



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

IN THE ISSUE

+ COMPLETE CITY LISTINGS - INSIDE!

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Samaris, black metal

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+ Mývatn FUN!

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Water polo? Yes, water polo!

Happy Hour



**WE RATE + REVIEW
every single BAR
in 101 Reykjavík!**

☞ **“DJAMM ER SNILLD”**

We love drinking. It's part of what makes life on the island vaguely bearable, and it is a fun way to kill time. Drinking at bars is especially nice, as it will expose one to stuff one wouldn't encounter drinking at home with the curtains drawn. BUT THERE ARE SO MANY BARS! HOW DO WE KNOW WHICH ONE TO GO TO? Indeed, there are over fifty bars in 101 Reykjavík. So we went and had a beer at all of them... **PAGE 20**



Illustration: Hristbjörnsson
this.is/trendy



Editorial | Haukur S. Magnússon

Maybe Partying Will Help

Haukur's 40th Editorial

Wow. Every bar in 101 Reykjavík, huh? That's a lot of bars. Rating and reviewing all of them is a huge task. Well, maybe not compared to, say, 'rating and reviewing every bar in Manhattan', but Manhattan is a very densely populated metropolitan area. It is the modern day Rome or Athens (or Babylon or maybe R'lyeh?). Almost everyone lives there! Downtown Reykjavík is tiny, yet it still has millions upon millions of establishments that are dedicated to the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Over fifty, in any case.

And as you know, we are all borderline alcoholics, and we keep having to reach further and further to justify our all-weekend benders. This issue's mission was not only intended to provide the good people of Reykjavík and their guests with an overview of their choices when it comes to alcohol-related lounging and how much each place charges for drinks (also to compile the excellent 'happy hour' list), it was also an excellent excuse to once again get really, really wasted while claiming to be working.

Will we find another excuse for next weekend's bender? In the immortal words of US presidential candidate Sarah Palin: "You betcha".

You can flip to page twenty right now to view the results of our survey. There aren't many surprises; some places are all instantly awesome, others are kind of lame (or scary!), but most of them are just, you know, bars where you can get buzzed. Our run-through should optimally give you an indication of which place might be suitable for your tastes and budget, and you can also figure out where you can go to hear your favourite style of music (if your favourite style of music is 'frat boy drunkenly playing top 40 hits on an acoustic guitar at some random party', you are in luck).

A lot of people helped us make this happen, not the least all the writers who graciously donated their time and livers to completing this unselfish mission. We are very grateful.

You might be asking yourself whether our ratings are all biased and stuff, and you are right to wonder (although if you're so into questioning authority, we can think of some real authorities out there that are in dire need of being questioned and



disputed). Of course the individuals that visited these bars and wrote them up have their personal favourites, they are after all active participants in Reykjavík's nightlife. But we tried to be sorta scientific about things and not let our own preferences influence our verdict (I was actually surprised at how low some of my own favourites scored, but then that's life).

Also, it's fun to note that the team (I like to call them 'ICELAND DRINKING TEAM 2011') had representatives of both genders and most age ranges (we had men, women, native Reykjavikings, New Icelanders, twentysomethings, thirtysomethings and fortysomethings, for instance).

If you find yourself disagreeing with a given assessment, write us a letter explaining your case and we will print it. We love encouraging and engaging in discourse!

Now. Go pick a bar and go get a drink. And while you're there, ponder the fate of Medhi Kavyanpoor (page six), who has been fighting for his right to an existence for over seven years now, and is quickly being worn down. Ponder the fate and situation of asylum seekers in Iceland, and how our treatment of them—while maybe slowly improving—is still shameful and embarrassing. Ponder personally doing something about it, for instance by writing a letter to the Ministry of the Interior (www.innanrikisraduneyti.is) and letting your outrage be known.

These are real live human beings we're talking about, and our treatment of them—when doing a decent job would be so easy—is fairly to very upsetting and depressing in equal measures.



TRACK OF THE ISSUE

Puzzle Muteson
En Garde

Download at www.grapevine.is

Bedroom Community don't often add acts to their roster, but now they've have taken UK artist Puzzle Muteson under their wing and released his first album, 'En Garde'. This is for good reason. This young musician has composed an album of strangely comforting songs with his trembling vocals, soothing guitar picking, and mixing of electronic beats and orchestral strings.

Puzzle is hard to classify into a genre: some might say he's a folk artist, while others might give him a completely different title ("relationship-core"? "folktronica"? "witch-wave"?).

Regardless of Puzzle's genre ("puzzle-gaze"? 'En Garde' is the fancy song and title track they're giving you Grapevine readers this issue. It blends his unique vocals with a strings section and trance-like electronics, and some guitar picking. It is definitely worth a listen.

Check it out at: www.facebook.com/puzzle.muteson

Comic | Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir 2011



THE LAMBURGER

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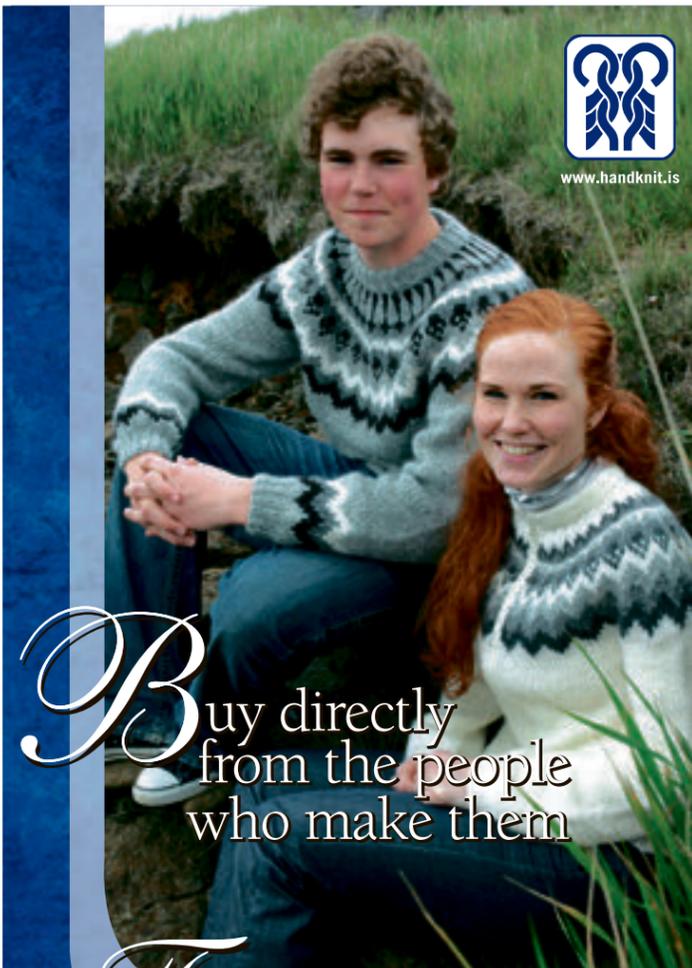


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4 Letters

MOST AWESOME LETTER:

Dear editor
I travelled across the world in search of TARGETS FOR DEREGULATION. And in 2009 I arrived in northeast Iceland, and found a perfect target for NEOLIBERAL DEREGULATION. The target I have found in NORTHEAST ICELAND for Deregulation, Is RAUFARHOFN. I THINK raufarhofn could be a perfect example of NEOLIBERAL DEREGULATION. I think that the Icelandic government should deregulate raufarhofn, to stimulate GROWTH IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMY. I think you need to deregulate the fishing industry in raufarhofn, impose an exemption on the Icelandic fisheries management laws. Give the fisherman a chance against the imposition of

MOST AWESOME LETTER
FREE GRAPEVINE TEE HEE HEE!



We've got a new prize for all your MOST AWESOME LETTERS. And it's a scorcher! For this issue, whoever sends THE MOST AWESOME LETTER will receive a cool new Reykjavik Grapevine T-shirt, featuring the majestic G that adorns our cover. So you should make sure to keep writing us fun and/or interesting letters.

This new Grapevine tee surely is the shiznit (whatever that means)! It was designed by our very own art director man, Hörður Kristbjörnsson, and it's good for posing in front of a mirror, impressing folks with your impeccable taste or picking up men or women of all ages (no minors). DON'T PANIC if your letter wasn't picked AWESOME LETTER. You can still get a tee for a low, low price over our website, www.grapevine.is

Now, if you're in the market for free goodies next month, write us some sort of letter. Give us your worst: letters@grapevine.is

Hello, halló

a message from holland

to pay back to the Netherlands and Great Britain is the biggest nonsense!!

There are many reasons why you do not have to repay. (a few)
Iceland and its inhabitants are not responsible for a private bank.
Iceland and its inhabitants are not responsible for speculators (of any kind)

Holland is one of the richest countries in the world, (thanks exploitation and oppression) (Holland has a large debt to many countries, many people (for centuries)....)

If Holland's position would be like Iceland, (Holland "must" repay), Holland would NEVER pay back.

Icelanders persist!
Do not pay!

with friendly greetings and respect for your obstinacy,

from a dutchman,
jaap

I do not know if the following text is translated correctly
(via translate.google) (eng.> Icelandic)

skilaboð frá Hollandi

að borga aftur til Hollands og Bretlands er stærsta bull!

Það eru margar ástæður fyrir því að þú þarft ekki að endurgreiða. (nokkrar):
Ísland og íbúa þess eru ekki ábyrgir fyrir einkarekinn banka.
Ísland og íbúa þess eru ekki ábyrgir fyrir spákaupmenn (af einhverju tagi)

Holland er eitt af ríkustu löndum heims, (takk aðráni og kúgun)
(Holland hefur stór skuld til margra landa, margir (margar aldir)....)

LAW from the centre.
all those malformed over size fish, star wars type. you can end the spectre of oversized star wars esque fish. by imposing DEREGULATION OF THE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT LAWS ON RAUFARHOFN
ours sincerely
mr C. Jarvis
Vitebsk, Belarus

Dear Mr. C. Jarvis,

thank you for your nice letter.

What a great idea you have! Have you tried pitching it to the University of Iceland? They

seem happy to fund research into these areas, as their undying support of 'Godfather Of Icelandic Neoliberalism', Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson (funnyly enough, a government worker his whole life) will attest. Perhaps you should write them and offer your services in teaching courses such as 'How Iceland Can Become The Richest Nation On Earth 101' and 'There's No Such Thing As A Free Lunch Unless Your Friends Own The Government That In Turn Runs All The Cafeterias In Which Case You Are Hooked Up With Free Lunch For Life And Maybe Even Dinner 101'. It's certainly worked for others of your persuasion.

Can you help?

Her name is Sigríður Guðjónsdóttir, she is close to 50 years old. She has a daughter, Heidrun (born 1988) and a son, Óli (born 1989). In 1993 her address was Laugarásveg 53, 104 Reykjavik.

Sincerely
Anette Gultvedt
+47 99 23 89 72

Dear Norway,

funny you should ask our help now! WHERE WERE YOU WHEN ALL OUR BANKS COLLAPSED? WAIT, DON'T TELL US, WE KNOW DAMN WELL WHERE YOU WERE! YOU WERE ROLLING AROUND IN ALL YOUR FANCY OIL MONEY, GOING ON TELEMARK TRIPS AND BEING ALL HEALTHY! AND NOW YOU EXPECT US TO 'HELP' YOU? WHAT A JOKE!

Djók! Anette, really, that was a joke! We would love to help you out! Do any of y'all have contact information for the Sigríður Guðjónsdóttir in question? We tried já.is-ing her, to no avail!

Yes and thank you for your nice letter.

Hi,

What happened to Dr. Gunní's History of Icelandic Rock music articles? I haven't seen one in your fine publication for a while now.

Best,
Mark II

Dear Mark III!

Thank you for your nice letter. We asked Dr. Gunní WTF was up! He wrote: "Sorry for not delivering, but I've just been too busy finishing the new edition of the Iceland Rock/Pop history book. It's almost done, so the articles in Grapevine will return soon. The book, Stuð stuð, is gonna be huge, about 500 pages or something, and chock full of stuð. It will come out in the autumn."
Ok bye, Dr. Gunní

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Iceland | Politics

DESPERATE TIMES DESPERATE MEASURES

Medhi Kavyanpoor tried to set himself on fire out of frustration

“There was nothing else for me to do, I couldn’t take it anymore”, says Iranian asylum seeker Medhi Kavyanpoor (born 1958), who for seven long years has waited for a positive reply from Icelandic authorities regarding his status as a refugee. Medhi hit the Icelandic news-sphere last week, reminding Icelandic authorities of his existence. This wasn’t the first time Medhi has aroused media interest, but this time Medhi engaged in a shocking act, never attempted before in this supposedly peaceful island. It was, quite intentionally, supposed to be his last.

THE ACT

On Friday May 6, Medhi Kavyanpoor took a taxi from his home to the headquarters of the Icelandic Red Cross. Once there, he proceeded to pour gasoline over his body. Two lighters in hand, he threatened to set himself aflame. Asking those present to step away from him, he headed for the office of the sole staff member who officially represents refugees in Iceland. As that is the only contact person that refugees have while waiting for answers, Medhi had some questions: “Why do you do this to me? Give me some answers, or I’ll answer myself.”

The only answer Medhi received was the police extinguishing him before he managed to turn the trigger. But his mission was accomplished. This man, so long left forgotten in the system, shook Icelandic society. Iceland’s Minister of the Interior Ógmundur Jónasson appeared in the media expressing sympathy for the man’s desperation, but he could though not state clearly why Medhi, who arrived in Iceland in early 2005, was still here, with nothing in hand, save for a couple of lighters. Medhi’s case is complicated, as is to be expected after seven long years of waiting, stalling and legal complication.

“My daughter turned 18-years old on April 29. I had told her that we would finally get the chance to meet. I haven’t seen her since she was eleven”, Medhi explains to me, as we meet at the psychiatric hospital where he is being detained while his case is examined. “I had been promised a positive answer in January, but then, as always, months went by and the phone never rang”.

IF YOUR LIFE DOESN’T HAVE ANY MEANING...

It was then that Medhi started making his plans. But was his intention really to kill himself, or was he first and foremost trying to remind society of his existence? “You are not from a war-torn country”, he explains. “You come from a small, peaceful country, and therefore you cannot understand, but sometimes you simply have to stand up for yourself. You cannot harm other people, but your own life—well, if it doesn’t have any meaning, you better take it. In the situation I’m in, it is my only weapon. I don’t have anything else.”

Medhi tells me he arrived on the shores of Iceland with the help of a smuggler he paid to get him out of Iran. He fled after having been imprisoned and tortured by his government, which he had worked for, for losing confidential documents. He did not know where he was when the smuggler dropped him off in Iceland. Speaking no English at the time, he presumed he was in Canada.

For four years Medhi lived in a small room at the Fit Hostel in Keflavík, where refugees are kept, close to Iceland’s international airport (it also serves as a guesthouse). At every level, his request for asylum was refused, but since he was from Iran, there was no way for Icelandic authorities to send him back home “unless he assists Icelandic authorities in doing so, or agrees on being sent back”.

Medhi’s name has appeared regularly in the Icelandic media. In 2008, Medhi (who is called ‘daddy’ by other refugees at the Fit hostel) went on a hunger strike. After 28 days of not eating, a feat that came close to ending his life, authorities gave in and granted him a temporary work permit. Medhi felt almost like a free man when he could finally move out of the hostel, find work and an apartment of his own. Since then, he has been living a ‘regular life’, paying his taxes, but nothing

Words

Kolfinna Baldvinsdóttir

Photo

Hörður Sveinsson



“My daughter turned 18-years old on April 29. I had told her that we would finally get the chance to meet. I haven’t seen her since she was eleven. I had been promised a positive answer in January, but then, as always, months went by and the phone never rang”

more. For seven years he has never left the island, not even travelled around it. A man without a ‘kenitala’ is a man without rights.

THE FINAL ANSWER

In October of 2010, Medhi received his final answer, from Iceland’s Supreme Court. The phone call he craved for so long turned out to be negative one. Medhi, who said in interviews: “I will rather end my life here, than having it taken from me in Iran”, went into hiding, fearing the worst.

The authorities assured him that there was no need to panic, and offered him to apply again, this time for a permanent residence permit based on humanitarian grounds. Relieved, Medhi submitted an application last January. Knowing about his

desperate situation, well informed about Medhi’s declared intentions, the authorities promised a quick process. Four months later, with his daughter angry with him for not fulfilling his promise, Medhi could not wait longer.

He had been called for an interview at the Directorate of Immigration that very Friday. “Again, another interview, about what?” Medhi says. “What more could they possibly want to know about me? I have told them everything, again and again.” According to his lawyer, Medhi’s request for asylum has been refused because he “has not been able to prove that he was tortured in Iranian prison,” and “he has refused to assist Icelandic authorities in proving who he is.” “They have insisted that I apply for an Iranian passport,” Medhi ex-

plains. “This I cannot do, I am on the run from Iranian authorities, how can I apply for a passport?”

“WE WILL EMBRACE ALL GOOD PEOPLE”

When asked about Medhi’s case in an interview, interior minister Ógmundur Jónasson stated: We will embrace all good people who seek our assistance, I will make sure that we will stand up to our good name of respecting people’s human rights, while of course keeping the bad people out.” He then went on to elaborate on Iceland’s reaction to international organised crime.

Upon arrival, refugees to Iceland are often put under the same hat as ‘criminals’ and treated as such in the beginning stages. It is obvious that because most refugees arrive with forged identity documents, or how else are they to get out of their native countries? Doing so, they have indeed broken the law, but the thorough screening they go through upon arrival is to make sure that it is their only crime. With nothing in their hands to prove their identity, it of course takes time to investigate each case, researching the humanitarian breaches the individual could face in his native country, according to each story and its consistency—especially since there are only three lawyers working these cases. But unlike other refugees already granted asylum (though unable to confirm their stories), Medhi seems to have a greater burden of proof. As he points out: “Iran is Iran, it shouldn’t take an expert seven years to understand what awaits me there.”

HOW WILL THEY RESPOND?

In 2008, Iceland’s right-wing government, which had only one policy towards this “biggest problem of the 21st century”—to keep them away—was replaced by Iceland’s first ever purely leftist government. It professed a more humane approach to the issue. Up until then, only one individual had been granted political asylum in Iceland, while around fifty had been granted a residence permit on humanitarian grounds. Since then, the numbers have swelled with twenty individuals granted asylum and yet another ten given a humanitarian permit (see www.utl.is).

However, it was only when the aforementioned Ógmundur took over the ministry last year that activists fighting for refugees in Iceland sighed with relief. He had shown the issue a great deal of interest whilst in opposition, so great hopes were attached to his new post. One of his first tasks was to prevent refugees being returned to Greece, finally giving in to a 2008 “request” from the United Nations. He promised to come up with a formal governmental policy, which has yet to be formulated.

Now with the ministry preparing a revision of refugee laws, it remains to be seen how the Icelandic state will respond to Medhi’s desperation and with regards to four others who are in similar positions. Will he be convicted of risking other people’s lives? Or will he be granted a permission to stay, based on his ‘mental breakdown’?

Many questions remain unanswered, but one thing is for sure: Medhi has cornered Icelandic authorities. Giving him a positive answer now could easily trigger others to attempt the same—those few but desperate individuals who have nowhere to go and yet nowhere to stay. But giving him a negative answer will have as dramatic consequences. Medhi has made up his mind. Now the authorities have to make up theirs. 🍷

Addendum: after this article had been proofed, we learned that Minister of Foreign Affairs Óssur Skarphéðinsson had offered asylum to an Iranian woman, Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, who faces execution in her homeland after being convicted for adultery and murder. When we brought this up with Medhi, he replied: “Do I have to kill somebody then, to get a similar offer?”

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Iceland | Whaling

Whale Watching Tourists Eating Whale

Anti-whaling advocate Sigursteinn Mátsson interviewed

Whale watching attracts more tourists than any other tourist activity in Reykjavík. Tourists who go whale watching are mostly against whaling and come from anti-whaling nations. Yet, by the time they find themselves on a whale watching boat, 19% say they have already eaten whale and the majority say they would eat whale for cultural and historical reasons.

This is a paradox that anti-whaler Sigursteinn Mátsson would like to tackle. A former journalist, Sigursteinn has been working for the International Fund For Animal Welfare (IFAW) since 2003, when Iceland—after a 24-year hiatus—resumed whaling again. The Grapevine met up with Sigursteinn to learn more about whaling in Iceland and his efforts to stop the practice.

So Iceland stopped whaling for 24 years. Why did it start up again?

When Iceland stopped whaling in 1989, politicians and the public were not happy about it. There were a lot of discussions about in Alþingi; the whaling camp in Iceland has always had lobbies in the political parties.

The public has shown little interest in the issue. When people are asked, they say they are pro-whaling like they are pro-Iceland. It's not because they have thought so much about it, or because they have studied the issue; it's out of patriotism. In recent years, I have been trying to find ways to address this, to reach an understanding that people can support Iceland without supporting whaling.

Do you think that Icelanders are mostly thinking of jobs and the economy? Or is it really a patriotic thing?

I think people are realising more and more that this argument, that whaling is creating so many jobs and that it is economically viable, is wrong. But I think people still believe that whales should be killed like any other animal. People often compare whaling to the slaughtering of cows or chicken. From an animal welfare perspective, we can't justify the inhumane killings of whales by pointing to something that is bad elsewhere. As soon as Icelanders realise that, I am sure we will have a different situation.

Words

Anna Andersen

Photography

Maroesjka Lavigne

You've been working on this for eight years. How's it going?

There have been ups and downs. I have to admit, there was a backlash in 2008 with the economic collapse. People turned back to basic attitudes and values of the past. In many ways it was very good, but in other ways it was not. For instance, the national sentiment became more pro-whaling after the crash compared to the year before the crash.

But I think people are realising that whaling is not very economical, and that minke whaling is disastrous for the whale watching business here in Reykjavík. It's by far the biggest tourism activity in Reykjavík. So having the minke whalers here in the same Faxaflói Bay killing the same minke is just absurd.

What do you think of Animal Planet's reality TV show, 'Whale Wars,' which documents the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society's struggle to end whaling? What do you think of their tactics?

They may very well have achieved their goal in the South Pacific. Although I have never seen the programme—I guess it makes for good television—I prefer a more civilised and sophisticated approach like we have been doing here. I don't think Iceland would be whaling today if the Sea Shepherd had not sunk two whaling boats here [Sea Shepherd founder Paul Watson sank two whaling vessels in the Reykjavík harbour in 1986].

It was like a terrorist attack on Iceland. It made Icelanders determined to never give in. When IFAW, a forty-year old organization, came here eight years ago, it was considered a terrorist group. We are now considered a reliable partner by the government. We take a very soft approach to this issue. We engage in dialogue rather than a typical campaign calling for sanctions and things like that.



So the organisation is more about dialogue—how do you reach individuals?

This summer we will go further in raising the issue publicly in Iceland and targeting foreign visitors. What has happened is that more and more restaurants are offering whale meat on their menu. Two years back there were only a couple of restaurants doing it. The strange thing is that tourists, who are mostly ordering it, say they are opposed to whaling when asked. They also come from countries that are totally against whaling.

A scientist conducted a survey on boats of a whale watching company in Reykjavík. She asked 1500 tourists who were going whale watching some questions. It turned out that 19% had already eaten whale meat in Iceland before going whale watching, and a majority of tourists said they would taste it out of cultural and historical reasons.

The situation in which foreign tourists who oppose whaling are keeping minke whaling alive in Iceland is very ironic. This is an issue that we will specifically work on, and we will be introducing a campaign in the beginning of June. We wouldn't organise a boycott,

but we just think that every person should think twice about what they order, so that they are not contributing to whaling.

I've never thought of whaling as being part of Icelandic culture...

And it isn't in fact. To explain a bit, the commercial whaling, killing big whales, only started around mid last century with Icelanders. And then there was a twenty-four year break. The history of minke whaling is a little bit longer, about thirty years longer. So this is something that tourists coming to Iceland should realise. Whaling is not part of Iceland's history. Commercial whaling of big whales has been conducted by a single family in Iceland. The father, Loftur, started the company and then his son, Kristján Loftsson, took over the business. So that has been a single-family business.

According to a Gallup poll, only 3-5% of Icelanders eat whale meat regularly. It is neither historically important, nor is it a part of the heritage, nor is it a big part of the culture. So you can say that when it is introduced to our foreign guests in Iceland as historically important and a part of the culture, that

Icelanders eat it regularly—that is false.

What's the ultimate goal of the campaign that you are launching?

Of course the ultimate goal is to have whaling in Iceland a part of its history, where it belongs, and to have responsible whale watching as the only whale business in Iceland. That should be the aim.

Now that Japan and Iceland have stopped fin whaling, I think there is an historical chance to do things right. If there is any animal on Earth that we can look at and say, we have really treated you badly through the centuries, it is the whale. We hunted some of them to extinction and others to endangerment. The hunting has been extremely cruel. It can take up to an hour to kill a whale after the first harpoon hits. It's completely unnecessary.

I see the whale as symbol of the connection between nature and humans; if we can stop whaling, humanity has grown. ♡

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What do passengers say about Gray Line Iceland?

Wells wrote: 17 April 2011
- AH11 The Golden Circle Afternoon



"Tour guide was so knowledgeable and shared interesting information about Iceland past and present. The six hour tour was plenty for us and although the weather was not good at times the guide arranged for the sun to shine at every stop. We had very strong winds which made driving difficult but the guide was such a good driver and we had every confidence in her. The seats were comfortable and the addition of safety belts was good. Thank you for the experience."

Morgan wrote: 4 May 2011
- AH12 The Golden Circle Classic



"Excellent +++ very good value and we would recommend it to others. our guide, john and driver, ruth went above and beyond to inform all tour participants. both john and ruth were willing to answer questions about the places we visited and about their country (which we always want to learn about). john had a great sense of humour. i liked the fact that he circulated through the bus to ask everyone if they were getting their questions answered. he is a quality guide...and you can tell he enjoys what he does. we had a great day !"

Britton wrote: 2 May 2011
- AH12 The Golden Circle Classic



"Excellent tour and excellent driver and guide. We were in really safe hands and the tour was both professional and interesting. Thanks for making our trip so enjoyable. The free child places were great and the half price youth seats. This made the trips much more affordable for my friend and myself who are both single parents. Brilliant - many thanks. We will recommend you to the 300 plus members of our single parent group in the UK."

Butler wrote: 29 March 2011 - AH18 The Blue Lagoon to Keflavik Airport



"This was a great tour. I reserved online the night before using my ipod touch. The website worked fine even on such a small screen. The bus arrived as scheduled and everything was very organized and professional. The return bus from Blue Lagoon to the airport arrived as scheduled. Everything was great. Thanks!"

