less than 153.409 Ikr pr. Month – 885 Ikr. pr. hour in daytime, 1.521 Ikr. pr. hour in overtime.

For skilled worker:

No less than 194.805 Ikr pr. Month. – 1.124 Ikr. pr. hour in daytime, 1.946 Ikr pr. hour in overtime.

Market wages

Unskilled Electrical worker:

1.000 – 1.200 Ikr. pr. hour for in daytime, 1.800 – 2.000 Ikr pr. hour in overtime.

Skilled Electrical worker:

1.450 – 1.700 Ikr. pr. hour for in daytime, 2.100 – 2.500 Ikr pr. hour in overtime.

For more information, Contact
Rafiðnaðarsamband Íslands
Stórhöfða 31 - 112 Reykjavík
Tel. 580 5200 Fax 580 5220

rsi@rafis.is
www.rafis.is



Baldursgata 12
Wed-Sat 12-17
www.galleriagust.is
Jan. 12 – Feb. 23

Absalút gamall kastale
Davíð Örn Halldórsson exhibition

■ Gallery Fold

Rauðarárstíður 14-16

Mon-Fri 10-18

Sat 11-16

Sun 14-16

www.myndlist.is

■ Gallery Gel

Hverfisgata 37

Mon-Fri 13-18

Sat 11-16

Sun 14-16

www.myspace.com/gallerigel

■ Gallery Turpentine

Ingólfsstræti 5

Tue-Fri 12-18

Sat 11-16

www.turpentine.is

Current exhibition:

Euphora

Arngunnur Ýr exhibition

■ Gerðuberg Cultural Centre

Gerðuberg 3-5

Mon-Thu 11-17

Wed 11-21

Thu-Fri 11-17

Sat-Sun 13-16

www.gerduberg.is

■ Hitt Húsið

Pósthússtræti 3-5

www.hiththusid.is

From Jan 12:

Progress, Ink and Tea

Hanna Aniela Frelek exhibition

■ 18 Gallery

Klapparstígur 33

Tue-Fri 11-17

Sat 13-17 and by appointment

www.i8.is

Current exhibition:

Works by Ívar Valgarðsson

■ Living Art Museum

Laugavegur 26

Wed, Fri-Sun 13-17

Thu 13-22

www.nylo.is

The Museum will be closed until Feb. 11 to prepare for a special 30th anniversary itinerary. Some happenings will still take place and event announcements will be posted on www.nylo.is.

■ The Lost Horse Gallery

Skólastræti 1

www.this.is/subqua/losthorse.html

Jan 12 - 25

Exhibition by Anika Todd and Una Stígsdóttir

From Jan 26

Exhibition by Rakel Gunnarsdóttir

■ The National Film Archive of Iceland

Hvaleyrarbraut 13

www.kvikmyndasafn.is

The National Film Archive of Iceland screens old movie classics and masterpieces twice a week for 500 ISK per ticket.

■ The National Gallery of Iceland

Friðkirkjuvegur

Tue-Sun 12-17

www.nordice.is/

Jan. 12 – Jan. 13

The Dari Dari Dance Company will be performing at 8 pm.

Jan. 12 – Jan. 31

The Beauty of Islam

Photographic exhibition examining Middle-Eastern and Islamic architecture.

Jan. 19 – Feb. 10

Rebekka Guðleifsdóttir exhibition

■ The Numismatic Museum

Kalkofnsvegur 1

Open Mon-Fri 13:30-15:30.

Free admission.

Permanent exhibition:

The Central Bank of Iceland and the National Museum of Iceland jointly operate a numismatic collection consisting of Icelandic notes and coins.

■ Reykjavík 871 +/- 2

Aðalstræti 16

Open daily 10-17

Permanent exhibition:

The Settlement Exhibition

■ Reykjavík Art Museum

– Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum

Sigtún

Open daily 10-16

Free entrance.

www.listasafnreykjavikur.is

Current exhibition:

The Shape of Line

A new retrospective of the works by Ásmundur Sveinsson. The exhibition focuses on abstract works from 1945 onwards.

Jan. 27 from 1 to 4 pm.

An open art workshop for the whole family, using Ásmundur Sveinsson's sculptures as inspiration for three-dimensional creative projects.

■ Reykjavík Art Museum

– Hafnarhús

Tryggvagata 17

Open daily 10-17 and on Thursdays



Music

Janis Joplin Tribute Concert

On her would-be 65th birthday, Friday, January 19, a group of vocal soloists will perform at Organ in tribute to the musical stylings and accomplishments of blues-rock-legend Janis Joplin.

Andrea Gyldadóttir, Lay Low, Elíza, Diva de la Rosa, Didda, Kenya, Rag-nheiður Gröndal, and Jenni of Brain Police, among others, will perform songs from Joplin's short-lived record-

ing career. Joplin rose to fame in the late 60s as the lead singer of blues outfit Big Brother and the Holding Company before veering off and establishing the beginnings of a successful solo career, and in her short lifetime earned the status of something of a legendary rugged blues-mama.

The interpretations of her songs will surely vary greatly in temperament

and arrangement, as artists from a variety of musical genres in the Reykjavík scene come together to celebrate her work.

The concert begins at 21:00. Admission costs 2,000 ISK.

*January 19
Organ, Hafnarstræti 1-3*

10-22
Free Entrance.
Nov. 2 - Jan. 27

Hreinn Friðfinnsson exhibition
Friðfinnsson's practice encompasses photography and drawing as well as sculptures and installations. His works are linked by a common sensibility and lightness of touch.

Nov. 2 - Jan. 27
An exhibition of definitive major works from The Reykjavík Art Museum's Erró Collection.

Jan. 10 - Mar. 2008

The Golden Plover has Arrived
Steingrímur Eyfjörð's installation was Iceland's contribution to the Venice Biennale in 2007.

Jan. 10 - Mar. 2

D7
Ingi Rafn Steinarsson
Jan. 17 at 3 pm.

Artist's Talk
Ingírafn Steinarsson talks with curator Fee Quay.
Jan. 20 at 2 pm.

A guided tour and art workshop for the whole family, with activities inspired by the Hreinn Friðfinnsson exhibition.

Jan. 20 at 3 pm.

A Conversation about Hreinn
Visual artists Ingólfur Arnarson and Birta Guðjónsdóttir conduct a tour of the exhibition and discuss Hreinn's work, his influence on their own work, and his influence on Icelandic art as a whole.

Jan. 24 at 8 pm.

Screening of "City Walls: My Own Private Teheran" (2006) by Afsar Sonia Shafie. Director will be present for Q&A.

Jan. 31 at 8 pm.

Steingrímur Eyfjörð and curator Hanna Styrnisdóttir discuss Steingrímur Eyfjörð's work and participation in the Venice Biennale.

■ Reykjavík Art Museum
- Kjarvalsstaðir

Flókagata
Open Daily 10-17
Free entrance.

Nov. 17 - Jan. 13

Blonde Miss World 1951
Paintings by Birgir Snæbjörn Birgisson. He has painted portraits of Miss World winning contestants from 1951 onwards.

Oct. 20 - Jan. 13

Meditation on Furniture

Works of architect and designer Óli Jóhann Ásmundsson

Jan. 5 - Apr. 6

Jóhannes Sveinsson Kjarval - From the Museum's Collection

Jan. 26 - Apr. 6

Selected sculptures by Nína

Sæmundson (1892-1965) from the Reykjavík Art Museum collection.

Jan. 26 - Apr. 6

Mikines - A Retrospective

A retrospective of the work of the distinguished Faroese painter Samuel Joensen-Mikines.

Jan. 27 at 3 pm.

Mikines - A Retrospective

Art historian Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson leads a tour of the exhibition.

■ Reykjavík Maritime Museum

Grandagarður 8

Open Tue-Sun 11-17

www.sjominjasafn.is

Current exhibition:

Trawlers in Iceland

■ Reykjavík Museum

(Árbæjarsafn)

Kistuhylur 4

Open daily from 10-17

www.arbaejarsafn.is

Current exhibitions:

Building Techniques in Reykjavík

1840-1940

Disco and Punk - Different cultures?

History of Reykjavík - from farm to city

Memories of a House

Living and Playing

■ The Reykjavík Museum of

Photography

Grófarhús, Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor

Weekdays 12-19

Sat-Sun 13-17

Free entrance

www.ljósmyndasafnreykjavíkur.is

Dec. 1 - Feb. 17

Flickr-flakk og heljarstökk

Dec. 20 - Feb. 12

Í Skotinu

■ Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Laugarnestangi 70

Open Tue-Sun 14-17

Permanent exhibition:

Works of sculptor Sigurjón Ólafsson

■ SMÁTÍMA

Laugavegur 21 (basement)

Jan. 11

Opening: Helga Arnalds and Ástriður Magnúsdóttir

Jan. 18

Opening: Una Björk Sigurðardóttir and Rakel Jónsdóttir

Jan. 25

Opening: Logi Bjarnason and Hanna Birna Geirmundsdóttir

■ Start Art / Art Shop

Laugavegur 12b

www.startart.is

Jan. 10 - Feb. 6

Exhibitions by Elín Helena Evertsóttir and Sigrid Valtingojer

Outside Reykjavík

■ Hafnarborg

Strandgata 34, Hafnarfjörður

Mon.-Sun. 11-17

www.hafnarborg.is

Jan. 12 - Mar. 3

To celebrate its 25th anniversary Hafnarborg will host an exhibition of art from Hafnarborg's Collection.

■ Gljúfrasteinn

- Halldór Laxness museum

270 Mosfellsbær

Open daily except Mondays from 10-17.

"You haven't been in Iceland if you haven't been to us"
Don't miss it!

Viking feasts every night - live entertainment

- Hotel
- Restaurants
- Souveniers

For booking and further information:
Tel.: +354 565-1213
www.vikingvillage.is
vikings@vikingvillage.is
Strandgata 55 Hafnarfjörður

VIKING village
Fjörukráin

The Great Wall of China

Vesturgata 6-8

Tel: 552-1900

Fax: 552-9988

www.greatwall.is

Also Available for Banquettes



12 course buffet from monday - friday, 11:30 - 14:00 only 1.450 ISK

Menu Special Every day

3 Course Meal for two persons only 2.500 ISK each

Meal 1:

Springrolls

Deepfried fish

in s'n's sauce

Almand Chicken

Fried Noodles

Meal 2:

Hot n' sour soup

Pork w onion

s'n's King Prawn

Fried Noodles

Meal 3:

Chicken Satay

Fried Beef with

Sacha sauce

Mixed Meet Dish

Fried Noodles

Uncle Tom's Cabin
Laugavegur 2

Expresso, Cappuccino, Café Latte, Soya Latte, Tea and Organic Tea

Coffee in French Press, Take Away Coffee

Real hot Chocolate

Various light meals, sandwiches and more

Dj playing on weekends and dancing
Open until 5:30 on weekends



Art

Calm Ripples Currents at i8

Ívar Valgarðsson's newest installation 'Calm Ripples Currents' at gallery i8 explores man's relationship to colour in the natural environment, and how that perception manifests itself in our manmade environment. Ívar attempts to explore the quality and nature of paint and colour as well as how light, reflection, and perspective controls how color manifests itself and how we experience it. Ívar's art is born around views of our everyday environment. Known for his un-whimsical approach

to art, Ívar tends to use his materials in their most literal and direct terms. In his most recent exhibit, he explores among other things how liquid paint creates a still surface in a tub of paint and how paint forms different surfaces under different circumstances. Ívar poses the question, "Can we imagine the sun as the opening of a giant paint bucket that pours its yellow rays over the world?"

*Opens on January 11
i8, Klapparstígur 33*

■ Kópavogur Art Museum – Gerðarsafn

*Hamraborg, Kópavogur
Open daily 11–17 except Mondays
www.gerdarsafn.is*

■ The Icelandic Museum of Design and Applied Art

*Lyngás 7–9, 121 Garðabær
Opening hours: Tues.–Fri. 14–18; Sat. and Sun. 16–18.
www.mudesa.org
Exhibitions devoted to Icelandic design.*

■ Skafffell

*Austurvegur 42, Seyðisfjörður
www.skafffell.is
Jan. 12 – Feb. 24*

Icelandic Visual Art – 100 years in a nutshell



Films

■ Hitman

Smárbíó

■ The Golden Compass

Smárbíó, Háskólabíó, Laugarásbíó, Regnboginn, Borgarvíó, Sambíón Keflavík

■ Dan in Real Life

Regnboginn

■ American Gangster

Sambíón Álfabakki

■ Beowulf

Sambíón Kringlan

■ Sydney White

Sambíón Álfabakki

■ The Nanny Diaries

Smárbíó, Háskólabíó, Borgarvíó

■ Duggholufólkid

Smárbíó, Háskólabíó, Borgarvíó

■ Alvin and the Chipmunks

Smárbíó, Laugarásbíó, Borgarvíó

■ I am Legend

Sambíón Álfabakki, Háskólabíó, Sambíón Kringlan, Sambíón Selfoss, Sambíón Akureyri

■ National Treasure: Book of Secrets

Sambíón Álfabakki, Sambíón Kringlan, Sambíón Selfoss, Sambíón Akureyri

■ Enchanted

Sambíón Álfabakki, Smárbíón Kringlan, Sambíón Akureyri

■ Bee Movie

Smárbíón Álfabakki

■ We Own the Night

Háskólabíó, Regnboginn

■ Fred Clause

Smárbíón Kringlan

■ Run, Fat Boy, Run

Laugarásbíó, Regnboginn

■ I'm Not There

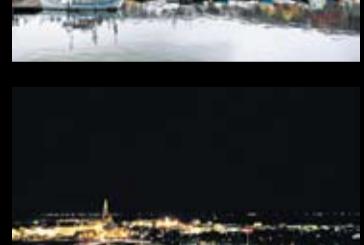
Regnboginn

■ Saw IV

Sambíón Keflavík

■ Lust, Caution

Travelling?
Check out our
many travel
stories online!



WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS

Culture // Dining // Travelling // Shopping // Articles // Interviews



Music

Ed Banger Party at Organ

The newly founded event company Jón Jónsson presents a genuine electro fiesta at Organ, January 12. The star of the night is French DJ Busy P, a veteran when it comes to drawing a crowd to the dance floor. He is the owner of Paris-based Ed Banger records, one of the top labels in the electronic music scene today, home to crowd-pleasers such as Justice, Uffie, Mr. Oizo and DJ Mehdi. Busy P is also the manager of Daft Punk, Cassius and Justice.

The Ed Banger nights have been major hits among clubbers around the world so some craziness can surely be expected at Organ this Saturday. Also playing are DJ President Bongo and local trendsters in Steed Lord. The party starts at 23:00 and tickets can be bought at www.midi.is for 1,500 ISK or at the door.

*January 12
Organ, Hafnarstræti 1-3*

Regnboginn

- **The Mist** (Jan 11)
- **Aliens vs. Predator** (Jan 18)
- **The Game Plan** (Jan 18)
- **Charlie Wilson's War** (Jan 18)
- **Atonement** (Jan 18)
- **Cloverfield** (Jan 25)
- **Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street** (Jan 25)
- **The Darjeeling Limited** (Jan 25)
- **Walk Hard** (Feb 1)
- **Underdog** (Feb 1)
- **Rambo** (Feb 1)
- **Fanboys** (Feb 1)

French Film Festival

■ Háskólabíó

Jan 11 – Jan 24

■ Persepolis

Molière

■ Promets Moi

■ Terror's Advocate

■ L'Enfer

■ 2 Days in Paris, Serko

■ Le Dernier

■ Des Fous

■ Changement D'Adresse

■ Dans Les Cordes

■ Douches Froides

For more information see www.af.is

Movie Theatres

■ Regnboginn, Hverfisgata 54

101 Reykjavík, Tel. 551-9000

■ Háskólabíó, Hagatorg

107 Reykjavík, Tel. 525-5400

■ Laugarásbíó, Laugarás

104 Reykjavík, Tel. 565-0118

■ Smárabíó, Smáralind

201 Kópavogur, Tel. 564-0000

■ Sambíóin, Álfabakki 8

109 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900

■ Sambíóin, Kríglan 4-12

103 Reykjavík, Tel. 575-8900

■ Sambíóin Akureyri, Ráðhústorg

600 Akureyri, Tel. 461-4666

■ Nýja-Bíó, Hafnargata 33

230 Reykjanesbær, Tel. 421-1170

■ Selfossbíó, Eyrarvegur 2

800 Selfoss, Tel. 482-3007

Events

■ Immigration Issues Discussed

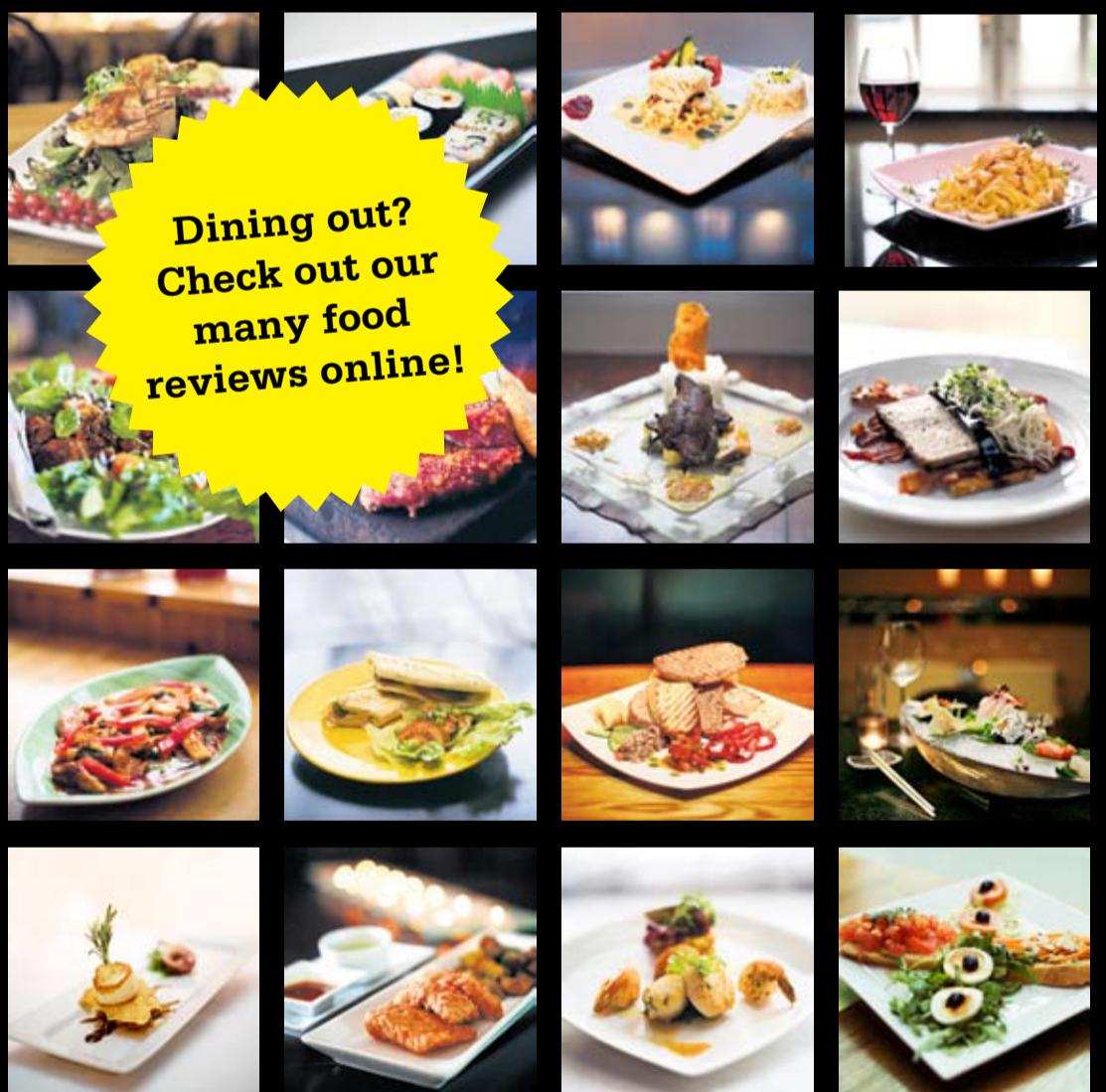
Fri 11.01 The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Immigration Council present

Aðgangur
ókeypis

Free
admission

Hafnarhús Kjarvalsstaðir Ásmundarsafn

Listasafn Reykjavíkur
Reykjavík Art Museum



WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS



INDIAN MANGO

RESTAURANT
Press reviews:
.. Probably the best addition to Icelandic restaurant landscape
.. Great food, something new in Iceland, like never seen before
Fine dining Indian cuisine, hard to beat anywhere!!

Frakkastigur 12,
tel: 551-7722
open 17 til late
www.indianmango.is

Grand Rokk
Reykjavík

Open every day from 11:00

Smiðustígur 6, downtown Reykjavík

// Enjoy life //
// Rehab is for quitters //

GAUKURÁSTÖNG
REYKJAVÍK
est.1983

www.myspace.com/gaukurastong
// Tryggvagötu 22 // 101 Reykjavík //
// Tel. 517 22 77 // gaukurnn@gmail.com //



DISCOVER ICELANDIC SEAFOOD

At the Reykjavík harbour

1 EATING

American Style Tryggvagata 26

What makes American Style burgers distinct from all the other ones in the city is the size, the soft bun and the amount of fresh veggies in the toppings. Grab a seat in one of the booths with your bbq heavy special with bacon and cheese, fries and a soda and you won't get hungry for hours.

2 Nonnabiti Hafnarstræti 11

Renowned for its greasy sandwiches, Nonnabiti, or Nonni as the locals call it, is one of the more popular junk food places around, offering a large selection of take-out or dine-in subs, sandwiches and burgers with a nice dash of the unique Nonni-sauce. If you have a late-night craving there's no need to worry, Nonni is open longer than most other places.

3 Bæjarins Bestu Tryggvagata

There's a good reason why there's always a queue in front of Bæjarins Bestu, no matter the weather or time of day. Selected the best hot-dog stand in Europe by The Guardian – something locals realized decades ago – it has been serving people "ein með öllu" downtown since 1935, making it the oldest fast-food place in the country.

4 Pizza King Hafnarstræti 18

This small pizza place isn't only cheap but offers the largest slices of pizza you'll get downtown. Charging only 400 ISK per slice, not to mention the special lunch offer where a 10" pizza with three toppings of your choice and a can of Coke costs only 800 ISK, Pizza King is a local favourite. Staying open all night until 6 on Friday and Saturday nights doesn't hurt either.

5 Austurlanda-hraðlestin Hverfisgata 64A

Although a little pricey for a take-away, charging around 1600 ISK for the main courses, the food is well worth that extra spending once in a while. Serving typical Indian dishes, the menu is a treasure chest for those with a penchant for spicy food. There are also a few tables inside for those who choose to dine in.

6 Hlöllabátar Ingólfstorg

Hlöllabátar sandwich bar sits in the middle of Ingólfstorg square – the perfect stop off for a late night snack, or a light lunch, if you are so inclined. Select your toppings from assorted vegetables and stir fried meat and enjoy the guilty pleasure that is a greasy sandwich with a cold soda.

7 Domo Pingholtsstræti 5

Elegantly designed and decorated, restaurant Domo is a hit among those with a demanding palate. Boasting an Asian/French menu, excellent sushi and an extensive wine list, this place offers highly dependable fine dining. The Domo bar downstairs plays host to numerous jazz concerts each month.

8 Tveir Fiskar Geirsgata 9

Tveir Fiskar is predominantly a seafood restaurant, although land-based animals also appear on the menu. At lunchtime, you can have a three-course meal for 2300 ISK, which is pretty reasonable. As an extra bonus, the chef has been awarded the Medal of the Order of the White Rose by the President of Finland.

9 Shalimar Austurstræti 4

Shalimar prides itself on being the northernmost Indian restaurant in the world. The daily special, a sample of two dishes, goes for around 1000 ISK. But we recommend the chicken tikka masala, known to be highly addictive.

10 Sjávarbarinn Grandagarður 9

Located down by the old harbour, Sjávarbarinn offers plain and fresh fish, the way Icelanders have been consuming it for centuries, at a competitive price. Sjávarbarinn's main feature is an all-you-can-eat buffet, filled with assorted fish dishes and other creatures from the sea.

11 Fljótt og Gott Vatnsmýravegur 10

Serving real Icelandic home-style food, this is essentially a quality fast-food restaurant. Here you can taste traditional fast-foods such as hamburgers, pizza and deep fried chicken and fish, along with some traditional Icelandic delicacies such as Svið, or sheep's head.

12 Salt Hotel 1919 Pósthússtræti 2

Austurstræti

An upscale restaurant with an adventurous menu. The restaurant's staff will happily prepare special dishes for both children and vegetarians upon request. For a light lunch downtown, certain dishes from the starters menu can be ordered at a very reasonable price in the lounge bar.

13 O Sushi Lækjargata 2a

Lækjargata

O Sushi is located on the second floor of Íða bookstore downtown. Also called The Train, it serves traditional sushi dishes and Japanese cuisine on a traditional Japanese fast-food conveyor belt, which runs alongside the whole seating section and creates a buffet-like atmosphere.

14 Tapasbarinn Vesturgata 3b

Vesturgata

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 miniature dishes served in an authentic Spanish style. There's also a lounge in case you don't feel like getting up straight away afterwards.

15 DRINKING



SPOT THIS: Cintamani

Laugavegur 11, 101 Reykjavík

Cintamani stocks quality Icelandic outdoor-gear and travel equipment, guaranteed to keep the whole family nice and warm in any type of weather. Here you'll find almost

everything needed for your trip across the country and beyond, and you can book an adventure excursion on the spot.



15 DRINKING

Organ

Hafnarstræti 1-3

This stylish two-floor bar and concert venue presents a diverse range of concerts by local and international acts at least four times a week. The venue features established bands and young and emerging musicians. It can accommodate 300 people and has enough seats for weary concertgoers to rest between sets. Open until way past late on weekends.

18 Dillon

Laugavegur 30

The quintessential rock-pub, Dillon features moderately priced drinks, a dark and cosy mood and some pretty good music (especially when local favourite DJ Andrea Jóns mans the decks). The tattooed, beer-lovin' types who hang out there on school nights are joined by legions of parka-clad students during weekends, creating a party atmosphere that's always fun.

21 Ölstofan

Vegan

Ölstofan has been open for over 20 years and is a favorite of Icelandic rock bands. The background music is blasting and the atmosphere is great. Better show up early for the regular shows as they sell out quickly. In its popularity, it's hard to find a better place to go.

16 Prikið

Bankastræti 12

This two-floor café/pub has been part of Reykjavík's bar scene for decades. With a large and fairly cheap bistro menu, Prikið attracts a mix of university students with their laptops and devoted elderly regulars during the day while the younger clientele fills up the space during the evening, especially on weekends when the music is mostly dedicated to hip-hop and R&B.

19 Næsti Bar

Ingólfsstræti 1a

Næsti Bar can be a godsend on those nights when queues seem to snake down all of Laugavegur, no seats are available anywhere and you just want to chat with some friends over a beer. Frequented by the literary and acting elite, those folk usually don't mind if you pop in for a quick beer and make use of some of the (usually) available tables, so long as you don't sing.

22 Nasa

Thorvaldseyri

In recent years, Nasa has gained a reputation as one of the most popular bars in Reykjavík. Many of the majority of Icelandic bands have performed here. As a variety of international acts play here, it's one of the bigger clubs in the city, there's always something going on during weekends, and it's a favorite of the crowd.

17 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Kaffibarinn is a popular coffee place on weekdays, especially among students and downtown workers who like to enjoy a beer after a busy day. On weekends, it becomes a very lively destination as its two floors fill up with late-night souls. With DJs playing live sets from Wednesday to Saturday the party doesn't start winding down until early morning.

20 Bar 11

Laugavegur 11

If you like trendy places, Bar 11 is the place to go. The atmosphere is crazy to a lively and glamourous. The dance floor is large and the nightclub is packed. The music is great and the service is friendly. The food is delicious and the prices are reasonable.

23 Óliver

Laugavegur

Óliver is a trendy and popular place to go. The atmosphere is great and the food is delicious. The service is friendly and the prices are reasonable. The music is great and the dance floor is large. Overall, it's a great place to go for a night out.

6 Hlöllabátar

Ingólfstorg

Gissur Gudmundsson
Owner of Tveir Fiskar
President of the
Nordic and Icelandic
Chefs Association
European Continental
Director for World
Association of Cooks
Societies



13 O Sushi

Lækjargata 2a

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 miniature dishes served in an authentic Spanish style. There's also a lounge in case you don't feel like getting up straight away afterwards.



14 Tapasbarinn

Vesturgata 3b

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 miniature dishes served in an authentic Spanish style. There's also a lounge in case you don't feel like getting up straight away afterwards.



17 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Kaffibarinn is a popular coffee place on weekdays, especially among students and downtown workers who like to enjoy a beer after a busy day. On weekends, it becomes a very lively destination as its two floors fill up with late-night souls. With DJs playing live sets from Wednesday to Saturday the party doesn't start winding down until early morning.



20 Bar 11

Laugavegur 11

At Bar 11, DJs call the tunes every weekend, emphasizing old rock'n'roll classics, chart-toppers and sing-along hits. The packed dance floor tends to turn into a war zone at weekends when it's impossible to have a private chat – an appealing experience if you join in the fun.



23 Óliver

Laugavegur

If you like trendy places, Bar 11 is the place to go. The atmosphere is crazy to a lively and glamourous. The dance floor is large and the nightclub is packed. The music is great and the service is friendly. The food is delicious and the prices are reasonable.



16 Prikið

Bankastræti 12

This two-floor café/pub has been part of Reykjavík's bar scene for decades. With a large and fairly cheap bistro menu, Prikið attracts a mix of university students with their laptops and devoted elderly regulars during the day while the younger clientele fills up the space during the evening, especially on weekends when the music is mostly dedicated to hip-hop and R&B.



19 Næsti Bar

Ingólfsstræti 1a

Næsti Bar can be a godsend on those nights when queues seem to snake down all of Laugavegur, no seats are available anywhere and you just want to chat with some friends over a beer. Frequented by the literary and acting elite, those folk usually don't mind if you pop in for a quick beer and make use of some of the (usually) available tables, so long as you don't sing.



22 Nasa

Thorvaldseyri

In recent years, Nasa has gained a reputation as one of the most popular bars in Reykjavík. Many of the majority of Icelandic bands have performed here. As a variety of international acts play here, it's one of the bigger clubs in the city, there's always something going on during weekends, and it's a favorite of the crowd.



17 Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1

Kaffibarinn is a popular coffee place on weekdays, especially among students and downtown workers who like to enjoy a beer after a busy day. On weekends, it becomes a very lively destination as its two floors fill up with late-night souls. With DJs playing live sets from Wednesday to Saturday the party doesn't start winding down until early morning.



20 Bar 11

Laugavegur 11

At Bar 11, DJs call the tunes every weekend, emphasizing old rock'n'roll classics, chart-toppers and sing-along hits. The packed dance floor tends to turn into a war zone at weekends when it's impossible to have a private chat – an appealing experience if you join in the fun.



23 Óliver

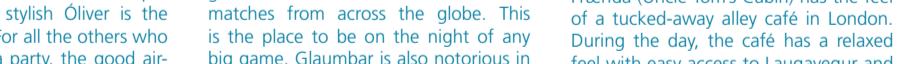
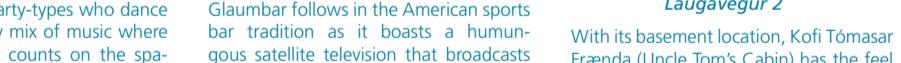
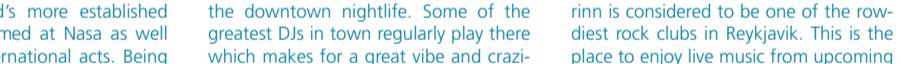
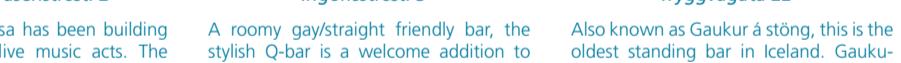
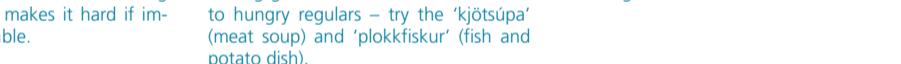
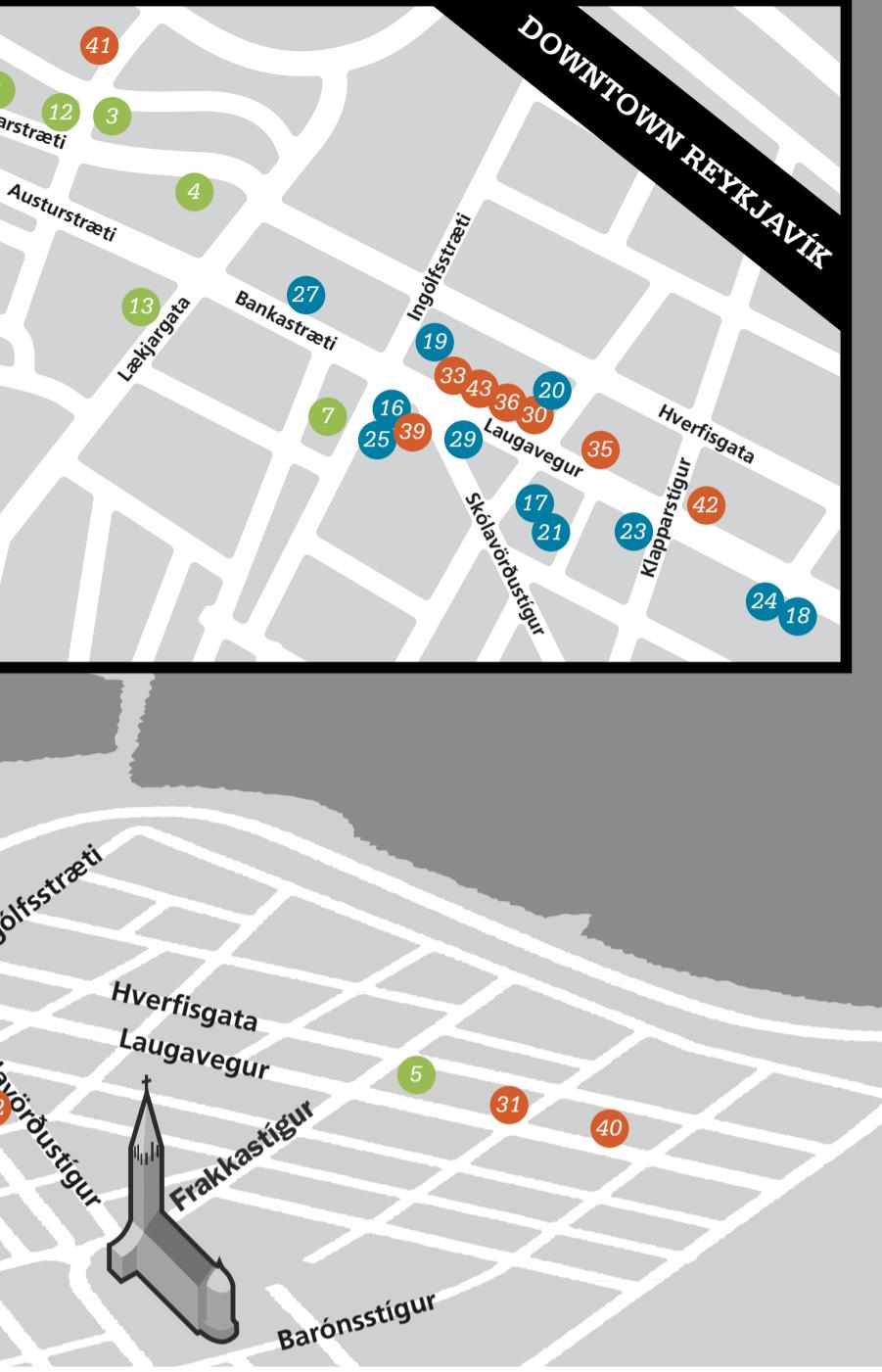
Laugavegur

If you like trendy places, Bar 11 is the place to go. The atmosphere is crazy to a lively and glamourous. The dance floor is large and the nightclub is packed. The music is great and the service is friendly. The food is delicious and the prices are reasonable.