WONG wrote: 10 May 2011 - AH35 South Coast & Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon



"I must say I usually do not like to join tour but due to time constraint, I decided to join this tour and I was pleasantly surprised with the quality of the tour. I thoroughly enjoy the trip and the tour guide, Matthias is excellent. I definitely recommend this day tour to whoever who is interested in visiting the Southcoast. Well done!"

Bugeya wrote: 4 May 2011
- AH12 The Golden Circle Classic



"We had a great day, cold but great! John was an excellent tour guide, knew his information and has a great sense of humour. We enjoyed seeing all the geographical features of Iceland and found the history of those places fascinating. Thank you."

Gora wrote: 9 May 2011
- AH12 The Golden Circle Classic



"The tour was brilliant, it took us to all the main attractions in the vicinity of Reykjavik and gave us enough time to explore each... all at a great price. The Gullfoss waterfall was absolutely breathtaking and the Geysir is an absolute must-see. I'd definitely recommend this tour to all visiting Iceland."

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Dinquel wrote: 17 April 2011 - AH100 Keflavik Airport to Reykjavik



"Our driver picked us up at the airport and had a sign with our name on it when we arrived. Great service and he gave us some info on the area on our way to Reykjavik. Great experience!!"

MOSSIAT wrote: 8 May 2011 - AH100 Keflavik Airport to Reykjavik - One Way



"Everything was just perfect... Although my plane landed at Keflavik Airport 2 hours later than expected, there was still someone waiting for me at 2 o'clock in the morning on your heartbreakingly beautiful island. But then again, what else could you expect from Iceland? Thanks a million."

Meaney wrote: 4 April 2011 - AH150 Taste the Saga



"Overall a very enjoyable experience with this tour! The brewery is small and growing so it's nice to see a great work in progress. It was nice to see such a professional and high tech facility with such a young profession in that country; it was very emblematic of the Icelandic people in that regard! The unfiltered beer was the best and i would hope they will start selling that version soon!"

Rebolledo wrote: 29 April 2011 - AH74 Whale Watching & Golden Circle Afternoon



"I was really impressed by the high level of service received. The Whale watch-

ing was fun, didactic and really good, even though the bad weather and the high waves and we spotted some whales... The Golden circle afternoon was really good and we appreciated the couple of additional stops (the green house and the crater) the weather was again terrible but we had a very nice time. The guides in both parts were very didactic and gave us a very good impression about Iceland and the activities."



Beards Gone Wild

An exclusive look inside the world of competitive bearding



When you live in a town of Reykjavik's size, any change in the surroundings is instantly noticeable. So when an increasing number of men with long and sometimes extravagant beards began to appear downtown, it got our attention. Sure, there are plenty of young dudes with beards in Reykjavik, but seldom are they navel-length, or parted in the middle and then curled upwards on both sides. When the curiosity became too much to bear, we approached two guys sporting ZZ Top-tier beards and asked, "Is there some beard-related event happening in Iceland or something?"

"Yes and no," he said with a smile. As it turned out, he and dozens of other bearded gentlemen were on their way to the World Beard and Moustache Championship in Trondheim, Norway. The festival, which is held every two years since 1995, attracts competitors from around the world, most of who are from Europe and North America.

Our visitors, who were stopping over to do a little sightseeing before heading to Norway, hailed from the US and Canada. As it turned out, the timing of running into these two guys could not have been better—other competitors were at that moment just blocks away at the bar Dillon, enjoying happy hour. When we arrived, there were already

"Well, Full Beard Natural is the most popular. But altogether there are 17 categories and three subcategories. It's an expensive hobby."

close to a dozen bearded guys sipping beer and chatting. While most of these guys had the long, bushy variety of beard, Bill Mitchell's stood out (as his photograph can attest). We spoke with him briefly about competitive bearding.

The first question on our mind was, what categories of competitive bearding are there? "Well, Full Beard Natural is the most popular. But altogether there are 17 categories and three subcategories. It's an expensive hobby."

Mitchell's beard preparation is a labour of love, and requires a regime that would put many to shame. "There's the constant shampooing, for one, then I blow-dry it", he explains. "When it's dry, I use a curling iron on the sides. Then I curl them around a pair of cans and hairspray them. Once that's set, it's done."

His experience in Iceland, he said, has been very pleasant. "They really put out the welcome mat for us," he said. "We went on a walking tour, saw the national museum and the national

library. Tomorrow we're going on the Golden Circle tour. I wish every day could be like this".

Mitchell was confident that he would do well, and in fact, the official website of the World Beard and Moustache Championship announced that he won in the category of Partial Beard Freestyle. In fact, America walked away with six gold medals in the competition, but Germany's Elmar Weisser—better known on the internet as "the guy with the windmill beard"—came out on top, as the site reports his "reindeer beard couldn't be stopped."

The BBC reports that while Europeans have traditionally been the reigning champions of competitive bearding, the US is "fast becoming the world's new facial hair super power".

PAUL FONTAINE
ALISA KALYANOVA

What New York Times Magazine Thinks Of Iceland

On Friday, May 13 (of all days), New York Times Magazine ran with an article by shock-reporter and radio commentator, Jake Halpern, entitled 'Iceland's Big Thaw'. Much in the exaggerated ilk of Michael Lewis's 2009 Vanity Fair hyperbole ('Wall Street On The Tundra'), Halpern paints a picture of the new Icelander as a smug, boorish, easy-go-lucky wannabe, who'd rather collect on unemployment than get knee deep in fish guts which, according to Halpern, is the only work going in Iceland at the moment.

The author paraphrases Ásthildur Sturludóttir, Mayor of "Patreksfjordhur" [sic] as saying that the only people who will take jobs in the local fish factory are Polish immigrants. Halpern claims he interviewed a manager of a fish factory outside of Reykjavik, who said: "The Icelanders don't want to do this [fish processing] work—and it has nothing to do with the salaries—it's just not fancy enough for them."

In the article, Halpern supposedly travels across Iceland in search of what Icelanders have become since the 2008 crash. What he claims to have found is a bankrupt, disillusioned nation on the brink of a nervous breakdown. Among others, he interviews Reykjavik's Mayor, Jón Gnarr, who says that the biggest issue facing Iceland right now is to whether to adopt the Euro. According to Halpern, Jón Gnarr is all a-tingle with the dollar: "People think we should go to the Euro, but it doesn't look cool... It's the dollar that you see in the movies—it has the image." And it seems, Halpern is taking Jón at his word: "I waited for Gnarr to smile, but he didn't."

Halpern also tells the excess stories of Guðfinnur S. Halldórsson, car salesman, who, during the boom years, supposedly managed to resell the same Porsche five times within the space of six months (each time with a profit). Apparently, not one of the five customers ever paid the first leasing instalment to the bank. If such was the case, one wonders why in 2009 Michael Lewis claimed that Icelanders were blowing up Land Rovers for insurance money. Surely Guðfinnur would have been pleased to make yet another sale? Back in the good ole days, Guðfinnur, who Halpern says goes by the name of Guffi (pronounced "Goofy", as in Mickey Mouse's sidekick), had regularly invited Ukrainian and Swiss chicas he'd met on the internet to paint Reykjavik crimson red. Now, a picture of significantly more balance, he has decided to settle on a regular Icelandic woman. "I do nothing stupid, and then I have no

"Do they really think of Icelanders as a bunch of failed wannabe bankers who have now taken up knitting and enjoy vetoing their government's decisions?"

stress."

It seems that Halpern has gone far out of his way to seek out the most odd-ball characters (with the exception of Jón Gnarr of course), and puts across an image of Iceland that borders on the edge of insanity. One has to wonder, with the mainstream press pulling stunts like this, what the rest of the world thinks of Iceland. Do they really think of Icelanders as a bunch of failed wannabe bankers who have now taken up knitting and enjoy vetoing their government's decisions?

He quotes drama teacher Steinunn Knútsdóttir as saying: "Everyone is knitting. People are also making jam." Which, Halpern says, he finds incredulous until he says, "one day I saw a woman directly across the street from my hotel, perched on a chair, yarn in hand, stitching some so-called 'knit-graffiti' into place around a tree." He goes on to interview "the knitter", Raggá Eiríksdóttir, whom he puts across tongue-in-cheek as some kind of new-age-knitting-needle-touting-existentialist-philosopher: "Knitting is the opposite of idolizing money. Knitting embodies thriftiness and is something old that has been with the nation forever. In the 1800s, the state actually published documents that outlined how much citizens should knit. It was said, for example, that a child from the age of 8 should finish a pair of socks each week."

Honestly, I'm quite surprised that Halpern didn't manage to slip in an interview with a puffin taxidermist, a rod-dowser, or that little old guy with the three foot beard that lives in the middle of nowhere with four dogs and a two-headed chicken and talks to elves. Perhaps it was a word-count issue?

And, by the way, Jón Gnarr is spot on: the dollar is far cooler! Clint Eastwood in 'A Fistful of Euros' just wouldn't work.

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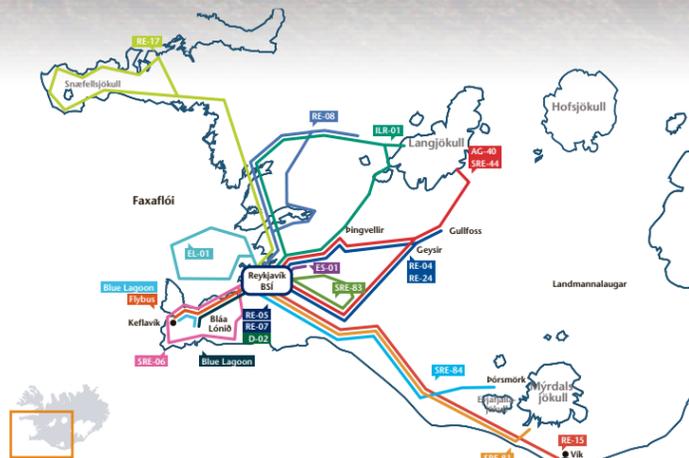
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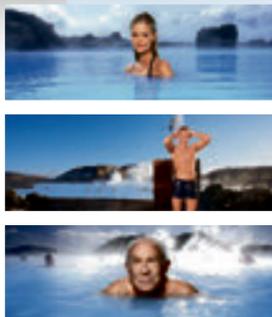
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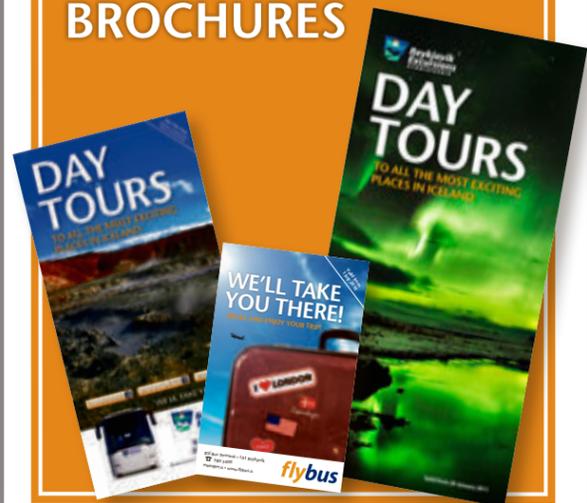
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Ode To Nature's Fuzzy Balls



Marimo, rise from the depths of Mývatn and speak

Iceland, the land of volcanic eruptions, glacial fields, and herds of grazing sheep, does not welcome plant life with open arms. The ones that do slip through the cracks (quite literally sometimes) are often marvels of evolutionary accomplishment. The marimo, a big fuzzy ball of algae that dwells in the shallow waters of Mývatn, is such a plant. It's one of those weirdo, outcast plants, the kind that other plants gawk at in the photosynthesis line: they do not know the latest fashions of fruit or flowers, the sport of root growing, nor the lingo of leaves. But perhaps the marimo's huggable form or their lush, calming green hue, often adorned by pearls of air bubbles, might win you over.

GETTING TO KNOW THE MARIMO

Marimos are the creative limits of evolution in the flesh. And for this, us nerdy naturalists are utterly enamoured with them. However, according to Árni Einarsson, director of The Mývatn Research Station, an ecological research institute that monitors Lake Mývatn, the "marimo has no place in Icelandic culture." Only until relatively recently,

he says, were they known to people outside of the Mývatn area. But to be fair, scientists only discovered the colony that inhabits the lake in 1977.

When gazing upon a marimo, one might wonder how the elements of nature convinced algae, an organism that prefers a more planar existence, to take the form of a perfect sphere. Normally plants want to increase their surface area-to-volume ratio (e.g. with big leaves or lots of pine needles) to capture as much light as possible for their size. Spheres are really bad at maximizing this ratio; actually, they're the worst. The marimo, however, has gotten around this staple rule of evolution. They took the hypotenuse line to survival: require less light (thus, energy) to live by staying small. The marimos in Mývatn reach only about 10 to 12 cm in diameter.

Though scientists aren't completely sure how they form, they think it involves the gentle caresses of wind-induced waves over Mývatn, the silky sediments of Icelandic volcanoes, and the light conditions of life at the bottom of a clear lake. When these three factors combine, marimos leave the

psychedelic dreams of a young botanist's slumbers and materialise here in Iceland and only a few other locations on earth, including Japan's Lake Akan. Like Mývatn, Akan was formed by volcanic activity, which might explain why large colonies of marimos call both lakes home.

English speakers actually adapted the Japanese word for these algal balls, 'marimo,' as their own. The direct Japanese translation is quite literal: 'mari' meaning 'ball' and 'mo' meaning 'water plant.' The direct translation of the Icelandic word, 'kúlu-skítur,' is a bit less endearing. 'Kúlu' translates to 'ball' and 'skítur' means 'shit' in Icelandic. "Fishermen often used vulgar names for strange things that come to the surface when fishing," says Árni, and in the marimo's case, they were probably deemed shit because they would get "entangled in the fishing nets but [aren't] fish," he says. So for Icelandic fishermen, not fish = shit. Makes sense.

LET US IN

Maybe what stunts any growth of respect for marimos in Iceland is their elusive behaviour. In order to see one of

these guys in the wild, you'd have to be lucky enough to hook one on a fishing line or be part of a registered diving operation. The Natural History Museum in Kópavogur does have some on display in a tank, but that's not really the same as seeing scores of them piled on top of each other in Mývatn.

Though their exterior allows for quick judgement, the marimo's interior deserves the respect of many far and wide. It is evolutionary fitness at its greatest: break one of these guys open and out comes a torrent of chloroplasts that in a matter of hours will awaken from a dark hibernation. After these chloroplasts see the light, they become photosynthetically active and start producing energy that the marimo uses to make one broken ball into two shiny new balls.

NEVER GONNA GIVE UP

The way to kill a marimo may require a slow, insidious approach. Us humans are accomplishing this quite successfully, scientists believe. Marimo populations are declining worldwide. Though they aren't exactly sure how, biologists have a hunch that the decline involves

eutrophication, which is the build up of nutrients caused by either natural sources, like bacteria, or human sources, like fertilizer runoff. Eutrophication can make lakes foggy, which hinders the amount of light that reaches the things living at the bottom of the lake.

The situation in Iceland is bit more complicated, where during the winter months everyone's got to learn to live with little sunlight. If the marimos can survive months without sunlight, then a little extra fogginess can't be the cause of their decline, Icelandic scientists reason. Basically, what we've got here is a case of the elusive outcast, shunned by society, which only leads to more secrecy. The marimo has stumped the scientific community, not only concerning the cause of its decline but also the basics of its life cycle. But there are a few of us that take a fancy to your elusiveness, little Icelandic marimo, and we will continue chip at the wall you have built around yourself until we reach the emerald core of your biology. ♡

✍ VANESSA SCHIPANI
📷 VANESSA SCHIPANI

Opinion | Environment

Why Riding Your Bike In Iceland Isn't Green

A bus ticket is less dangerous and more eco-friendly and we don't need MythBusters to prove it.

It is no doubt that Iceland's natural beauty and landscapes invite many different types of nature lovers that travel the country road to take it all in. This should be encouraged. But what should be actively discouraged is the practice of bicycling the ring road. It increases danger to the bicyclers and the vehicles and costs much more fuel and carbon than if they simply took an existing seat

on a bus going to the same destination anyway.

I will spell it out for those that are not familiar with some unique aspects of Route One, the "ring road" that connects most major towns and encircles the island. Route One carries the vast majority of vehicular traffic: cars, campers, motorcycles, long haul trucks and those that are bicycling between towns.

Don't get me wrong, by all means enjoy your bicycle in Iceland—but it would be wise to restrict it to the townships and areas that you wish to explore... namely, anywhere other than the long parts of Route One connecting the towns and across the highlands. This is for your own best interests (and mine). Most towns and tourist areas have places that rent bicycles (check with the tourist office) and these areas expect to see bikers on the local roads. But when it comes time to head to the next destination you should: rent a car, hitchhike or take a seat on a tourbus. The latter two

options are much more environmentally friendly than biking long distances, and now I shall explain why.

Route One is a difficult and potentially dangerous road for any vehicle. It has few "shoulders" so there is rarely room to swerve off the road if needed or by accident. This is an existing danger that contributes to accidents every year as it is. Add to that the fact that many parts of Route One are sharp, curvy, hilly and downright ridiculous. You often cannot see oncoming traffic until it is coming around a corner and zooming past you. Additionally, there is only one lane for each direction and even in the best of weather (not common) driving in Iceland requires constant alertness and a bit of luck.

Enter the cyclist: sometimes riding, often walking their bicycle up a long and steep incline. It is common to see them with little time to react—often you have to slow down to nearly a complete halt (note the fuel consumption of each

driver affected each time you must be passed) and now the driver is creeping behind you and must try and make a pass because you take up the majority of the lane with your giant hikers pack arranged horizontally across the back of the bike like a dead deer. This is dangerous for everyone involved. Now more fuel must be spent by the vehicle to go from zero to passing speed (often on a hill) to get around you and hope some trucker (or cyclist) is not coming around a blind corner in the opposite direction!

I have sympathy for those bikers and I often think they might rather enjoy their time exploring specific locations instead of nearly killing themselves (and possibly me and my cat) getting there. Perhaps this can be the motivation: it is NOT green. You are hurting the environment with this behaviour. No matter how much you love nature, your decision to come to Iceland is a selfish one unless you sailed here. Jet fuel is expensive and costly to the environment. We are glad

you are here, but let's not pretend you are saving the world—the money and resources it takes to visit and return could have been put to more charitable use if that is your primary concern.

As stated earlier, Route One serves the major towns all around Iceland. There are a variety of bus companies serving any area you wish to see and often with multiple day passes and packages to accommodate any flavour of traveller. Iceland is popular. The buses are nearly full and being used anyway. Some may even let you bring your bike along. It takes marginally more fuel to carry your butt (and human-sized backpack) than it does for these same vehicles to have to suddenly react to bikers on a steep, blind road with no shoulder room.

Think green... ride a bus. ♡

✍ RYAN PATRICK



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Whom To Blame?



Icelanders are upset. That may be an understatement, and it's also unfortunate. The real unfortunate part is that they're a little unsure about what they're upset about.

Domestic bankers made some bad loans. Icelandic consumers took on more leverage than might otherwise be sensible. Politicians (corrupt or otherwise) made some promises that they couldn't keep. In a common story, bankers and politicians became unusually friendly during the boom years. In an unusual twist, central bankers and politicians made for strange bedfellows.

Whom should we blame? There are the usual suspects—the ones that made out so well during the boom that no one could object to penalising them today. And while some of this group—those bankers that made money both by both hook and crook—seem to be all-too-

easy targets, others were just trying to make an honest króna.

It's the same thing on the political side of the fence. Although we can easily point to some less than level-headed representatives during the boom, there were also plenty of honest politicians. After all, after the elections of 2009 only 26 Alþingi seats had a new bottom to fill them—far less than half.

CBI'S LOOSE-MONEY POLICY

I would like to draw attention to another usual suspect, but with a twist. The Davíð Oddsson led Central Bank of Iceland (CBI)—that venerable, if recent creation of Alþingi—controls two important facets of banking: regulation and monetary policy. The CBI's loose-money policy throughout the 2000s ushered in low interest rates (at least when adjusted for inflation), and enticed investors and consumers to take on more debt than was prudent. Few would argue today that Icelanders have not become aware of the risks of burgeoning debt levels.

More latent, if salient, are the types

of guarantees that the CBI had committed itself to through its regulatory role. Contained in the new Central Bank Act of 2001 (passed, incidentally, while Davíð Oddsson served as Prime Minister), was a promise by the CBI to insure all bank accounts held with any Icelandic bank. This pledge extended regardless of the currency the account was denominated in (whether krónur, euro, dollar, yen, or even, presumably, Congolese francs), and regardless of the geographic location where the deposit was held (whether in Reykjavík, Amsterdam, New York, Tokyo or, again presumably, the Congolese capital of Kinshasa). The new Act on the Central Bank of Iceland is brief—700 words exactly, including the title—but the ramifications were drastic.

By explicitly committing itself to act as a "lender of last resort", the CBI effectively gave investors a carte blanche to not worry about their banks' activities. No longer would a depositor be concerned with whether her bank prudently managed her hard-earned wages, or whether the bank's man-

"The losses have been earned, and the profits have been lost—finding the guilty parties isn't going to reverse history. Identifying the true root causes of the turmoil will enable Icelanders to make sure that the same mistakes don't repeat."

agement was being transparent and sensible. Bankers didn't have to worry much about these things either. The CBI, backstopped by Alþingi, was there to provide the necessary funds when profits turned to losses. Heck, even the IMF gave the green light to Icelanders to continue their reckless spending during the boom and to not fret over and potential problems that could develop. And problems did develop. So many problems that no one was able to deliver on their promises when the time came.

WHERE WERE ICELAND'S FRIENDS?

It's nice to have people say that they will support you in your time of need. The unfortunate part about this "support" is the behavioural change that comes with it. Caution gets thrown to the wind. A whole nation got swept up in a euphoric sense of success, guaranteed by multiple layers of guarantees. If you think that these guarantees are being used as a scapegoat to absolve some individuals from acting sensibly, read what none other than Kaupthing's ex-CEO Ármann Þorvaldsson had to say about his own decisions: "I always believed that if Iceland ran into trouble it would be easy to get assistance from friendly nations." These types of quotes read what none other than Kaupthing's ex-CEO Ármann Þorvaldsson had to say about his own decisions: "I always believed that if Iceland ran into trouble it would be easy to get assistance from friendly nations." These types of quotes only beg the wrong type of questions: Where were Iceland's friends? Why didn't they come through? We can speculate on why the guarantees and promises never materialised, but it's mostly bygones by now.

Lest I be misunderstood, I am not absolving Þorvaldsson (or any other banker, lender or borrower) of responsibility. Nor do I pick him out for any other reason than the fact that his concise quote encapsulates the whole point I wish to make. He was and is only human; so were all the other Icelandic bankers. If one wants to start finger pointing, one needs to find the reasons why that finger is directed at someone. Lots of bankers (and individuals, businesses, and even politicians) acted completely rationally given the incentive structures they faced—however perverse they were.

If you make someone an offer he can't refuse, he won't. If you offer someone an investment that she can't lose money on, she'll invest. If you make the deal sweet enough, she won't even ask questions about it. Depositors, lenders and borrowers were given just such a sweet deal in 2001 via the CBI's guarantee to insure their deposits—regardless of the money's physical location or denomination.

THE RISK OF A FUTURE NOT UNLIKE THE PAST

I don't write this as anyone who had to live through the last three years of Icelandic recession (or, unfortunately, the boom). There are, in all honesty, at least a milljónir ranghala that I don't understand about the beautiful country and its people. I write as a person that knows a crisis when he sees one. Finger wagging at some guilty suspects might provide some closure, but it doesn't do anything to improve an already bad situation. The losses have been earned, and the profits have been lost—finding the guilty parties isn't going to reverse history. Identifying the true root causes of the turmoil will enable Icelanders to make sure that the same mistakes don't repeat.

Looking at how laws, particularly banking laws, affect the incentives we face will go far in reducing (or even eliminating) the risk of these unfortunate events from happening again. Guaranteeing people's deposits is just one such way that the Central Bank of Iceland created an atmosphere of risk-taking from an otherwise reasonable country. And as my co-author Philipp Bagus and I outline in our new book 'Deep Freeze: Iceland's Economic Collapse', these guarantees came from all layers of government, and covered all sorts of investments. The guarantees on Icelandic bank accounts that I have discussed herein still remain on the CBI's statutes. Until they are changed, the country faces the risk of a future not unlike its recent past. ☹

DAVID HOWDEN
GÚNDI

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THE MASTER BUILDER, THE MINISTER AND THE CHURCH WE USED TO THINK WAS UGLY

The story of Hallgrímskirkja, its architect and plans for a utopian city of culture



The idea of building a church on the hill called Skólavörðuholt was first broached as early as 1916.

Architect Guðjón Samúelsson started making sketches for the church in 1937. He was intent on finding an Icelandic style of architecture, truly a hard task in a country where the building style consisted of turf huts and, later, timber houses from Norway and Denmark—many of them prefabricated. So Guðjón Samúelsson looked to nature for inspiration. Hallgrímskirkja is supposedly influenced by mountains and glaciers, but first and foremost by basalt lava formations common in Icelandic nature. These can also be seen both on the interior and the exterior of another Guðjón Samúelsson building, the National Theatre on Hverfisgata.

LONG CONSTRUCTION TIME

It took a long time to build houses in Reykjavík in those days. The National Theatre was started in 1932 and not opened until 1950. It was used as a depot for the British and American forces during the war. It was then finished during a burst of energy that so drained the architect's powers that he was actually on his deathbed during the theatre's inauguration. The building time of Hallgrímskirkja was 38 years. It rose very slowly out of the ground, sometimes no work was done during long periods.

The building was also the butt of many a joke. Iceland's most famous 20th century poet, Steinn Steinarr, a drinker and a cynic, wrote a famous poem about the church where Hallgrímur Pétursson—the priest and poet to whom the church is dedicated—comes to the architect and asks him to please stop:

The Master Builder of the state took a handful of clay the late Hallgrímur Pétursson came to him and said: No more, no more!

There was also the question of building materials. Iceland had no trees to build from—up until the mid 20th century there were almost no trees in

Words

Egill Helgason

Illustration

Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

the country—and there was little tradition of stone masonry. So Icelanders warmly embraced reinforced concrete, so much so that it became the favoured building material. However, the quality of the concrete wasn't good, and there was too much salt in the sand used to mix with the cement. The National Theatre has been crumbling for a long time and the tower of Hallgrímskirkja has been extensively renovated two times.