16 Prikið

Bankastræti 12



SHOPPING

30 Cintamani

Cintamani stocks quality Icelandic outdoor-gear and travel equipment, guarantee to keep the whole family nice and warm in any type of weather. Here you'll find almost everything needed for your trip across the country and beyond, and you can book an adventure excursion on the spot.

31 Kronkron

Laugavegur 63b

Located on the corner of Laugavegur and Vitastígur, this hip clothing wonderland sells trendy designer wear for both sexes. Shoppers can purchase everything here, from funky street wear and elegant dresses to limited-edition shoes and jewellery from major fashion labels such as Vivienne Westwood, Umbro, Cheap Monday and Marc Jacobs.

32 Húfur sem hlæja

Skólavörðustígur 18

Loosely translated as 'Happy Smiling Headwear', the shop's owners have designed whacky hats and headwear since 1994 and stock a good selection of warm handmade products for women and children at the downtown store. Check out the elf hats if you want to look different.

33 Álafoss Shop

Laugavegur 1

The downtown outlet store for the Álafoss factory – the famous makers of traditional Icelandic wool sweaters. Here one can also find woollen mittens, gloves, caps, scarves and blankets as well as other woollen goods.

34 The Viking

Hafnarstræti 3

The large tourist shop The Viking sells all sorts of souvenirs and smart gift items to bring back home. The selection includes postcards, outdoor clothing, teddy bears, maps, books, woollen sweaters and plastic Viking helmets as well as Viking statues and shot glasses.

35 Blue Lagoon Store

Laugavegur 15

The geothermal seawater spa The Blue Lagoon is a world famous healing spot as the water is rich with silica and sulphur, which are extremely good for the skin. The natural skincare products made from the healing minerals are sold at the downtown Blue Lagoon shop.

36 Kisan

Laugavegur 7

Kisan sells goods that you're unlikely to find elsewhere in Reykjavík. The selection is a mix of interesting items from around the world, such as high-street brands, children's clothing, household items, stationery, toys, DVDs and even books on Japanese street fashion.

37 Kraum

Aðalstræti 10

The Kraum Iceland Design store features the best from the latest trends in Icelandic design. Kraum sells unique, Icelandic takes on everyday items like stationary, wooden children's toys, plastic zip-lockable handbags and raincoats, and woolen and other clothing and jewellery.

SHOPPING

38 Handprjóna-sambandið

Lækjargata 2a

The Handknitting Association of Iceland's official store, Handprjónasambandið, sells wool products of uncompromising quality. The store features pullover sweaters, cardigans and other wool accessories. They also sell yarn and the association hosts knitting nights at lóðu Húsið.

39 Nakti Apinn

Bankastræti 14

The designer shop The Naked Ape offers an amazing variety of colourful street-clothing, including hand-printed hooded sweatshirts, T-shirts and leggings. Inside you'll also find a good selection of Icelandic music, books on art, accessories and international designer wear.

40 Gallerí Sautján

Laugavegur 91

Stocking many hip fashion labels such as Diesel, DKNY, Lloyd, and Paul Smith, Gallerí Sautján is a unisex store with everything from casual business wear to evening outfits. On the second floor is Eva, stocking fashion labels for women who want to look smart and professional.

41 Kolaportið

Tryggvagata 19

A trip to the downtown indoor flea market Kolaportið is always a fun way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Endless stalls offering all kinds of second-hand goods, candy and even fermented shark. If ready to take the time, you can find some great bargains. Only open on weekends.

42 Aftur

Laugavegur 23

Sisters Bára and Hrafnhildur 'Raven' Hólmeinsdóttir are internationally acclaimed designers and stylists and their label, Aftur, can be found in fashion capitals across the world. Aftur's unique collection is available at their shop and studio with the same name on the second floor of Laugavegur 23, open from 12-6 pm.

43 Trilogia

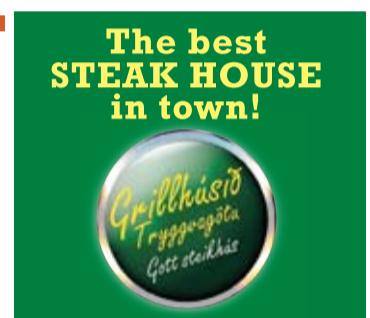
Laugavegur 7

A favourite among fashionistas with money to burn, fashion boutique Trilogia prides itself on stocking a fine selection of stylish designs where casual yet elegant daywear is mixed with feminine and fashionable evening dresses. The shop stocks brands such as Alexander McQueen, Chloe, Robert Cary Williams, Antipodium, Erotokritos and Pepa De-



The best Vegetarian Restaurant in the World?

Ánaestu grósum
FIRST VEGETARIAN
Laugavegur 20b Tel: (+354) 552 8410
anaestugrosum.is



Tryggvagata 20 - Tel: 562-3456
www.grillhusid.is

Cozy atmosphere and delicious food in a beautiful environment

GEYSIR
Bistro & Bar
Aðalstræti 2 - Tel: 517 4300
www.geysirbistrobar.is



VID TJÖRNINA
A SMALL CHARMING SEAFOOD RESTURANT DOWN TOWN REYKJAVIK

TEMPLARASUND 3
101 REYKJAVIK
TEL: 5518666
VIDTJORNINA@SIMNET.IS



ORIGINAL INDIAN & PAKISTANI TASTE
SHALIMAR
INDIAN - PAKISTANI CUISINE
AUSTURSTRÆTI 4, Tel. 551 0292 www.shalimar.is





Photos by GAS

Valencia Tapas Bar

Located on Vitastígur, (a side street off Laugavegur), Valencia Tapas Bar opened its doors a little over a month ago. As the name implies, the place celebrates the beloved Spanish tapas culture and is owned by a perky Spaniard, Diego Valencia, who not only manages the place but serves as the chef as well. Diego is a man of many talents and proudly told my companion and me that when the mood feels right, he offers his guests live music as the singer of a notorious flamenco duo.

At Valencia, there is no written menu. The daily specials are pre-prepared and the selection consists of around ten tapas classics (two vegetarian and one meat dish cost 1700 ISK.) We grabbed a table upstairs and sampled a mix of six different dishes. The dancing flames from the fireplace not only warmed our freezing hands but created a pleasant atmosphere while all the colourful paper fans adorning the walls let our minds wander to the warmer South.

Our favourite was the Spanish omelette, a recipe that never fails to please. With chunks of potatoes, onion and red peppers it was delicious, as was the Andalusian salad with salted cod, potatoes, boiled eggs, onion and oranges. The salad was especially fresh, although it could have benefited from a little more fish. Mushrooms, sautéed in lime-juice scored highly and the artichokes with olives, basil and parmesan cheese more than satisfied. We later used the bread served on the side to soak up all the flavourful oil left on the plate and washed it down with our San Miguel. We found the pieces of chicken breasts in olive oil and garlic a bit boring though, and the tuna salad was sadly not very interesting.

Valencia is best described as a cosy bar that offers light appetizers and is recommended for both relaxed evenings or as a first stop before bar-hopping. If in the mood to sample some food to accompany your drink and to share with your company, as is so popular in Spain, the place is worth a try. Expect to get basic and unpretentious tapas where the combinations are simple yet flavoursome.

Address:
Vitastígur 10a
101 Reykjavík

Reviewed by
Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

Síam

The Thai restaurant Síam in Hafnarfjörður has a long history. Although several name and location changes make the trail hard to follow, it has evolved from the restaurant Bangkok which claimed to be the first Thai restaurant in the Nordic Countries, founded in 1985.

The restaurant has recently gone through a change of ownership, and is now in the hands of the owners of the Mexican themed Serrano fast-food chain, which incidentally happens to be my favourite stop for a quick meal. Therefore, I was excited to see how they would approach Thai culinary traditions.

For most Reykjavíkians, Síam faces a giant problem: its location. Situated in Reykjavík's neighbouring town of Hafnarfjörður, it is not somewhere you tend to drop in without making a trip out of it. Obviously, the locals in Hafnarfjörður might reap the benefits, but I am too egocentric to care.

Síam is somewhat cursed with the 'tweener status. That is, it lies somewhere between being 'a place to eat' and an actual restaurant in many respects. The price falls somewhere between what you would expect to pay for fast food, and what you would expect to pay for a meal at a regular restaurant. There are waitresses roaming around taking orders and there is a wine-list, but the setting is more like what you'd expect from you local video rental. Plastic and cheap. It is not a pleasant dining area that invites you to sit for a while and enjoy your company after finishing a meal.

The food, however, is good, and that is what we came for after all. We sampled two different kinds of meat: traditional red curry; and a course called 'heavenly meat,' prepared in soya and coriander seeds, which gave it a very sweet and special taste. A surprising course that is highly recommended.

I believe that if Síam paid more attention to its accommodations, dining there would be a truly pleasant experience. But as it is, it falls just short, or, more accurately, somewhere in between pleasant and indifferent.

icelandic
FISH & CHIPS

Organic bistro

Creating a tradition

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

The National Theatre of Iceland
An unforgettable performance

Ivanov by Anton Chekhov
Direction and adaptation: Baltasar Kormákur
See and hear more on www.leikhuisid.is

PÓÐLEIKHÚSID

French film festival

OPENING FILM:
PERSEPOLIS

11. - 24. JANUARY
IN HÁSKÓLABÍÓ



11 EXCLUSIVE
QUALITY FILMS



græna
ljósið

www.graenajosid.is
www.af.is



Clockwise from the top:

695 ISK

Blue Skies bubble-bar for bubble baths made from the finest essential oils and safe synthetics. With the scent of cinnamon and patchouli.

Lush, Kringlan, 105 Reykjavík

16.400 ISK

A handmade white poncho from sheep's wool.

Hanna Design, Laugavegur 20B, 101 Reykjavík

3.800 ISK

A woollen doormat for cold winter nights.

Hanna Design, Laugavegur 20B, 101 Reykjavík

25.900 ISK

A unique green dress designed by Birta Björnsdóttir.

Júniform, Hverfisgata 39, 101 Reykjavík

495 ISK

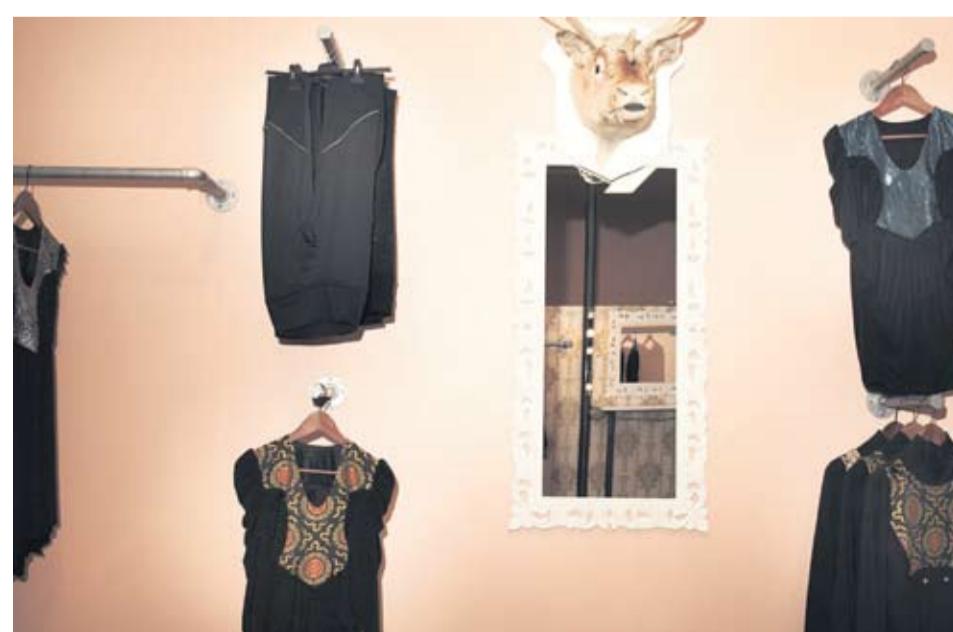
Golden Slumbers bath-bomb works like an aroma-therapeutic soap that colours the water and fills it with oils to soften your skin.

Lush, Kringlan, 105 Reykjavík

26.900 ISK

A unique black dress by Birta Björnsdóttir.

Júniform, Hverfisgata 39, 101 Reykjavík



Pay Attention!

Júniform

Júniform is a boutique clothing store on Hverfisgata where owner and fashion designer Birta Björnsdóttir offers her highly personal one-off creations. Six years ago, Birta came to the conclusion that she needed a studio of her own to develop her creativity and her love for design. The studio on Hverfisgata has slowly evolved into a shop that is today one of the most popular designer stores in town.

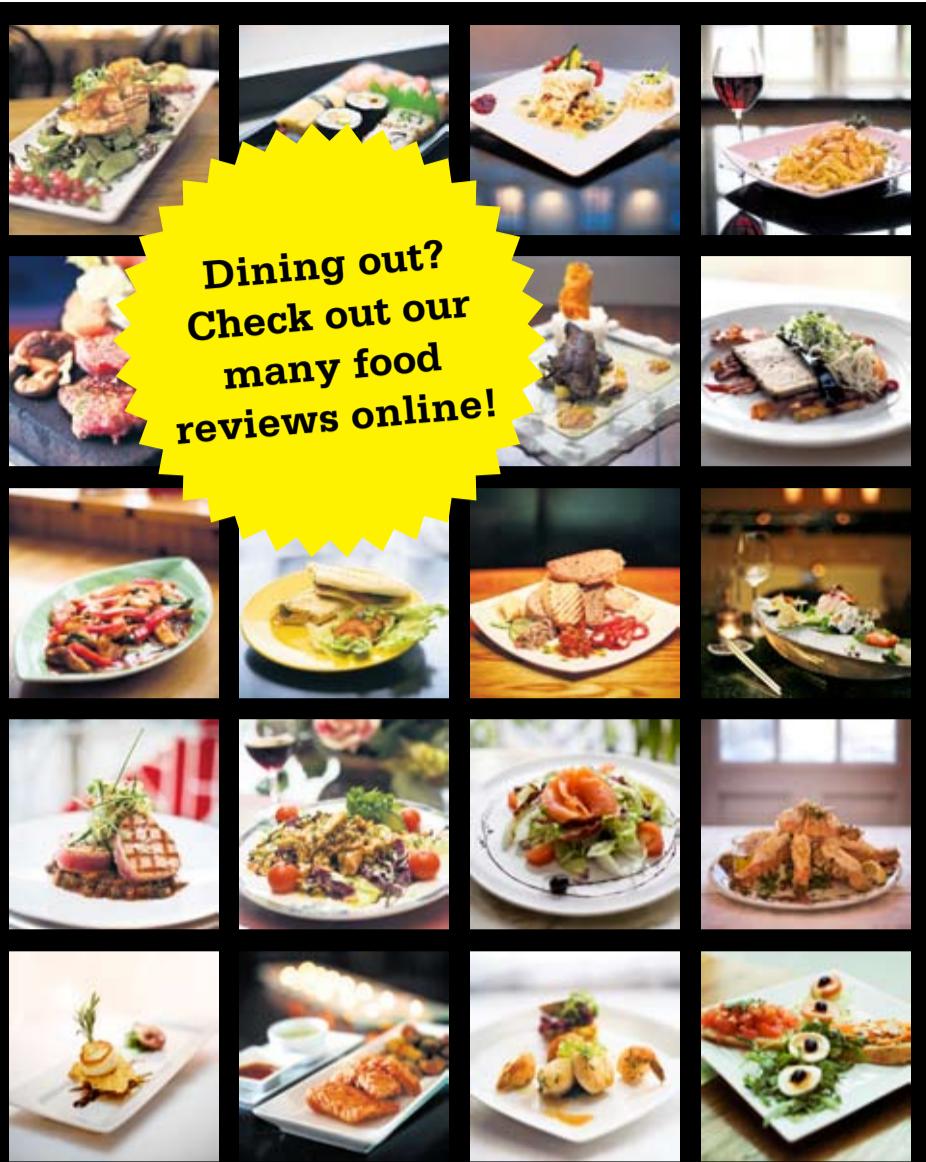
For the first four years, Birta produced all items herself. She has since moved on to focus exclusively on the design aspect. Although Birta makes use of new special fabrics in her design,

she also likes to use vintage dresses, making use of old fabric, or redesigning a classic garment.

Many of her customers utilise her website to select dresses and then come in for a personal fitting. The fittings take place at the store or via mail if you don't live near Reykjavík. The clothing is always Birta's own design but she adjusts clothes to the customer's liking when required.

Hverfisgata 39, 101 Reykjavík

Text by Merituuli Holm and Jennifer Ivars



Dining out?
Check out our
many food
reviews online!

WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS

[News](#) // [Culture](#) // [Dining](#) // [Travelling](#) // [Shopping](#) // [Articles](#) // [Interviews](#)



NÁMSFLOKKAR HAFNARFJARDAR MIÐSTÖÐ SÍMENNTUNAR

- ICELANDIC FOR FOREIGNERS
- TUNGUMÁL
- HANDVERK OG LISTIR
- HEILSA OG ÚTLIT
- TÖLVUR OG REKSTUR
- TÓNLISTAR- OG SÖGNAM
- LEIKLIST FYRIR BÖRN OG UNGLINGA
- NÁMSADSTÖÐ
- MATUR OG NÆRING
- PRÓFAÁFANGAR
- FJARNÁM VIÐ HA

Innritun á vorönn 2008 er hafin.

Nánari upplýsingar og innritun í síma 585-5860.

Kennsla hefst skv. stundaskrá 28. janúar. Námskrá vorannar er aðgengileg á netinu frá og með 14. janúar.
www.namsflokkar.hafnarfjordur.is

BERG
car rental
Safety all the way!

Discover the wonders of Iceland in a Berg car.

Check for special offers at your hotel
or guesthouse.



Free pickup at your hotel in the Reykjavík area.



Ask for the Grapevine offer.

Contact Info: Tel: +354 577 6050 - Fax: +354 567 9195 - Tangarhöfði 8 - www.bergcar.is - berg@bergcar.is

Photo by Ívar Brynjólfsson



30 Years of Contemporary Art

The Living Art Museum has been an important part of the art community since its foundation and was among the first non-profit art organisations in the country.

The Living Art Museum, commonly known as Nýló, celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. For the past three decades the museum has been a centre for contemporary art in Iceland. Emerging young artists have taken their first steps there, notable international artists have exhibited and household names in the local art scene have put on innovative shows, many of which are seen as turning points in Icelandic contemporary art history and have made Nýló an internationally acclaimed museum.

For the past 30 years, more than 2000 artists have been involved in the museum's programme and Nýló's collection of art contains more than 800 works donated by artists who have exhibited over the years. These include Niels Hafstein, Steinþrímur Eyfjörð, Steina Vasulka, Dieter Roth and many more. This extensive collection is not only valuable in a monetary sense but as a significant part of Iceland's art history from the 60s onwards.

A Year of Cleaning

When I sit down with Nýló's chairman Nína Magnúsdóttir and board member Andrea Maack inside the museum's current location on Laugavegur 26 they explain that Nýló's history has mostly been preserved by word of mouth. Although there are many documents in storage, there is no complete record of past exhibitions and the generation of artists that developed their art inside Nýló's walls. They stress how important it is to preserve this history, to save valuable art works and to make the collection accessible to all those interested in Icelandic contemporary art history. That is precisely the plan.

The 30th anniversary will be celebrated with

an overall clean-up. The museum will be transformed into a laboratory where artists and scholars will dedicate their time to compiling, filing and documenting the collection and the archive. Try to put all the puzzles together, so to speak.

"Historically, this is a very important project. We know roughly what the collection holds but I'm certain we will also discover plenty of surprises along the way," Nína says.

The museum has been an important part of the art community since its foundation and was among the first non-profit art organisations in the country. Established in 1978 by a group of artists that felt official art institutions – the National Gallery of Iceland in particular – didn't appreciate contemporary art, the goal was to focus on experimental art and to open people's minds to new ideas and media. The founders were part of the famous SÚM-movement and wanted Nýló to be a fresh and powerful platform for young artists. Their vision is still followed and working artists have always run the museum. It is currently funded by the City of Reykjavík, the state and Glitnir Bank.

Nína explains that "when Nýló was founded, no one was really dealing with Icelandic contemporary art," and Nýló soon became the only institution that collected art from that period. "One of our main goals in 2008 will be to honour this hard work and put the collection in a safe place," and they've made a contract with The National Gallery, which will store the collection. "It's a beautiful thing, historically, to collaborate with the National Gallery, which today has a great understanding of this whole struggle," she says.

Giving Artists a Real Boost

Nýló's past exhibitions are as diverse as they are numerous and range from provocative performances and rampageous concerts to aggressive installations that have raised many eyebrows. "Legendary things have happened at Nýló. This was the only place for progressive art, not only visual art but music, theatre and poetry readings as well. Nýló was a meeting point for artists who wanted to create something different, and it still is," says Nína.

One of the aims has been to support emerging artists and they want to take things even further in the future. "By finally storing the collection and the archive somewhere safe we can continue to focus on exhibitions. As of 2009, we want to have fewer exhibitions per year and instead give the artists a boost by putting some funding into each production and a possible artist fee. Nýló is supposed to be a platform for artists who get a chance to produce grand shows they can later present abroad," Andrea explains.

Nýló will be bursting with energy this year and the extensive programme features various happenings. The research will not take place behind closed doors – instead, the building will be open to all. "Our work will be visible and everyone who wants to take a look or share memories and ideas is more than welcome," they say, excited about the vibrant year ahead and the many treasures they expect to find hidden in storage.

For more info visit www.nylo.is

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

b5

Bar - Bistro

Bankastræti 5 □ 101 Reykjavík □ b5@b5.is □ www.b5.is □ www.myspace.com/b5_bar

What's on? www.getrvk.com

b5 offers internet access and provides a laptop, free of charge

Opening hours:

Sun-Wed. 11:00 - 24:00
Thursday 11:00 - 01:00
Fri - Sat. 11:00 - 03:30



Earth's final hour.
Photo by GAS



Earth Waves Goodbye to GusGus

"I had a blast and the feedback was great. I really couldn't have been more satisfied with the night," Urður says of her last GusGus show.

If anyone knows how to please their fans it's the electro maniacs in GusGus. The group's catchy beats and eclectic vibe have been a huge draw among clubbers of all nationalities for years and at the same time have made the band a notorious live act across the globe. When performing on their home ground, at club NASA, things tend to be a little too hot for the crowd to handle and when the band played the packed venue on December 29 last year, it was no exception.

With one club hit after another the atmosphere soon became aggressive to say the least. Total mayhem in fact. Fights broke out between a few intoxicated "fans" but the more peaceful and appreciative masses couldn't have cared less about the drunken' party-poopers and danced until their feet couldn't carry them anymore. The sweaty crowd later rushed outside at the crack of dawn and left the floor at NASA resembling a post-combat scene.

GusGus members were in the mood to party. This was the last show of a successful Forever tour, (to support the band's latest release) and they and their followers were to say a proper goodbye to their vocalist Earth (Urður Hákonardóttir), a key member of the family for the past seven years. Urður has left GusGus and plans to pursue a solo career, leaving only two of the founding members, President Bongo and Biggi Veira, to keep the torch burning.

A few days into the New Year, I sit down with Urður at a much quieter location, the coffeehouse 10 Dropar. In between spoon-feeding her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter Kría with an appetising meat-soup, she discusses how it feels to say

goodbye to the successful teamwork and what the future holds for her as soloist.

Flying Solo

"I had a blast and the feedback was great. I really couldn't have been more satisfied with the night," Urður says of her last GusGus show. Since its foundation in 1995, GusGus's line-up has scaled down a great deal and when Urður came to the rescue she entered a new band. Several members had left but she injected a lot of energy into the band with her unique voice and vivid stage presence and has released two hyped records with the seemingly immortal party-troop. So why leave now?

"For me and my music career it's a next step. It's like moving away from home and now I want to try to create something on my own. Our collaboration had come to an end and I'm leaving on good terms. [Biggi and President Bongo] will continue to do their music and we will continue to be friends and love each other, forever."

The past years have seen extensive touring around the world. "That's probably what I'll miss the most because we put on super live shows together. In my view, [GusGus] is the best live band there is," she says, and plenty of concertgoers would easily agree. The concerts are more like happenings; visually engaging and always interesting to witness. "We've played countries that I would have been unlikely to visit otherwise, like Singapore, Russia, Turkey, Croatia, Montenegro and the Middle East. To get the chance to travel and play in front of a huge audience is a privilege."

Once Urður's daughter Kría was old enough,

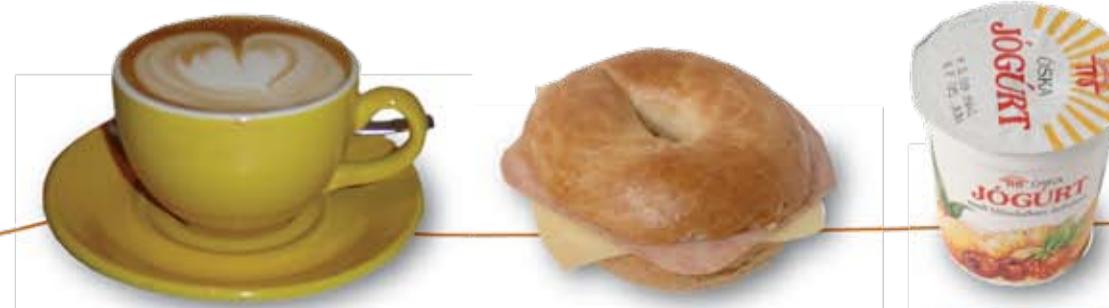
she and a babysitter came along on tour, which Urður tells me was no problem at all. "I find it quite funny when I hear people say that the reason I'm leaving GusGus is to focus on being a mother. I don't find it an insult to me personally but rather an insult to women in general – this concept that you need to drop everything you are doing to be a parent. I, at least, don't see it that way. I'm a good mother and it hasn't stopped me from doing the same things as before she was born."

Urður says she has no clear picture of how things will evolve in terms of her solo career and the musical direction in which she is moving, but admits that she is influenced by the dance scene that has been such a big part of her life. "The songs I've written up until now are both soothing melodies and danceable tunes. The album will probably be house oriented but without as much techno as Biggi produces. I want to experiment with instruments and make an album people can play at home anytime of the week, not just as a warm up before partying."

By now, Kría is getting tired of me interrupting their lunch-time and demands some more attention from her Mum, so I conclude by asking Urður how she sees the next months, free from touring and tackling crazy crowds at NASA and beyond. "What I know is that this will be a great year! I'll put the emphasis on my album, which I plan to finish in 2008. Then we'll just see what happens".

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

**Breakfast
special**



Cappuccino + bagle + yoghurt = 650 kr.

roma

Rauðarárstígur 8

ORGAN

January & February

January

Friday 11th:

Saturday 12th:

Friday 18th:

Saturday 19th:

Wednesday 23rd:

Thursday 24th:

Friday 25th:

Saturday 26th:

Wednesday 30th:

Thursday 31st:

Friday 1st:

Saturday 2nd:

Thursday 7th:

Friday 8th:

DJ THOR - No admission

ED BANGER PARTY: Busy P (aka Pedro Winther), Steed Lord, President Bongo(Gus Gus)

BREAKBEAT.IS ÁRSLISTAKVÖLD: Commix (Metalheadz UK) Kalli & Ewok (Breakbeat.is IS)

JANIS JOPLIN Birthday tribute concert

SHADOW PARADE AND MÚGSEFJUN

MONITOR Í UPPSVEIFLU: Poetrix, Original Melody, 1985!

BLOODGROUP DJ SET - No admission

TBA

HRAUN + guests

THIS IS SPIRIT (UK)

TBA

TBA

MONITOR Í UPPSVEIFLU

BARCODE: DJ F.E.X.



www.myspace.com/organreykjavik

**Open: Tuesday-Thirsday 19-01 / Friday 17-05 (Happy Hour 17-19) / Sat 19-05
Organ / Hafnarstræti 1-3 / 101 RVK / tel: 551-0022**

Charts
I Adapt came dead
the Album of the Year
reporter sat down
each band to quiz
ard-winning records,
the pros and cons of
labels.



Photo by GAS

Birkir Fjalar Viðarsson

"We have gotten so much notice now that it is a shame we broke up really. But we don't want to keep it going, just to keep it going."

So, Chainlike Burden topped our list for album of the year, joined by Skátar's The Ghost of Bollocks to Come. This is the first I Adapt album to receive considerable notice from the Icelandic media [it finished high on most other year-end lists also.] Did you expect this?

I didn't really give it much thought. As a musician, I don't pay much attention to such lists; I usually don't even bother to read them. But yes, I did expect that if anyone really listened to an I Adapt record, it would make the cut with some left-field scribes, but I didn't really expect it to break top five, or even top ten, especially with the general public. It was placed very highly in reader surveys and internet polls for example.

Do you know how much it sold?

No, that's in the hands of our label. I don't think it sold very well. It sold well in relation to the number of copies we pressed, but I don't think it sold very well compared with many other albums. But it might pick up after all this publicity.

The label you signed to, Mamma Pín Records, is a small indie label, with little money to spend on promotion compared with many other labels. Do you think people even know this record is out there?

No, I've talked to a lot of people, people who go to the University with me, and so on, who don't even know the record is out there. The fans who follow the band and lurk around on our MySpace.com site know about it. That's where we promote it, and on message boards and internet forums. But that escapes a lot of people. It seems that everyone starts by going to Skífan [record store], and if a record is not available there, they might possibly look for it in other record stores. We didn't distribute to Skífan, so...

Just before the end of the year, news filtered out that the band had broken up. Why now, when the band had just started to reach public awareness?

Yeah, well, you know. I've asked myself that same question many times as well. But I think it would be even worse to be in a band with four people who are not on the same page. The idea behind breaking up now, rather than later, was to maintain the integrity of the band. People who know us as a band know that we are solid guys who deliver the goods every time we play live. We wanted to break it up before the untrained ear would start to notice that the band was lacking harmony in so many different things off the stage. The reason we broke up was not musical differences or that we didn't get along, it was everything else. We didn't want that to be seen or heard on stage. When you see a band play where there is not total unity with everything – the sound, the equipment, rehearsals, everything – you notice it, you hear it. And then you think 'dudes, why don't you just give it up, or form a new band or something?' But, if we think of this band as a fellowship, this fellowship is not going any further, at least not at this time.

So what's next?

I have no idea. I want to be in a prolific band where I don't need to be the vitamin injection. I've been doing this since I was 13, and I'll be 30 in a month, so I'm even ready to be not in a band, or if I am in a band, to be a low-level player with no expectations or goals other than playing. [Bass player] Addi is playing with Gavin Portland, a band that is really taking off, so the future looks bright for him. [Drummer] Elli has always got some kind of art projects going, making short films and videos. I have a feeling that [guitar player] Ingi and I might end up doing something together, but not in a fully-formed band that takes to the streets to kick ass. We have written a lot of stuff after Chainlike Burden came out. That album is actually very old [release was repeatedly delayed]. Ingi and I have been throwing riffs and ideas back and forth, and that stuff is just so good, that we, as hobby musicians, want to play it, just the two of us.

I Adapt was always a band that fed off playing live. How will you cope with playing only in a dingy practice space instead of playing live?

The starting point for this band, and for me especially, was always that attending an I Adapt show should be a totally different experience from going to any other show. That was a very selfish idea as well, because I wanted to be in the position to be able to manipulate everything and bring something new and fresh. To tell you the truth, I am starting to regret that already, not to have that on the horizon. But we don't want to have to drag the horse across the finish line. We could probably make it look OK forever, but we won't settle for anything less than being the best live band out there. When the foundation for that was no longer there...

But is there still going to be one last show?

Yes, February 2 we will play one last show. That is going to be an all-ages show in a small auditorium somewhere, a low profile show, just for the die-hards who have supported us for a long time. It is going to be a real I Adapt show where everything goes crazy.

What was the idea behind founding the band in the beginning?

We just wanted to create something totally new. We had much more of a plan back then. We were very excited, and kind of arrogant. We thought almost everything sucked, not necessarily musically, but we thought most bands were boring live. We thought it was boring to go to maybe one hundred shows a year, and nobody said anything, unless perhaps the singer was drunk. Then he would ask if everyone was having a good time or yell "Tuborg!" or "Satan!"