A BEAUTIFUL BUILDING?

It is only in latter years that Icelanders themselves have come to realise that Hallgrímskirkja is actually quite a beautiful building. Its fame has come from abroad; it is mentioned in most guidebooks and Skólavörðuholt is a favourite with tourists who come to see the church and the statue of Leifur Eiríksson. Skólavörðustígur, the street which lies up to the church, is one of the most pleasant streets in Reykjavík with its small houses of corrugated iron, a building material considered ugly by many but greatly appreciated in a land of wind and rain.

In the old days, the hill was very rocky, as were the eastern slopes around Tjörnin, the pond in the centre of Reykjavík. On the top there was a small tower where the young men of the Reykjavík Latin School, then the highest institution of learning, came to discuss their private matters. There was a small road up the hill. Beside it there was an unmarked grave containing the bones of murderess Steinunn Sveinsdóttir, who died in prison in 1805. It was a tradition to throw a stone towards the grave when passing it. Later, when rocks were being taken from the hill to build the harbour of Reykjavík, a small casket with old bones was found and finally buried in the old cemetery on the western side of the lake.



"It is only in latter years that Icelanders themselves have come to realise that Hallgrímskirkja is actually quite a beautiful building"

THE AUTHORITIES' FAVOURITE

The architect Guðjón Samúelsson was a remarkable man. His buildings are numerous and many of them are quite monumental—no builder in Icelandic history has been so favoured by local authorities.

Guðjón's main spokesman was Jónas Jónsson from Hrifla, Iceland's most controversial 20th century politician. Jónas was by all means a remarkable man. He was a farm boy from the north, and he always held the conviction that real culture was to be found on farms and in the countryside. In 1916 and 1917

he was the founder of two of Iceland's main political parties, Framsóknarflokkurinn, the Farmers' Party, and Alþýðuflokkurinn, the Social Democratic party. Jónas believed it was the destiny of these parties to work together against the corrupting influences of the merchant class, and later against communism.

THE LITTLE MUSSOLINI

In 1927 Jónas entered government, as Minister of Education and Justice, and soon became the most powerful man in the country. He was hated by his en-

emies, who actually got the director of Reykjavík's mental asylum, Kleppur, to declare that Jónas was mad and should be hospitalised. Jónas fought back, the affair is commonly referred to as 'The Big Bomb'. But certainly he had megalomaniacal tendencies—the then-king of Denmark and Iceland, Christian X, is rumoured to have asked him: "Are you still playing at being the little Mussolini?"

True to his ideals, Jónas built schools around the country—higher education was no more to be a domain of the upper class. Many of these large houses, some of them designed by Guðjón Samúelsson, now stand empty around the countryside. Jónas was also interested in cultural matters, founding a state publishing house to counter the influence of communists in literature, and even holding an exhibition of degenerate modern art—taking the cue from German Nazis.

CITY OF CULTURE

The architect also had huge plans for Skólavörðuholt. Hallgrímskirkja is but a faint shadow of these plans. Originally it was going to be a cathedral in the centre of a big plaza. Around it were to be the university of Iceland, student buildings, the National Gallery as well as the museum of Einar Jónsson. This was going to be the high seat of Icelandic culture—"Háborg" is the Icelandic word, signifying a glorious city upon a hill.

These plans have faded into history. But we have the church and the sculpture museum. The hilltop looks better than it has for many years—to tell the truth it used to be a bit shabby. If you look down the hill towards the east and the south you might catch a glimpse of two other large buildings by Guðjón Samúelsson, Sundhöll Reykjavíkur and the National Hospital, both built in the thirties. Another feature of the hill is of course the statue of Leifur Eiríksson who, as Oscar Wilde noted, "[...]found America, but had the good sense to lose it again." But then, if he had stayed, New York might have been called New Reykjavík and all those Americans might be speaking Icelandic! 🇮🇸

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THE CONSUMER'S REPUBLIC OF ICELAND

"The great mass of people renewed their cars, home appliances, exchanged tube TVs for flat-screens and took more trips abroad. While all of this spending was clearly excessive (as evidenced by growing debt) it was, however, not on par with the extravagance of the financial oligarchs who served risotto garnished with gold flakes"

The newspaper DV recently made considerable hay out of the fact that from 2005–2008 Iceland was the second largest market in the world for the Danish luxury home electronics brand Bang & Olufsen. This is according to one of the owners of the now bankrupt Bang & Olufsen store in Reykjavík. Only rich Russians bought more of these overpriced Danish designer electronics, and we're not talking about 'per capita' measures. No, in absolute terms Iceland was the second largest market in the entire world for Bang & Olufsen. The news site Eyjan.is declared in a headline that "every second household in Iceland" owns a B&O gadget.

KEEPING UP WITH THE GRISWOLDS

Considering the cultural atmosphere of pre-crash Iceland this should not come as a surprise. The firm's home electronics have long been associated with the ostentatious display of newfound wealth. A case in point: the insufferable yuppies who live next door to the Griswold family in Chevy Chase's 'Christmas Vacation' owned a Bang & Olufsen stereo, killed by Clark Griswold in a memorable scene. In the yuppiefied world of Iceland anno 2007, where it seemed every second person drove a Range Rover, corporate and finance types ruled supreme and every two bit businessman was a budding corporate Viking, planning mergers and acquisitions abroad, it made perfect sense that every second home be stocked with Bang & Olufsen.

During the height of the bubble Iceland became a major market for many other luxury items. For example, during the first ten months of 2007 more Range Rovers were sold in Iceland than in Sweden and Denmark combined, and in January 2008 sales estimates anticipated that the Icelandic market would absorb as many top of the line Toyota Land Cruiser 200s as the entire British market. All kinds of other extravagant luxury items, from Beluga Caviar and Japanese Kobe beef to designer furniture and overpriced stereo equipment, sold like hotcakes.

This explosion of expensive luxury consumption was one of the results of rising income inequality. According to research by Stefán Ólafsson and Arnaldur Sólvi Kristjánsson at the University of Iceland, income inequality grew faster in Iceland during the period 1993–2007 than in any other OECD country. The average income of people in the wealthiest 1% went from being roughly five times the average income in 1993 to being 27 times higher in 2007. By 2007, 39.4% of all income was made by the richest 10%. Half of this went to the wealthiest 1%,

who commanded 19.8% of all personal income.

"MY BELUGA NEEDS MORE GOLD FLAKES"

But it wasn't only the top percentile looking for ways to blow its newfound wealth that consumed like there was no tomorrow. Average people were also increasing their consumption. From 2002 to 2008, personal consumption grew in real terms by some 29%, while incomes grew by only half as much, or 15%. Much of this increased consumption was therefore paid for by increasing debt. From 2002 to 2008, household debt grew by 77%. Iceland went through a general consumer boom.

The great mass of people renewed their cars, home appliances, exchanged tube TVs for flat-screens and took more trips abroad. While all of this spending was clearly excessive (as evidenced by growing debt) it was, however, not on par with the extravagance of the financial oligarchs who served risotto garnished with gold flakes.

It is both unfair and incorrect to conflate the two. The Icelandic consumer boom has at least two sets of actors: the top 1–10% and the rest of the population, the average middle class Jane who took out a home mortgage to pay for an upgrade to her kitchen, a trip to Tenerife and a travel trailer for the family. This is opposed to the top 1%, the new class of financiers who took out loans to pay for various financial shenanigans, and then bought private jets, Kobe beef and Beluga caviar for the proceeds. Then, of course, there was a large segment of the Icelandic population that simply had no opportunity to participate in the great boom. Those who work at low wage jobs, single mothers and pensioners were largely left behind.

It is therefore unfair to say that "everyone" participated in the same consumer boom: There is a difference in kind between the wasteful extravagance of one group and the excessive spending of the other. The two are nonetheless closely related, and it is this relationship that might explain what fuelled the Icelandic consumption boom.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INSECURITY

Consumption is a social practice. People use it to signal what groups they belong to, or want to belong to, and how they want to be viewed by others. This frequently assumes the form of competitive conspicuous consumption, first described by the 19th century economist Thorsten Veblen. Veblen argued that the haute bourgeoisie of the times used

Words

Magnús Sveinn Helgason

Photography

Hörður Sveinsson



conspicuous consumption to engage in a competition of social status.

With the rise of the middle class in the post war period this kind of conspicuous consumption became less pronounced, as American social scientists argued that consumers were more preoccupied with maintaining status and "keeping up with the Joneses". Keeping tabs on what kind of car their neighbour drove, where they went on holiday and whether they had their kitchen remodelled—not to outdo them so much as to keep up. While the earlier type of conspicuous consumption was never present in Iceland this second type characterised Icelandic consumer society in the post-war period.

But as the American economist and social critic Juliet Schor has argued in her book 'The Overspent American', this dynamic has changed in the past few decades as consumers have piled on debt to finance the ratcheting up of their consumption standards. The reason, Schor argues, is that the reference groups people look to have changed. In the post-war period people looked to neighbours and friends on which to

model their own consumption practices; people who were by and large within the same income bracket as they were. In the more recent past, consumers have increasingly started to model their consumption practices on people who are much higher on the income scale. Schor blames rising income inequality as well as the media portrayals of the lifestyles of the rich.

Schor argues that newly wealthy groups of corporate managers and investment bankers have had the opportunity to engage in fabulous displays of wealth that had not been seen since Veblen wrote his 'Theory of the Leisure Class' at the turn of the 19th century. The media pays close attention to these displays of wealth, even portraying them as a goal for the middle class. The result, Schor argues, is a growing cultural and social anxiety as the middle class desperately tries to keep up with increasingly unattainable consumption goals, piling on debt in the process.

The process Schor describes is well known from history. Classes experiencing social and economic decline frequently engage in desperate competi-

tive consumption. Historically, though, these have been aristocratic classes who plunge into debt to finance their extravagant lifestyles in a vain attempt to cling to their cultural status in the face of rising groups of merchants or burghers. In all cases, however, we encounter an atmosphere of rapid social and economic changes and uncertainty, paired with social and cultural insecurity.

"AFFORDABLE LUXURIES"

It can be argued that similar conditions emerged in Iceland in the past decade. Iceland had been a relatively egalitarian society and wealthy Icelanders rarely flaunted their wealth, and the media never paid much attention to their consumption. This changed in the 1990s as income inequality rose, creating fabulously wealthy people. And the media reported breathlessly on their spending habits.

At the same time there was a massive increase in the space given to various lifestyle reporting. Home remodelling and various luxuries got ample space in newspapers and magazines while TV shows contributed to a heightened awareness about the consumption of people who were seen to be successful, what they had in their garages, their living rooms, etc. With this the consumption references of Icelanders shifted.

Even if the average Icelanders could not afford his or her own private jet, some could buy a Range Rover and those who could not afford that luxury, even with generous financing, could at least trade out their old car for a shiny new one. And many did. Just so that they would not feel left behind.

This fear of being seen as someone who is not "making it" is all the more pressing in a small society when large groups of people are making it big time. Realising that you are not one of the chosen few who gets to eat the golden risotto can fill people with a feeling of emptiness that can only be plugged with some other luxuries. Marketers exploited this by advertising and marketing all kinds of "affordable luxuries".

WHY, ORDINARY PEOPLE?

The story about the Bang & Olufsen sales received a lot of attention primarily because it seemed to encapsulate the extravagance of Icelandic consumption prior to the crash and proves that nearly everyone (half of all households according to eyjan.is) participated in the craziness. But it probably obscures as much as it illustrates. The bulk of the sales, especially of the high-end equipment, priced in the millions of króna, could only have been bought by the nouveau riche. However, a part, even a very sizeable part, of the general population, must also have been among its customers, stretching their credit card limits to buy a 500.000 ISK flat screen TV.

The critical question is why "ordinary people" felt they needed overpriced home electronics. By blaming it on some innate spendthriftiness or moral failure of average Icelanders we fail to take into account the larger changes that were taking place in the Icelandic economy and society, and we fail to recognise the cultural impact of these changes. ♻️

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'HAPPY HOURS'

We really love drinking (who doesn't though?). It's part of what makes life on the island vaguely bearable, and it is a fun way to kill some time. Drinking at bars is especially fun, as it will often expose you to people and situations you wouldn't find drinking at home with the curtains drawn (unless you live in a bar).

BUT THERE ARE SO MANY BARS! HOW DO WE KNOW WHICH ONE TO GO TO?

Yes, that question has plagued us too. So we got the crazy idea of doing something about it. We thought: there can't be that many bars in 101 Reykjavík. Why don't we pay every single one of them a visit and write down some pertinent info and what we think?

So we ganged together a bunch of our fun-loving writers and their associates and divided the places between them. Our research revealed that there are well over fifty places in 101 Reykjavík that can be classified as bars (depending on your definition, of course—we made our own, which you may read somewhere on this spread), and we strived to include every single one of them (if you find your favourite one (or the one you manage) slipped by us, do send us a note and we'll do it justice in a future issue), and for a glorious five days we worked hard at buying one beer at every single one of them and relaying our experiences through words and Gs.

Of course you might not agree. Of course we might have visited at the wrong hour, or maybe our tastes just differ greatly from yours. Or we might be wrong. That is to be expected, this thing is for entertainment and informational purposes, and it is meant to incite discourse more than anything.

And if it helps you find a new bar you love, then that's all the better.

LEGEND

- Time visited
- Price of beer
- Price of single + mixer
- Price of shot
- Mood/atmosphere
- Interior decor
- Average patron
- Style of music
- Munchies
- Quote of Note
- Identifying characteristics
- In short
- Rating out of five

Icons courtesy of Joseph Wain at glyphish.com. Thanks to Andri at vefstofan.is

1919 Radisson Hotel
Pósthússtræti 2

Monday, 20:30
 700-900 1190-1290 990

Bright with a nice view over the harbour.
 Elegant, art deco.
 25+, High Income, low tolerance, business people.
 Soft, lounge music.
 Tasty and elegant, complimentary olives.
 "People don't really come here to drink shots".
 Inside the old Eimskip building—a rare pearl of Icelandic architecture.
 An elegant and relaxed lounge bar

Austur
Austurstræti 7

Friday, 23:30
 1000 1300 700

Feels very upscale. The word "swank" would not be out of place here.
 Black is the deciding theme, although the red stairs that curled upwards in front of a wall mosaic of mirror pieces stand out as downright daring in comparison.
 In the front half of the bar, young club-going men, at the back, middle-aged suburban women.
 Piped-in low-key electronica and dance music suitable for an upscale bar.
 Austur is a fully functioning steakhouse during restaurant hours.
 Didn't really seem like a place you'd go to get hammered, but more for inviting an important VIP out for drinks, or to have a pre-dinner cocktail before your anniversary dinner.
 Classy without being stuffy, laid-back atmosphere.

B5
Bankastræti 5

Friday, 23:52
 900 1400 800

Fairly jovial in a relaxed way.
 Understated and sparse in that Scandinavian style.
 At this point in the evening, middle-aged suburbanites, although some young people were trickling in.
 There was a troubadour duo on keyboard and guitar, but a DJ typically plays on weekend nights.
 There is a Hamborgarabúlla Tómasar outlet in the back, which is open during restaurant hours.
 It's one large room with a big window onto the street, so you can see everything going on in there as you walk by.
 Pretty nice place to drop by early in the night.

Bakkus
Tryggvagata 22

Saturday, 01:30
 700 1000 600

Hip, crowded and loud.
 Artsy and dark.
 Globalised hipster.
 Hip dance music.
 Not eating is hip.
 "I'm from Astoria, Queens. Where are you from?"
 Hipster central, smelly toilets.
 Where the hip young things of Reykjavík gather to drink, dance and chat. It's a fine example of a hipster joint but is let down by smelly toilets with broken fixtures. Decrepitude may be hip, but it would be nice if they fixed the sinks and toilets.

Bar 46
Hverfisgata 46

Monday, 23:00
 700-800 1000 700

Gloomy
 Classic pool joint + abstract-expressionist paintings.
 Drinking veterans mixed with pool players of all ages (including weathered hustlers).
 Blues, classic rock, oldies, ambient lounge, mostly depending on the bartender on shift.
 Sometimes they'll have nuts, but you shouldn't count on it.
 "So this is where the locals at Grand Rokk went?"
 Pool tables! A smoking area that really feels like you're smoking inside.
 For those who love a game of pool, this is the only place to play downtown. Drinks are fairly priced and the staff is friendly. With the abstract-expressionist paintings on the wall, this place offers the perfect backdrop for a bizarre evening.

Bar 11
Hverfisgata 18

Saturday, 04:24
 750 1100 650

Like the cantina in Star Wars, with worse music.
 Whatever chairs they could find, vomit, lack of giving a fuck, the smell of teen spirit.
 15-25 year-old kids who just don't give a fuck.
 Pitchfork-core
 No
 A place where having 8 shots actually kind of makes sense.
 Just thinking about this place brings the smell of vomit to my nose; it's that awesome.

Barónspöbb
Laugavegur 72

Friday, 19:00
 650 1000 750

What you'd expect.
 In the style of a bar in the Austrian Alps for some reason.
 Seasoned alcoholics and middle aged sailors. 40+
 No music.
 There are plates of food wrapped in cling film.
 "Vikings are overrated".
 The bartender is either on the phone or absent.
 End of the line, yet surprisingly expensive.

Bjarni Fel
Austurstræti 20

Sunday, 22:30
 890 1000 650

A few girls rooting for Finland's hockey team, a few guys in open buttoned shirts discussing Liverpool.
 Nearly identical to Hressingarskáliinn, save for a lot of TV sets displaying different sport events.
 Sports fans.
 It's a sports bar.
 Food from Hressingarskáliinn.
 "3...2...1...FINLAND! FINLAND!"
 Lots of sports.
 In same building as Hressó with the same proprietors—not much separates the two places except one has a higher ratio of sport fanatics.

Boston
Laugavegur 28B



Friday, 00:54
 850 1200 800

Decidedly upbeat—the place was packed, but not in an obnoxious, holy crap I can't move way.
 Dark. Pretty basic bar furniture, to be honest, although the black tassels over the windows gave it a certain Far East/Deep South charm.
 Hipsters, hipsters everywhere. Actors. This is a bar for the 30+ cool crowd.
 Post-ironic Fleetwood Mac appreciation club. Dance DJs on weekends.
 Reminiscent of what Kaffibarinn and Sirkus used to be like, although the location—just outside the hub of most pub activity downtown—is refreshing.
 A nice enough place early in the night, and probably a great place to swing by at peak hours.

Café Paris
Austurstræti 14

Saturday, 23:00
 900 1100 700

Relaxed and friendly.
 Furnished like any upscale street café in any major city—but very clean and neat in comparison.
 Families taking a stroll in town during the day, at night 30+. Tourists and people starting their night out.
 Inoffensive background music.
 Large bistro menu, everything from crêpes to prime lamb, whale and baccalao during restaurant hours.
 "Are you going to be asking a lot of questions? I'm very busy waiting tables, you know".
 The sidewalk café, open during the day is a good place to soak up the brief Reykjavík summer.
 Among the very first 'cafés' that sprang up in Reykjavík in the '90s, the leading 'French'-style sidewalk café since. It has maintained its status, while avoiding becoming a hangout for drunken Icelanders. A quiet place to sit down with a beer at night and avoid drunk locals. As touristy downtown bistros go, Café Paris is actually quite good.

Celtic Cross
Hverfisgata 26

Saturday, 02:32
 800-900 1600 800

Irish frat boy. Interesting mood!
 Like they grabbed every 'ye-olde-pub-be' cliché in existence and stuck it up on the walls.
 The typical Icelandic teen: egocentric, plainspoken, drunk.
 TROUBADOR ALERT LEVEL 1500!
 Doritos/Lay's @ 450 a packet
 This is where you can go to partake in a sex crime.
 Disneyland with drunk teenagers. The basement is where it's at. Ignore the ground floor.

Den Danske Kro
Ingólfsstræti 3

Monday, 18:00
 800 1200 800

Quite crowded for a Monday afternoon. People are loud and the smoking area is full.
 Classic, wooden, Danish, bodega style.
 Everyone that likes to have a beer after work and a few more after that one. Is there an 'average beer drinker'? Well, that's the average patron.
 Live troubadours and bands every night from 22:00. Classic rock and oldies, too.
 Chips and nuts for sale. Open faced sandwiches if ordered well in advance.
 "NU SKAL JEG FANDME HA' EN CLASSIC!"
 The buzz around happy hour is refreshing. No bar will be as busy on a Monday at six.
 Perfect for that after work beer and a game of darts or backgammon. But you need to bring your own backgammon.

Dillon
Laugavegur 30



Wednesday, 21:15
 800 1100 800

Dark, intimate, musky, like the inside of a ships galley. A place for a decent session.
 Decked in black/dark chocolate wood panelling, faded grime-infused floors. Pictures of rock greats: Cash, Bowie, Dylan, etc. Also a photo of resident DJ Andrea Jónsdóttir (aka 'The White Witch') with Robert Plant.
 A mix of 25+ urban types wearing jeans and jumpers, rockers and bikers.
 Playlist is a classic RAWK clusterfuck. Lynyrd Skynyrd, Stone Temple Pilots, Guns n' Roses, Kings of Leon. DJs on weekends and regular live music. All of it rock based.
 This is a BAR. No munchies here.
 "Alice In Chains totally peaked in '96".
 There is a beer garden, but this does not get used that often and then only in the summer.
 The dirt and faded frontage means this is not a fancy bar by any stretch. But its relaxed atmosphere and lack of pretence means you can have a proper drink and a chat.

Dubliner
Hafnarstræti 4

Saturday, 00:52
 850 1000-1700 750

Like the bar from 'Pirates Of The Caribbean', but without the fist fights and attractive people.
 Clichés, the works. Wooden tables, candles in whiskey bottles, framed Irish rugby shirts.
 Weekend dads on their off weekends, drunks who wish they were writers and the not-so-bonny lasses who love them.
 TROUBADOR ALERT. LEVEL 5!!!! MAN THE HARPOONS!! RIG THE LINES!!
 Soups and sandwiches during the day.
 Picture a pub. Then picture a lot of people in leather jackets. Now, go to Dubliner. Buy yourself a drink. While you're doing stuff for me, could you get me a Mars bar and an orange soda? Thanks.
 An Icelander walks into a pub ...

EVERY BAR IN 101 REYKJAVÍK REVIEWED AND RATED

English Pub Austurstræti 12

Saturday, 22:40
800 **Y** 1400 **W** 700
Relaxed, quiet, kind of British.
Classy, dark, old black and white photos all over the place.
At the time of our visit, we saw 40+ and 50+ folks and mature couples mixed with pseudo-intellectuals and wannabe gentlemen. At other times it's reportedly a sports-hnakkí haven. Seasoned alcoholics.
Troubadour alert!
Fast food (pizza, nachos, paninis...) and some snacks.
"Hey! Don't you know there are a lot of good writers in Spain?"
If you feel lucky you can try to win some free beers spinning the wheel. Live football matches of the Premier and Champions League.
A nice bar for chatting relaxed with friends while listening to some good live music.

GGGGG

Esja Austurstræti 16

Friday, 18:00
850 **Y** 1100 **W** 800
Fairly empty.
Classy, but sterile.
Aiming at the 30+ real estate agent and banker demographic, to seemingly little avail.
Top 40.
Tapas.
"..."
Place really needs a little time to set in order to develop some.
Not quite there yet.

GGGGG

Faktóry Smíðjustigur 6



Saturday, 23:40
750 **Y** 1000 **W** 750
A place people come to drink alcoholic beverages. A lot of them.
Dark, mismatched chairs and tables, bar stools and tall tables.
Twentysomethings, some in their early 30s, all out for a night of heavy drinking.
Mismatched like the décor; everything from rock to techno. The upstairs bar is a live music venue that features great concerts many times a week.
None
"Whooooo!!! Wazzzuuup!"
When the weather is good the large courtyard in front can turn into an outdoor festival, good stop for very late bar hopping.
The ideal place for someone looking for the rowdy drunken atmosphere, or a concert.
GGGGG (more if you're seeing a show there)

Gamla Pósthúsið Pósthússtræti 13

Saturday, 00:07
750 **Y** 1800 **W** 800
American Psycho in a bistro with ugly people.
White walls, Habitat couches, those weird beige drapes that look like they're made of translucent burlap sacks.
Still-moneyed baby boomers and their trust-fund offspring. MPs.
House remixes of whatever these people remember of the '70s, '80s and '90s.
Plenty of snacks and a full daytime menu (that looks pretty expensive).
Where the remainder of Iceland's post-collapse nouveau riche like to hide out, drink up and make out, with perfume-drenched results.
Clinton's inauguration, after Tipper Gore passed out and Marion Barry turned the cameras off.

GGGGG

Hotel 101 Bar Hverfisgata 10

Sunday, 23:40
990-1350 **Y** 1350 **W** 700-1000
2007
Modern, Nordic, minimalist, black and white.
Real Estate Agents, 25+, High Income, King of Sweden.
Nondescript background lounge music.
Mediterranean appetizers like marinated olives and bruschetta with marinated artichoke.
"This place is sooo 2007".
Reportedly owned by bankster Jón Asgeir and his wife, Ingibjörg S. Pálmadóttir. Designed by Ingibjörg.
Once had been a popular spot to party, before Iceland's financial meltdown. If chic and modern is your thang, this could be your bar.

GGGGG

Hótel Holt Gallery Bar Bergstaðastræti 37

Sunday, 22:40
900-1000 **Y** 1800 **W** 950
Warm, cosy, dimly lit
The room is full of big comfortable leather couches. The walls are adorned by paintings and sketches by Iceland's most notable artists.
Average patrons are from 25+ upwards. It's mostly Icelanders who stop by to have a drink before or after dinner. Eric Clapton has been known to drop by as well.
Soft, nondescript lounge music.
Small plates like "Duck confit dumplings", and "Tandoori tiger prawn and papadum biscuits and pumpkin salad".
"They make a really good whiskey sour".
The bar really doubles as a museum and a gallery.
Built in 1964, Hótel Holt is classic, sophisticated luxury. That said, the bar welcomes everyone and prices can be quite affordable, especially during Happy Hour. This is a great place to spend a relaxing evening catching up with friends.

GGGGG

Hressingarskálinn, Hressó Austurstræti 20

Wednesday, 20:30
890 **Y** 1000 **W** 650
Relaxed, family friendly, half empty.
Faded American diner, with leather booths next to the main window, simple tables and chairs. Long L-shaped bar.
A mix of young couples and students chatting or hunched over Apple MacBooks.
Playlist mix of non-threatening acoustic indie, Cold War Kids and French pop. DJs on weekends, as well as live music in the form of troubadours and cover bands.
A wide and varied menu. Standards such as burgers, sandwiches and pizza are combined with daily specials.
"Why is the internet not working!?"
The massive and beautiful courtyard where people can sit, drink, eat and (more importantly to some), smoke.
No great shakes, but a perfectly relaxing place to go and chat with friends during the day.