Back then, we were very idealistic and obnoxious. All our lyrics were very simple, they were always about some current issue, and we would explain that before playing a song. We truly believed that there should be no boundary between the band and the audience. We wanted to create a totally new live environment here in Iceland, and I am certain that we did and that is why we garnered such a loyal following. That was always the plan. We had such an attitude for the first four years as a band that we never played in a bar. If everybody was not going to get in, we refused to play. When we started to write more complex music however, the younger kids turned away from us, while we started to appeal more to older listeners, so we started to play in bars more.

Do you think that decision helped you gain more attention?

I think so, yes. There are so many music journalists who would never go to an all-ages show. It is not necessarily snobbery, but the preference to be in a situation where they are allowed to have a drink and maybe a smoke. Those people didn't really start to listen to us until late in our career, so I think that decision helped us draw more attention to the band. We have gotten so much notice now that it is a shame we broke up really. But we don't want to keep it going, just to keep it going. We are just in such different places in our lives right now. I wish we could keep it going, but the fellowship needs to be stronger. It is not enough to agree that it is fun to play live and practice. When you have been in a band for seven years and after several U.S. and European tours, you need more. And after touring the U.S. the last time, where we played with the best hardcore bands in the business, we only compare ourselves to those guys; we are not going to compare ourselves to some band that just won the Battle of the Bands. The measuring stick is so much higher. We just want to be convincing as a band, and if we are not convincing, we might as well stop. This is what killed the band maybe. The ambition. We are all very ambitious, but maybe that ambition is not always directed towards the same goal.

Text by Sveinn Birkir Björnsson



Photo by GAS

Psychedelic Normalcy

Who:
Benny Crespo's Gang

Where:
Tjarnarbió

When:
December 19, 2007

Bathed in a purplish glow, the Benny Crespo's Gang foursome opened up the first seated rock concert in recent memory, with a series of bleeps and blurps. It was the epitome of BCG's appeal in the form of an overture; a basic rock outfit with light psychedelic tendencies. However, celebrating the release of their debut album, self-titled, at Tjarnarbió, the Gang did little else throughout the course of the night to elevate themselves to anything above an image of distinct normalcy. On stage, they were polite, shy, and clearly a bit nervous. After a hiatus of nearly a year, perhaps they deserved to be.

They dove into their first number. Heavy bass lines and an even heavier, slightly overpowering drum input chaotically climaxed into an almost transcendent medley of sound. The audience of friends and fans cheered enthusiastically, even shouting and stomping with excitement.

In the interval between songs, somewhere between tuning their instruments and waiting for everyone else to tune theirs, singer Helgi Rúnar and Lovísá awkwardly attempted one-sided small talk with the audience. "Has everyone bought their Christmas presents yet?" asked Lovísá. Then after a painful pause, she breathed, "I haven't." From somewhere in the audience I heard a lonely chuckle.

The emphasis on emotional, though not delicate, vocals on their next number, Shine, gave the song singularity in a pool of dense instrumental cogitation. Lovísá's sweet but un-optimistic cooing had a similarly arresting effect on Come Here, where her band-mates' thickly woven instrumen-

tals fittingly took the backseat.

Though the openings and endings tended to be less than smooth, the build-ups sometimes predictable, and certainly their stage-presence less than thrilling, the Gang continually managed to build steadily to explosive climaxes and moments of surprising clarity in their songs. Despite the fog machines and the impressive light show, however, the gig felt more like a band practice than a concert. With clumsy, difficult transitions, along with elongated tuning pauses between each song, the band seemed clearly out of practice, and they moved forward together in a rusty state.

Finishing with a heap of unfocused but jarring musical meditations, the band was burning out in a burst of misdirected power. Helgi Rúnar and Lovísá's vocals suggested a delicate edge to the band's foundation that was continually left uncultivated by the unrelenting drums and heavy bass. Though intended and successfully executed as little more than a showcase of their recent release, the concert did lack a certain polish, a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Whether it was focus, ambition, or practice that they lacked, the band's strengths were as visible as their weaknesses. With time and a little more of any of the aforementioned ingredients, the former will surely prevail.

Text by Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir



Krummi from Minus and Jenni from Brain Police as Jesus and Judas

Jesus Christ Rockstar

Who:
Jesus Christ Superstar

Where:
Reykjavík City Theatre

When:
December 28, 2007

Excitement filled the air inside The Reykjavík City Theatre minutes before the premiere of Jesus Christ Superstar. There is no mystery to the plot in Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's famous rock-opera but Vesturport's take on the classic has made many old fans curious, especially since director Björn Hlynur decided to cast two local rockers in the leading roles. Krummi, best known for fronting the rock monsters Mínus, takes on the role of Jesus and Brain Police's singer Jenni plays Judas. These are very challenging parts - to sing and act - and the theatre audience very distinct from their usual crowd, something that must be nerve-wrecking for two first time actors.

Björn Hlynur succeeds in presenting something different, although his version does not entirely escape clichés. He moves far away from any hippy or pop-oriented atmosphere of the original and offers the audience leather pants and tattoos, BBQs and stewardesses while Pontius Pilate is dressed in a speedo. I have to say though that some parts left me a bit confused.

To modernise the piece for a generation of rock-enthusiasts, Björn Hlynur got Daði Bergisson and Krummi's band-mates, Bjössi and Bjarni, to orchestrate the music. That was his best move. The show started with a bang and the band's dynamical sound blasted loudly for the whole two hours. It was too bad the five-piece was hidden in a pit in front of the stage. When things got a bit dull onstage it would have been nice to watch the action beneath.

Jenni delivered his part as Judas well. His singing was powerful and his raw sound a good contrast to Krummi's softer voice. He was angry

yet emotional and convincing as the confused betrayer, which suited this hard-rock version perfectly. Krummi's vocal delivery was surprising and showed a totally new side of him as a singer. He is usually the rough guy but here he easily hit the high notes and sang the slower ballads just fine. Between songs though, it felt as he didn't really know what he was supposed to do, and lacked the skills to deliver the feeling of sympathy in dramatic scenes.

I was impressed with Lára Sveinsdóttir who sang her role as Mary Magdalene beautifully. Ingvar E. Sigurðsson stood out as Pontius Pilate and proved that he is not only a terrific actor but a great singer. Magnús Jónsson as Caiaphas and Bergur Pór Ingólfsson as the obese King Herod (who received a well-deserved applause and laughter), also deserve compliments.

That being said, what the production lacked in acting skills it made up for in volume. It was rather the powerful singing and heavy instrumentals that carried the show from start to finish and made it entertaining to watch. The music was full of attitude and smart details and the arrangements both interesting and aggressive. This version of the classic opera is pure rock, just as intended.

Text by Steinunn Jakobsdóttir

**Looking for tickets
to concerts in Iceland?**



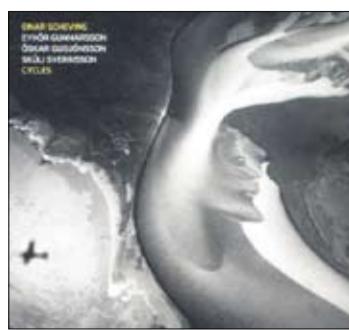
GET THEM ONLINE!

midi.is



CD
Ein í leyni
Benni Hemm Hemm

Benni Hemm Hemm's latest EP release *Ein í leyni*, recognises the infinite merit of the phrase 'short and sweet.' Indulging instrumentally in the simplicity he has long employed in his lyrics, Benni manages a combination of melancholy and optimism within a strikingly lucid record. He has perhaps taken the queue from his friend and collaborator Jens Lekman in this regard, even making an acoustic version of the song *Hól á hey hóla*, from *Kajak* in which they both sing (and whistle.) It is that song as well as *Jag Tyckte Hon Sa Lönnlöv*, in which Lekman sings *Maple Leaves* in Swedish along with some Big Band reinforcement and vocal support by Benni, that are especially well arranged. Ultimately the distinct Benni Hemm Hemm sound is only positively reinforced by the acoustic strip, allowing him to fully revel in the simplicity that is his ultimate strength. *Vp*

CD
Cycles
Einar Scheving

Einar Scheving is a respected member of the relatively small community of Icelandic jazz musicians. As a drummer, he has played on over 100 albums, although *Cycles* is his first as a bandleader. For this album, he has assembled an all-star squad of musicians to join him with Eyþór Gunnarsson (piano), Skúli Sverrisson (bass), and Óskar Guðjónsson (tenor sax). Although drums have been Scheving's forte, he has turned his attention more towards compositions as his career advances, earning rave reviews for his work. This album is a fine testimony to Einar's strong compositional abilities. He has a deft touch for sparsity whereby each tone is given space to breath. This is an album that rewards careful, repeated listening, where the intricate puzzle of delicate tones unfolds with more clarity each time. Skúli Sverrisson's mastery of the bass is especially enjoyable. *SBB*

CD
Siðasta vetrardag
Siðan skein sól

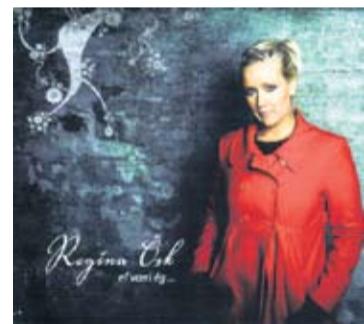
The career of pop quintet Siðan Skein Sól spans twenty years. They ruled as kings of the Icelandic pop music in the nineties, and have a catalogue of hits that regularly grace the radio waves. *Siðasta Vetrardag* is a live recording celebrating the band's 20th anniversary. 18 songs in all, this CD includes most of the band's many hits, many of them performed with alternative stripped down acoustic arrangements, with different instrumentation for added effects. The results are hit and miss. The strings definitely add to *Ég stend á skýi*, while the lounge feel of *Halló, ég elsk a þig* is a step backwards. For long-time fans of Siðan Skein Sól, this is probably a good addition to the collection, since the 2-CD package also contains a DVD recording of the concert, but others are probably better off picking up some of the band's earlier studio albums. *SBB*

CD
Behold
Steini

Behold is the first release from pop quartet Steiní, which apparently gets its name from the 'romantic loser' Steiní, who sings and plays guitar. The music is a rather unobtrusive mix of simple acoustic guitar-pop, with a nostalgic glee. It is not terribly original, or engaging, but not exactly boring either. Mostly it just falls nicely into the backdrop to whatever else you are doing so you hardly notice it at all. The songs *Girl I Used to Know* and *Behold* are positive highlights. Steiní (the band member) has a passable singing voice, but the terrible cover design adds little value. *SBB*

CD
Not to Lead nor to Follow
Gjöll

Extreme electronica is a corner of the musical universe that often gets little attention. The conceptual electronic band Gjöll is the duo of Sigurður Harðarson, better known for his work with the punk band Dys, and the grindcore band Forgarður Helvítis; and Jóhann Eiríksson, member of the musical projects Reptilicus and Product 8. This is their second album, combining anarchistic poetry and extremely dark and moody ambience through pulsating reverbs and heavy use of voice effects. For people interested in experimental electronica or curious to learn more about it, this is worth checking out. Everyone else is probably better off spending their money elsewhere. *SBB*

CD
Ef væri ég ...
Regína Ósk

With the help of Karl Olgeir, who co-wrote all the songs and lyrics on the record, Regína Ósk has released her third solo album in three years. The record is a mixed-result. First off, it could be worse. Olgeir, who also managed all arrangements and recordings, has made a commercial record that is solid and clean, if at times flat. Though indulgent and uninspired, the lyrics are not deplorable or entirely mindless. *Samastað* and *Bítlalag* are perhaps the most successful tracks, if only because the light (very light) Latin influence sets its melody apart from the other 11 songs. Yet, despite all the effort that was surely put in on all ends to make this shiny new disc, it ultimately manages to be almost entirely uncharming and unstimulating. *Vp*

This exciting new multimedia exhibition tells the story from an island's dramatic birth from the depths of the Atlantic Ocean through its forty year history to the current day – and beyond, glimpsing the future 120 years hence.

The exhibition explains the Government's decision to submit an application to UNESCO to designate Surtsey a World Heritage Site.

SURTSEY – GENESIS. EXHIBITION AT THE CULTURE HOUSE

The Culture House - Þjóðmenningarhúsið
 National Centre for Cultural Heritage
 Hverfisgata 15, 101 Reykjavík
 Telephone 545 1400 www.thjodmenning.is

Open daily between 11am and 5pm

The admission fee grants entry to all exhibitions at the Culture House. Adults ISK 300. Senior citizens ISK 200. Students ISK 200. Free entry for children 16 years of age or younger. Admission is free on Wednesdays.

Reykjavík pop band Hraun delivered the goods for the BBC World Service. The unanimous decision was that all those instruments on stage had little to do with the performance



Battle of the Lands

How can you compare a solo singer, albeit an admirably talented one, who has a CD-R instead of a live band, to a group of Kenyan multi-instrumentalists (Yunasi) or a French art-school electro outfit (Maya McCallum) on the basis of one song?

The once-popular battle of the bands competition has been on the wane for several years now, probably because of the ubiquity of such contests and the increasing ease of access to live music through festivals and tours, but 2007 saw the format stage something of a revival to the benefit of one Icelandic band in particular.

A large part of BBC's World Service programming focuses on global culture, from Japanese ladyboys to new music, and it's the latter subject that they were interested in when Auntie (as the BBC is affectionately known in England; it's old and friendly) asked for the best new bands from around the world to submit one track for a competition branded as the Next Big Thing. The judging panel, all well known in the music world and very successful in their own right, then whittled the piles of entries down to just five finalists from five very different corners of the planet. Whilst it's debatable if the World Service has enough clout to boost a band's profile in the same way that wretched programs like The X Factor, which can essentially rig the pop charts by acting as king maker to pretty much any idiot they choose, the competition was still a credible exercise thanks to the high standing of the judges and brilliant performances from the likes of Iceland's Hraun, one of the bands chosen to play their song at the world finals in London.

The BBC's Maida Vale studios, located in leafy North London, are something of a national treasure to Brits, with the run-down buildings hosting the legendary John Peel sessions for years as well as performances from just about every major band and musician to have ruffled the charts in the last four decades. With this in mind, to play there is a privilege rarely bestowed upon a band which hasn't graced the cover of a magazine or received flattering reviews in the national press and, frankly, the first finalist, the United Arab Emirates' Jeremie Johnson, looked quite lonely as a solo artist on the substantial stage (located deep within the bowels of the facility) but was mildly impressive when his backing tape kicked in. The said backing tape sounded like it was made by remixing Queen, Celine Dion and Phil Spector and proved to be just one of the oddities of a contest that seemed to have a little too much focus on what the end result might sound and look like when broadcast rather than being a talent competition based purely on musical ability.

How can you compare a solo singer, albeit an admirably talented one, who has a CD-R instead of a live band, to a group of Kenyan multi-instrumentalists (Yunasi) or a French art-school electro outfit (Maya McCallum) on the basis of one song? I was certainly none the wiser as to who would be the next big thing on the basis of what the bands performed that afternoon, despite my predilection towards Icelandic music. The fifth band in the final, a mass of Serbians called Vrelo who combined a gang of Lolita-esque schoolgirl

singers and heavy metal to achieve the sort of result that could only be considered credible in a very remote place, were perhaps the weakest act. Even the schoolgirls looked more like the dinner lady than Britney Spears and their chosen song was, to be blunt, lacking in every way. But thankfully Hraun's song was firmly located at the other end of the scale of credibility.

Hraun submitted a vocal-based composition, Ástarsaga úr fjöllum, which tells the sorry tale of a troll who falls in love but discovers the object of his affections has turned to stone. The song's airy, harmonised vocals and sparse, plucked-guitar accompaniment create a brilliant piece of understated music making and, when listening to the recorded version, you could easily understand why judges such as Talvin Singh and William Orbit praised the band.

However, there was a sting in the tail in the form of a large dose of irony when it came to judging the final result after all the bands had played their one song several times for the benefit of the cameras and microphones. As previously mentioned, it was difficult to see how five acts that play in five entirely different styles could be compared to each other and Hraun suffered the most from this problem. Because the final was being filmed, all the entries had to give the impression that the one song they played was part of a longer set performed for the benefit of the judges and audience. So, when Hraun strode onto stage clutching their instruments and drumsticks to play the song that got them through to the final, it was purely for show (apart from Svavar Knútur's acoustic guitar) and there was no chance to show the musical ability that the band demonstrated so well two days previously at a warm-up gig in London's Old Street district. The band's keyboard player looked a bit lost as his power cable lay unattached on the floor, the drummer didn't touch his kit at all and the rest of the band, flute player and all, just sang, albeit beautifully. It was frustrating that Hraun weren't given the opportunity to play to the maximum of their ability but, then again, they might not have even got to the final had they submitted a different song. They'd made their bed and now they had to sleep in it.

The Kenyan entry, Yunasi, were worthy winners in that they demonstrated a combination of energy, epic percussion skills and a universal appeal thanks to their use of several languages and musical styles. Their winning song may have sounded like a world music cynic's worst nightmare but to the open-minded they beat all other entries, bar Hraun, hands down. Perhaps if the Icelanders had entered a different song in the competition then the day would have taken a different course – they'd either have won or they'd have been sitting at home listening to the final on the radio.

What the Judges Said:

Talvin Singh - Producer, DJ, instrumentalist and Mercury Music Prize winner (1998)

"I really enjoyed it, it's a wonderful piece of music and I'd love to hear it in a pair of headphones in a really chilled place. I found it very deceiving because visually they had all these instruments on stage so what you're seeing doesn't really match what you're hearing – that's the only thing that threw me off. Other than that, I thought that aesthetically it was a really nice piece of music with beautiful harmonies. The voice is the ultimate instrument, every instrument imitates the voice, but with so many instruments on stage it was deceiving, the drummer looked a bit redundant."

Nile Rodgers - Bassist and co-founder of seminal New York disco/funk band Chic (*Le Freak* etc)

"Can I see it in the charts? Maybe in a different era because in my head I think in terms of quality of music but when you ask me if it could be in the charts I have to visualise what the charts are today and it's a very different environment. Maybe somebody can have a situation, the perfect storm, and it's the right thing at the right time with the right band. Compositionally it absolutely could be but in today's world I'm not sure if it could be, it's not clear to me how one would promote that type of song. If you had it next to Rihanna's Umbrella... But it's a terrific composition, harmonically it's wonderful, the only problem is that in this setting the visual didn't sync with what I was hearing and I understand that if you're a band then you're used to performing the song every night and holding your instruments, you don't put your instruments down to sing – I get that – it's just weird if you don't tell me that's what you're going to do."

Tahita Bulmer - New Young Pony Club lead vocalist

"I really enjoyed it. In terms of what we're looking for, the band is very diverse and it reminds me of the band collective stuff like Broken Social Scene. I think they'd fit in really well with that kind of a scene. They could be massive on the College circuit, definitely – you need a bit of introspective music to get over the emotional times in your life! I also think it's great when people sing in their regional languages and dialects, it's got to open the eyes of Westerners, American and English people in particular, who are used to having everything sung in their mother tongue, so it's great to hear. Also, in terms of how it makes you feel and how you react to songs; it is different hearing Mozart sung in German and opera sung in Italian, they have a different emotional resonance."

Text by Ben H. Murray



Recent Books About Iceland

Seven Books Mysteriously Missing from the Icelandic Library System

I often hear of books that I want to look at because they are relevant to issues in Iceland today. Usually, a book like this is too expensive to buy just to read once or skim. Here is a short list of such titles. All deal with important issues where Iceland could surely benefit from outside perspectives.

- The high cost of free parking, by Donald C. Shoup (2005). Parking in Reykjavík has become harder and harder. It looks like this author has thought hard about the economic incentives involved.

- Supermarket wars: the future of global food retailing, by Andrew Seth and Geoffrey Randall (2005). Supermarkets are so important to Icelandic life and politics that I've been thinking I'd like to learn more about the whole industry.

- Urban multi-culture in Norway: identity formation among immigrant youth, by Mette Andersson (2005). I chose this title more or less at random from among the many books on the immigrant experience in mainland Scandinavia that aren't available here.

- Rebuilding inner city airports, by Prianka N. Seneviratne (1996). Reykjavík is not alone in struggling with the question of what to do with a downtown airport built at a time when the city was much smaller.

- A place in the sun: Shetland and oil, by Jonathan Wills (1991). With Iceland planning to explore for oil in the seas to the northeast of the island, it would be good to listen to a balance of voices about oil's effect on our almost-next-door neighbour, Shetland.

- Estonia: independence and European integration, by David Smith (2002). Estonia, another peripheral Nordic country with an economy vaguely similar in size to Iceland's, pegged its currency to the Euro some years before formally joining the European Union. I'm not saying we should necessarily do this too, but I'd like to know more about why it worked (or didn't work) for the Estonians.

- A farewell to Greenland's wildlife, by Kjeld Hansen (2002). This book shows how our neighbours, the Greenlanders, are caught in their very own, and somewhat different, marine harvesting debates.

The Iceland Connection

By D. Edward Bradley
(Tarbutton Press, 2006)

I found this novel at Eymundsson. The National Library also has a copy, or it can be ordered from Amazon or from the publisher. It is the third volume of a trilogy, which follows a young British student from his entry to boarding school in the first years of World War II through young adulthood in the 1950s. This volume is principally about his girl troubles, which intensify after a university-sponsored field "expedition" to Iceland. Most of the novel's action takes place in Britain and Canada. The author is a British-Canadian physicist who turned to novel writing after his retirement from academia. He is a contemporary of the main character and there are autobiographical threads in the novel.

The novel has a soap-opera quality to it, with a succession of textbook romances and betrayals. The writing is a bit wooden, and there are some slightly forced plot turns (one character is introduced when his plane crash-lands in the North Atlantic right next to the transatlantic ocean liner carrying two of the other characters). A mystery that drives the plot through the first six chapters is simply dropped and left unresolved. While I can understand why no mainstream publisher published this book, what made it readable for me was the author's evident sincerity, and also his success in creating a certain amount of genuine suspense. I'd say it's suitable for light vacation reading. The climactic event in the story takes place in northern Iceland, more specifically just outside of Dalvík, but the novel has somewhat less to do with Iceland than the title suggests.

Cultures of the World: Iceland

By Jonathan Wilcox and Zawiah Abdul Latif
(Marshall Cavendish, 2007)

Originally published in 1996, this hardcover pictorial reference book was substantially updated and reissued in 2007. At first, it appealed to me because of its low price (US\$27.95 from Amazon), its combination of thorough text and candid photos, and its focus on everyday life in Iceland. Although part of a series pitched to school libraries and teenagers, the language in the book is advanced, and adults wouldn't feel strange receiving it as a gift. The first author teaches Old English at the University of Iowa. The second author appears to work for the publisher, and has also written titles on Lebanon, Lithuania, and Sudan. It is always fascinating to see what image of Iceland gets presented to the world in such books.

Unfortunately, this book is uneven. It has good parts, but does not fully live up to its promise. Though some photos are new, many are noticeably out of date. The book makes plenty of accurate observations about Icelandic society, but there are also a lot of bloopers. So, for example, we are told that all of Iceland's vegetable production is in greenhouses, that "it is unusual to find a dark-haired Icelander," that "whaling traditionally occupied a significant part of Iceland's economy," that orcas are more commonly sighted around Iceland than minke whales, and that all Icelanders "use the same form of address in both formal and informal circumstances." Other statements are years out of date, such as that Icelandic kids start learning Danish two years before they learn English, that "any foreigner who adopts Icelandic citizenship also has to adopt a suitable patronymic," and that Iceland has five universities, all of which are state-funded and tuition-free.

And I do think there could have been fewer spelling errors: we find "Jökulsarion," "Reykjahlio," and the hypercorrect "Vestmannæjar," as well as multiple transcriptions for Þ and Ð, which is no longer acceptable in the Unicode age. In fairness, it is hard for a single author to write such a reference book without making mistakes, but it is usually possible to catch most of them with good editing and proofreading. It would also have been appropriate if the blond girl on the inside cover photo had posed with an Icelandic sheepdog rather than a Blenheim spaniel. There are worse books to give as souvenir gifts to people who have visited you in Iceland. But even for the price, it would have been nice to see a little more work put into this one.

Memoirs of an Icelandic Bookworm

By Jóná E. Hammer
(Xlibris, 2006)

Born in Akureyri in 1943, Jóná Hammer went to college in Massachusetts and has spent her adult life teaching university students in the United States. Her book, which I found on sale at Eymundsson, has an unusual format: sections of memoir alternate with Icelandic folktales that she has translated into English. The memoirs describe her childhood in Akureyri: family, school, acting, reading, friendships, and summers on a farm. The folktales are very nicely selected, well translated, and helpfully introduced.

From the first page, Hammer is an amusing, cheery, and irreverent companion. For example, I liked her story of how she had to read Halldór Laxness on the sly, as his books were forbidden as dangerously radical in her childhood home. I enjoy memoirs, so I'd be pleased to see Hammer expand and rewrite the recollections in this book. I'd gladly hear more detail about her mother, her friend Ranka, and her summers at Sandvík, and I'd like to learn about her British father and her adjustment to life in America. An expanded version could benefit from a little more active editing. Shorter sentences and fewer parentheses, semicolons and asides wouldn't have to disturb the exuberance of the writing.

Hammer published this book through Xlibris, one of several new American self-publishing services which allow writers to get their work out to readers without a huge initial investment. The first such book I read was Douglas Wells' super memoir of jump-starting the tourist industry on the Estonian islands in the early 1990s, and since then I have really been impressed at the amount of creativity that this new publish-on-demand business model has unleashed. Jóná Hammer perhaps thought of her book rather casually, as amusement for her friends and daughter. But she has created something that many others can enjoy. I hope she finds time to write more in the future.

Text by Ian Watson



A Different Kind of Country Music

Tom Waits' '16 Shells From a 30.6' greeted my ears as I got back in the car. His gruff voice and junkyard arrangement seemed a perfect fit as I passed towering cliffs with small waterfalls blown so hard by the wind that their water defied the laws of gravity and launched skyward.

Jonah Flicker came to Reykjavík for the 2007 Iceland Airwaves festival. After a long weekend of too much booze and music and too little sleep, he set out to see the rest of the country.

Five nights of Iceland Airwaves will wear you down, mentally and physically. Don't get me wrong; as an avid music fan and critic who tends to avoid the festival circuit, Airwaves stands out as manageable, engaging, unpredictable, and a whole lot of fun. But five consecutive nights of live music, hopping from venue to venue, writing show reviews at 2am, and drinking 'til dawn takes its toll. This year, however, I was prepared, and had already planned the perfect post-Airwaves come-down.

Instead of hopping on a plane and dealing with the seven-hour time difference between LA and Reykjavík on top of a raging hangover and a worsening cold, I climbed in a Ford Explorer and drove around Iceland's Ring Road. Over the course of four nights and five days, I witnessed some of the most spectacular scenery I've ever seen. And it was made all the better by the fact that I was travelling in Iceland's off-season for tourism, and ran into very few fellow travellers. Finding yourself at the top of the awe-inspiring Dettifoss waterfall or in the middle of the desert-like Skeiðarársandur are moving and exciting experiences, greatly enhanced when they're solitary endeavours with no one around for many kilometres in any direction.

Of course, it's not that easy to get the ringing out of your ears after five days of aural pummeling, but I found that soundtracks, both real and imaginary, constantly played in the background over the course of my journey. The few CDs I carried along with me, the sporadic reception of Icelandic radio, nature's random murmuring, and deafening silence only disturbed by intensely powerful gusts of wind comprised the soundtrack to this trip. Again and again, the per-

fect song (or perfect moment with absolutely no sound at all) would pop up at just the right moment, either adding solemnity to or invigorating an already majestic moment. Such is the power of music.

Radio Somewhere

The trip began after a final night of debauchery with other visiting writers at a family farmhouse near Laugarvatn, about an hour and a half outside Reykjavík. I awoke to a morning of sporadic sunshine, very welcome after the previous day's incessantly pounding sheets of rain. After a morning spent cleaning up our drunken mess and trying to get the smell of pan-fried pork out of my hair, I hit the road for my first destinations, Geysir and Gullfoss. Icelandic talk radio was this morning's soundtrack. By the end of my trip, you would have thought that I could speak Icelandic, or at least understand it, based on the many hours I spent listening to chatter on the FM dial. But alas, that was not to be.

Regardless, the blend of sunshine and sudden rainsqualls that morning resulted in some of the most vibrant and beautiful rainbows I've ever seen as I drew close to the geothermal Mecca that is Geysir. I managed to catch several eruptions as I walked around the bubbling mud and steaming vents, one of the main attractions of the famed Golden Circle. After getting my fill of Geysir, a quick drive brought me to Gullfoss, a splendid waterfall that coated me with droplets of mist as I gazed with wonder at the crashing tumult and chewed my smoked lamb sandwich.

I then backtracked a bit and headed south to Route 1, the Ring Road, making a detour along the way at Skálholt, a cathedral that was seat of a bishopric dating back to 1056 AD. The grounds were deserted, and I soon became aware of a strange soundtrack, the source of which took me several minutes to identify. The wind, which buffeted me throughout the majority of my trip, was

whipping a line against a flagpole in the parking lot. Ping... ping... ping... A perfect, eerie soundtrack for my solitary visit to this lonely cathedral.

Suspicious Minds in Þík

After a few other stops at some of the Golden Circle's natural wonders, I was itching to get on the road to see the country beyond the vicinity of the capital. After reaching the Ring Road, I drove through various suburban areas, including Hella and Hvolsvöllur, before entering a relatively uninhabited stretch of road that passed through lovely green farmland dotted with the occasional cluster of houses.

My first stop on this leg of my trip was at Seljalandsfoss, one of Iceland's most famous waterfalls. What it lacked in width and power, it made up for in height and background scenery. A sign alerted me to the fact that it was possible to walk behind the fall, but after yesterday's non-stop rain, I wasn't in the mood to get wet and passed up this opportunity. I have to admit that I regret it now, as the view from the other side of the falls must be incredible.

Tom Waits' '16 Shells From a 30.6' greeted my ears as I got back in the car. His gruff voice and junkyard arrangement seemed a perfect fit as I passed towering cliffs with small waterfalls blown so hard by the wind that their water defied the laws of gravity and launched skyward. A short stop at Skógarfoss, a waterfall whose size helps to hammer home just how puny we humans are, and I was on my way to Þík, a small village on the south coast.

Þík supposedly averages the highest rainfall in Iceland, but I was greeted by sunshine and relatively balmy weather of about eight degrees Celsius. A quick drive down a dirt road brought three rocky spires into view, known as Reynisdrangar (aka the "Troll Rocks"), just offshore from a beautiful black-sand beach. There didn't



Photos by Jonah Flicker

seem to be much more going on in this sleepy town, so I returned to the road with a brand new soundtrack playing – a cheesy '70s cover version of Elvis' "Suspicious Minds." I was suddenly oddly and embarrassingly moved by the overwrought tune, but I suspect this was a combination of the extra-strong coffee I picked up at Vík's single gas station and the astounding Mýrdalssandur, the glacial desert I was now entering.

Glacial Landscapes for Glacial Landscapes

At this point, I began to wish I actually had brought some CDs with me for the trip. But in this day of the iPod, who still carries physical copies of music along with them on their travels? Luckily, I had been given a copy of Reykjavík's excellent 'Glacial Landscapes, Religion, Oppression, and Alcohol' by a very drunken guitar playing member of the band during the festival. I popped this in and was immediately inspired and energised, but managed to slow down as I passed a rest stop with mysterious piles of rocks dotting the landscape.

Intrigued, I pulled over to investigate and found that this spot marks the remains of an ancient homestead. It seems that Icelanders consider it good luck to add a rock to one of these cairns, so I happily obliged, secretly hoping that this action would portend good things to come. In the distance, the cloud cover lifted up ever so slightly, affording me a glimpse of Myrdalsjökull, a glacier that would pale in comparison to what I would experience in the morning at Vatnajökull, Europe's largest glacier.

I tipped my hat to the elves and trolls I'm sure were scurrying all around me and got back in the car, determined to make it to Hótel Skaftafell before dark, on the edge of Skaftafell National Park. The hotel turned out to be a pretty average roadside accommodation, nothing special but not particularly grungy either. It's pretty much the only option for lodging in the area, so one can't

complain too much.

A busload of British teenagers was spending the night as well, so the management obliged my request to change rooms so I could get a decent night's rest. After sampling the excellent breakfast spread, I headed out before sunrise to backtrack a few kilometres to the edge of the glacier just within the boundaries of the national park.

Towards the East Coast '80s

At first light I arrived at Skaftafell's deserted visitor centre to the most appropriate soundtrack of all – complete silence. Alone, except for the occasional chirping bird, I walked the path through the dissipating mist to the glacier's edge. Signs warned against climbing on Vatnajökull, and the visible crevasses convinced me that it was advice worth heeding. Later on during my trip, someone would tell me about a couple of German tourists who disappeared on the glacier last summer and haven't been heard from since. Blissfully unaware of this at the time, I immersed myself in the serenity of my surroundings. On the way back to the Ring Road, an incredibly cheesy reggae song played on the radio, something about the "heartbeat of the earth." Somehow, this hackneyed cliché felt kind of poignant, considering the natural beauty surrounding me.

As I travelled northeast on the Ring Road, skirting the coast, the massive glacier peeping out from behind the mountains every few minutes, a litany of '80s hits burst forth from my Explorer's speakers – 'Tainted Love,' 'Purple Rain,' etc. I passed through the small town of Höfn and entered a tunnel through the mountains. Static immediately deadened the sound from the car speakers, but when I came out into the sunshine of the fjord country on the other side, Sinead O'Connor's "Nothing Compares 2 U" was playing – yet another perfect soundtrack moment. I stopped for lunch in Djúpivogur at the Hótel Framtíð. This was one of the best meals I had

during my time in Iceland. I ordered the daily special, consisting of vegetable soup, baked cod, fried potato balls, and a cabbage salad. My meal was enhanced by the restaurant's soundtrack, with what sounded like an Icelandic Neil Diamond singing a song called "Blue Jean Queen."