GGGGG

Hvíta Perlan Austurstræti 12a

Sunday, 16:00
850 **Y** 950 **W** 700-850
Dark and relaxed.
Stylish, grey, minimal.
Footballer of the fancier type, wearing designer sportswear, drinking Breezers.
None during football matches (top 40 at other times).
A slim selection of antipasti and burgers.
"He should've gotten a red card!"
High-Definition screens. High-class sports viewing.

In Short:
A nice place to go to drink beer in a dark corner and watch your team play.

GGGGG

Íslenski Barinn Pósthússtræti 9



Sunday 16:00
900 **Y** 1200 **W** 850
Very relaxed, nice.
Feels like grandma's living room. Embroidery on the walls, nice black and white photos of old Iceland upstairs.
25+. Basically anyone could fit in. Nice atmosphere for writers and journalists to sit and write. Couples, young or old. Suitable for people working in the area to sit outside in the summer for lunch.
Icelandic music.
Very Icelandic menu. 'Mother's special lamb', then the very Icelandic one with shark, rúgbrauð and harðfiskur. They also have some plain bar snack, nuts, chips, etc.
"We're the only bar in town that sells Kaldi as draft!"
My grandmother had the exact same embroidery picture of old Greek goddesses
A very nice place to sit down and relax. Good service and with the variety of people in there you don't need to worry if you belong to the group or not, there is no "group!"

GGGGG

Kaffi Amsterdam Hafnarstræti 5

Saturday, 22:00
900 **Y** 1300 **W** 700-900
Vaguely seasoned hard-drinker dive—vaguely normal folks out for a pint dive.
Wood panelling, classic dive.
A nice mix of seasoned drinkers, folks from out of town that don't know better and Bakkus hipsters that snuck in to use the bathroom but find themselves enamoured.
Top 40 'party music'. DJs on weekends, sometimes live bands.
Nope.
"CAN YOU PLAY ROD STEWART'S TEARS FROM HEAVEN?"
One of Iceland's only dives that's not totally end-of-the-line in a horrible way. Occasional alt. concerts will mix up the crowd.
Amsterdam often functions as a venue during Iceland Airways. This often-empty (sometimes-crowded) divey dive bar is not without its charm. You'll at least have the chance to meet some interesting people. That said, the drinks are kind of expensive and it's not the kinda place you seek out.

GGGGG

Kaffi Grand Frakkastígur 9

Sunday, 15:00
400 **Y** 700 **W** 400
The cheapest bar in town.
Plain.
College students, rockers, seasoned alcoholics. 30+
Zeppelin oozed out of a broken sound system.
Not really.
"I really should be studying..."
The cheapest bar in town.
Go there for drinking.

GGGGG

Kaffi Zimsen Hafnarstræti 18

Saturday, 03:44
750 **Y** 1800 **W** 700
Like the world is about to be swallowed by a sports car.
An eclectic mix of incredibly random stuff, with vintage gramophones and sewing machines violently with disco balls, IKEA furniture and a Lascaux-type cave painting.
After midnight, this is where teenhood goes to die. Every pot-smoking, moonshine-drinking, hair-bleaching, SAT-failing unwanted pregnancy in greater Reykjavík is dancing to shitty techno in here. During the day you can find pretty much anyone.
Dance versions of songs you hear everywhere else. Daytime means Pearl Jam and other '90s rock heroes.
No. You used to be able to buy Pizza King slices in the smoking area. That might still be the case.
Come for the teenagers, stay because you're still in line to get in.
At night: Don't. During daytime: sure why not?

GGGGG

Kaffibarinn Bergstaðastræti 1

Friday, 03:00
750 **Y** 1000 **W** 600
It's Kaffibarinn. Very crowded and charged with pheromones of all sorts.
It's Kaffibarinn. No interior decorations can be seen after 2AM. I did see a picture of a dog hanging on the wall besides the bar.
It's Kaffibarinn.
DJs, live music, events. It's Kaffibarinn.
It's Kaffibarinn. Sometimes sandwiches. Free nuts for those who show up early! Free cheese and crackers on Wednesday nights.
"It's so crowded, sexual harassment is called dancing around here. It's Kaffibarinn."
It's Kaffibarinn. It has a great smoking area unlike many other bars in Iceland. It also remains the only bar in Reykjavík that has its own men's choir. They practice Sunday nights if you're interested...
It's Kaffibarinn. Don't expect affection from the service personnel after midnight. However, Kaffibarinn has an excellent feel to it. One can easily say it is a must-visit if you want to experience the core of Icelandic nightlife.

GGGGG

Kofi Tómasar Frænda Laugavegur 2.

Sunday, 01:15
790 **Y** 1150 **W** 700
Quiet before midnight, dance-y after midnight.
Black leather, wood and candles.
PM: Quiet people. AM: Drunks dancing badly.
PM: Quiet. AM: Dance music.
Full menu, includes sandwiches, soups and so on.
"The name of this place means what?!"
A jarring shift from quiet to loud.
Whenever an Icelander complains that Americans fail to understand other cultures bring up the fact that a downtown café-bar is named after "Uncle Tom's Cabin". That said, once you pick your jaw up off the floor, this is a nice place before midnight. Then it changes into the world's smallest dance club.

GGGGG

Laundromat Austurstræti 9

14:00, Sunday
800 **Y** 1100 **W** 700
Bustling, new.
Complicated, nice. Lots of Grapevines in the basement.
Hipsters, 101 celebs, Icelandic celebs and the tourists that love them.
Modern hipster fare
A full menu of bistro/grill food.
"Where can I plug in my MacBook?"
It's new and fresh and full of stuff.
Seems like ideal for hanging out for prolonged periods.

GGGGG

REVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS

These are the instructions we handed out to our reviewers before they embarked upon their mission.

DEFINE: BAR

A bar is an establishment that has 'the sale and consumption of alcohol' as its main purpose and goal. It cannot regularly charge an entry fee (thus excluding, for instance, NASA and Sódóma), and it must remain open until 1AM on weekdays (thus excluding, for instance, Tíu Dropar). It can sell food, but emphasis must be placed on, again, the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages.

METHOD

One beer per bar, one reviewer per bar. At the bar, we will ask the bartender the average price of beer there (as well as the average price of a 'single + mixer' and 'shot'), and if they have 'happy hour'. We will note down the time given and offer on offer in our fancy notebook that we did not forget to bring (because forgetting that would be horrible!). We will then, if at all possible, seek to engage a patron or two in conversation. This is important. We will then write down the following:

MOOD/ATMOSPHERE

Describe the mood in a few words.

INTERIOR DECORATIONS

A note on the style of the place.

AVERAGE PATRON

What type of person frequents it (don't be judgmental here!).

STYLE OF MUSIC (NOTE IF THEY SOMETIMES OFFER LIVE MUSIC)

What kind of music do they play? Do they have DJs or live music in the evening?

MUNCHIES?

Can you get something to eat there?

QUOTE OF NOTE

When you were chatting with the patrons, did they say anything interesting?

IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS, IF ANY

What sets this one apart.

IN SHORT

Sum up your experience in a few words.

RATING OUT OF FIVE

Based on your overall enjoyment/feel (extremely high or low ratings should be argued for)

HAPPY HOURS

Do they have any 'happy hours'? When? What do they entail?

By: Anna Andersen, José Angel Hernandez García, Bogi Bjarnason, Þórður Hermannsson, Ólafur Sindri Ólafsson, Haukur S. Magnússon, Jón Örn Loðmfjörð, Megan Herbert, Kári Tulinius, Paul Fontaine, Sindri Eldon, Vala Þóroddsdóttir, Helgi Þór Harðarson, Magnús Sveinn Helgason

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Live Pub
Laugavegur 45a

Saturday, 01:55
500-600 1600 500-600

Like the Japanese god of karaoke etiquette just died by his own hand.

A karaoke machine, some soccer posters and not much else.

High school kids attempting karaoke in various stages of drunkenness and undress.

The karaoke machine.

No.

Did I mention the karaoke machine already?

Seppuku by karaoke.

Mónakó
Laugavegur 78

Sunday, 21:00
850 1000 800

Drunken stupor.

Homey. Reminiscent of your grandma's living room—should your gran keep a dozen slot machines and some professional drunkards in her home.

Seasoned gambler with alcoholic tendencies

Golden age of rock and reggae.

No, and if you're offered something you probably shouldn't eat it.

"A CLEAN glass? Who do you think you are, the president?"

Slot machine-galore and a uniquely local atmosphere.

If you want to experience the real existence of professional drinkers and gamblers, where no one tries to put up a fake smile for show, go here.

Monte Carlo
Laugavegur 34a

Sunday, 22:00
850 1000 800

Chill, with a dash of madness.

Classic pub decoration, a lot cleaner than you would expect, with more slot machines than anyone can hope for.

'Adventurous' drinkers.

Various kind of music, only playing a few seconds of each song. Happily skipping from Rolling Stones to Cypress Hill to Nýdönsk—sometimes raising the volume for no reason, then lowering it.

No.

"Can you please give me a cigarette?"

It resembles Mónakó.

A real authentic alcohol-crazy Icelandic experience.

Nýlenduvörurverzlun Hemma & Valda
Laugavegur 21

Friday, 00:00
750 850 650

Relaxed. No bullshit. No glitz.

Vintage furniture. Wood & velour. Mood lighting. Basically like a large living room.

101 locals, scenesters, hipsters, students, tourists. People who like to 'hang out'.

Though it's usually a 'sit and chat' kind of place, it also offers a lot of diverse live music, in which case people have been known to dance. Live music usually features slightly obscure or rather non-mainstream bands, but can include anything from reggae to jazz to electro. Known to host 'Grapevine Grassroots'.

No kitchen, but they will grill you a sandwich.

Ómar Ragnarsson was there. That says a lot.

A beer and wine kind of sit-down place. Great for a chat, at any time.

Cosy as fuck.

Næsti Bar
Ingólfsstræti 1a.

Saturday, 00:45.
750 1100 700

Soft music, people chatting.

Generic.

People of all ages who prefer talking to dancing.

Too quiet to hear.

Chips.

"Do you want to play 'kill, marry, fuck'?"

Nice place for a chat.

If your idea of a good time on the town is a conversation with friends, Næsti Bar is the place. The crowd varies quite a bit, sometimes young, sometimes old, sometimes both.

Obladi oblada
Laugavegur 45a

Sunday, 21:30
750 1000 800

Like in a retirement home—if drinking was encouraged and all the women were dead.

Back in the USSR.

The Beatles and their ilk (for example, REM). Occasionally have some kind of Beatles coverband playing.

No.

"Don't go there. Let it be. It's been a hard day's night. Ha ha!"

It wants to be a Beatles bar.

The perfect place to go with a senile Beatles fan—but for others. Please stay away.

Óliver
Laugavegur 20A

19:00, Friday, 23:30, Saturday
850 1200 700

A restaurant/bar/club trying to cover all bases. Wants to be sophisticated.

Black leather booths, wood-veneer walls, and plenty of chrome and glass. Clean, modern, but kinda soulless.

Weekends attracts a mixed 25+ pick-up crowd.

Top 40, dance music, karaoke, troubadour s.

The ubiquitous 101 menu with an emphasis on Indian during restaurant hours.

One of the staff, when describing their Thursday night regular performer, Ingó from Veðurguðirnir: "He is quite popular in Iceland".

More theme nights than a cruise ship.

Covers all your needs for a big night on the pull.

Ólstofan
Vegamótastígur 4

Saturday, 00:30
700-800 1000 700

Friendly neighbourhood feel where people drink while having conversations.

Needlepoint pictures and grandma lights hanging over the bar give the place a homey feel.

Purported intellectual types, artists, journalists and hipsters, 30+.

Low volume music, nothing offensive or loud—anything from Dean Martin to Johnny Cash or indie rock.

None, except bar nuts and occasionally pop corn.

"Yeah, I'm super busy these days! By the way, did you see my exhibition?"

The central bar island. Great place to stand or sit, gives a nice view of the entire place. The heated smoking area is great during cold nights. Ólstofan brews its own beer, Brio, which is excellent.

Great place to sit down for a beer and a conversation with friends.

Prikið
Bankastræti 12

Saturday, 00:00
690 990 500

Old-school Reykjavík café by day, magically becomes a nest of hip hop creatures at night. Have you seen Tarantino's 'From Dusk till Dawn'?

Two floors of austere and simple decorations.

20+ youngsters, rappers and skaters.

Chill by day, hip hop by night. MCs will drop in intermittently.

A full grill menu. Nice burgers.

"This music makes me completely crazy, man!"

That bizarre outdoor smoking area with walls full of graffiti and a broken basket makes you feel like you were in a magical hip hop dream.

Rowdy after midnight. For hip-hop lovers.

Rósenberg
Klapparstígur 25a

Sunday, 17:00
800 1150 900

Relaxed, at night it depends on who's playing.

Wooden panelling. Music posters.

Concertgoers, Musicians' Union members, music lovers.

Easy going, at night hosts often-excellent live performances.

Full menu during restaurant hours.

"Women can also be sound engineers!"

Their steadfast commitment to a certain style of live music (jazz, blues, professional rock).

The best at what they do.

Kaffi Sólon
Bankastræti 7a

Sunday, 19:00
900 1000 800

Too bright for normal barflies. Except maybe at night.

Black, streamlined—a brighter version of Hvíta Perlán. Art on the walls.

25+ whoever. Undefined.

Lounge. DJs on weekends.

A full 101 bistro style menu.

"What's this canapé?"

Nothing much. A place lacking in identity.

Felt uncomfortable the whole time. The light was too bright and the bartenders kept offering me to order something more, while I was still drinking my beer.

Strawberries
Lækjargata 6a

Sunday, 00:00
1000 1500 1000

Faux strip club.

Plush and beleathered.

The unhappily married. Real estate agents and tourists. 40+.

Faux strip club.

Nope.

"This is unfair!"

It's a faux strip club.

What strip clubs turn into when strip clubs turn illegal. Go there if you miss strip clubs, otherwise avoid.

Pingholtsbar
Pingholtsstræti 5

Friday, 00:28
800 1200 750

You could say it was a relaxed atmosphere—we were literally the only patrons. Apart from that, it seemed like a nice place for "warm-up drinks" before hitting louder, more dance-oriented pubs.

We were told it was designed by Guðrún Jónsdóttir, who won an Esquire magazine award for restaurant design. And it really shows. The interior is very Scando—neutral colours, sharp lines, furs and skins. Felt at once comfy and fancy just sitting there.

Wish we could say, as we were the only ones there.

Piped-in adult contemporary.

Set in a basement on a side street, you'd walk right past it if you didn't know exactly where it was, which, in our opinion, is part of the charm.

Quiet, classy and understated. The best happy hour in town.

Thorvaldsen
Austurstræti 8-10

Sunday, 20:30
800 1200 700

Neutral, relaxed.

Stylish, fancy, minimalist.

30+ very business type atmo here. Well dressed co-workers.

Mixed RnB, pop, chill-lounge.

Full menu with a wide variety of meals, kitchen open from 11:00-22:00 + bar snack all hours.

"That's not luck, it's called having connections!!!" [from a random man slamming his cell-phone before storming out].

They have 'Bertelsstofa', kind of the better living room of the place. Suitable for big meetings or fancy parties.

A nice place with an interesting menu. Suitable for friends and couples to dine in a nice looking environment. Although the look of the place hints at a dress code that's not really the case. Good service and relaxing mood.

Trúnó
Laugavegur 22

Saturday, 01:00 AM
800 1400 700

Animated, cheerful, polite.

Playful, colourful, clean. Framed pictures of Madonna and Jón Gnarr, respectively.

Gay & gay friendly.

DJs play disco and europop. Sometimes live music.



A Full List Of Every Happy Hour Offer We Found In 101

<p>B5 Happy Hour every day from 17-19, beer and wine for 650 ISK.</p> <p>Bar 11 Beers & shots for 450 ISK on Thursdays</p> <p>Bar 46 Happy Hour every day from 16-19, beers and shots are for 500 ISK.</p> <p>Barónspöbb Beer is 500 ISK until 19.</p> <p>Bjarni Fel Mojitos 750 ISK every weekend from 23:00.</p> <p>BOSTON Happy Hour every day from 16-20, two for one on beer.</p> <p>Celtic Cross Thursdays, lager for 500 ISK. Inquire about the malt beer punchcards.</p> <p>Den Danske Kro Happy Hour every day from 16-19, two for one. Shots for 500 ISK every Monday.</p>	<p>Dillon Happy Hour every day from 16-20, two for one.</p> <p>Dubliners Happy Hour every day from 15-20, two for one Polar Beers, beer and shot for 1000 ISK.</p> <p>Faktory Happy Hour every day from 17-20, large Egils Gull 500 ISK.</p> <p>Hotel 101 Bar Happy Hour is daily from 17-19, all drinks are 50% off.</p> <p>Hótel Holt Gallery Bar Happy Hour every day from 16-19, beer and wine 50% off. Cocktail of the day is 50% off.</p> <p>Íslenski Barinn Every day, beer of the day for 650 ISK.</p> <p>Kaffibarinn Red wine special on Wednesday evenings at 600 ISK a glass.</p>	<p>Laundromat Café: In May, Happy Hour every day from 22-01, two for one on beers.</p> <p>Nýlenduöruverzlun Hemma & Valda Happy Hour every day from 16-20, Viking Beers for 550 ISK.</p> <p>Óliver Happy hour every day from 23-01.</p> <p>Prikið Happy hour every day from 17-19, large beer 400 ISK. Buy four large beers, get free nachos.</p> <p>Trúnó Happy hour every day from 16-20, all beer and wine 500 ISK.</p> <p>Pingholtsbar (Center Hotel Þingholt) Happy Hour every day from 17-21 as of June 1 (currently every Friday and Saturday), all drinks are half off.</p>
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- Breakfast through dinner menu. Also sells candy, cocoa puffs, and cupcakes.
- "She's got her lipstick on, here I come, da da dum".
- Alcoholic slushies with liquor of choice. Plus Glimmerkaffi. Plus glimmer.
- 'Gay' as in lighthearted and cheerful. But also gay as in gay.

Vegamót Vegamótastíg 4

Sunday, 20:00
800 960 700

Vegamót is like a nicer, younger version of Óliver and Sólon (even though the latter places model themselves after it). The music volume is perfectly tuned so you don't have to listen to the people at the next tables. Gets rowdy at night.

- 101 bistro [via Garðabær].
- A 20+ crowd, mostly young, clean girls and the people who love them at the .
- Hip club background music, DJs in the evening (R&B is often a favoured style).
- Vegamót are the inventors and purveyors of the Original 101 Bistro Menu. And they do execute it well.
- "My ex-boyfriend was a complete joke, but I sometimes see him in Hagkaup. Come on! Hagkaup?"
- Vegamót has been a 101 staple for well over a decade. They found their thing and they do it well, as regulars will attest. Hot summer days bring an outdoor patio that is excellent for guzzling beers and feasting on lobster pizza.

Vestur Tryggvagata 22

Saturday, 03:13
800 1700-1800 700

Like a boy band video, but only one guy showed up.

Nothing to speak of.

Underage ladies? Please.

- Whatever the ladies love.
- No.
- "Are you fucking looking at my girlfriend?"
- The patrons' willingness to get into bed/a fight with you before either of you could spell 'willingness.'
- If Jimmy Smits was a bar, his underage daughter would be Vestur.

Víkingakráin Hafnarstræti 1

Sunday, 18:00
850 1200 900

Warm and inviting

Viking-esque, rough wood, sheep skin, shields and candles

No regulars yet. Tourists probably.

Megas! Icelandic traditional and folk. Live music in the plans.

Full-featured restaurant of the traditional Icelandic variety. Snacks after kitchen closes.

- "Is there nothing at all I can offer you to eat? This is a new place; we can add anything you like to the menu!"
- Servants dressed as Viking maidens!
- A brand-new Viking-themed restaurant/pub. Shows promise. Cosy and friendly. Worth checking out.

Vínbarinn Kirkjutorg 4

Saturday, 18:00
850 1100 850

Mature, sophisticated.

Upscale IKEA.

40+ persons of influence, drinkers of wine.

None to be heard.

Nope.

"I'll pick the mushrooms and you follow me."

Vínbarinn is located right behind Alþingi. It is where politicians and

- drinkers over the age of forty like to get their wine on. Can get quite rowdy in the evening (in that classic Icelandic sense).
- Not necessarily the place for you, but some of us have brought our parents and grandparents there for whatever reason and they seem to love it.

Vitabar Bergþórugata 21.

Sunday, 00:15
700 950 700

Quiet.

Classic pub decor.

Locals and hungry meat eaters.

Rás 2.

Burgers beyond comparison, and some other food.

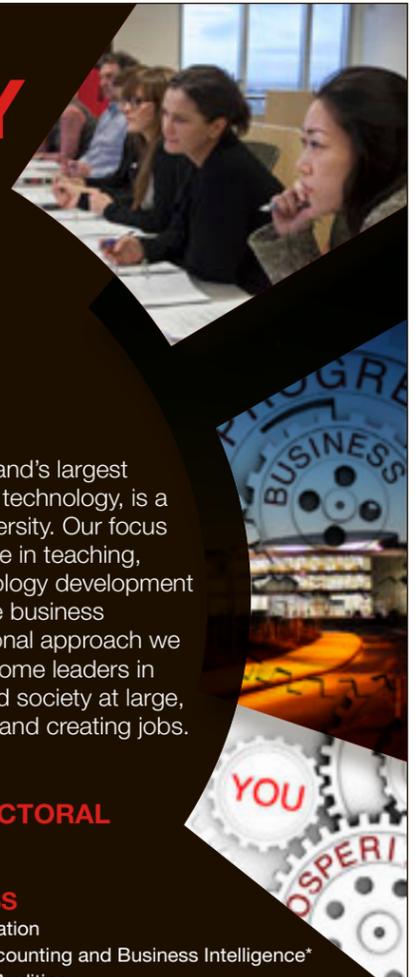
People come here to eat, not chat.

The best burgers in town.

Nice quiet place with good food. This reviewer is a vegetarian but their Forget-me-not blue cheese and garlic hamburger is a fond memory. Every visit is a struggle to stay on the wagon. Luckily their fries are quite tasty too and the bottled beer selection is small but decent.

Vitabar

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Synchronicity



In some places in Polynesia it was common to play synchronous music in order to terrify the enemy in warfare. The music would indicate how well they were organized. An organised army is efficient and effective. If there is a clear pulse it synchronises with a master, a top of the hierarchy.

The marching band is a group that is to be used in warfare. As any other part of a military it has (or had) a strategic role. In some cases for instance, a military force would attack a city and the marching band came afterwards. The people of the city, who had perhaps never heard this kind of music before, were terrified. Hearing the loud synchronous sound of a marching band

would be terrifying and additionally the people of the city would imagine that even more soldiers would follow the marching band and resistance would be futile.

Governments like to use festivities, science and art to remind people of their power. One clear example of this was the "space race" in the cold war. In the field of music, any well-trained army of people will remind one of the efficiency and organisation of the society. That way a symphony orchestra, for instance, has a clear militaristic role. It is a well-trained and efficient army of people that follows one ruler and executes very complicated tasks in great detail in perfect timing. Each and every member is aware of the strategic plan and has a chart with a two-dimensional graph or a grid, an action plan, that is very rigid and exact.

In a country that has no military, like Iceland, one might wonder what is the strategic task of these kinds of

forces. Is it simply to be like everyone else? To have a Nike store because everyone else does? Or is it perhaps a business-oriented goal of giving the signal: "We are a European society and very cultured, disciplined and efficient." In order to give a clear signal you need to speak a language somebody understands. In order to have a competition the rules must be clear and standardised. In order to enter a world competition you must submit to those rules. That way international conductors and soloists can make their regular special appearances, just like single functional objects can be replaced in a machine. They travel between similar institutions doing their art as well as making sure everything is right in every corner of the world. This way orchestras all across the world work together, synchronised. ♪

✉ [GUÐMUNDUR STEINN GUNNARSSON](mailto:GUÐMUNDUR_STEINN_GUNNARSSON)
📷 [LAURI RANTALA](mailto:LAURI_RANTALA)

Music | Reviews



Nico Muhly

I Drink The Air Before Me

www.nicomuhly.com

You'll neither laugh nor cry, but you'll seriously consider doing both

IDTBM reaches far and wide in its attempts to balance playful flute frolics and dark, sombre horns, and Muhly has created a piece that, while ostensibly a soundtrack to a visual work, also functions fairly well as a darkly atmospheric work in its own right. There are hiccups, of course; while 'Music For Boys', 'Jagged Pulses' and 'Fire Down Below' are as enthralling rhythmically as they are sonically, other tracks, such as the jauntily modern 'Varied Carols', fail to go anywhere interesting, and the pretentious quirkiness of 'Music Under Pressure' and 'Salty Dog' is just plain annoying. Sometimes these extremes can even be found in the confines of the same track, with 'Storm Centre' and 'First Storm' veering wildly from awesome, brooding minimalism to lacklustre frivolity. All in all, it makes for an enticing listen, if a slightly uneven one, and could easily be Muhly's most mature work to date.

♫ - **SINDRI ELDON**



Steve Sampling

The Optimist

[f stevesampling](https://www.facebook.com/stevesampling)

Could have used a little pessimism, but still pretty damn good

Steve Sampling's trip-tastic journey through his magical adventure world of drum patterns, random delay effects, airtight compression and—you guessed it—oodles upon oodles of samples is light, accessible and enjoyable, which isn't necessarily a good thing, mind you. The album gets a bit too 'easy listening' sometimes, with 'Distorted Contact' sounding like something you might hear in a vegan coffee shop. But for the most part it remains tacitly elusive, wafting through the air like the cloud of bong smoke it was presumably composed to.