A Friendly Reminder from JC

From Djúpivogur, I stayed on the Ring Road instead of taking Route 939, which would have connected me directly to Egilsstaðir and shortened my trip significantly. This is a good choice if you have time to spare, as the road winds you around beautiful fjords, sometimes going several kilometres inland and back out to the coast. Talking Heads' 'Road to Nowhere' began to play as I flipped through the dial, on the only station that had any reception in this part of the country. Unsure if I had missed a crucial turn that would add hours to my journey, David Byrne's words seemed to mock me, until I realised I was on the right path.

After a brief stop in Reyðarfjörður, where my guidebook told me I might be able to find the grave of Völv (I didn't), I headed out on the final stretch to my destination for the night, Seyðisfjörður.

Heading up over the hills from Egilsstaðir, Audio Adrenaline's moronic Christian rock played on the radio, a song called "Never Gonna Be as Big as Jesus." Jesus, what a terrible song. But this musical torment was well worth it when I pulled into the parking lot of Seyðisfjörður's quaint and classy Hotel Aldan. Owner Klas Poulsen met me in the building that houses the dining room and reception area to direct me towards a separate building where the rooms are located. Mine was on the top floor, large, antique-furnished, and very comfortable accommodation.

Seems that in the winter, everything in the town closes down at about 6pm, but I made it over to the ATVR (the state alcohol store) dur-

ing the one hour it is open on weekdays to pick up a couple of Vikings. Seyðisfjörður is a bustling ferry stop during the summer, but the only sign of life this night was the town's name in lights up on the mountainside. I bought my supper at the local grocery store and headed back to my room to settle down for the night.

My trip was only halfway over, and there was still a lot of ground to cover and soundtracks to hear, but I already felt like I had gotten to know this wonderful country just a little better.

Text by Jonah Flicker

CAR PROVIDED BY:



Keflavík Airport
Tel.: 540 2222, www.sixt.is

Reykjavík Then & Now

In the 1970s...

Ingólfstorg was called Hallærísplanið, where teenagers gathered to drink and cop a feel.



In 2008...

Hallærísplanið is called Ingólfstorg, where kids gather for ice cream.
Photo by GAS



The only thing lower than the standard of this ad ...

... the price of a Sixt Rent a Car.

(Book at www.sixt.is, call 540 2222 or contact your Hotel reception.)

Inside Reykjavík

The Grapevine Guide



The only guide that tells you the talk of the swimming pools, how to find the best cafes, how to recover from all night parties, an A to Z of Icelandic music and what "Viltu kaffi?" can really mean.

Travel Guides Can Be Honest. Really



Available at your nearest bookstore

Christmas Trees

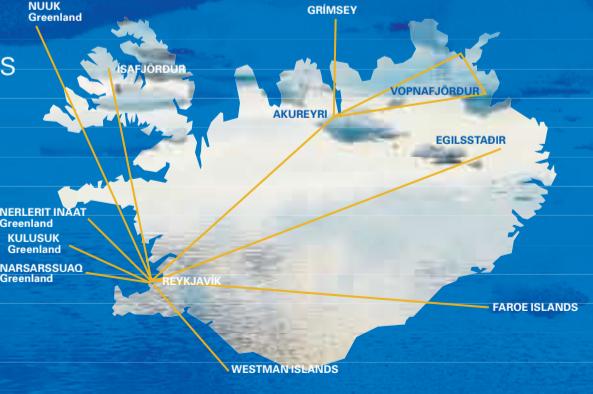
Every year, an estimated 35 million Christmas trees are cut down and sold around the world. A large number of those are transported thousands of kilometers to eventual buyers. Christmas just became a major contributor to climate change. *Photo by GAS*



 **AIR ICELAND**

Fly and discover

Air Iceland destinations

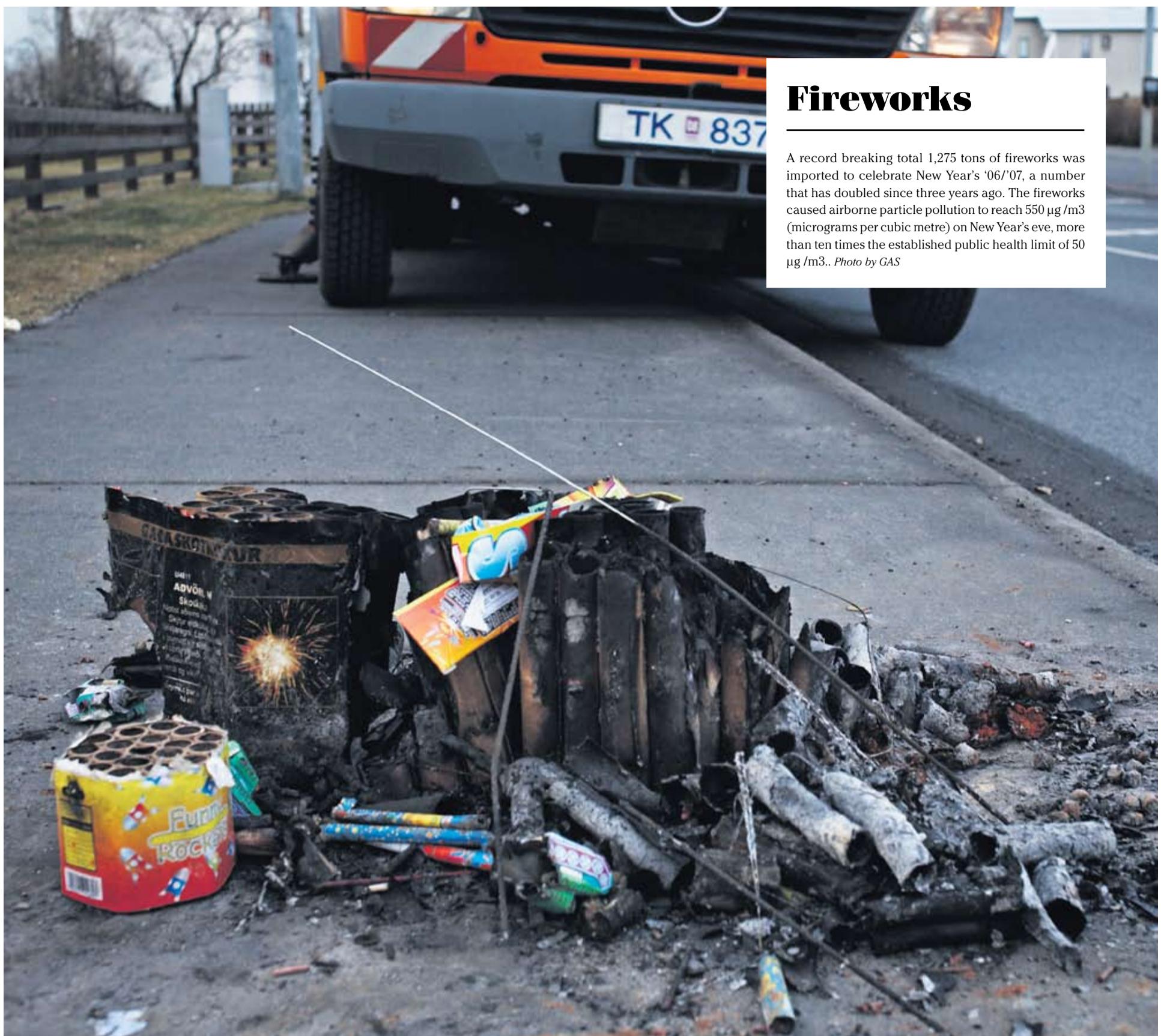


The map shows the locations of various destinations served by Air Iceland, with lines connecting them to Reykjavik. The destinations listed are: NUUK Greenland, ISAFJORDUR, AKUREYRI, EGILSSSTADIR, VOPNAFJORDUR, GRIMSEY, FAROE ISLANDS, WESTMAN ISLANDS, NERLERIT INAAT Greenland, KULUSUK Greenland, and NARSARSSUAQ Greenland.

airiceland.is
/ tel. 570 3030

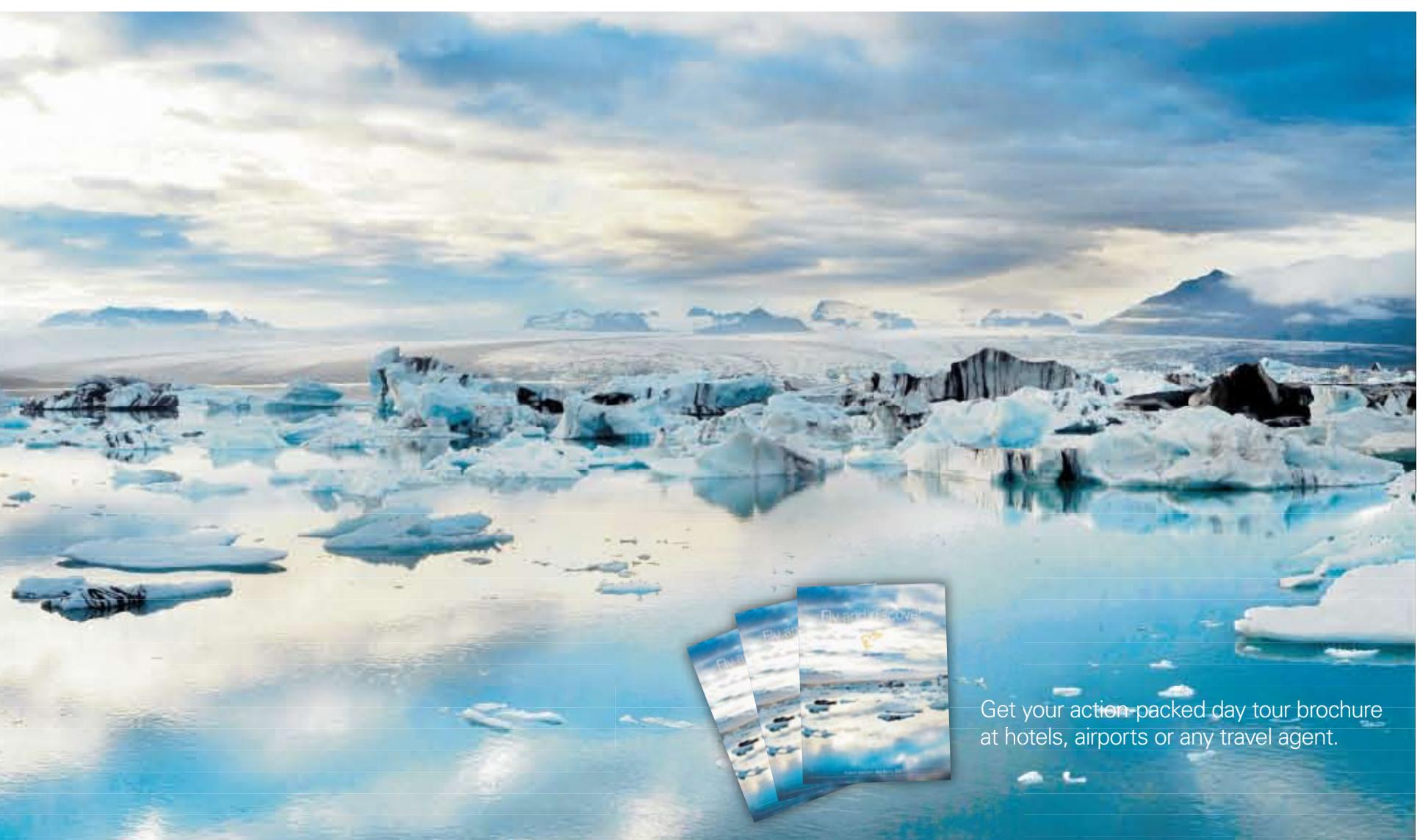
ISLENSKASÍASÍS 3452/447





Fireworks

A record breaking total 1,275 tons of fireworks was imported to celebrate New Year's '06/'07, a number that has doubled since three years ago. The fireworks caused airborne particle pollution to reach 550 µg/m³ (micrograms per cubic metre) on New Year's eve, more than ten times the established public health limit of 50 µg /m³. Photo by GAS



Get your action-packed day tour brochure
at hotels, airports or any travel agent.



Across the Country in 40 Days

I wake up and set off fairly early in the morning. It is common knowledge that wading in large glacial streams should be done in the early hours of the day, when the ice melt is least intense.

The engine huffed and puffed loudly as the modified Toyota Hilux bit its way over yet another stretch of sand, continuing on its run through an ever-shifting cloud of fuzz and dust. One more traveller was challenging the old Gæsavatnaleið trail.

Winding across a plateau of lava, sand and bare rock at the outskirts of the Dyngjujökull glacier, only a generous amount of optimism and naivety could induce someone to call Gæsavatnaleið a road. And the Icelandic Road Administration, in fact, has little or nothing to do there. Similarly, it would be quite superficial to consider Gæsavatnaleið a simple drive. Rather, it is a real off-road rally, fit to exhaust the most enduring car and wear out even a highly experienced driver, a province of intrepid travellers and dedicated Rescue Team volunteers who proudly roam this no-man's-land in search of situations where some help may be welcome – a pioneer's scenario that seems drawn from tales of other places and other times. Perhaps symbolically, the trail takes its name from the only, tiny oasis of life and vegetation within an otherwise unbroken wasteland: the minuscule ponds of Gæsavötn, surrounded by moss. Besides that small interruption and feeble glimpse of greenness, all else is black and naked along Gæsavatnaleið, between Askja and Nýdalur.

Travellers are regularly warned against the route. Regardless of the direction from which one approaches the track, the antiphony is the same:

the land wardens will question the driver as to what sort of car is about to stand trial, whether it is owned or hired, whether it has 35-inch tyres, at least, between its body and the harsh ground. They will point out that while the road is only about 100 km long, one should realistically allocate 6-7 hours to complete it, that mechanical accidents are pretty common, and, also for that reason, that travelling in a convoy is definitely the least masochistic option. They will try to make sure, in the end, that nobody ventures further, unless relying on a monster vehicle and entirely conscious of what the undertaking might entail. Among all the routes and itineraries within the Icelandic highlands, Gæsavatnaleið is the only one for which I would gladly make an exception and give up walking in order to join the motorized legions of those rally drivers and adventurers.

I waved my hand and gazed at the car glimmering white and eventually disappearing in the distance, until fresh tyre marks on the ground and a dissolving cloud of dust were all that remained. I pushed on and walked in complete solitude, roughly following the course of the trail for the remainder of the day. I walked until my skewed shadow was anticipating my steps late in the night, determined to cover, in two days of marching, the sixty kilometres that separated me from fresh water in Gæsavötn.

Surprises were conveyed by the unreal and deceiving gleam of the evening. I reckon it was

around 21:30 when I first stared at that new and unexpected devilry of the land. It appeared to be dark grey, hit by the last rays of a descending sun, a razor-sharp and menacing barrier straight ahead to the South, an array of acuminate teeth rising like a wall from the ground, geometric and angular, as if cut by square and knife. I halted and remained still for some time, trying hard to decipher the strange spectacle that had just appeared before my eyes: from afar, they looked like hills of crude rock, and yet I had never heard of anything like that being in this part of the country. I hit the trail again and quickened the pace.

It was under such circumstances, my gaze still fixed on those mysterious sculptures looming ahead, that I came across the mud. Concealed behind a row of mounds of sand and lava, lay a whole plain. Commonly flooded and submerged by the wash of glacial waters, it now unfolded arid and droughty, drained by the unnaturally dry season and consequent paucity of rain. It might be hard to believe that so much artistry can be produced by something as obvious and prosaic as dried mud – yet that appeared to be precisely the case. It looked like an abstract painting in the late night air, stretching for many acres over the soil, a dazzling sequence of shades of black and grey, of sinuous lines and cryptic patterns.

Not even the closest examination proved sufficient to lift the veil of blindness entirely from my eyes. Not until I broke the ice with my trekking

Both photos are from Dyngjujökull.
Photos by Fabrizio Frascaloli

HYTA HUSÍÐ / SIA

Energy for life through forces of nature

www.bluelagoon.com

BLUE LAGOON
ICELAND



— Adventures of the Lonesome Traveller, Leg 5

poles, stroke after stroke, did all disbelief and incredulity abandon me. Deceived by the distance and feeble light, what I had mistaken for rock and an absurdly shaped range of hills, eventually revealed itself to be the grim front of the Dyngjökull glacier: it did not glimmer white and immaculate with ice and snow as one would expect, but stood there threateningly, clad in a layer of silt and dirt, black and turbid like the very soil underneath my feet, black down to its very core, to its subtlest veins of crystal. I observed this imposing and disquieting glacial tongue of black ice for a long time, trying to embrace and comprehend its nuances. Most of the time I shivered in discomfort. Later on, I filtered clean some of the meltdown water, and made camp by the moraine. The following day I walked the remaining kilometres to Gæsavötn. Drizzle and wind broke out late in the afternoon and did not cease until nightfall.

Gæsavötn

The last mystery of Gæsavatnaleið awaited me at 1,200 m at the Dyngjuháls pass. Like a host of silent totems, dozens, scores, perhaps even a couple of hundred cairns dotted the slopes, votive tributes of past journeymen asking for safe passage over this ominous trail. I tried to erect my own, and as I watched it stand briefly, clumsily, and then collapse to the ground, I could only feel relief for having most of Gæsavatnaleið behind and not before me.

Despite looking pathetically powerless as a tiny, shiny dot in the boundless black nothingness all around, Gæsavötn does nonetheless make for an uplifting sight. It welcomed me like an eagerly awaited breath after a prolonged apnoea. I camped on the moss, in yellow and orange hues, rather than green, from a summer so avaricious for rain.

From the very beginning, I had seen Rjúpnabrekukvísl as the first declared challenge on the route. I had heard many frightening tales about this river – enough to spoil a few nights of sound sleep. They spoke of stones whirled around by the violence of the waters, of desperate falls into the stream, of days spent drying backpacks drenched by the splashes of the river. It is July 22nd, and I wake up and set off fairly early in the morning. It is common knowledge that wading in large glacial streams should be done in the early hours of the day, when the ice melt is least intense. The weather seems willing to assist me at first, but it soon turns to intermittent burst of drizzles. My own experience with the wading of Rjúpnabrekukvísl, however, turns out to be less dramatic than the darkest expectations had suggested – dry summers can have their advantages. The river bed is rugged and bumpy, and certainly does not facilitate the best balance. The dirty and muddy waters gush impetuous, rough and furious at the surface. Fortunately, however, they do not reach much above my knee, and I make for the other

side without any excessive scares. It is only for a short while in the middle of the crossing that I get the disturbing impression that the strength of the flow is too much of a monster to tame, and that I might be overcome. As I touch the opposite bank I am cold and trembling. It is a particularly generous (and painfully untimely) downpour of rain that denies me the opportunity to fully enjoy having accomplished the feat.

Vonarskarð

Thus, I finally enter Vonarskarð – the Pass of Hope – nestled between the glacier Tungafellsjökull and the north-western slopes of Vatnajökull. The horizon progressively enlarges into the immensity of a flat plain, the black lava makes room for the monotonous greyness of glacial debris, perfectly oval and conic elevations peep out all around in the guise of the area's most prominent landmarks. I leave my waterproof clothing tucked away in my backpack three times, and instead let the light drizzle wash over me, waiting for the sun to re-emerge and dry me again. I inevitably overrate my good luck and misread the weather: the fourth time, there will be no more getting dry again – only getting wetter. I camp at around 1,000 m altitude, on the slopes of Laugakúla, where the presence of gushing thermal waters has created an oasis of moss and lush vegetation. I fall asleep under pouring rain, and I wake up under pouring rain the following morning: there is no possible way to

delude myself – this will be a miserable day.

I see little or nothing of the glorious geothermal area of Vonarskarð, hidden as it is in a mantle of thick and impenetrable fog. I catch only sporadic glimpses of the colourful and steaming muds, of the glaciers in the distance, of the vastness of the plains beneath, and think with some regret that this may be a magnificent place under different conditions. There is not much more to the day: I cross the mountains and walk my way along the river in a narrow but sufficiently comfortable ravine. By the time the valley widens, my boots have given in to the overwhelming wetness, which only adds to the day's overall misery. By the time the familiar and much longed-for shape of the Nýidalur hut appears within sight, it is late in the evening, and I am soaked. Since I set off, however, I have managed to cover almost 300 km, and half of the journey already lies behind me.

Text by Fabrizio Frascaloli

glaumbar

oldest sports bar in town



Soccer
Football
Basketball
Tennis
Rugby

glaumbar - tryggvagötu 20 - tel: 552-6868
www.glaumbar.is

flickr·era – digital horizons



1. 12. 2007 – 17. 2. 2008

LJÓSMYNDASAFN REYKJAVÍKUR
Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Tryggvagata 15, 6th floor · 101 Reykjavík · Tel. 563 1790 · photomuseum@reykjavik.is · www.photomuseum.is
Opening hours 12–19 mon–fri, 13–17 weekends · ADMISSION FREE



With the houses on Laugavegur 4-6 scheduled to be demolished or moved, this might be your last chance to see these relics from the past.

Photo by GAS

Classifieds

Classified ads are free for individuals! If you want to place a classified ad, email class@grapevine.is

Grundarfjörður Hostel



comfortable - affordable
Central in Snæfellsnes



grundarfjordur@hostel.is
www.hostel.is

+354-5626533
+354-8956533

Bring THIS AD and
get 15% discount!



Your Affordable Quality Bed
2-6 bedded rooms. Prices from 1750 isk.

Next door to Laugardalur pool and
campsite.

Bus 14 from Center/BSI. Flybus pickup.
Free WiFi. Kitchen. Laundry. 24 hrs.

Tel: (+354) 553 8110
reykjavikcity@hostel.is
www.hostel.is



ASÍ ART MUSEUM
FREYJUGÖTU 41
101 REYKJAVÍK
TEL. 511-5353

Accommodation

Bakki, Laugarbakka
tel: 4512987 / 6163304
email: elinborg8@msn.com
Quiet surroundings, only one kilometer
from Highway 1. Rooms, Sleeping Bag
Accommodation and Camping w/electricity
Mini-Market and Cafe Angling sold for
lakes in Arnarvatnshéiði

Apartments for rent:

Apartment for rent in Reykjavík town
center from 1.Jan'08 - 1.Mar'08, two
bedrooms. 70.000 ISK. (1.150 USD) (560
GBP) (780 EUR) pr. month. Furniture incl.
(dishwasher man!) Available to those
that do not set the place on fire nor steal

books.
steinarsson@gmail.com

Job openings:

Looking to hire a full time live in nanny to
care for my two children ages 16 months
and 12 years old. Must be willing to
move the Richmond Virginia (USA) must
drive and speak some english. NO CRIMINAL HISTORY OF ANY KIND will pay
600.00\$ per month. Please sent replies to : demevergos@yahoo.com

Job needed:

I am a twenty year old American looking
for work in Iceland during my three
month summer recess. Please contact
Paul Shufro at shufro@wisc.edu.

For sale:

Pentium 4 desktop,2500mhz cpu,512
ram,80gb hd,64mb nvidea,dual dvd/
cdrw,17" svga,win XP,wireless net,creative
sound system, 45000ISK. contact: valknut76@hotmail.com

Education:

Qualified English teacher (native British
speaker) available for private lessons.
Masters Degree Applied Linguistics and
TESOL qualified (University of Cambridge).
Call Russell 849 7337 or
email: russellaldersson@hotmail.com for
further details.



WWW.GRAPEVINE.IS

News // Culture // Dining // Travelling // Shopping // Articles // Interviews

Services

Useful Numbers

- **Emergency number:** 112
- **Police:** 440 1000
- **Medical help:** 1770
- **Dental emergency:** 575 0505
- **AA:** 551 2010
- **Information:** 118
- **Telegrams:** 146

Tax Free Refund

- **Iceland Refund,**
Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 564 6400
www.icelandrefund.com

Post Office

Post offices are located around the city as well as in the countryside. The downtown post office is at Pósthússtræti 3-5. For a full list and info on opening hours visit www.posturinn.is. Stamps are also sold in bookstores, gas stations, some grocery stores and tourist shops.

Embassies and Consulates

- **United States,** Laufásvegur 21, Tel: 562 9100
- **United Kingdom,** Laufásvegur 31, Tel: 550 5100
- **Russia,** Garðastræti 33, Tel: 551 5156
- **China,** Viðimelur 29, Tel: 552 6751

For a full list visit Ministry for Foreign Affairs: www.mfa.is/diplomatic-missions/icelandic-missions/

Internet Access

Most coffeehouses have wireless Internet access. Computers with Internet connections are available at:

- **Ráðhúskáffi City Hall,** Tjarnargata 11
- **BSÍ Bus Terminal,** Vatnsmýrarvegur 10
- **Ground Zero,** Vallarstræti 10
- **The Reykjavík City Library,** Tryggvagata 15
- **The National and University Library,** Arngrímsgata 3
- **Tourist Information Centre,** Aðalstræti 2
- **Icelandic Travel Market,** Bankastræti 2

Opening hours

- **Bars and clubs:** According to regulations bars may be open until 01:00 on weekdays and 05:30 on weekends.
- **Shops:** Mon-Fri 10-18, Sat 10-16, Sun closed. The shopping centres Kringlan and Smáralind as well as most supermarkets and tourist shops have longer opening hours.

■ **Swimming pools:** weekdays 06:30-22:30, weekends 08:00-20:30 although some may be open an hour longer.

■ **The State owned ÁTVR liquor stores:** Mon-Thu 11-18, Fri 11-19, Sat 11-18. Banks in the centre are open Mon-Fri 09-16.

Laundry Service

- **HI Hostel,** Sundlaugarvegur 34, Tel: 553 8110, www.hostel.is
- **Úðafoss,** Vitastígur 13, Tel: 551 2301, www.udafoss.is

Getting Around

Public transport

The only public transport system in Reykjavík is the bus. Most busses run every 20 minutes and price per fare is 250 ISK for adults and 75 ISK for children. Complete route map at: www.bus.is. Tel: 540 2700. Busses run from 07:00-24:00 on weekdays and 10:00-24:00 on weekends

Rent a bike

- **Borgarhjól,** Hverfisgata 50, Tel: 551 5653, www.borgarhjol.net
- **HI Hostel,** Sundlaugarvegur 34, Tel: 553 8110, www.hostel.is
- **Tourist Information Centre,** Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, www.visitreykjavik.is

Taxi

- **Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir,** Tel: 553 3500 or 588 5522
- **BSR,** Tel: 561 0000
- **For disabled travellers:** Reykjavík Group Travel Service, Brunastaðir 3, Tel: 587 8030, www.randburg.com/is/reykjavik_group_travel_service/
- **Car rentals**
- **Áatak Car Rental,** Smiðjuvegur 1, Tel: 554 6040
- **ALP,** Dugguvogur 10, Tel: 562 6060
- **Avis,** Knarravogi 2, Tel: 591 4000
- **Eurocar,** Hjallahauna 9, Tel: 565 3800
- **A.G Car Rental,** Tangarhöfði 8-12, Tel: 587 5544
- **Atlas Car Rental,** Dalshraun 9, Tel: 565 3800
- **Berg Car Rental,** Tangarhöfða 8, Tel: 577 6050
- **Hertz,** Flugvallavegur, Tel: 522 4400

Airlines

- **Air Iceland,** Reykjavíkurflugvöllur, Tel: 570 3030, www.flugfelag.is
- **Air Vestmannaeyjar,** Tel: 481 3255, www.eyjaflug.is

Bus Terminal

- **BSÍ,** Vatnsmýrarvegur 10, Tel: 562 1011, www.bsi.is

Samferda.net

A reasonable choice for the budget traveller. You log on to the website www.samferda.net, choose your destination and hopefully find a travel buddy to share the cost.

Cultural Centres and Tourist Offices

■ The Intercultural Centre

The Intercultural Centre throws occasional cultural events and conferences but its main purpose is to be an information and counselling centre and serve as an advocate for the rights of immigrants in Iceland. Hverfisgata 18, Tel: 530 9300 www.ahus.is

■ Icelandic Travel Market

Bankastræti 2, Tel: 510 5700, www.kleif.is

Information on day tours, accommodations, car rental and everything else you need to know when travelling in Iceland.

■ Iceland Visitor

Lækjargata 2, Tel: 511 2442, www.icelandvisitor.com

A travel agency offering travelling package trips and custom-made tours as well as car rental, day tours and accommodations for visitors.

■ Tourist Information Centre

Aðalstræti 2, Tel: 590 1550, www.visitreykjavik.is

Offers information for tourists as well as providing internet access, booking service, a phone centre, money exchange service, tax refund and selling the Reykjavík Tourist Card. The Reykjavík Tourist Card gives admission to city busses, various museums, Reykjavík swimming pools, The Family Park and Reykjavík Zoo, The Culture House and the National and University Library.

■ The Icelandic Tourist Board

Lækjargata 3, Tel: 535 5500, www.visiticeland.com

All information needed before travelling in Iceland.

■ Goethe Institute

Túnsgata 14, Tel: 561 5921, www.goethe.de/island

A cultural institute that offers movie screenings, lectures and German language courses.

■ Nordic House

Sturlugata 5, Tel: 551 7030, www.nordice.is

The Nordic cultural centre organises various cultural events, conferences and exhibitions.

All major tourist spots in Reykjavík also offer brochures, maps and information for travellers.

Useful Information

Where to learn Icelandic as a foreign language

■ Icelandic on the Internet,

www.vefskoli.is

■ Mimir Continuing Education,

Skeiðan 8, Tel: 580 1800, www.mimir.is

■ Námsflokkar Reykjavíkur,

Fríkirkjuvegur 1, Tel: 551 2992

■ Fjölmennung, Laugavegur 59,

Tel: 511 1319, www.fjolmenning.is

■ The Icelandic College of Engineering and Technology, Höfðabakki 9,

Tel: 577 1400, www.thi.is

■ Íönskólinn í Reykjavík,

Skólavörðuholti, Tel: 552 6240, www.ir.is

■ The University of Iceland – Department of Continuing Education,

Dunhagi 7, Tel: 525 4924, www.endurmenntun.is

Religious movements

The national church in Iceland is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Masses are generally held on Sundays at 11:00 in churches all around the capital.

Service in English is at Hallgrímskirkja every last Saturday each month, starting at 14:00. The Roman Catholic Church also has masses in English and Polish.

Other religious movements in Reykjavík are for example:

■ The Muslim Association of Iceland, Ármúli 38

■ Ásatrú Association, Grandagarði 8

■ Bahá'í, Álfabakka 12

■ The Church of Evangelism, Hlíðasmári 9

■ The Icelandic Buddhist Movement, Víghólastígur 21

■ Reykjavík Free Lutheran Church, Fríkirkjuvegur 5

■ Pentecostal Assembly, Hátún 2

■ Roman Catholic Church, Hávallagata 14

■ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-

■ Day Saints, Ásabraut 2

■ Jehovah's Witnesses, Sogavegur 71

■ Seventh-Day Adventists, Suðurhlíð 36

■ Zen Buddhism in Iceland, Reykjavíkurvegur 31

■ Independent Church, Háteigsvegur 101

■ The Russian Orthodox Church in Iceland, Sólvallagata 10

■ The Cross, Hlíðasmári 5-7

Trade Unions

■ The Icelandic Federation of Labour, Sætún 1, Tel: 535 5600, www.asi.is

■ The Federation of State and Municipal employees, Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8300, www.bsrb.is

■ The Association of Academics,

Borgartún 6, Tel: 581 2090, www.bhm.is

■ Efling, Sætún 1, Tel: 510 7500, www.efling.is

■ The Commercial Workers' Union, Kringlan 7, Tel: 510 1700, www.vr.is

■ Union of Public Servants, Grettisgata 89, Tel: 525 8340, www.sfr.is

Useful Websites

■ www.visitreykjavik.is (The official tourist website of Reykjavík)

■ www.gayice.is (Information about the gay scene in Iceland)

■ www.fjolmenningarsetur.is (The Multicultural Centre)

■ www.hostel.is (Hostel International in Iceland)

■ www.vinnumalastofnun.is (Public employment services)

■ www.gulalinan.is (The yellow pages)

■ www.leigulistinn.is (Rent a flat)

■ www.ja.is (Icelandic telephone directory)

Where to get ...

■ **Work and residence permit:** The Directorate of Immigration, Skógarhlíð 6, Tel: 510 5400, www.utl.is

■ **Insurance and benefits:** The State Social Security Institute, Laugavegur 114-116, Tel: 560 4400, www.tr.is

■ **Icelandic citizenship:** Unless you come from a Nordic country, foreign citizens have to have had an unrestricted residence



REYKJAVÍK'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE MAGAZINE

ISSUE ONE: JANUARY 11 - FEBRUARY 07



Gott til
endurvinnslu

YOUR FREE COPY

Stuffed with stuff

Yes, there's an incredibly thin line between drama and comedy, and it's evident that a lot of the best comedies of all time could have easily been turned into dramas, with a few simple nuances.

Director Ragnar Bragason talks about his recent exploits.

Page 6

They are tearing down Grand Rokk. And Sirkús. Not that I am the biggest fan of either of those establishments (actually, I've probably spent more time unsuccessfully trying to gain entry to Sirkús than actually inside of it).

Haukur Magnússon wonders about downtown development.

Page 8

If we think of this band as a fellowship, this fellowship is not going any further, at least not at this time.

Birkir Viðarsson explains the break up of I Adapt.

Page 16

"That's probably what I'll miss the most because we put on super live shows together. In my view, [Gus-Gus] is the best live band there is."

No more Earth for GusGus.

Page 31

"Has everyone bought their Christmas presents yet?" asked Lovísia. Then after a painful pause, she breathed, "I haven't." From somewhere in the audience I heard a lonely chuckle.

Valgerður Þóroddsdóttir went to see

Benny Crespo's Gang.

Page 34

"They could be massive on the College circuit, definitely."

BBC World Service loves Hraun.

Page 36



Szukasz pracy? / Need a job?

Nasza oferta jest bezpłatna.

Posiadasz numer ewidencyjny i pozwolenie na pobyt. Zarejestruj się na stronie www.vinna.is, tam znajdziesz oferty pracy w języku polskim.

Register at www.vinna.is, free of charge. There you can find a number of available jobs. To apply you need to have a national ID number and a residence permit (non-EU citizens need working permits as well).



Rejestracja i informacje na stronie www.vinna.is
For further information please visit www.vinna.is

Vinna.is
Sími 511 1144
www.vinna.is