♫ - **SINDRI ELDON**



Svartidaði

Temple Of Deformation

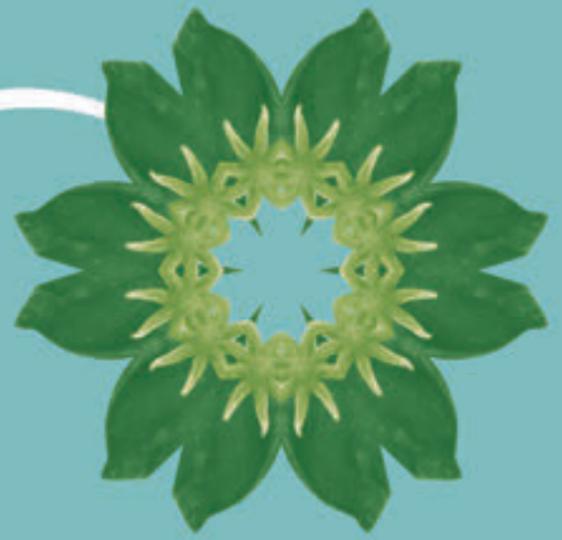
[f svartidaði](https://www.facebook.com/svartidaði)

The hard-to-find 2006 recording finally gets a proper release

Svartidaði have made unpleasantries their business for some time now. But despite a loyal cult following, they've hardly been prolific. In times when a large number of black metal bands are trying to not sound black metal, Svartidaði revels in what once pushed people away and certainly did not recruit hipsters in droves. Barbaric and thoughtful at the same time, it's in the latter that they have subtly elevated themselves above genre standards while remaining true to some of the conventions that made black metal one of the unfriendliest forms of music. The difference is in the layering of discordant chord-tones and simple yet organic drums. All of which compliment one another to create a methodical whole.

There's a tangible love for the craft of black metal but not a forced break-away from it. Self-destruction and misanthropy run amok. Either you choose to endure it or get the hell out of the kitchen before you get hurt.

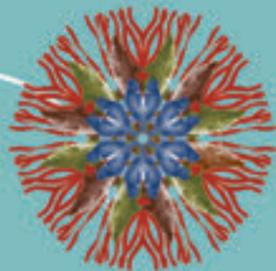
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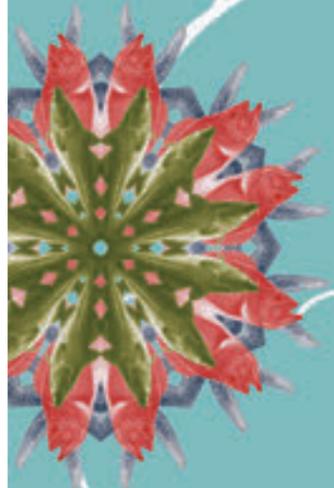
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Mad Scientist Samaris

An interview with the winners of Músíktilraunir 2011



During the Reykjavík Music Mess I caught up with Samaris, the recent winners of Músíktilraunir. The band is composed of three Icelandic youngsters: **Áslaug Rún Magnúsdóttir**, **Jófríður Ákadóttir**, and **Pórrður Kári Steinþórsson (Doddi)**. Since Áslaug couldn't make it to the show that night, Jófríður and Doddi invited their turntabling friend, **Bjargmundur Ingi Kjartansson**, to scratch a few impromptu beats.

Though they have yet to discover their exact formula, the band members mix seemingly antithetical sounds like mad scientist musicians full of grit and exuberance. Samaris' songs are battles between the past (ethereal vocals and clarinet) and the present (electronic knee-rumbling beats). This summer, when the bane of homework withers in the freedom of warm(er) weather, the trio plans to record their first album using the studio sessions they won from the Músíktilraunir contest.

How did winning such a legendary competition feel?

Jófríður: In these competitions you can never know what the judges will focus on. All of these bands were really good in their own way. This competition was happening when we were trying to get our music out, so we thought, why not just enter the competition? It's made everything so much easier for us now.

Pórrður: Yeah, it got us this gig. A lot of people pay attention to the contest every year. The festival organisers probably wouldn't have paid attention to us otherwise.

How did you start getting into music?

J: My parents are musicians, so music has always been around me. I've been in a lot of bands with my sister since I was little. I'm in Pascal Pinon with her, which has been very important for us for the past last two years.

If you have a band already, why did you feel like you needed another one?

J: Samaris came up as a joke between me and Áslaug. We wanted to start a band with a lot of joking. Áslaug and I were going to call the band Portal to Ecstasy.

What kind of ecstasy are you talking about here?

J: Like it means the vagina [giggles all around]. You get the metaphor. That was the sort of thing we had in mind at first, but then we met up with Doddi and made really nice mixed music. He makes the synths and the beats and I always write the melodies and sing. And Áslaug plays the clarinet.

How do you handle being in two bands and school?

J: This week has been the craziest week of the whole year for me. I recently had a lot of tests in school so we only had two practices for this concert. Today and yesterday.

D: And we hadn't practised for like two weeks.

J: Did you see us laughing on stage? It was because we hadn't practised that song at all. It was really ridiculous. I was singing lyrics from another song that we didn't use.

Do you think anybody noticed?

J: No not really. The lyrics could have made sense because they were just from another song. We just wanted to improvise and have fun.

D: Yeah and get loose.

Who are your influences?

J: We're influenced by Fever Ray, Portishead and James Blake. I have also been influenced by Björk, of course.

D: I'm mostly influenced by deep techno, a lot of trip hop and DJ Crush.

Did you guys see the MT review in Grapevine, by Sindri and Bob?

J: Yeah, we thought it was really fun.

D: Yeah, I liked it a lot.

It didn't piss you off?

D: Noooo.

J: He can have his own opinion.

D: I thought it was really funny. It was just a joke. I didn't take it personally.

J: They were also dissing a lot of great bands, so I really couldn't take it personally.

Do you think that Jófríður being in Pascal Pinon, a kind of well-known band, helped you guys win Músíktilraunir?

J: I hope not. That wouldn't be very fair.

D: I think that the clarinet got us the win. The combination of the clarinet and the computer hasn't been done a lot.

J: We've heard this kind of music in other countries, but it's not been done much here in Iceland.

D: We'd like to add the turntables to our sound too.

So Áslaug not being here tonight has changed the band?

D: We were trying to get someone else to play her part but it was kind of a long shot. So it got us thinking what we could do differently.

J: We thought, how can we make the best of this situation? We mentioned our idea to Bjargmundur six days ago and started practising yesterday. Down the road, he's also going to do some work remixing Samaris' stuff too.

D: Yeah, he's going to be playing a bigger part for sure. ☺

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The First Step Away From Segregation

 Words are weapons. Controlling language—the meaning of words, which words exist and which do not—is the ruling powers' fundamental premise to keep society stagnant or sway it toward their ideological direction.

This is for example known to Hannes Hólmsteinn Gissurarson, professor at the University of Iceland and Iceland's primary laissez faire capitalism cheerleader. For more than three decades he has worked hard shaping the Icelandic language, adjusting it to the capitalist ideology and emptying it of words and ideas that might be used to resist capitalism. Book by book, article by article, he has rooted out the use of terms needed to maintain and expand the capitalist ideology. And his success is most obviously manifested in the tabooisation of the word 'capitalism' in everyday language, not due to its negative meaning but because its realisation has become an unquestioned part of our existence.

In addition to capitalism, words like 'civilisation', 'peace', 'freedom', 'equality' and 'rights'—to mention only few examples of many—are all words that have gotten such a one-sided meaning that using them to discuss or criticise is almost impossible.

LINGUISTIC ASYLUM

For the last seven years, the life of Iranian refugee to Iceland Medhi Kavyanpoor has been centred on his fight for his right to existence and to be recognised. He has employed every method, from attending meetings to going on hunger strike. On May 6, he walked into the Red Cross headquarters in Reykjavík, poured petrol over himself and threatened to ignite.

The major media outlets followed by reporting that an asylum seeker had been arrested after "barging into" the Red Cross and "causing explosiveness". A police officer stated that the Red Cross staff had been in "emergency danger", while the staff itself said that only Medhi's life was threatened. The Interior Minister and the director the Directorate of Immigration argued that Medhi's case was based on a "misunderstanding". The editors of newspaper Morgunblaðið repeatedly framed the word 'refugee' within quotation marks, toning down its meaning and seriousness, questioning its actuality. Enwrapped in rhetoric that diagnosed Medhi and portrayed him

"Preventing discussion and action by eliminating certain words and controlling the meaning of accepted ones is a clever strategy."

as a psychotic, it looked like a united attempt to lighten his desperate act's political weight.

This is not a unique incident. The majority of public discourse on refugees in Iceland is characterised by this same use of language. Regardless of whether it is conscious or not, it entails that refugees not only have to seek asylum in the corporeal world but also within the language. After seven years Medhi had enough, gave up on language and took action that needed no words of explanation.

But when looked at in close-up, his action was full of words, repressed for too long. And exactly this—how meaningful the act of self-immolation is as a political act—must be the main reason why Medhi was met with such a barrage of linguistic attacks.

THE SHADOW OF DEFINITION

Preventing discussion and action by eliminating certain words and controlling the meaning of accepted ones is a clever strategy. For example, Iceland's Interior Minister, Ögmundur Jónasson, is currently pushing for expanded police espionage-permits, now referred to as "proactive investigation permits". His main weapon are the words "universal organised crime", but he is not referring to the international aluminium companies that operate in Iceland, all infamous for their world-wide crimes, human rights violations and arms production.

They are referred to as 'companies', 'foreign investment', 'industry'—everything but gangs of organised criminals. In this case, an accepted definition of a particular word weighs heavier than the substantiality behind it. Another example of this is a recent verdict from the European Court of Human Rights, linguistically limited by the European Convention on Human Rights, which legitimised the infamous murder of a 23-year old boy by an Italian policeman during the 2001 anti-G8 riots in Genoa. A powerless person's life was taken,

no one can argue against that, but because the act did not fall under the correct definition it is not recognised as a human rights violation.

Similarly the definition of a 'war crime' does not work on the assumption that war is essentially a crime, but rather a legitimate situation where particularly defined crimes can take place. In the shadow of these linguistic definitions, the world's self-declared civilised nation states and corporations can commit their crimes—not defined as crimes—undisturbed.

THE FIRST STEPS

It is in the shadow of such definitions that the Icelandic state's felonious refugee policy is practised. While refugees have worked hard for the express purpose of obtaining an appropriate place in the dictionary, they have systematically been refused asylum or their cases aren't taken up at all. They are ignored. There is a word for this and that word is 'segregation'. It is the rule in Iceland, with the only exceptions being when foreigners can contribute to economic growth and/or assist Iceland in the competition of nation states.

Words are weapons and in the struggle against oppressing economical and state powers, language is as important a battlefield as the substantial world. Here in Iceland we can start by granting refugees an asylum within our language, by recognising their existence within it. That would be the first step: one small step for a man, one giant leap for the language. 🍷

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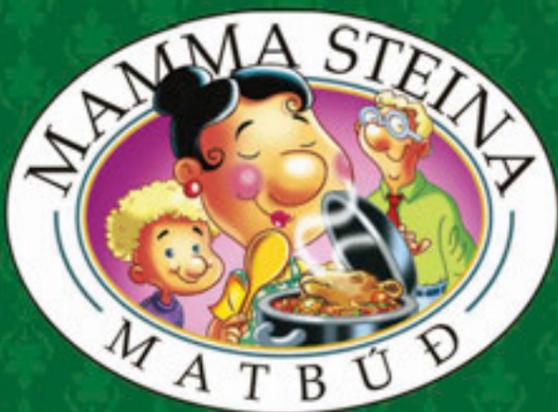
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EVIL SOUND HALF-RUINS EVIL CONCERT

Svartíðauði, Gone Postal, Abominor and AMFJ at Kaffistofan. Saturday May 7.



An evening of extreme music on what was probably the sunniest weekend Iceland has seen so far this year? It does seem a little incongruous, but once we're inside the dark, dank confines of Kaffistofan the pleasant weather outside can easily be forgotten. Covered windows, incense and walls daubed in blood and symbols set the scene amply enough. Things are about to get evil.

First up is AMFJ, an artist described by this very publication as a "one-man death march of genocidal sound destruction". Seems pretty close to the mark to me. Looping, hypnotic noise with a bearded gent howling over the top.

Next we have Abominor who seem to have a nice old-school black metal vibe going on. I can only say that they seem to have this vibe because the sound is so bad inside Kaffistofan. You know when you watch a poorly recorded live video on YouTube on crappy laptop speakers and you can barely make out what's going on? Well it basi-

"You know when you watch a poorly recorded live video on YouTube on crappy laptop speakers and you can barely make out what's going on? Well it basically sounded like that, except a hell of a lot louder"

cally sounded like that, except a hell of a lot louder. It means that working out what's going on is a pretty damn hard task because I could see the guitarists move about on the fret-board but I couldn't hear it in my ears. All I can hear is a wall of noise. This sucks because Abominor seem to be pretty decent and the drummer kicked up a nice groove. I will check them out again if I have the chance.

Gone Postal were in the same boat with the poor sound, which is frustrating because when I saw them last, at the Metal Battle at Sódóma a few months back, they sounded rad. Seen as Gone Postal's repertoire isn't all full-

throttle blasting it was a bit easier to tell what's happening though. They've got a nice death metal thing going on.

And so onto Svartíðauði's vicious black metal assault. Again, the set was marred by bad sound. This meant that a lot of their more intricate guitar work was lost in the wall of noise and things only became clear during songs' slower sections. One such section occurred at the tail end of Svartíðauði's set and was truly crushing. It sounded utterly malevolent and made up for the frustration that the sound had caused through the night. 🍷

CLYDE BRADFORD
RAKEL ERNA SKARPHÉDINSDÓTTIR

Opinion | Music

Cyndi Lauper? Really?

Have the girls that just wanted to have fun in the '80s finally started having fun?



When I first learned Cyndi Lauper would be one of the first international pop artists to perform in Harpa, I was really surprised. Who would want to see Cyndi Lauper? Shouldn't she just stick to playing her hits over and over in Vegas? Well, she keeps getting endlessly nominated for Grammy awards, but does anyone remember anything she's done since '85? She's doing celebrity reality TV for crying out loud!

But maybe Cyndi shouldn't be getting such a negative reaction from myself, as her body of work and impact on pop-culture have never been as relevant. Her hits are, of course, karaoke staples, but it feels that today they have a bigger purpose than being belted out off-key at Cosmo-fuelled girls' nights out.

From the nostalgic balladry of Ariel Pink to the serious cultural criticism of Arcade Fire (Cyndi performed two songs with the Canadians recently, one of hers and one of theirs), from 'witch house' to 'chill wave' (where did these horrible genre names come from?) it seems the innovative side of pop culture is now all about paying artistic

homage to the queens of '80s pop. This is especially interesting since they for a long time seemed were viewed as more of a joke than serious talents, the results of capitalist America taking over the music business.

The loud synths and weird clothes are no longer cool in a bubblegum, '80s high school sense. They are becoming serious, mature mainstream fashion. Is it because the people who grew up listening to this are now running show business? Have the girls that just wanted to have fun in the '80s started having fun again? Are they doing it right now? It may help a little, but it seems too that the joke is wearing thin. We have the '90s to make fun of now, and the pure gold pop hits of the '70s and '80s are climbing up the respect pillar, reaching the best of the '50s and '60s. If you look at Cyndi's clothes in her stunning '83 and '84 videos, you can see a resemblance to today's cuts, patterns and items—even her iconic 'shave-off-one-side-of-your-hair' look seems to have caught on in fashion recently.

It feels like we are living in an age of post-irony. The criticism of the materialistic '80s has faded as people realise that things haven't gotten any better in terms of material- and commercialism. Instead, people are embracing the highly ignored artistic and cultural value of 'cheesy' synths (now: Yeezy synths) and formulaic songwriting. Hipsters donning shiny jackets and vintage

'80s sunglasses as an ironic statement are becoming oddly relevant. Blasting '80s powerpop at parties will not bring about giggly singing and ugly dancing, but rather goosebumps and a strong feeling of togetherness with everyone in the room, as well as a good, loud, feel-good sing-a-long.

It's a shame that Cyndi was dumped into the same category as the one-hit-wonders of the '80s, as she has powerful artistic charisma, owing a lot to the likes of David Bowie (frivolous fashion sense and great stage presence) and Talking Heads (playful use of the pop form), but her original charm had drowned in negative talk of the nefarious decade she made her way in. However, it's starting to look like Ms. Lauper will once more be viewed as a true talent, and songs like the hitherto unmatched 'Time After Time' will never again be laughed at.

As far as her appearance in Harpa goes, I have a feeling that the crowd will be equal parts girls having fun, nostalgic thirty- or fortysomethings, hipster kids and music fans that are slowly becoming proud of their guilty love for 'Time After Time'. I at least will be in that last camp, enjoying the sound of such powerful balladry in the state of the art acoustics that our shiny new glasshouse by the harbour has to offer.

PÉTUR EGGERTSSON

Harpa Fönn Sigurjónsdóttir is owner and director of FRAFL. FRAFL, incidentally, is responsible for MESSA. So read her article with that in mind. MESSA Teaser will be held the weekend of May 20, 2011 at KEX Hostel, Gym and Tonic, Skúlagata 28, 101 Reykjavík and will be free and open to the public on Saturday, May 21 from 11 AM to 8 PM.

Making an alternative art fair in Iceland

An article about MESSA by its organiser



MESSA Teaser is a small-scale 'teaser event' in preparation for the first international visual art fair to be held in Iceland. It will open on May 20 and features a select group of Icelandic and international artists, as well as galleries and collaborative projects, who will be provided spaces to exhibit and sell their work and promote themselves to the artworld and the general public.

The art fair as THE most important international venue for promotion and sales of art today

Art fairs are temporary spaces where galleries and other participants of the art market bring contemporary artwork to promote and sell. The artwork can be purchased on site by the public, but is mainly sold to dealers, collectors, gallerists and other active participants of the art market.

Art fairs started emerging within the art market shortly after the millennium. The first Frieze Art Fair, for instance, was held in London in 2003. Following the success of Frieze—now one of the biggest international platforms of the contemporary artworld—it wasn't long before other major cities around the world caught on. Art Basel in Switzerland, FIAC in Paris, France, the Armory Show in New York and Art Basel Miami in Florida, to name a few, were launched shortly afterward, and are now held annually.

Nowadays art fairs are one of the most important and effective tools of the art market. They are opening a new era in which participants of the art market have a one-time chance and an opportunity to explore, view, sell and buy contemporary art.

Iceland as the new contributor to the new era of the art market!?!?

Iceland has a population of around 320.000. The nation's vibrant and dynamic art scene is driven by a group of inspired artists from various backgrounds and influences who create innovative works and events for a dedicated audience. However, because of the relative infancy of the local art scene—as well as for geographic and economic reasons—Iceland has not been in a position in the past to open up to the international commercial art market in the same sense as neighbouring European countries. Therefore, access to the art market by way of Iceland is quite limited. Consequently,

"However, many artists find art fairs a weird environment. A traditional art fair showcases new and established artists to an international audience, and the artists exhibited are almost exclusively promoted by galleries, with no involvement from the artists."

regional artists are at a disadvantage when it comes to promoting their work to an international audience, and the regional audience is not as likely to be exposed to the work of international artists.

This is a problem, especially when it comes to emerging contemporary artists trying to get footing in the larger art world. This is a problem that needs to be addressed, and it is one that could be solved by the implementation of MESSA—Iceland's first alternative international art fair.

So what will MESSA bring to the art world?

The artworld is a tough and brutal place with many different participants who have various goals and aims, where the art works themselves sometimes get lost in the dynamic bustle. It can be tricky for the emerging individual or freelance visual artist to establish and maintain their careers, but it is important for them to keep up their profile. Art fairs are important in this process, as they can bring artists' work to the attention of people from all over the world.

However, many artists find art fairs a weird environment. A traditional art fair showcases new and established artists to an international audience, and the artists exhibited are almost exclusively promoted by galleries, with no involvement from the artists. That being said, and bearing in mind the current economic landscape, the art market is suffering and the old model is no longer as effective a way for emerging artists to successfully promote themselves and their work. Now is the time for fresh, new ideas.

The fresh new idea is MESSA!

MESSA will not be a commercial art fair in this traditional sense. Instead, it will make a precedent for a new kind of an art fair. What will make MESSA exceptional is that special emphasis will be placed on promoting and exhibiting the work of emerging individual or freelance visual artists, enabling a

crossover between the established and non-established.

Also, MESSA will not only focus on selling art and potentially making a profit. MESSA aims to be more of an art event, with the dual purpose of giving emerging artists the support, connections and knowledge they need to cultivate their future careers in the art world, while also giving the general public access to new and exciting talent and artwork to which they might not otherwise be exposed. MESSA will help to create a platform for networking, sharing, collaboration, connections and support within the visual arts.

A one-time opportunity to buy art. MESSA will set an example for the involvement of the general public within the art world. Who doesn't want to light up their life with a beautiful work of art, or go around in the pub with their exceptional knowledge of contemporary art and the hottest thing today, or just add another rare piece to their collection?

So join us for MESSA Teaser on Saturday, May 21 2011 at KEX Hostel from 11.00–20.00 to nurture your eyes and fill your homes with interactive and beautiful contemporary art works.

Featured artists in MESSA Teaser include Anni Leppälä, Björk Viggósdóttir, Etienne de France, Harpa Dögg Kjartansdóttir, Katie Bethune-Leamen, Klængur Gunnarsson, Leó Stefánsson, Þorgerður Ólafsdóttir and more. Featured galleries in MESSA Teaser include 002 Gallery, The Lost Horse Gallery, and our guest of honour, The Corridor, the oldest running gallery in Reykjavík. Featured publications in MESSA Teaser include Endemi and Crymogea.

In addition, a symposium about the making of an alternative art fair in Iceland will be held on Monday, May 23, at the SIM house, at Hafnarstræti 16, in English and open to everyone! ☺



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The Exponential Curve Of Caribou

Dan Snaith discusses dancing, math, and the necessity for change



With five albums under his belt, Dan Snaith's sound continues to approach a plane of infinite possibilities. From the club-inspired 'Swim' to the psychedelic 'The Milk of Human Kindness,' there is no doubt Dan, who goes by the moniker Caribou, has found his muse in the chameleon; it's simply impossible to know what kind of music he will produce next. With the persistence of the band's drummer Brad Weber, a true 'Iceland-o-phile,' Caribou will finally be gracing us with their presence this weekend. We caught up with Dan for a short interview before the concert to pick his ever-evolving musical and mathematical mind.

You're known for changing your sound with every record. Is this something you do intentionally or does it happen naturally?

I don't think I could summon enough enthusiasm to make the same record over again. While I was making my second album, at first I thought: "Okay, I should make this one like the first one because people seemed to like that". But that felt so retrograde. For me, it's just natural that music evolves. Now I've gotten to the point where I consciously want to change with each album and I like that people expect something different from me every time.

Do you get bored easily with the songs that you write? Is that why you change your sound often?

I've never gotten tired of playing any song live. Some bands don't want to play their older songs, but I'm always consumed with the moment during live shows, so it's always this different, changing experience. But the most exciting part about music for me is always generating the ideas in the first place. Then there's this long process of tweaking things and getting all the sonic particulars in place, which is okay, but that's not the exciting part about making music, not for me at least.

How do you feel about 'Swim', your latest album, compared to your others?

It's definitely my favourite of all of them. I feel like it's a comprehensive collection of what I've done musically so far. And since 'Swim' was released a year ago, our experience playing live has completely changed. Before this album, we never had people dancing at shows, because it wasn't really that kind of music. Now, everyone dances. Being able to see some sort of physical response from people feeds our excitement when performing live. It changes the way the songs develop as we're playing them. We've incorporated its electronic elements into a properly spontaneous live show, rather than somebody just pushing buttons on a laptop.

It's been about a year since its release, have you written any new stuff since then?

Just ideas. It's not like I sit down and write ten tracks and those are the ones that go on the album. It's a very gradual process of figuring out the different sonic directions I can go in. My ideas build up over time rather than occur all together. So I've started in some sense, but I couldn't play you a song that's going to be on the next album. I've only recorded bits and pieces.

Have you been to Iceland before?

I've been in the airport for about an hour on the way to the UK from Canada. But our drummer Brad Weber is a massive Iceland-o-phile. He's visited many, many times. He's constantly like, when can we do a show in Iceland? But somehow it just never worked out until now. Even this time it was a trade off because we'll end up only having 24 hours in the country. Though it's a shame, we all really want to play in Iceland so we rearranged our schedule to make sure that we could this time. And we don't sleep very much, so we'll do as much as we can in that little bit of time.

Well you won't have too much trouble not sleeping in Iceland because we've already got almost 24 hours of light here.

Yeah exactly. That will help. I think this

trip will be more about meeting people there, rather than getting out into the natural environments. That will have to wait till next time.

Do you listen to any Icelandic musicians?

One of the reasons I've wanted to come to Iceland for the last five or six years was because we did a tour with Mugison in Japan in 2005. We had such an awesome time. His music is so great. Ever since then, I've followed Icelandic music. I like Sin Fang a lot too. We were excited when we heard he was going to be playing with us at the show Sunday night.

I read that you have a PhD in mathematics from Imperial College London. Do you have two separate brains, one for math and another for music?

I've been making my own music since I was a teenager. In fact, my first album, 'Start Breaking My Heart', came out when I was an undergraduate student. And I was still doing my PhD when my next few albums came out. It all just happened gradually. I probably would have chosen to do music in the first place if I could have somehow known beforehand that I would be able support myself doing it. Making music is more of an intuitive, emotional process for me. But mathematics was something that I really enjoyed too, so it wasn't like I wanted to escape from it as soon as I had the chance. I think mathematics is more musical than people realise. The mathematics you do as a PhD student are completely different than the arithmetic you do in high school. The higher levels of mathematics are much more creative, intuitive, and artistic. In that sense, the things that I like about mathematics parallel what I like about music. ♪

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Road Tripping For n00bs

A beginner's guide to the south road



“On any road trip, don't ask yourself, 'why?' Ask yourself, 'why not?' Sometimes the best experiences are the ones you almost missed

Words

Steve Ganey

Photography

Vanessa Schipani

The classic road trip is as old as roads themselves. Planning a road trip shouldn't be a daunting task, but for any highway newbies out there, here's one idea for an easy trip that will leave you feeling on top of the world.

My travel buddies and I took a car for a one-day jaunt on Route 1 to the town of Vík í Mýrdal. Roundtrip from Reykjavík, it totals at about 370 kilometres, or five solid hours of driving. Leaving plenty of time to soak up the scenery, the trip lasted ten hours, which was easily doable in one day.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Knowledge of the trip ahead of you is probably the most important thing to have on any trip, so don't skimp on the research. Major sights along the way are the waterfalls Seljalandsfoss and Skógafoss, you pass by the glaciers Eyjafjallajökull and Sólheimajökull, and the beach at Dyrhólaey is definitely worth a detour. There's not much to do in Vík besides taking pictures, but it's beautiful and quaintly Icelandic, and about as far south as you can go on the island.

Choosing a car is obviously another big part of planning a road trip. Luckily, Route 1 from Reykjavík to Vík is totally paved and clear of ice most of the year, so a cheap compact car may be all you need. However, if you find some interesting sights off the beaten path, a larger vehicle with 4WD could be a wise investment.

LITTLE COMFORTS

I rallied my companions and set out at 11:00 and

hit the road (another helpful tip: if you're riding with someone else, BE READY ON TIME). Within minutes, I realised one thing for which I had not planned: I didn't bring any music. Unless you're a fan of the agonising mixture of American pop and radio static ubiquitous on Iceland's FM dial, make sure to bring a formidable music library.

It was about the time we passed through the town of Selfoss, I realised another total n00b mistake I made. I didn't bring any snacks. It's amazing how hungry you can get staring out the window, so bring tons of snacks. Munching is also a good way to break up the monotony of driving. Music and snacks: don't leave home without 'em.

After two hours, we finally arrived at Seljalandsfoss. Although the amount of water flowing over the falls isn't that much compared to some of Iceland's other waterfalls, Seljalandsfoss is impressive due to its sheer height, and you can take a trail behind the falls. Wear good boots, because by the time I got back in the car my shoes were carrying an extra two pounds of mud. We spent an hour taking photos of Seljalandsfoss from every conceivable angle before setting off.

Only twenty minutes away is another gem, Skógafoss. A wide waterfall with a high volume of water, and respectable drop of 60 metres, Skógafoss is a classic scene. Seriously, ask anyone to draw a waterfall and they'll come up with something that looks like Skógafoss. There's a convenient staircase to the top of the falls and a tiny path where the brave/foolish can look over the edge.

NOT ALL WHO WANDER ARE LOST

We continued on toward Vík. This is where good research paid off. Earlier that morning, I was flipping through my guidebook and spotted a small blurb about a beach facing the island Dyrhólaey. It didn't sound especially spectacular, and I don't know what about it piqued my curiosity, but it's always better to indulge that sense of adventure. On any road trip, don't ask yourself, 'why?' Ask yourself, 'why not?' Sometimes the best experiences are the ones you almost missed.

So off we went in our little Toyota down the rough gravel road. This is where a big SUV would have been nice. The short detour became a minefield of potholes, mud ruts, and huge rocks just waiting to take chunks out of the bottom of the car. But curiosity was rewarded with stunning black sand surrounded by huge rock formations. We took photos, ran on the beach, wrote messages in the sand, and just revelled in the sheer beauty. So cliché, I know.

We bounced back to the main road and twenty minutes later we were in the tiny town of Vík. One unique feature is the church, built on the highest point in Vík and the only refuge should nearby Mount Katla wake up and destroy the town. We grabbed a bite to eat and made our way back to Reykjavík as the sun began to set.

When all was said and done, the trip cost around 25,000 ISK for rental and fuel, but that could change depending on what car you choose and what time of the year you go. If you're a road trip first-timer, the south road journey is a great way to dip your toes in and test the water. 🇮🇸



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Back To The Way It Was

Grapevine tours *Mývatn*



“I couldn't help feeling as though I maybe didn't want to write about this tour after all

Words

Paul Fontaine

Photography

Maroesjka Lavigne

North-central Iceland's attraction to tourists revolves primarily around two areas: Akureyri, for being “the capital of the north”, and Húsavík, which has exceptional whale watching tours. Sadly, the wonderful stuff in between these two towns is often completely neglected. However, there is a tour that can introduce you to quite a number of these little treasures.

Grapevine's photographer and I flew up to Akureyri for the “Lake Myvatn is Natural Magic” tour. We were greeted at the airport by Trausti, a jovial and informative freelance guide who's been in the business since 2007. While part of what he does is offer private tours for visiting VIPs, he told us that the Mývatn tour has been popular, especially in the winter.

Travelling with us in Trausti's van were three elderly Australians and a quiet Canadian photographer. Trausti was anything but quiet, and made for the perfect guide—having grown up in Akureyri he knows the surroundings like the back of his hand. He provided interesting commentary (including a brief explanation of the aluminium smelters vs. exporting electricity debate) peppered with forgivably corny jokes, kept the mood lively, and answered questions faithfully.

WATERFALL OF THE GODS

Our first stop was just outside Akureyri, at Gallerí Surtla—a converted barn where handmade felt products are sold. In the next barn, we were able to witness the use of an automatic, laser-guided cow milker from France, which I personally found pretty cool.

After that, we were off to Goðafoss. Trausti explained that the name, “waterfalls of the gods”, originates from when Iceland officially converted to Christianity, and the newly saved Icelanders threw their graven images of Óðinn and Þór into this waterfall. It's a spectacular site, but what struck me was the contrast between it and Gullfoss. At the latter, you will find a large tourist shop and a restaurant; at Goðafoss, you'll find a waterfall. It was refreshing to be able to enjoy this natural wonder without being reminded that we were all tourists.

Moving along, our next major stop was Lake Mývatn, and if you haven't seen this place, you're missing out. Stand on a tall enough hill, as we did, and you'll see how positively Tolkienesque this volcanically and glacially created lake is—cone-shaped hills, giant craters (created by hot lava meeting cold water and subse-

quently exploding, we learned) and hundreds of tiny little pools along the lake's edges gives this place a surreal beauty; the lack of any major souvenir shop helped preserve it.

DIMMUBORGIR: NOT JUST A BLACK METAL BAND

After about half an hour there, we were off to Dimmuborgir. Now, for most of my life, Dimmuborgir was a black metal band. But it's also a frankly mind-bending maze of lava pillars and winding paths that you can easily get lost in. It's also home to the famed Icelandic Yule Lads and their mother, the half-troll Grýla. We were told that every Christmastime, Icelandic farmers from the surrounding area dress up as the Yule Lads and provide terror and joy for visiting children. We were also told that it's not unusual to “see things” that you might not expect to see—one American tourist allegedly saw the ghost of John F. Kennedy sitting on a rock and reading a book. Trausti did not know what book it had been.

Once our stay was finished, we stopped briefly at a number of places—the natural geothermal vents of Hverir, the enormous crater Víti (literally, “hell”) and the naturally formed jacuzzi-in-a-cave of Grjótagjá. All

of this was very nice, but it paled in comparison to our final stop before heading back to Akureyri: the Mývatn Nature Bath.

KEEP IT LIKE A SECRET

On my first trip to Iceland, in 1998, the Blue Lagoon was little more than the lagoon itself and a tiny shack for selling admission and ice cream. Today, it is a full-fledged spa, replete with its very own eponymous cocktail. I am of course not speaking badly of the Blue Lagoon—there's a time and a place for the luxury the place provides, and it will always be a staple of Icelandic tourism—but the Mývatn Nature Bath was pretty much exactly what the Blue Lagoon used to be over a decade ago: understated, low key, and simple.

As the photographer and I floated in the steaming hot water, listening to the excited conversations of a group of Danish tourists, I couldn't help feeling as though I maybe didn't want to write about this tour after all; that I wanted to keep this to myself, preserved in time, remaining a humble attraction that stands on the strength of the natural wonders it provides. But in the end, I decided to share the secret with you. Because I'm generous like that. ☺

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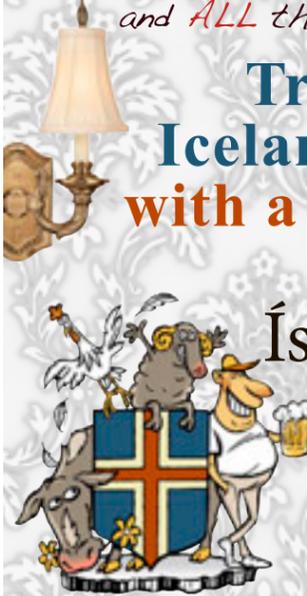


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All About The Love

*Tales of a weekend in Ísafjörður during
the Aldrei fór ég suður festival*



In the salty, arctic air of Ísafjörður, a small fishing town cradled in the north-west corner of Iceland, an omnipresent warmth lingers. A sense of community radiates from the town's residents, their quaint homes, and the landscape that can become suddenly intimate if one looks closely enough. During the Aldrei fór ég suður music festival this feeling community warmed me to the core.

THE DRIVE

We drove up to Ísafjörður packed in a small rental car. My friends slept, sung, and snacked during the six-ish hour drive from Reykjavík. The spider web of a road map gave us the impression that time should be allotted for getting lost, but in reality the roads are well marked and signs for Ísafjörður are plentiful.

Out of the window, I witnessed the landscape pull us through the seasons. While traversing a mountain range after turning off route 1 onto route 60, we struggled to find the road in a snowstorm. But in the slowly greening plains before entering the Westfjords, we rolled down the windows and shed our layers.

The creation of this landscape is no less epic than the sight of it: thousands of years ago, the Westfjords, like all fjords, formed by glacial melting. The diminishing ice carved U-shaped valleys out of the rock, leaving behind rows of sheer, flat mountains.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Within thirty minutes of my feet touching the soil of Ísafjörður, a town of roughly 3000 inhabitants, I got the overwhelming feeling that Aldrei fór ég suður (AFÉS) is a festival for the past, present and future residents of

Ísafjörður, the rest of us warmly welcomed guests.

The festival's name, which translates as "I Never Went South" (to Reykjavík), comes from a song by Bubbi Morthens, a former migrant worker, and alludes to the swelling urbanisation of Icelandic society. Though fishing has been the main industry of Ísafjörður for centuries, political fishing restrictions in the early 1980s and a decline in the fish population has caused the Ísafjörður natives to seek work in Reykjavík or abroad, leading to a decline in the town's population. Now in its eighth year, AFÉS came when a revival of unity was needed. Already on Friday evening, during the community seafood feast in the town's centre, I could tell a sense of community would run deep throughout the festival: an owner of a local restaurant cooked up huge pots of seafood soup and fish stew, and cheap beer was piled on ice in the back of a pickup truck.

Mugison, who conceived AFÉS over a beer in London with his father in 2003, remarked, "This festival is all about the love. There are no sound checks and mostly everyone uses the same equipment. We just want to have a good time this weekend and enjoy each other".

The night of AFÉS' conception, Mugison and his father made a list of all the things they disliked about the structure of most music festivals: lesser known bands play first; sound checks take as long as the set itself; money reigns, and thus advertisement infiltrates everything from the napkins at the hot dog stand to the stage décor.

Mugison said he wanted to start a festival in Iceland that replaced this formal structure with a relaxed, communal atmosphere, where the musicians and the town's residents volunteer their time and donate their goods.

COMMUNITY BRENNIVÍN IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL

After sitting on the shore and passing around a bottle Brennivín, my friends and I sauntered over to the venue, a

large warehouse situated on the outskirts of town. The stage was decorated with commercial fishing equipment that hung from the ceiling on thick rope. Large plastic tubs used for storing freshly caught fish held the festival's ever-growing empty beer can collection.

As the Brennivín began to take hold, the concerts started to blend together, as if the musicians had all played simultaneously. But my hazy memory of this musical melding was no dream: Icelandic musicians are an especially incestuous bunch. FM Belfast's Lóa Hlín Hjálmtýsdóttir, for example, is also in Prinspóló and múm's Órvar Þóreyjarsón Smáráson plays with FM Belfast, Borko, and Skakkamanage from time to time.

SINKING EYELIDS

The sun, even in April, lingers late and rises early, making a viewing of the Northern Lights this late in the season especially rare. Despite the odds and bright lights that beamed over the crowd, the sky graced me with my first viewing of Aurora Borealis, a subtle tinge of green that accented Ísafjörður's rural stars.

As we lay on a hill above the concert venue in the plush Icelandic grass, the music still droning in the background, the sky sunk into the depths of my heavy eyelids. Before falling asleep completely, we walked back to a warm Icelandic home and opened a door that we had been told remains unlocked at all hours of the night.

WARMLY WELCOMED RISING

We awoke late Saturday morning in what we realised was the room of a teenage Icelandic girl: the full collection of Twilight novels gave her away. Our hosts had kicked not one but both of their children out their rooms for us. The second room was across the attic hallway, its door adorned with stencils of planets and the names of Icelandic boys.

Maybe it was the smell of eggs permeating the house that morning that



“As the Brennivín began to take hold, the concerts started to blend together”

caused our bodies to desire the waking life. We soon discovered that our host, who fed us breakfast alongside their children, was the cook of the fish stew and seafood soup of the evening before. Food, I've begun to realise, is the language of hospitality. And at no point in Ísafjörður did I go hungry.

LABOUR OF LOVE

On the second night of concerts, rain joined the celebration, but the crowd of hundreds of people remained unbothered. This year, AFÉS is said to have around 3.000 attendants, and I couldn't help but notice how many children were in the audience that night, sitting

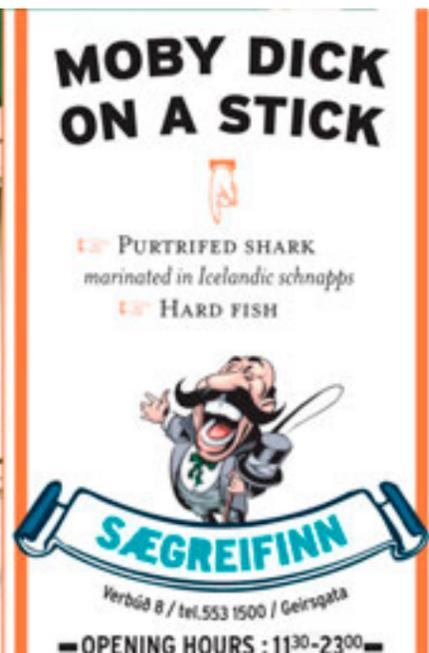
atop their father's shoulders. There is something strangely beautiful about a festival where old men drunk off of cheap vodka can peacefully teeter next to excited little girls waiting in line for Icelandic pop star Páll Óskar's signature. Even these drunken old men grew endearing in my eyes, especially as they danced with us to a metal band of teenage Ísafjörður natives.

For the musicians and festival organisers, the party continued through Sunday. In the morning all the musicians went to Sunday mass with the town's residents. In the afternoon they took a bus together to the pool in Bolungarvík, a tiny town that neighbours Ísafjörður, where impromptu water yoga ensued. The day ended with a huge Easter dinner and improvised concerts.

On Sunday, I witnessed Icelandic singer Lára Rúnars serve drinks at dinner, Borko massage FM Belfast's Árni Vilhjálmsson in the sauna, a busload of

Icelandic musicians sing 'Kumbaya, my Lord' together in perfect key, and town residents clean up after the crowd. These moments can't be measured in currency, but money never really factored into the equation in the first place: no one, not even the performers, are paid (other than in food and beer). Anything that does need buying is paid for by sponsors like Landsbanki and Hertz, though advertisement remains minimal. Even with a speedy growth in attendance, the festival has remained an intimate, labour of love endeavour.

✉ VANESSA SCHIPANI
☎ ALISA KALYANOVA



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FOOD & DRINK

Don't Forget Your Speedo!

Having fun and getting in shape with Reykjavík's water polo league



Here's a fun activity: Go to your nearest pool and start swimming. Swim around until your arms get tired, your legs go numb, your lungs burn, and your heart feels like it's going to burst. Then, swim some more. This is essentially the experience for most people the first time they play water polo. However, for anyone out there who loves competition, wants to get in shape, or thinks they just look amazing in a Speedo, you could give water polo a try.

I met up with a local water polo team at Laugardalslaug at a Monday night practice to get a feel for the game. There were eight men and women of various ages and skill levels practicing that night. We started out with some warm-up drills. One drill involved the team lining up and treading water while they passed a plastic chair to each other above their heads. The team spent

the rest of the practice doing passing and shooting demonstrations. I spent the rest of the practice trying to catch my breath and re-evaluating my diet and lifestyle. Despite my physical limitations, the team was always very encouraging.

At the team's next practice, another water polo team showed up to scrimmage. From the instant the game began, the players never stopped. Each player charged through the water on a mission: swim, pass, shoot, score. Whenever possession of the ball turned over to the other team, everyone raced down to the other end of the pool. Watching them all surge toward the goal looked like a school of sharks moving in for the kill. The match was hard-fought on both sides, but always friendly.

A WORK IN PROGRESS

The Reykjavík water polo league is relatively new. Founded only five years ago, it is admittedly still in a developing phase. There are only two official teams, and games are tentatively held once every two or three weeks. Glenn

Moyle, a friendly Kiwi in his mid-thirties with long blonde dreadlocks, played water polo for years in Reykjavík before becoming head coach of one of the teams. I spoke with him after practice to learn more about the sport and how it's developing in Iceland.

Glenn tells me he played many different sports growing up in his native New Zealand, and was an especially avid swimmer. He got bored, however, simply swimming back and forth, so being able to toss a ball around in the pool made water polo a natural fit. "What I love about sports is the competitive side, the physical side, the mental side. And water polo combines everything that every sport has into one," says Glenn. He goes on to tell me he began playing at age twelve, and soon it became a major part of his life.

After ten years of playing he put water polo on hold in order to travel the world. His travels brought him to Iceland, where on one visit to Laugardalslaug four years ago, he found a water polo team practicing. He asked the coach if he could join in, and after years away from any official leagues,

water polo was suddenly back in his life. He continued to play in Reykjavík for the next few years, as well as work to progress the league. His work to develop the sport in Iceland led to the first official league championship game last year, which Glenn's team won 4-3.

RIPE FOR THE PICKING

Although it's a small start, it is a start nonetheless. But Glenn thinks Iceland is ripe for a sport like water polo. He cites the high quality of Reykjavík's pools and the success of handball in Iceland (since water polo is "just an aquatic handball" as he puts it) as reasons the game could be very popular. "The best facilities in the world combined with one of the best handball teams in the world, it should be one of the better water polo teams in the world."

Glenn's involvement with the team reached a new level when he became head coach at the start of this season. Though he pushes his players to be their best, Glenn's coaching style is supportive, and very involved. He spends most of the practices in the wa-

ter with the players.

He encourages anyone interested in taking up the sport, or just looking for a great way to get whipped into shape, to come give it a shot. "We have had people come play who can't even swim. But there's no arrogance in the water. It's not just about the competitive side. It's also about the enjoyment, the social aspect. It's about getting a workout. It's about a lot of things."

Glenn still cites some of his best friends today as the people with whom he grew up playing water polo. The game's social aspect can be seen in the camaraderie among the team he coaches.

For an exciting and fun way to compete, get in shape, and make some new friends, head down to the pool and dive on in.

If you're interested in playing water polo, you can find the team at Laugardalslaug on Mondays and Wednesdays, 20:00-22:00, or check out their website, www.waterpolo.is

Words

Steve Ganey

Photography

Hörður Sveinsson



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Racist? You Misunderstand ...

Border Control
Landamæragæsla

Economic principles, diagram 6
Undirstöður atvinnulífsins, skýringarmynd 6

NORMAL PEOPLE
(GDP per capita > \$24 thousand)

... enter freely.
EU, US, Canadian and Australian citizens are exempted from Visa requirements.

1.000.000
"Within the next ten years, Iceland expects to have one million tourists per year. Last year there were 500 thousand."
– Björgólfur Jóhannsson, CEO Icelandair Group, according to *Visir.is*.

OTHER PEOPLE
(GDP per capita < \$24 thousand)

Residence permits granted in case of:

- Marriage with an Icelander**
When married or in a domestic partnership with a person from an unequal economic zone, said couple must prove their love before legal authorities.
- Temporary labour shortage**
One-year permit when labour cannot otherwise be found in the EEA, EFTA or Faroe Islands. Can be extended once.
- Au-pairs (18–25 y.o. exclusively)**
Single year permit, without extension option.
- Family ties to an EEA citizen**
Good for 3-6 months. Does not apply to wage earners from Romania and Bulgaria.
- Students**
Spouses of PhD students and American citizens qualify too.
- Field Experts**
- Professional athletes**
- Refugee standing**

Family reunification permitted

Family reunification not permitted

Rights are unclear

The permit application fee is 12.000 ISK and it will not be refunded in case of rejection. Entering the country before application approval is illegal. Most foreign residents must undergo a health examination upon entering Iceland and will be required to bring a doctor's certificate to the Directorate of Immigration. All foreign residents must have their photo taken at the Directorate of Immigration or the nearest sheriff's office. East-Asian nationals who would like to travel to Iceland are asked to contact their local Denmark Embassy, which ignores their applications on Iceland's behalf.

Info gathered from the Directorate of Immigration website, utl.is, on March 25, 2011. GDP statistics are based on 2008 data from the CIA World Factbook.

© Biddu aðeins, 2011

Since May 8, when 53-year-old Iranian Medhi Kavyanpoor attempted self-immolation in the Icelandic Red Cross offices, intending to give up his own life to draw attention to the inhumane treatment of asylum seekers, the racism and xenophobia inherent to this republic has been on my mind. On my blog I have pulled together some examples and anecdotes, the first of which was the public response to Medhi's act. RÚV's first headline read: "Asylum seeker caused risk of explosion"—and described at length the threat caused to the Icelandic Red Cross staff by the gasoline fumes, while making no mention of the seven years Mehdi Kavyanpoor has waited for an answer to his asylum request. Even after taking this desperate measure, Iceland refused to acknowledge his existence. Interior minister Ógmundur Jónasson's initial response, at least the first quoted one, claimed the whole thing must be based on 'a misunderstanding.' Media and public officials thus seemed to do their best to collectively minimise any potential meaning the act might have.

I went back to 1936 and dug up the

story of when Iceland decided not to join the League of Nations, the forerunner of what is now the United Nations, in order not to upset one Benito Mussolini, whose taste for cod was highly appreciated. The League of Nations put fascist Italy under embargo after the latter's invasion in Ethiopia, where mustard gas was amongst Italy's weapons of choice. Iceland chose rather to partake in the riches secured with said mustard gas and the eventual 30 thousand dead, who all served the Icelandic króna well. Mussolini showed his gratitude for Iceland's declared 'neutrality' by personally signing a new contract about fish imports from Iceland.

'THE FOREIGNERS SURVEILLANCE'

Somewhere I mentioned that what you English-speaking lot know as the Directorate of Immigration, for which the Icelandic name is 'the Foreigners' institute', was originally founded as 'the Foreigners' surveillance' and to begin with headed by one Agnar Kofoed-Hansen. He was put in charge of the matters after a crash course organised by the German SS, at Heinrich Himmler's per-

sonal invitation, in the summer of 1939. That was some years after the Icelandic socialist writer Þórbergur Þórðarson was prosecuted at Germany's request, and convicted in Icelandic courts, for libel against Adolf Hitler, whom he had described as a sadistic mass murderer.

I mentioned the Jews who sought asylum from German persecution, also in the late 1930s, whom Iceland turned away without a second thought, it seems. I proposed that their eviction should be seen in the context of 300 German workers invited to work on Iceland's farms soon after the war, people 'preferably of north-west-German stock' as demanded in the contract they would sign. The farmers' union had already explained that the proposed stock 'would cause little danger in terms of "national nature."'

I mentioned the dozen or so Romanian Roma musicians who appeared on the streets of Reykjavík in the summer of 2007, with their instruments, and were removed by police authorities faster than you can say 'racism'. Or almost—the officials gave their time quite generously to the media, distributing

slander about "this sort of people" who, according to police intelligence, always bring trouble. They were evicted without being evicted, simply thrown out of the country without any appeal to the rule of law. That was necessary since the people had every right to be here, as any other citizen of the EU.

BE CAREFUL

You see, I went back and forth through these bits of history in a few blog posts to provide a sense of continuity. To do such history any justice, a book is obviously needed, one that remains unwritten. In my mind, the current unwritten state of any such book bears witness to this society's reluctance to face its faults, let alone bloody ones. In 2005, when documents revealed the above-mentioned eviction of Jews to Denmark and Germany in the advent of WWII, the Progressive Party's then-Prime Minister, Halldór Ásgrímsson, responded that one should be very careful about apologizing for ancient events, dating from times when handing Jews over to Nazis was considered normal ...

Right on. Let us be careful. Now,

after this briefing, this minor attempt to give some context to the strange response to an exhausted man's attempted self-immolation, to reflect upon this republic's systematic lack of compassion, as one might put it mildly, systematic racism as I phrased it publicly, the local intelligentsia makes itself heard: Illugi Jökullsson, a public intellectual I've known of and looked up to since my childhood, and a member of the constitutional committee currently drafting a new post-2008 constitution, makes public his and his fellows' ideas on the rights chapter.

The rights chapter—it's chapter 7—comes right after the chapter on the Church, right after Parliament and taxation. The changes proposed regard article 65, which constitutes equality under the law, also known as the pillar of political modernity. Chapter 7, article 65 currently reads, in a rough translation: "All shall be equal before the law and enjoy human rights, without distinction of sex, religion, opinions, national origin, race, colour, economic means, kin or any other status." It broadly resembles the classic Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ELIMINATE RACE

The constitutional committee will now propose a change of this text. According to Illugi, the committee will propose that the word 'race' be eliminated from this enumeration. Why? Because they have found out that the racists were wrong all along: there are no races. "It has now fortunately been scientifically refuted that the races exist at all—they are make-believe, a myth, and people's different appearances and cultures are not caused by their 'racial' differences". Well, excuse me, but: duh.

This was a few days ago, and I'm still stunned. Instead of race, the clause shall now specifically mention 'genotype'. I refuse to cite the supposedly good intentions involved. Iceland just might, it just might outdo its own, as of yet unexamined, history of wilful ignorance of other people by explaining racial discrimination away as, to use the phrase employed by our interior minister above: a misunderstanding. Meanwhile, Mehdi Kavyanpoor is in custody, facing charges for the attempted self-immolation. His biggest chance of escaping charges and his biggest chance of finally reaching something akin to an asylum in Iceland is supposedly to cite mental illness. Which would of course explain his intense, prolonged misunderstanding of the locals' generous hospitality. ♡

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GEYSIR



PAGE 20

A place where having 8 shots actually kind of makes sense.

Our bar guide, talking about Bar 11. Did you hear, we're reviewing every single bar in 101 Reykjavík! Whoa!

PAGE 14

Depositors, lenders and borrowers were given just such a sweet deal in 2001 via the CBI's guarantee to insure their deposits—regardless of the money's physical location or denomination.

David Howden, co-author of 'Deep Freeze: Iceland's Economic Collapse' blames the Central Bank for creating incentives no rational banker could deny.

PAGE 8

The situation in which foreign tourists who oppose whaling are keeping minke whaling alive in Iceland is very ironic.

Anti-whaling advocate Sigursteinn Mátsson has a campaign up his sleeve.

PAGE 30

One of the reasons I've wanted to come to Iceland for the last five or six years was because we did a tour with Mugison in Japan in 2005. We had such an awesome time. His music is so great. Ever since then, I've followed Icelandic music.

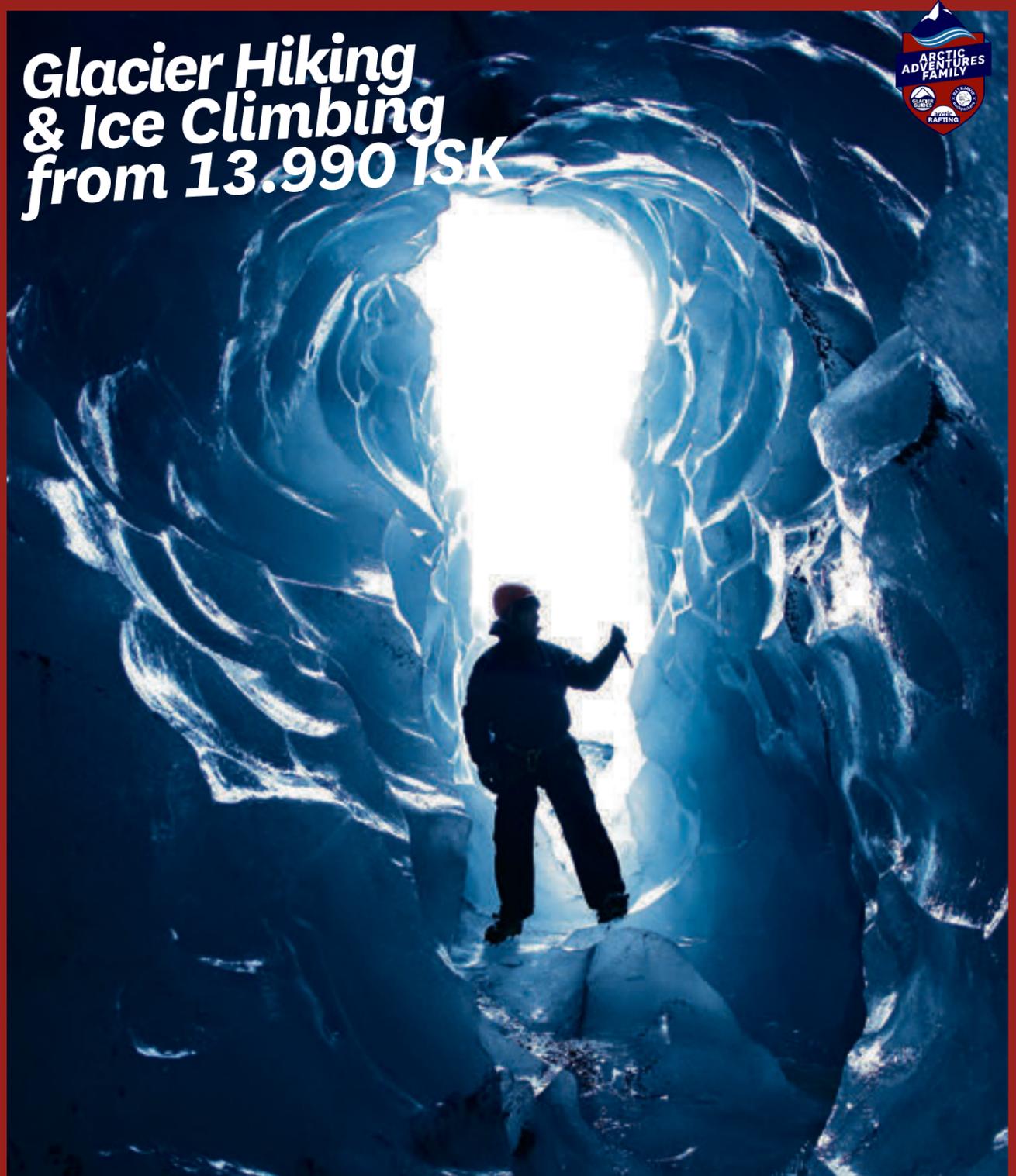
We interview Caribou's Dan Snaith, who's playing a show this Saturday. See you there?

PAGE 6

My daughter turned 18-years old on April 29. I had told her that we would finally get the chance to meet. I haven't seen her since she was eleven", Medhi explains to me, as we meet at the psychiatric hospital where he is being detained while his case is examined. "I had been promised a positive answer in January, but then, as always, months went by and the phone never rang".

We interview Iranian asylum seeker Medhi Kavyanpoor, who threatened to set himself on fire out of desperation.

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

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ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

Issue 6 - 2011

www.grapevine.is



May 20 - June 5

Reykjavík Arts Festival - *It's On!*

Full schedule at www.listahatid.is

WHEN SUMMER COMES...



FM BELFAST don't want to sleep out june 3rd on cd and lp

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haukur s. magnússon



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"nice shot of adrenaline"

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MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN MAY & JUNE

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How to use the listings
Venues are listed alphabetically by day.
For complete listings and detailed information
on venues visit www.grapevine.is
Send us your listings: listings@grapevine.is

20 FRI

- Amsterdam**
22:00 Norn & guests
- B5**
00:00 DJ Leifur
- Bakkus**
00:00 DJ Árni Sveins
- Bar 11**
21:00 DJ Omar X-ið
- Barbara**
20:00 The Skyndilega group puts on a hip hop night
- Boston**
22:00 DJ Hellert
- Café Oliver**
22:00 Girls just want to have fun, 3 for 1 drinks for ladies
01:00 DJ Maggi or DJ Brynjar Mar
- Café Rosenberg**
22:00 BIBEO - Scottish folk music
- Celtic Cross**
01:00 Live Music
- Den Danske Kro**
00:00 Live Music
- Dillon**
22:00 Storyteller, Dorian Gray, The Wicked Stranger
- Dubliner**
21:30 Live Music
00:30 The Smurfs
- English Pub**
22:00 Live Music
- Esja**
22:00 DJ Bogi
- Faktóry**
00:00 Bloodgroup DJ set
- Harpa - Norðurljós**
21:00 Ólöf Arnalds & Skúli Sverrisson, 2900 ISK
- Hressó**
22:00 Dalton
01:00 DJ Elli
- Kaffibarinn**
23:00 DJ KGB
- NASA**
00:00 FM Belfast & Prinspóló, 1000 ISK
- The Nordic House**
21:00 Múlinn jazzclub
- Prikið**
00:00 DJ Árni Kocoon
- Sódóma**
23:00 End of School Party, day 1:
Who Knew?, The Vintage Caravan, Porstatica and more. DJ Biggi Maus and DJ Oli Dori, 1000 ISK
- Sólón**
23:00 Local DJ
- Thorvaldsen**
22:00 Local DJ
- Tjarnarbió**
20:00 Bryndís Ásmunds sings Janis Joplin, 2900 ISK
- Vegamót**
22:00 DJ Jónas

21 SAT

- B5**
22:00 DJ Johann
- Bakkus**
00:00 DJ Hunk of a Man
- Bar 11**
21:00 DJ Biggi Maus
- Boston**
22:00 DJ KGB
- Café Oliver**
22:00 Girls just want to have fun, 3 for 1 drinks for ladies
01:00 DJ Maggi or DJ Brynjar Mar
- Celtic Cross**
01:00 Live Music
- Den Danske Kro**
00:00 Live Music
- Dillon**
22:00 Morgan Kane, HEK, Skúli Hinn Mennski
- Dubliner**
21:30 Live Music
00:30 The Smurfs
- English Pub**
22:00 Live Music
- Esja**
22:00 DJ Bogi
- Harpa - Eldborg**
17:00 Jonas Kaufmann and The Iceland Symphony Orchestra, 4900-10900 ISK



Orka Swim Over to Iceland

May 25, 21:00

Sódóma

1000 ISK

Even with a tiny population of roughly 50 thousand people, the Faeroe Islands have produced a nice collection of magical musicians. This month, we are lucky enough to be graced with the presence of Orka, a band classified by many as 'experimental,' though they still make songs that are quite catchy. Before taking on the world with their music, Orka spent one Christmas stowed away at member Jens L. Thomsen's father's farmhouse, building their instruments out of power tools and farm equipment. Those that wear earplugs at concerts might have take them out from time to time to hear the soft whispers that are intermittent with crazy screams. So expect a multilayered performance from Orka that seemingly gets its inspiration from the turbulent seas that surround the Faeroes. VS

- Harpa - Silfurberg**
21:00 FM957 festival, 1957 ISK
- Hressó**
22:00 Silfur
01:00 DJ Elli
- Kaffibarinn**
23:00 Dads weekend #13 - Gísli Galdur & DJ B Ruff
- NASA**
22:00 Carlsberg party with DJs Blaz Roca, John Doe, Fred Dor and more, 1000 ISK
- Prikið**
00:00 DJ Danni Deluxe
- Salurinn**
20:00 Tango for Life - Kristine Arngrímsdóttir, 3000 ISK
- Sódóma**
23:00 End of School Party, day 2:
Who Knew?, The Vintage Caravan, Porstatica and more. DJ sets by Biggi Maus and Oli Dori, 1000 ISK
- Sólón**
23:00 DJ Rikki G from radio FM 957
- Thorvaldsen**
22:00 Local DJ
- Trúnó**
22:00 DJ Yamaho aka Natalie aka Natty Gee
- Vegamót**
22:00 DJ Hannes & Dóri

- Café Oliver**
22:00 Live Music, 2 for 1 mojitos
- Café Rosenberg**
22:00 Sykur & Rjómi
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live Music
- Dubliner**
21:30 Live Music
- English Pub**
22:00 Live Music
- Faktóry**
21:00 Live Jazz
- NASA**
22:00 Caribou with special guest Sin Fang, 3800 ISK
- Prikið**
22:00 Hangover Movie Night - Free popcorn!

23 MON

- Bakkus**
21:00 Movie Night, the Owl presents "Funeral Parade of Roses"
- Café Oliver**
22:00 DJ Anna Brö, 2 for 1 margaritas
- Café Rosenberg**
22:00 Pub Quiz
- Den Danske Kro**
22:00 Live Music
- Dubliner**
21:30 Live Music
- English Pub**
22:00 Live Music
- Prikið**
21:00 DJ Hús. Red wine & Cheese for two, 1000 ISK



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20
May



Flip it n' Reverse It, Whores Strike Back

Barbara

May 20, 20:00

Free

A group that calls itself, 'Suddenly I was possessed with uncontrollable longing' is putting on a hip hop night at Reykjavik's gay club Barbara. They've rounded up Ragga, Magga and crew; Alt-E, aka Andrea and Malli, Cell7 from Subterranean, Húsbandið feat. The Gimmicks, DJ Dagbjört and Rúna. If you're unfamiliar with them, well, that's okay (except for Cell-7, you should know her). They all loosely define themselves as female and the group claims to have found them in the dark alleys of Reykjavik (though they are probably speaking metaphorically because dark alleys in Reykjavik are few and far between). Anyhow, it's sure to be a riot. Doors open at 20:00, the riot starts at 21:00. We'll see you there. **AA**

24 TUE

Bakkus

22:00 DJ Fryová

Café Oliver

22:00 Live Karaoke with Raggi

Café Rosenberg

22:00 Bob Dylan Tribute

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live Music

Dublíner

21:30 Live Music

English Pub

22:00 Live Music

Hamrar

20:30 The North Chamber Choir, 2500 ISK

Kaffibarinn

22:00 DJ Kórstjóri

The Nordic House

21:00 Múlinn Jazzclub

Prikið

21:00 Game Night

Trúnó

22:00 Queer movie night

25 WED

Bakkus

20:30 Pub Quiz! 500 ISK to play, cash prizes

22:00 DJ Steinni & Frikki

Café Oliver

22:00 Live Music

Café Rosenberg

22:00 Elvar Örn & Jóhanna Guðrún

Den Danske Kro

22:00 Live Music

Dublíner

21:30 Live Music

English Pub

22:00 Live Music

Kaffibarinn

22:00 Taperecorder

Kaffitar, Bankastræti

20:00 Tango Milango

Prikið

22:00 DJ Óli Hjörtur

Salurinn

20:30 'Nina' turns 20 concert, 3000 ISK

Sódóma

21:00 Orka (FO), Album release concert, 1000 ISK

26 THU

B5

22:00 Live Music

Bakkus

22:00 DJ Hellert & DJ Fógetinn

Bar 11

21:00 DJ Biggi Maus

Barbara

22:00 Men Only Night

Boston

22:00 DJ Tobbi

Café Oliver

22:00 Ingo Weather God

Celtic Cross

22:00 Arnar & Guðmann - Grunge Music

Den Danske Kro

20:00 Beer Bingo

22:00 Live Music

Dillon

22:00 Bob Dylan Tribute

Dublíner

20:00 Live Irish Session

21:30 Live Music

English Pub

22:00 Live Music

Esja

22:00 Loungy Thursday

Faktorý

19:00 Future Shorts ONE: Screening of short films from around the globe, live musical performance, DJ set, 1500 ISK

Hressó

22:00 J.J.S.

Kaffibarinn

21:00 DJ BenSol

Sódóma

21:00 Dead Sea Apple, 1000 ISK

Thorvaldsen

20:30 Mojito night, Salsa lessons

Trúnó

22:00 Open mic

Vegamót

22:00 DJ Gorilla Funk

27 FRI

B5

22:00 DJ Símon

Bakkus

22:00 DJ Kári

Bar 11

21:00 DJ Matti

Boston

22:00 DJ Frosti Gringó

Café Oliver

22:00 Girls just want to have fun, 3 for 1 drinks for ladies

01:00 DJ Maggi or DJ Brynjar Mar

Celtic Cross

01:00 Live Music

Den Danske Kro

00:00 Live Music

Dillon

22:00 Wistaria, Moldun, Trust The

Lies

Dublíner

21:30 Live Music

00:30 EIPA Band

English Pub

22:00 Live Music

Esja

22:00 DJ Bogi

Faktorý

22:00 Die Ukrainiens (DE), Orphic

Oxtra, & Caterpillarmen, 1500 ISK

Hamrar

20:00 Sveinn Dúa Hjörleifsson &

Hjörtur Ingvi Jóhannsson, 2000 ISK

Harpa - Silfurberg

21:00 Ojos de brujo, 3900 ISK

Hressó

22:00 Penta

01:00 DJ Fannar

Kaffibarinn

23:00 Árni Vector & Árni E

Prikið

21:00 DJ OPEN

00:00 DJ Danni Deluxe

Sódóma

23:00 Rottweiler, 1000 ISK

Sólon

23:00 Opening Party for Sólon's new

website

Trúnó

22:00 DJ Erlingur

Vegamót

22:00 DJ Jónas

28 SAT

B5

22:00 DJ Jay-O

Bakkus

22:00 Skinnsemi Cabaret #2, 1500 ISK

00:00 DJ KGB

Bar 11

21:00 DJ Óli Dóri

Barbara

22:00 DJ Dramatík

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To the Blue Lagoon

MUSIC

CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE IN MAY & JUNE

Boston
22:00 DJ Kári

Café Oliver
22:00 Girls just want to have fun, 3 for 1 drinks for ladies
01:00 DJ Maggi or DJ Brynjar Mar

Celtic Cross
01:00 Live Music

Den Danske Kro
00:00 Live Music

Dillon
22:00 El Camino, Mighty Good Times

Dubliner
21:30 Live Music
00:30 EIPA Band

English Pub
22:00 Live Music

Esja
22:00 DJ Bogi

Harpa - Eldborg
17:00 A Feast of Mahler- Swedish soprano Camilla Tilling and the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, 2000-6500 ISK

Harpa - Norðurljós
20:00 Högni Egilsson, Davíð Þór Jónsson & the Fóstbræður Men's Choir, 2900 ISK

Harpa - Silfurberg
21:00 Icelandic artists perform Bob Dylan's best known songs, 5500 ISK

Hressó
22:00 Afró kúbu
01:00 DJ Fannar

Kaffibarinn
21:00 DJ Yamaho
00:00 DJ Margeir aka Jack Schidt

Prikið
00:00 DJ Benni B Ruff

Sódóma
22:00 DJ Matti

Sólón
22:00 DJ Rikki G from radio FM 957

Thorvaldsen
22:00 Local DJ

Vegamót
22:00 DJ Símon

29 SUN

Café Oliver
22:00 Live Music, 2 for 1 mojitos

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live Music

Dubliner
21:30 Live Music

English Pub
22:00 Live Music

Faktóry
21:00 Live Jazz

Frikirkjan
20:00 Boris Purushottama Grebenshikov

Hamrar
20:00 Sigurður Þengilsson & Julian Hewlett, 2000 ISK

Prikið
21:00 Hangover Movie Night - Free popcorn!

30 MON

Bakkus
21:00 Movie Night Magnús Dýri presents "Repo Man"

Café Oliver
22:00 DJ Anna Brö, 2 for 1 margaritas

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live Music

Dubliner
21:30 Live Music

English Pub
22:00 Live Music

Prikið
21:00 DJ Hús. Red wine and cheese for two, 1000 ISK

Tjarnarbió
20:00 STRENGUR - Tómas R. Einarsson, 2500 ISK

31 TUE

Café Oliver
22:00 Live Karaoke with Raggi

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live Music

Dubliner
21:30 Live Music

English Pub
22:00 Live Music

Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ HalliValli

Prikið
21:00 Game Night

Salurinn
18:00 Various opera singers perform, 1500 ISK

1 WED

Bakkus
22:00 DJ Elsa Maria

Café Oliver
22:00 Live Music

Den Danske Kro
22:00 Live Music

Dubliner
21:30 Live Music

English Pub
22:00 Live Music

Hafnarborg
12:00 Old Icelandic songs concert with Antonia Hevesi and tenor Jóhann Friðgeir Valdimarsson

Harpa - Eldborg
20:00 Sigurdur Gudmundsson and Sigridur Thorlacius perform popular songs from the 1950's and 60's, 2000-6500 ISK

Hressó
22:00 Böddi and Davíð

Kaffitar, Bankastræti
20:00 Tango Milango

NASA
22:00 Retro Stefson

Prikið
22:00 DJ Krúsi

Vegamót
22:00 DJ Benni B

2 THU

B5
22:00 Live Music

Bakkus
22:00 DJ Hashi

Bar 11
21:00 DJ Matti

Barbara
22:00 Men Only Night

Boston
22:00 DJ Andrea Jóns

Café Oliver
22:00 Ingo Weather God

Celtic Cross
22:00 Arnar & Guðmann - Grunge music

Den Danske Kro
20:00 Beer Bingo
22:00 Live Music

Dubliner
21:30 Live Music

English Pub
22:00 Live Music

Esja
22:00 Loungy Thursday

Harpa - Kaldalón
11:00 Edda Erlendsdóttir piano concert and lecture, 2900 ISK

Hressó
22:00 Jakobs cocktail quartet
01:00 DJ Fannar

Prikið
22:00 Breakbeat.is

Sódóma
21:00 The Prince of Nightmare: 13 song musical about gender relations

Vegamót
22:00 DJ Símon

ONGOING

Restaurant Reykjavík
20:00 Let's Talk Iceland: Comedy Show. 2200 ISK. *Everyday*

lónó
20:00 Cellophane Comedy show
Thursdays



FM Belfast, Prinspóló Family

NASA
May 20, 23:00
1000 ISK

Before leaving for a short European tour, Iceland's electro beasts FM Belfast will be performing live at Nasa TO-NIGHT (for those of you who picked up the paper straight off the press!) They will be accompanied by the up and coming Prinspóló, who play their songs with a comic undertone. The two bands even share a member in common, but this kind of musical incest is no surprise in the small country of Iceland. So expect to see the excellent keyboard player (slash-singer-slash-Grapevine-comic-artist-slash-illustrator) Lóa Hlín Hjálmtýsdóttir on stage for both acts. Both bands are known to impress, so go there and get impressed! **VS**

Den Danske Kro

• Mondays •

Shot's night - all shots ISK 400.-

• Tuesdays •

Live music and Beer Bingo night

• Wednesdays •

POP-QUIZ night (special offer on drinks) & Live music

• Thursdays •

Live Music / Scandinavian nights

• Fridays •

Live music / Sing-along nights

• Saturdays •

Live music / Sing-along nights

• Sundays •

Hangover & Live music night Really good prices on drinks



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www.danskekro.is

Music & Entertainment | Venue finder

Amsterdam Hafnarstræti 5 D2	Dillon Laugavegur 30 F5	Næsti Bar Ingólfsstræti 1A E3
Austur Austurstræti 7 E3	Dubliner Hafnarstræti 4 D3	Óliver Laugavegur 20A F5
B5 Bankastræti 5 E3	Esja Austurstræti 16 E3	Ölstofan Vegamótastígur E4
Babalú Skólavörðustígur 22 G5	English Pub Austurstræti 12 D2	Prikið Bankastræti E3
Bakkus Tryggvagata 22 D3	Faktóry Smíðjustígur 6 E4	Rósenberg Klapparstígur 25 E4
Bar 11 Hverfisgötu 18 E4	Highlander Lækjargata 10 E3	Sódóma Reykjavík Tryggvagata 22 D3
Barbara Laugavegur 22 F6	Hressó Austurstræti 20 E3	Sólón Bankastræti 7A E3
Bjarni Fel Austurstræti 20 E3	Bankinn Hverfisgata 20 E4	Thorvaldsen Austurstræti 8 D2
Boston Laugavegur 28b F5	Kaffi Zimsen Hafnarstræti 18 D3	Trúnó Laugavegur 22 F4
Café Paris Austurstræti 14 E3	Kaffibarinn Bergstraðastræti 1 E4	Vegamót Vegamótastígur 4 E4
Celtic Cross Hverfisgata 26 E4	NASA Þorvaldsenstræti 2 E3	Vestur Tryggvagata 20 D2
Den Danske Kro Ingólfsstræti 3 E3	Nýlenduvörverzlun Hemma & Valda Laugavegur 21 E4	

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ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN MAY & JUNE

COCKTAIL PLEASURES AND VISUAL STIMULATION

How to use the listings: Venues are listed alphabetically by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit www.grapevine.is
Send us your listings: listings@grapevine.is

OPENINGS

ÁSI Art Museum

May 20

Harpa Árnadóttir

The exhibition is a part of Reykjavik Art Festival 2011

Runs until June 12

The Culture House

May 21

14:00 **Moccasin Jackets and Moose Meat: Icelandic-Aboriginal Relations and Culture in Canada, 1875 onwards**

Lecture by Professor Lorena Fontaine and Icelandic Canadian scholar, Dr. Laurie K. Bertram

Fjörhúsið Hellnum

May 28

Fiskur Sirkur

Collection of Spaniard Eduardo Perez

Baca's paintings

Runs until June 30

Hafnarborg

May 21

14:00 **Family Workshop - Ingenuity**

May 22

15:00 **Guided Tour: Einar Thorsteinn Ingenuity**

May 26

20:00 **Guided Tour: Guðmundur Oddur Magnússon - Ingenuity**

June 1

20:00 **Art Talk - Art Without Boundaries**

Artist JBK Ransu talks about his exhibition 'Abstract'

Icelandic Printmaking Association Gallery

May 29

10:00 **Day 2 Print Dialogue symposium**

May 29

Workshop, exhibition and talk by artist Nicole Pietrantoni

Kex Hostel

May 21

11:00 **MESSA Teaser**

Art event featuring a select group of Icelandic and international artists.

Kling & Bang

May 28

Silent Room, Silver Room

Collection of Claus Carstensen newest mixed media paintings

Runs until June 26

The National Gallery of Iceland

May 27

Femme - Louise Bourgeois

28 works by Louise Bourgeois, principally installations or "cells" and sculptures, but also paintings, drawings and textiles

Runs until September 11

National Theatre

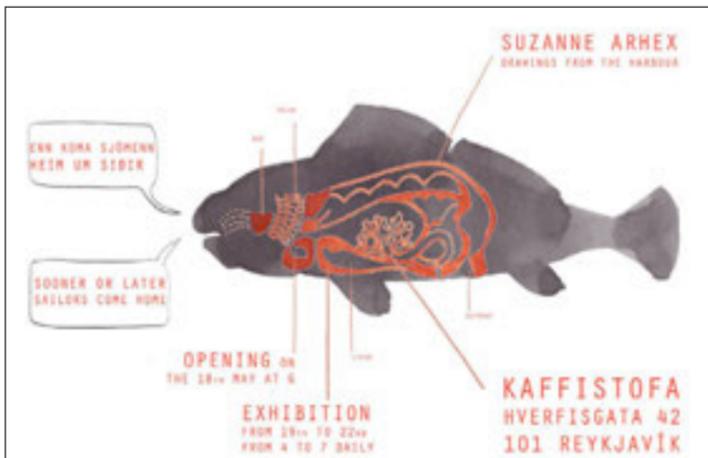
May 20

19:00 **We Saw Monsters**

A poetic work under the artistic direction of choreographer and dancer Erna Ómarsdóttir in which dance, singing, music and visual arts come together.

May 21

20:00 **We Saw Monsters**



Elegance And Fantasy In Paper

Kaffistofa, Hverfisgata 42

Runs until May 22 from 16:00-19:00

Free

Suzanne Arhex's colourful and genuine vision of the world can now be admired in Reykjavik for a few days at the café, Kaffistofa (Hverfisgata 42).

This young artist specialises in illustrating for children's books and comics. But that's not to say that her work is only aimed at young audiences. Her drawings are fresh and delicate, and they exude an endless force of creativity in every detail—a true joy for the senses. A clear example of all this can be seen in her new exhibit titled, 'Drawings from the Harbour'.

But don't delay, this unique opportunity will only last until Sunday, May 22. Are you ready to climb aboard? **JH**

The Nordic House

May 21

15:00 **Open Spaces**

Opening, light refreshments. Young artists from Nordic countries final exhibition

Runs until June 5

May 28

9:00 **Day 1 Print Dialogue symposium**

Open portfolio, exhibition, and artist talk held by the Icelandic Printmaking Association

Reykjavik Art Museum Hafnarhús

May 21

Tomi Ungerer - Posters and Drawings

Tomi is an award winning illustrator known for his social satire

Runs until July 24

May 21

Perspectives - On the Borders of Art and Philosophy

Comprehensive exhibit that represents the breadth and diversity of styles and artistic media pursued in Iceland today

Runs until September 4

May 22

14:00 **Symposium: Perspectives**

Discussion about the relationship between visual arts and philosophy with reference to the work found at the exhibition

May 23

17:00 **Tomi Ungerer Lecture**

Thérèse Willer, director at the Tomi Ungerer Museum in Strasbourg, gives a lecture on the French illustrator Tomi Ungerer and his work

May 29

13:00 **Philosophy workshop** for the family with Brynhildur Sigurðardóttir and Ingimar Ólafsson Waage, teachers of philosophy

14:00 **Curators' talk** with Oddný Eir Ævarsdóttir and Ólafur Gíslason

Reykjavik City Theatre

May 22

20:00 **Les Slovaks - Opening Night**

An exuberant and contagious union of folk-inspired music and imaginative movement

Tjarnarbió Theatre

May 31

20:00 **Six Pairs**

Six Icelandic composers and six choreographers work in pairs to create original works. 2900 ISK.

SÍM -The Association of Icelandic Artists

May 23

This symposium will be a discussion and debate on the opportunities for emerging artists and the Icelandic contemporary art scene in general.

ONGOING

Alliance Française

Icelandic Fishermen - Fishing past and present

A photography exhibit

Runs until June 4

The Culture House

Medieval Manuscripts - Eddas and Sagas

Some of Iceland's medieval manuscripts on display. Open guided tour in English on Mondays & Fridays at 15:00.

On permanent view

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Hornið
Restaurant - Pizzeria

Hornið opened in 1979 was the first restaurant of its kind in Iceland, a restaurant with a true Italian atmosphere. Hornið is known for good food made out of fresh raw materials, good pizzas baked in front of the guests, good coffee and comfortable service.

Lunch offers every day.
Open every day from 11:00 to 23:30
For reservations call 551-3340

MAP

Places We Like

1 Sægreifinn

Geirsgötu 8

Down by the Reykjavík harbour, Sægreifinn fish shop and restaurant is a pretty unique establishment. The menu features various fish dishes (including most of the "crazy Icelandic food" you'll want to tell your friends you had) and a rich portion of some pretty good lobster soup. Good food and welcoming service make this place a must-try.

2 Boston

Laugavegur 28

Like an older sibling to the fabled (now deceased) Sirkús, Boston is a warm and mellow second-floor bar on Laugavegur that plays host to the arty party crowd. The baroque wall dressings and deep, rich coloured décor make this bar feel pretty swank, but Boston also serves up some reasonably priced food earlier in the evening, so it's not too swank.

3 Barbara

Laugavegur 22

At Laugavegur 22, above Trúnó, Barbara serves up a lively atmosphere for Reykjavík's gay community and anybody else who just wants to dance and have a good time. The first level is made for dancing and is often packed with sweaty bodies, while the second level of the bar offers a place to sit, drink and chat with another and in which to smoke.

4 Glætan - Bókakaffi

Laugavegur 19

Glætan - Bókakaffi is a great café with a domestic feel. It's somehow always a convenient choice for whatever you're doing when you come across it. I am always happy to step into this comfort zone and simmer down with an excellent cup of espresso and one of the books in their selection. Glætan, roughly translated, means "a tiny ray of light," something this nice little café definitely is. Note: It's Christian café.

5 Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27

If you're sick of all the arty cafés, filled with Sigur Rós wannabes and their Macs, browsing Facebook, go to Tíu Dropar. It's a back-to-basics Icelandic café that hasn't changed their interior since the 60s. Really proves the saying 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.' Plus, the coffee's great. SKK

6 Korníð

Lækjargata 4

How about filling your face with cakes at the delightful Korníð. They taste so good, you would gladly push your own mother over for even the slightest of sniffs. Not a sweet tooth? Well, try their delectable sandwiches then, I recommend the egg and bacon ciabatta! At only 590 ISK plus all the Pítu Sósa you could dream of, what more could you ask for on your lunch break?

7 Ban Thai

Laugavegur 130

Even though the service at Ban Thai may get a little flaky, the food is always to die for and the place also offers a very pleasant dining atmosphere that puts you right in a comfortable Thai sorta mood. It's really Reykjavík's only "fancy" Thai restaurant. Ban Thai has remained a true Reykjavík treasure for the longest time, and is truly one that should be celebrated.



8 Kisan

Laugavegur 7

This store is incredibly cool. It's stocked with really unique and quirky clothes, outerwear, accessories and handbags, plus they have an adorable section of kids clothes, kitschy vintage toys and books and even interior design items. Wicked place; definitely worth a visit. CF

14 Mai Thai

Laugavegur 118

Located across from Hlemmur Bus Station, Mai Thai imports and sells all sorts of products from South East Asia, particularly Thailand and the Philippines. Depending on the day, you might find fresh coriander, mint, chilies, bean sprouts, exotic fruits such as Durian, Carambola or Coconut, as well as year round products such as frozen spring rolls, various kinds of rice sold in bulk bags, sauces and spices galore, egg and rice noodles, Asian snacks, clothes and other knick-knacks. In short, a wide array of what are still considered rare and exotic treats in Reykjavík.

9 Bakkus

Tryggvagata 22

Bakkus serves up reasonably priced beer, a really impressive selection of international vodkas and an atmosphere unlike any other in town. An eclectic mix of patrons, regular live music and movie nights keep this place interesting and always inviting. Expect dancing on tables and to-the-death foosball battles.

15 Babalú

Skólavörðustígur 22

Located on the second-floor of a quirky little building on Skólavörðustígur, Babalú is an inviting, quaint and cosy café serving up a selection of tea, coffee and hot chocolate along with delicious baked goods and light meals. Food and drink aside, Babalú boasts colourfully decorated and super-comfortable surroundings and a genuinely friendly and likeable staff.

10 English Pub

Austurstræti 12

True to its name, the English Pub offers a wide variety of lager on tap and a whiff of that genuine UK feel. You may also try their famous "wheel of fortune" with the chance of winning up to a metre of beer with a single spin. Cheers!

16 Habibi

Hafnarstræti 18

This small restaurant offers up a concise menu of delicious Arabic cuisine, from shawarma to kebabs and falafels. The staff is really friendly and accommodating of requests to kick up the spiciness or tone it down if the customer so desires. Habibi seriously hits the spot after hours of partying (or any other time of day) so it's convenient that the place is open until 6 a.m. Friday and Saturday.

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cakes made with love,
toasts made with
a toaster...



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Mondays-Saturdays 11:30-22:30
Sundays 16:00-22:00

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from ten o'clock

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And our infamous Wheel of Fortune

THE ENGLISH PUB
Austurvöllur



For a map of outside downtown Reykjavík visit www.grapevine.is or the Icelandic phonebook website www.ja.is

If you have an iPhone, check out the cool Locatify app in the AppStore. It's got a FREE guided audio tour of the downtown area, courtesy of your pals at Grapevine.

NEW IN TOWN

Útúrdúr

Hverfisgata 42, 101 Reykjavík



While not exactly 'new in town', art bookstore Útúrdúr has been sorely missed since they closed down along with the equally missed Havarí (come back!) in January. So when they re-opened in a brand new location on Hverfisgata (next to Kling & Bang) a couple of weeks ago, we felt it appropriate to express our joy by featuring them in our 'new in town' thingy on our centre map.

Útúrdúr is a bookstore that specialises in the sale and publishing of art related materials, namely "books, catalogues, posters, bookworks and multiples". It is also a venue where artists may get their work promoted. Go browse some art and alt.culture weekdays between 12-18 and Saturdays from 12-17. www.uturdur.blogspot.com

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Björn Kristjánsson, Borko

What's up, Borko?

Things are good. I've been at Borgarleikhúsið a lot these days working on 'Klúbburinn' ("The Club"). It's a theatre-dance-performance piece that I'm making music for and performing in. I feel privileged to get to work with such talented and fantastic people there. The show premieres on June 3.

EARLY MORNING > Vesturbæjarlaug pool

It's really nice to go to the Vesturbæjarlaug swimming pool to sit in a hot tub and go to the sauna. It surprised me when I found out that it only costs 100 ISK extra to go to the sauna where you can sit naked and sweat with other men. A perfect way to start the engines.

LUNCH > Bæjarins Beztu hot dogs

These days I've been eating at the theatre cafeteria, but to mix it up I'd go to Bæjarins Beztu and get a couple of hot dogs with everything on them. Two, because one is not enough and three are too many.

MID-DAY > Kolaportið

I like to go to Kolaportið to buy fish and flatkökur. You can get really good frozen haddock and plaice there, and if I feel like rewarding myself I also get some smoked trout and dried fish (harðfiskur). It's also a good place to check out old vinyl, books, clothes and sometimes I buy a lottery ticket. It's always something different. Then I might pop into Herrafataverslun Kormáks og Skjaldar for a chat and a quick look at the latest trends in gentlemen's fashion. If wink at the guys over the counter they might treat me with a sip of whiskey.

AFTERNOON > Hlíðarendi

If there's a game at Hlíðarendi, I go watch my team, Valur. During the summers, there are games once or twice a week. You start by meeting at Fjósið for a drink with your fellow Valur fans and then you go yell your brains out.

HEAT OF THE NIGHT > Bakkus

It's always fun to go to Bakkus. If you go early you can play table tennis and foosball and have your drink of choice (I've heard they make killer Bloody Marys). If you go late at night, it's packed and noisy but always really nice. I sometimes like fleeing to the downstairs Batcave for a nice chat rather staying upstairs in the party.

The Image of Þingvellir



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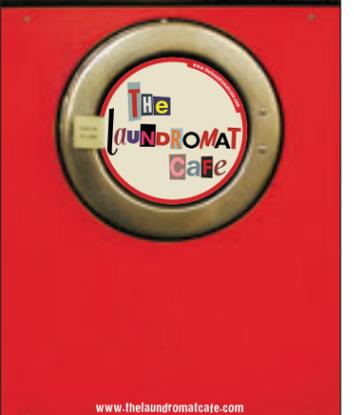
Café Loki in front of Hallgrímskirkja



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Icelandic food

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"John Wesley 1778"



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11 Café Óliver

Laugavegur 20a

If you like trendy party-types who dance like crazy to a lively mix of music where glamour is all that counts, the stylish Óliver is the nightclub for you. Check out Óliver's live karaoke nights on Tuesdays. If you don't suffer from stage fright you can go on stage and sing your favourite song accompanied by the local troubadour.

17 Austur

Austurstræti 7

Sleek and shiny, this new restaurant and bar is a straight-up boutique hot spot for stylish kids and trendy professionals alike. Appropriate for formal business meetings but casual enough for the roll-out-bed-at-5pm crowd, they serve up ample, satisfying, modern dishes at reasonable prices. This is also one of the rare places to get a full breakfast all day long! It's really fucking good too.

12 Kaffifélagið

Skólavörðustíg 10

Kaffifélagið has been a Grapevine favourite since they opened on Skólavörðustígur a couple of years back. The small coffeehouse always delivers an excellent cup of Italian-style coffee, and downtown regulars can spring for a clip-off coffee card to save on each purchase.

18 Kolaportið

Tryggvagata 19

Reykjavík's massive flea market is a wonderful place to get lost for a few hours, rummaging through stall upon stall of potential treasures. There are heaps of used clothing, knitwear and other yard-sale type goods from decades of yore, and a large food section with fish, meats and baked goods. Check out the vintage post cards and prints at the table near the army surplus.

13 OSUSHI

Lækjargata 2a

Great place to satisfy your craving for raw fish and vinegar rice. The selection on 'the train' is wide and varied and the atmosphere is relaxed. Also, the colour-coded plates make it easy to keep tabs on your budget while scarfing down your maki and nigiri.

19 Den Danske Kro

Ingólfsstræti 3

The Danish Bar is located on Ingólfsstræti, just off Laugavegur where Q Bar once stood. The bar serves up Danish favourites, such as open-face smørrebrød sandwiches, Danish Tuborg beer and Akvavit schnapps. How to ask for a large beer in Danish: "Hej, jeg vil gerne have en stor øl, tak".



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ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN MAY & JUNE



26
May

The World's A Stage

Faktorý

May 26, 19:00 to 01:00

1500 ISK

Future Shorts ONE is not your ordinary shorts film festival. Not only does it show us some of the most amazing shorts from around the world, but it also provides the audience with an unforgettable interactive experience.

Each month the festival stops in a new city with a new theme. The festival organisers won't divulge the theme ahead of time, but they did tell us: "Wear your best travel gear, and don't forget your cameras".

And that's not all! There is a free beer included in the price! Now there is no excuse to not enjoy even the most avant-garde sample of cinematography.

Like a well-known old guy said: "All the world's a stage". Do you want to partake?
JH

Reykjavík 871 ±2
Landnámssýningin
The Settlement
Exhibition

Step into the Viking Age

The exhibition and museum shop are open daily 10-17

Aðalstræti 16
101 Reykjavík / Iceland
Phone +(354) 411 6370
www.reykjavikmuseum.is

Reykjavík City Museum

Experience Viking-Age Reykjavík at the new Settlement Exhibition. The focus of the exhibition is an excavated longhouse site which dates from the 10th century AD. It includes relics of human habitation from about 871, the oldest such site found in Iceland.

Multimedia techniques bring Reykjavík's past to life, providing visitors with insights into how people lived in the Viking Age, and what the Reykjavík environment looked like to the first settlers.



Elding
adventure at sea

Whale Watching and Puffin island

Take part in an adventure at sea into the world of whales and sea birds all year round from Reykjavík.

Whale Watching Schedule - All Year

← Puffin season →											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Des
			9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00	9:00			
						10:00*	10:00*				
13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00
						14:00*	14:00*				
					17:00	17:00	17:00				

*10:00 and 14:00 departures from 1 July to 10 August

Other adventures at sea

Puffin Watching May 15th - August 15th

Midnight Whale Watching June 15th - July 31st

Sea Angling May 1st - August 31st

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ART

GALLERIES & MUSEUMS IN MAY & JUNE

The Living Art Museum

Solo exhibition of Carl Boutard

Carl Boutard's work often combines process-based installations with the display of conventional art objects made with eccentric methods to form an installation

Runs until May 28

National Gallery of Iceland

Sound Fields

Runs until May 22

Dialogues on Death

Runs until May 22

Strides

Changes in Icelandic painting from the late 1800s to the 2000s

Runs until December 31, 2012

The National Museum

Photography of Bárður Sigurðsson

Photographs from the Mývatn Area at the beginning of the 20th century

Runs until June 8

BE YE WELCOME, GOOD MY FRIENDS!

Collection of carved Nordic drinking horns

Runs until December 31

Carved Coffers

From the collection of the National Museum

Runs until August 31

Make Do and Mend

Repaired objects from the collection of the National Museum

Runs until September 1

Don't Touch the Ground

Exhibition on the games of 10 year old children

Runs until July 24

The Nordic House

The Library

The collection centres on new Nordic literature, both fiction and non-fiction. The library lends out novels, academic publications, audio books and more.

On permanent view

Slippery Terrain

Runs until May 29

Restaurant Reykjavík

Let's Talk Iceland Comedy Show

Daily, 20:00, 2200 ISK

Reykjavík Art Museum

Ásmundarsafn

From Sketch to Sculpture - Drawings by Ásmundur Sveinsson

Runs until April 22, 2012

Magnús Árnason - Homage

Runs until April 22, 2012

Hafnarhús

Erró - Collage

Runs until August 21

Kjarvalsstaðir

Jóhannes S. Kjarval - Key Works

Runs until January 15, 2012

Jór! Horses in Icelandic Art

Runs until August 21

Workshop

Open and informative workshop for children and families in connection with the exhibition Jór! Horses in Icelandic Art. Make a reservation in advance by email: fraedsludeild@reykjavik.is

Runs until August 21

Reykjavík City Museum

Reykjavík 871 +/- 2 (The Settlement Exhibition)

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre

On permanent view

Reykjavík Maritime Museum

From Poverty to Abundance

Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century

On permanent view

The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history and the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour

On permanent view

The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn

Display of vessel that took part in all three Cod Wars

On permanent view

Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Valdís Thor

100 photographs on display

Runs until June 29

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

Sigurjón Ólafsson's Pillars & "Icelander"

Runs until August 28

Skaftefelli

Every Other Day In A Different Place

8 students from the IAA

Runs until May 29

Streitishvarf, Austurland

Kate Woodcroft & Catherine Sagin

Runs until May 31

They are the Ones that Make Us

Henriikka Härkönen

Runs until May 31

Cannibal farm

Tom Backe Rasmussen

Runs until May 31

Spark Design Space

Smash & Grab by Scintilla

Runs until May 28



Spiderwoman Comes To Iceland!

National Gallery of Iceland

May 29 to September 11

500 ISK

Are you afraid of spiders? Hope not, because the femme of the spiders has arrived to Reykjavík and she is planning to stay for a while (well, actually until September 11). Louise Bourgeois is a French born artist well known for her bizarre scale arachnid sculptures called Maman, which have been displayed all over the world.

But she is much more than that. Louise was the first woman to receive a grant from New York's MoMA and she is considered one of the most important artists of the late twentieth century. If you are a modern art lover you don't want to miss this. And don't worry if you can't stand those disgusting spiders; the collection shown at the National Gallery of Iceland includes some nice installations, sculptures, drawings and paintings, all free of creepy crawlers. **JH**



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- » Pan-fried monkfish with lobster sauce
- » Grilled Icelandic lamb Samfaina
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Must try dishes

Mink whale carpaccio

Mink whale carpaccio with fennel, cabbage, parmesan cheese and lemon oil.

Lobster tail and tiger prawn Linguini

Linguini with tiger prawns, Icelandic lobster, rucola and cherry tomatoes in shellfish sauce.

Grilled salmon

Grilled salmon with Icelandic barley, grilled vegetables, radishes, dill, toasted almonds and sage butter.

Grilled minke whale

Grilled minke whale with „Brennivín“ glaze, rosemary potatoes and grilled vegetables.

White chocolate skyr panna cotta
With Limoncello gel and oat crumble.

Our kitchen is open

11.30 – 23.30
Sundays to Thursdays and
11.30 – 24.00
Fridays and Saturdays



See you soon ... A presto

UNO | Hafnarstræti 1-3 | 101 Reykjavík | Tel. 561 1313 | uno.is

LOTS OF FOOD REVIEWS 2009-2011!

By Various Grapevine food writers - Photo by Hörður Sveinsson

We have been reviewing and writing about restaurants in the Grapevine for the duration of our eight years as a publication. We love food, and going to restaurants is one of our hobbies. Throughout the years, we've strived to cover new restaurants as they open, and revisit old ones to see if they still suck (or indeed if they're still excellent in every way). Sometimes we've been proven wrong as time has passed, other times not so much. Such is life.

We don't pay for the food (we can't afford to), instead we have an elaborate system of signed and stamped 'review slips' that we pass the waiter when he asks for payment. This means that the restaurant's proprietors are not expecting us when we show up and they don't give us any special treatment while we dine (it is only in those last, crucial minutes that they know who we are). This system seems to be working out pretty fine as far as we can tell.

Since 2009, we have tried to have the same person reviewing restaurants for prolonged periods of time. Sari Peltonen did it for around a year, then Catharine Fulton took over for a year, and now the lovely Madeleine T. is doling out the Gs. We feel this adds consistency to the reviews; it enables the constant reader to familiarise herself with the reviewer's tastes and preferences and make up her own mind as to how much faith she can place in the reviewer's assessment of a given place.

We thought for this issue that it might be a good idea to compile a random selection of the reviews we've done since 2009 and print them for your convenience. You might find a place you've forgotten about in there, or one you've yet to try (or yet to avoid). As is the style in Reykjavík, some of them will have gone bust by now, and others will have changed management three times over. If you find something in here that you totally disagree with, why not write us a letter and tell us about it? letters@grapevine.is **HSM**

Issue 03, 2009

Restaurant Dill, The Nordic House

Address: Sturlugata 5
Bottom line: Amazing food, beautiful setting, bargain price
Price quoted: 1000 - 9000 ISK
Rating: +
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Kaffismiðja Islands

Address: Kárastrígur 1
Bottom line: The best coffee in town and beans for home.
Price quoted: Espresso 250 ISK; Latte 350 ISK; Filter coffee 250 ISK; Beans 750 ISK/300 g, 50 ISK reduction if you bring back the bag for reuse.
Rating: +
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 04, 2009

Salaatbarinn

Address: Faxafen 9, Skeifan
Bottom line: Healthier food for fuel
Price quoted: 1500 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Súpubarinn

Address: Hafnarhúsið, the Reykjavík Art Museum. Tryggvagata 17.
Bottom line: Good lunch in a grand setting
Price quoted: 1290 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 05, 2009

Fjöruborðið

Address: Eyrarbraut 3A, Stokkseyri
Bottom line: Good soup, great service
Price quoted: 3.240 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Rauða Húsið

Address: Búðarstígur 4, Eyrarbakka
Bottom line: Pretty house, brilliant lobster
Price quoted: 3.400
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 06, 2009

Silfur

Address: Pósthússtræti 11
Bottom line: Fine Icelandic dining in a pre-financial crisis setting
Price quoted: 4900 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Litla Kaffistofan

Address: Road 1 between Reykjavík and Hveragerði
Bottom line: Coffee and a pancake

Price quoted: 420 ISK

Rating: ☺☺☺☺

Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 07, 2009

Balkanika

Address: Vitastigur 10
Bottom line: A cheap, good alternative to the usual pizza, burger, and pylsa
Price quoted: 1090 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Austur-India Félagið

Address: Hverfisgata 56
Bottom line: Austur-India is like Harrison Ford: reliably charming, easygoing with a dash of style, but just a bit too big of a name to come cheap.
Price quoted: 4.195 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 09, 2009

Hamborgallabúlla Tómasar

Address: Geirsgata 1
Bottom line: If you want to eat a burger in Reykjavík, this is the place.
Price quoted: 1190 ISK
Rating: Best Burger of 2009
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Segurmo

Address: Laugavegur 28
Bottom line: Consistently good food at bargain prices - a gem.
Price quoted: 2000 ISK
Rating: Best Restaurant of 2009
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 10, 2009

Fishmarket

Address: Adalstræti 12
Bottom line: From charming to sketchy
Price quoted: 3900 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Ali baba

Address: Veltusundi 3B (by Ingólfstorg)
Bottom line: The new fast food favorite
Price quoted: 900 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 11, 2009

Sushismiðjan

Address: Geirsgata 3
Bottom line: Eat in, not out.
Price quoted: 2800 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen & Simon Barker



Sushibarinn

Address: Laugavegur 2
Bottom line: Good sushi, slow service
Price quoted: 2150 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen & Simon Barker

OSUSHI - The Train

Address: Lækjargata 2a
Bottom line: O-oh my fish is warm
Price quoted: 100-400 per piece
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen & Simon Barker

Issue 13, 2009

Á Næstu Grösum

Address: Laugarvegur 20b
Bottom line: It's like a Volvo - a dependable classic that gets you there safely
Price quoted: 1890 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 14, 2009

Fiskifélagið

Address: Vesturgata 2a
Bottom line: Fun, interesting, and

ambitious

Price quoted: 4530 ISK

Rating: ☺☺☺☺

Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 15, 2009

Argentína

Address: Barónsstígur 11a
Bottom line: Bloody good
Price quoted: 4950 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Tapas Bar

Address: Laugarvegur 20b
Bottom line: When in Iceland, do tapas as the Icelanders do
Price quoted: 1100 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 17, 2009

Garðurinn

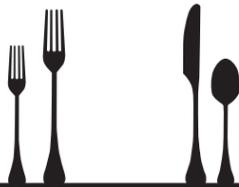
Address: Klapparstígur 37
Bottom line: Interesting concept, healthy food
Price quoted: 2200 ISK
Rating: ☺☺☺☺
Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Noodle Station
Noodle soup with chicken **IKR 930**
Noodle soup with beef **IKR 930**

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Issue 18, 2009

Vox

Address: Hilton Reykjavik Nordica, Suðurlandsbraut 2
Bottom line: Absolutely fabulous
Price quoted: 9900 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Metro Burger

Address: Skeifan
Bottom line: Like McDonald's but even worse
Price quoted: 999 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Sari Peltonen

Issue 02, 2010

Núðluskálin

Address: Skólavörðustígur 8
Bottom line: Good in theory, disappointing in reality
Price quoted: 990 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Noodle Station

Address: Skólavörðustígur 21a
Bottom line: Seriously good noodles
Price quoted: 900 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Issue 05, 2010

Wilson's Pizza

Address: Ánanaustum 15
Bottom line: Decent pizza; not the best, not the worst
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Gamla Smiðjan

Address: Lækjargata 8, 101 Reykjavík
Bottom line: Goddamn, that's good pizza.
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Eldsmiðjan

Address: Laugavegur 81
Bottom line: Good and tasty pizza, just slightly limp.
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Hrói Höttur

Address: Hringbraut 119
Bottom line: Sweet? Bland? Meh.
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Rizzo

Address: Grensásvegur 10
Bottom line: What a pleasant surprise!
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Domino's

Address: Hjarðarhagi 51
Bottom line: Needs more oomph!
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Issue 06, 2010

Piri Piri

Address: Geirsgötu 9
Bottom line: Good, simple chicken
Price quoted: 2640 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Brasilia

Address: Skólavörðustígur 14
Bottom line: Mixed bag
Price quoted: 1890 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Issue 08, 2010

Mmmmm

Address: Laugavegur 42
Bottom line: Mmmmm is ummmm, okay.
Price quoted: 1590 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Yummi Yummi

Address: Hverfisgata 123
Bottom line: Yummi Yummi is yummy
Price quoted: 999 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Issue 09, 2010

Gló

Address: Engjateigur 19
Bottom line: Healthy, tasty, and inventive
Price quoted: 1490 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Krúska

Address: Suðurlandsbraut 12
Bottom line: Good and good for you!
Price quoted: 1450 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Issue 13, 2010

Ban Thai

Address: Laugavegur 130
Bottom line: Delicious, authentic Thai cuisine
Price quoted: 2190 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Issue 14, 2010

Hressó

Address: Austurstræti 20
Bottom line: Pretty good soup
Price quoted: 890 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catherine Fulton

Svarta Kaffi

Address: Laugavegur 54
Price quoted: 1390 ISK
Bottom line: Really nice soup and great bread, too.
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Café D'Haiti

Address: Geirsgata 7b
Price quoted: 1250 ISK
Bottom line: Homey and hearty soup
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Issue 15, 2010

Nauthóll

Address: Nauthólsvegur 106
Bottom line: Wonderfully decadent bunch.
Price quoted: 3300 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Café Paris

Address: Austurstræti 14
Bottom line: Not so luxurious, but still good
Price quoted: 1790 ISK
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Catharine Fulton

Issue 2, 2011

Hamborgarafabrikkan

Address: Höfðatún 2
Bottom line: "For the best burger west of Vatnajökull, I know where to return"
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Madeleine T

Kína Flavour

Address: Lækjargata 10
Bottom line: "It would be a pity for anyone to miss this"
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Madeleine T

Issue 3, 2011

Eldhrímnir

Address: Borgartún 14
Bottom line: "Delightful Persian"
Rating: 🍴🍴🍴🍴
 Reviewed by: Madeleine T

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